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ABSTRACT
              Several methods illustrating how textbooks
traditionally teach the use of pronouns in discourse in Thai are
examined and criticized in this study. Examples of how "referential
identity" and "lexical identity" are interrelated are provided. It is
pointed out that (1) the semantic features of age, gender, and
relationship are not sufficient to describe pronoun usage in Thai,
and (2) dialogues and narratives based on rules of sentence-domain
grammars do not accurately reflect the language of native speakers.
The competence of the native speaker includes the skill to manipulate
and vary pronouns through discourse. It is suggested that an
objective of Thai language instruction should be to duplicate the
behavior represented by that skill and to discover and teach the
rules governing manipulations such as pronoun deletion and noun
switching in sentence sequences. (RL)

On the Role of Discourse in the Teaching of Thai

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One of the characteristics of Thai which becomes
immediately apparent to students of the language is the
abundance of possibilities in the use of personal pronouns.
The choice is dependent upon various features: person,
gender, number, status, age, relationship (formal, ordinary,
intimate), and attitude (non-restraint, deference, assertive-
ness), are among those mentioned by Gething and Cooke in
their respective analyses of Thai pronouns.

Combinations of these features specify the choices
available to speakers. That is, to select pronouns the
speakers draw from a set of structured possibilities
determined by the sex, relative age, relationship, etc.,
of the persons referred to, such that person X would use
a particular "I-you" pair when speaking with his servant
and another pair when speaking with his boss.

While the features, or significata, which define
pronoun choices have been extensively studied, this
information has been incorporated in the most minimal
way in Thai language textbooks. For example, the Haas
Spoken Thai glossary contains ten pronouns: / phŏm,

dichăn, chán, khun, nǔu, thəə, man, thâan, khăw, raw/;
AUA Thai Course has six: /dichăn, phŏm, khun, khăw,
kɛɛ, raw/; some Peace Corps materials include those
already listed plus / kan, kraphŏm, kuu, câw, tua/.
Most of these forms are considered "polite". All are
defined along the dimensions mentioned, so that in
Spoken Thai /phŏm/ is defined as: "I; used by men speaking
to equals."

It could be argued that relatively few pronouns are
taught because foreigners will not be expected to confront
the full range of situations available to Thais and
therefore will not need the full repertory of pronouns.
However it is not the number of pronouns introduced,
nor even the absence of complete definitions, which
are in question, but rather the treatment of these pro-
nouns in discourse as represented in textbooks.

It is the case that one of the ways of binding
sentences together such that they form a fragment of
discourse, as opposed to a list of unrelated sentences,
is the notion of referential identity. That is, sentences
1, 2, and 3 appear to be related in a way in which
sentences 4, 5, and 6 are not. In 1, 2, and 3, Helen

and her are seen to have identical referents, as do
Prime Minister of Canada, Trudeau, and jaunty French
Canadian, whereas such relationships do not hold in
sentences 4, 5, and 6.

    1. Helen took a picture of the Prime Minister
       of Canada.

    2. Trudeau smiled at her.

    3. The jaunty French Canadian greeted the crowds.

    4. Helen took a picture of the Queen of France.

    5. Salvador Dali smiled at him.

    6. The aging actress smoked her pipe.

In Thai language textbooks this referential identity,
especially when marked by pronominal forms, is maintained
by the device of lexical identity. That is, the same
lexical item is repeated again and again. An example
from Lesson 25 of the AUA Thai Course is:

    7. kháw chɔ̂ɔp thaan aahǎan thay   "He likes to eat
                                          Thai food."

    8. kháw bɔ̀ɔk wâa aahǎan thay arɔ̀y "He says Thai food
                                         is delicious."

    9. kháw mây chɔ̂ɔp thaan aahǎan faràŋ "He does not like
                                         to eat Western
                                         food."

   10. kháw bɔ̀ɔk wâa aahǎan faràŋ cʉ̀ʉt "He says Western
                                         food is tasteless."

In a sentence domain grammar, each of these sentences
is well formed. However these sentences do not consti-
tute acceptable Thai discourse, as the sequence would not
occur in normal speech and would be perceived as awkward
and ill formed by native Thai speakers.

One reason is that there is extensive pronoun
deletion when the referent can be unambiguously iden-
tified , as in sentences 7-10. What would actually
be found in Thai speech would be 7a-10a.

7a. <u>khǎw</u> chɔ̂ɔp thaan aahǎan thay   "<u>He</u> likes to eat..."

8a. bɔ̀ɔk wâa...   "___ says that..."

9a. mây chɔ̂ɔp...   "___does not like ..."

10a. bɔ̀ɔk wâa...   "___ says that..."

Another reason that lexical identity as a means of
indicating referential identity is not sufficient
when teaching Thai pronominal usage is the fact that
native Thai speakers may switch freely between sets
of pronouns in a single conversation without any change
in relationship or attitude of the people involved.

For example, T.S. is a Thai woman majoring in
linguistics at the University of Wisconsin. In conver-
sations with her older sister she can use the "I-you"
pairs /nɔ́ɔy/(lit. "younger sibling") - /phîi/ ("older
sibling") and /khǎw/ - /tua/ at will. When one person

switches the other responds appropriately, so that if
T.S. uses /nɔ́ɔy/ - /phîi/ her sister will use /phîi/ -
/nɔ́ɔy/. If one of them switches to /khǎw/ - /tua/ the other
will also use /khǎw/ - /tua/. The choice is apparently
open to either speaker and is used, according to T.S.,
"to avoid monotony."

Another example of the use of multiple sets of
pronouns in a given context comes from Narinat, a
popular culture magazine with short stories, advice
to the lovelorn, dress patterns, recipes, and an astro-
logy column. These characteristics are mentioned only
to show that the magazine has mass appeal and can be
read and interpreted by most Thais.

One of the stories in an issue of the magazine
has four characters: A- a man pretending to be royalty;
B- his wife; C- a gardener; and D- a "spirit doctor"
or specialist in the occult. In one conversation A
refers to himself as /kuu/ and refers to C variously
as /aây, man,eŋ/ and /muŋ/. In another instance B refers
to herself as /chán/ and to C as /man, câw/ and /kɛɛ/.
The spirit doctor refers to himself as /khâa/ and /kuu/
and to the gardener as /kɛɛ/ and /muŋ/. In all these
examples there were other characters present who were

potential participants in the conversation and potential
users of "I-you" forms. In very few cases were the dialogues
specifically attributed, as in " the gardener said..." and
"the doctor replied..." Yet native Thai speakers have
no problem determining that, in a series of sentences
spoken in a context involving many people, the pronouns
/aây, man, eŋ, maŋ/ all have identical referents.

It is apparent that a) the semantic features of
age, gender, relationship, etc., are not sufficient
to describe pronoun usage in Thai, and b) dialogues
and narratives based on rules of sentence-domain grammars
do not accurately reflect the language of native Thai
speakers. In fact, the competence of the native speaker
includes the skill to manipulate and vary pronouns through
discourse.

Therefore it is suggested that an objective of Thai
language instruction should be to duplicate the behavior
represented by that skill and to discover and teach the
rules governing manipulations such as pronoun deletion
and pronoun switching in sentence sequences.

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