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ABSTRACT

This contrastive analysis of English and Thai is designed to introduce ESL teachers to many of the differences between Thai and English. The material is intended to assist the teacher in defining the problems that Thai speakers are likely to have in learning English. The introduction includes background information on Thailand and its people. Part one deals with phonology, including segmental and suprasegmental features. Part two deals with morphology, part three with sentence structure, part four with verb phrases, and part five with noun phrases. Part six discusses vocabulary problems Thai speakers encounter in learning English.  
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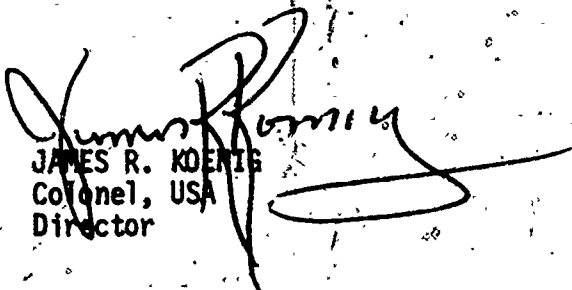


A CONTRASTIVE STUDY  
of  
ENGLISH and THAI

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ENGLISH AND THAI

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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

004

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Foreword

1. Introductory remarks on the contrastive analysis of English and Thai.

It is a truism to state that we tend to appraise any human behavior, either consciously or unconsciously, in terms of our own field of reference. This tendency is particularly true of language behavior. We invariably approach a second language in terms of our first language, and our ability to learn a second language is often constrained, to a greater or lesser degree, by our grounding in our own native language.

Perhaps an analogy to architecture will illustrate this interference between languages more clearly. The acquisition of a first language in childhood is the foundation upon which our ability to speak our native language is built. Say that English is like a convention hall, for example, and Thai is like a skyscraper. Although both buildings are constructed from the same kinds of materials and are built from the same theories of architecture and design, they differ not only in their superstructure, but in their foundations as well. Learning a second language, then, is very much like trying to construct a new building upon the wrong kind of foundation. Thus, a Thai learning English as a second language is like someone trying to construct a convention hall on the foundations of a skyscraper. In both cases, difficulties are created by differences in both the superstructure and the foundation.

It is the purpose of this manual, therefore, to introduce to the English teacher many of the ways in which Thai and English differ. It is hoped that the material presented here will assist the teacher in delineating the problems which Thai speakers are likely to encounter in learning English as a second language. Furthermore, by contrasting the difference in the patterns and structures between the two languages, it is hoped that the teacher will be able to present the material more lucidly and effectively to the Thai student.

This manual abounds in remarks such as, "Thai does not have...", "Thai speakers have great difficulty...", and, "The Thai often make mistakes with..." At no time are these remarks intended to be construed as critical of or condescending to the Thai people or language. Anyone with linguistic training will know how difficult it is to compare the degree of "difficulty, sophistication, or logic" between any two languages. It is not because of these qualities, therefore, that Thai and English differ, but because these languages are historically unrelated and geographically distant. A manual devoted to the teaching of Thai to speakers of English would contain many remarks on the mistakes and difficulties that English speakers would have. It is very important that the teacher does not

approach the problems which a Thai has in learning English in a critical or condescending manner, but rather with patience and understanding.

## 2. Thailand, the Thai, and Thai

Thailand (Siam), as a nation occupied by the Thai (Siamese) people, is a relatively young country when compared to other Asian nations, but it is the only nation in Southeast Asia that has never been colonized by the West, and it therefore enjoys a rich and unbroken historical and cultural heritage. The Thai people moved south from Southern China in a series of migrations and gradually drove the Mons and Khmers, the original inhabitants of the Thai peninsula, to Burma and Cambodia respectively. Through a process of gradual assimilation, Thailand has become a melting pot of several groups of people although the vast majority of people in both Thailand and Laos are of the major Thai ethnic group. Of the approximately 34 million people in Thailand today, about 15% are Chinese and about 3% are Malay. About 10 million Thai people live outside Thailand in countries as far west as Assam and as far east as North Vietnam and the island of Hainan.

Ethnically the Lao people are related to the Thai people. Historically the country of Laos was part of Thailand until the French combined the former with the colonies of Vietnam and Cambodia to make French Indo-China. There are eight million Lao people living in Thailand today; only one million Lao live in Laos. Because Lao and Thai languages are so similar, this manual can be extended to incorporate the problems Laotian students face in learning English as a second language.

Because much of Thai culture and religion comes from India, the Thai language has been heavily influenced by Indian languages and writing systems. Indeed, if you ask the average Thai where his language comes from, he will probably reply that it is Indian in origin. It is interesting to see that many Americans voice the same kind of misconception when they claim that English comes from Latin because we have so many Latin words in English. Most linguists believe, however, that Thai is a distinct language family, possibly related to Chinese. Teachers of foreign students will observe, for example, that the kinds of problems Thai speakers have with English grammar are usually more similar to the kinds of problems a Chinese speaker has than those of an Indian student. In fact, an Indian's foreign accent often sounds very different from the foreign accent of Thai and Chinese speakers. Because Thai speakers have used a non-Indo-European language all their life and because their alphabet is entirely different from the Roman alphabet used by many European languages, teachers of English as a second language will often find Thai students not as fluent in English as, say, Spanish-speaking students who have perhaps studied English for a comparable period of time but whose alphabet is the same. Because of a deep respect for teachers and educational systems in Thailand, however, teachers will find that Thai students are well motivated to acquire English as quickly and as correctly as possible.

# A Contrastive Study of English and Thai

## PART I: PHONOLOGY

### The Phonology of English and Thai

#### 1.0. Introduction to Prosodic Features

The sound systems of a language are usually divided into two parts: the prosodic features and the segmental features. The former refers to the sound patterns that occur during the pronunciation of syllables, words, and sentences, whereas the latter refers to solitary sound units (e.g., English /p/ /t/ /k/): The prosodic features that are of special interest to teachers of English to Thai speakers are pitch, stress, tone, and intonation. Because these features are more difficult to measure than the segmental features, and because they are interrelated with the syntactic patterns of sentences, the description of the prosodic features of both English and Thai will necessarily be shorter and more incomplete than the description of the segmental features of these languages. It is interesting to note that many linguists believe that the prosodic features of a language are the first to be learned by an infant and the last to be lost by a victim of aphasia, leading us to believe that these features are truly intrinsic to a speaker's native language. We might add, furthermore, that incorrect intonation patterns in English are often the signal of a foreign accent, even of a person who has lived most of his life in the U.S. Similarly, mistakes in tone, however slight, indicate to Thai immediately that the speaker has learned Thai as a second language.

#### Intonation in English

Intonation refers to the rising and falling of the musical pitch of the voice during the pronunciation of a sentence. Most declarative sentences in English, for example, begin with a normal level of pitch and volume, increase to a higher level toward the end, and then fall quickly to a low level at the end:

|       |                             |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| high  |                             |
| level | <u>John ate six apples.</u> |
| low   |                             |

Without changing the syntactic structure of this sentence though, a change in the intonation pattern can reflect the idea of questioning or incredulity:

John ate six apples?

This intonation pattern, one in which the level does not trail off but remains at a high level, indicates that the speaker is questioning the fact that John really did eat six apples. We might expect this second pattern to be used if John were a ten-month old baby, for example.

If an English sentence (or utterance) is only one word in length, the same intonation patterns apply. Imagine a telephone call between Elaine and George in which George responds with three utterances of yes, but each utterance differs in meaning and, in this case, the difference is signaled by three different intonation patterns:

Elaine: You know Albert asked me to marry him yesterday, don't you?

George: Yes. (Yes, I knew that already.)

Elaine: Well, I said yes to him!

George: Yes? (What! You mean you said yes?!)

Elaine: Yes, I did. Are you terribly disappointed?

George: Yes. (Yes, I am.)

The three different meanings of the three yes responses by George are immediately apparent to any native speaker of English, even without knowing anything about the situation other than the facts implied in this brief dialogue. In fact, the intonation patterns of George's responses alone indicate to us that: 1) George did not expect Elaine to accept Albert's marriage proposal and 2) that George had marital designs upon Elaine himself.

Although these examples may seem rather simple and straightforward to a native speaker of English, a Thai speaker who has little grasp of the prosodic features of English would have great difficulty in understanding what was implied in George's responses in the above example. It is the goal of the English teacher, then, to make explicit what is implicit in every English speaker's mind when he hears and produces intonation patterns such as the one given. This goal can be achieved more rapidly if the teacher understands the differences between intonation in English and Thai.

#### Intonation in Thai

A description of the intonation patterns of Thai cannot be as straightforward as that of English for several reasons. First of all, there is the simple fact that Thai has not been examined by modern linguists with any of the thoroughness with which English has been analyzed. Secondly, since Thai is a tonal language, each word usually has a pitch level which cannot be greatly modified by the overall pitch levels of the sentence. Finally, Thai uses particles (grammatical words) which often indicate the interrogative or imperative nature of the utterance. There are general intonation patterns for Thai sentences, however, in which the overall pitch level of the sentence is rising, level, or falling, and these levels correspond roughly to questions, statements, and strong assertions. Therefore, a Thai speaker learning English has a general frame of reference from which to

understand English intonation patterns. But it must be emphasized that Thai intonation patterns are influenced by the tones of the words in the sentence. For example, a sentence ending with a word with falling tone will generally not be used with a mid or rising intonation pattern. As mentioned before, certain particles will be used to indicate the interrogative or imperative nature of the sentence. Furthermore, since each Thai word has a tone, a single word used as an utterance cannot have an intonation pattern (unlike the English example with yes previously cited).

### Stress in English

Another prosodic feature which is important to the contrastive analysis of English and Thai is stress, the way we emphasize certain syllables and words in an utterance. There are two ways in which stress functions in English, at the syllable level and at the word level.

Every word spoken alone in English has one primary stress, regardless of the number of syllables in the word. The words sum, summer, summation, and Sumerian, all have one primary stress even though this stress is not always on the same syllable. If the word has more than one syllable, the syllables are marked with primary stress ('), secondary stress (^), tertiary stress (.), or no stress at all. The positioning of the primary stress is sometimes crucial for determining the part of speech of a word:

súspect (noun)  
éxport (noun)

suspect (verb)  
expórt (verb)

Although the incorrect positioning of secondary or tertiary stress does not lead to incorrect lexical information, it does type the speaker immediately as a non-native speaker of English. It would be odd if we heard an English speaker say tablecloth instead of tableclóth, for example. Many of the stress patterns for English syllables are systematic when applied to derivational patterns, and therefore are applied by English speakers quite systematically even to new words. From the pattern:

sénatör - sénatórian,  
mámmál - mámmálian,

we get:

Níxón - Níxónian

Stress is also used in English on the word level, to emphasize a particular word in a sentence as being of particular import to the speaker. This kind of stress pattern is called emphatic or contrastive stress. Thus, the sentence:

I didn't say he stole two large library books.

can have nine different meanings, depending on which word is emphasized in the sentence.

#### Stress in Thai

Stress is used both at the syllable level and the word level in Thai, although, just as in intonation patterns, stress patterns do not exhibit the variety in Thai that is found in English:

Stress nearly always falls on the final syllable in Thai, and because each syllable is marked with a tone, secondary and tertiary stresses do not play an important role:

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| thamníam  | customs      |
| rogrían   | school       |
| phayayáam | perseverance |

It is obvious that this will be a source of interference for Thai trying to learn the multi-level stress structure of English. There will be a tendency, for example, to pronounce the noun suspect with the final syllable stressed:

\*The policeman said I was a suspect.

(An asterisk signifies that the sentence is unacceptable.)

Emphatic or contrastive stress is also found in Thai, although, like intonation patterns, it is affected by the tones of the words which are emphasized. Words with falling tones are more easily marked with emphatic stress than words with rising tones. The differences in the way words in a sentence are stressed in English often appear extremely subtle to a Thai speaker.

I didn't sáy he stole two large library books.

would immediately imply to a native speaker of English that 1) the speaker did not make the accusation verbally, but 2) he did agree with the accusation. These implications would be very difficult for a Thai speaker to make unless he was given information other than that provided solely by the stress pattern of the sentence.

#### Tones

The third prosodic feature that is important to a comparison of the sound patterns of English and Thai is tone, the pitch level or contour of individual words in a language. Chart II lists the five tones in Thai. There are no tones in English, although single-word utterances with different intonation patterns are like the words with tonal differences in Thai, a tone language. A change of one tone in a phrase can often change the entire meaning of the phrase:

phii sǎaw (falling then rising tone): older sister  
phii sǎaw (rising and rising): she devil

The tone of the first syllable phii signals two very different meanings to a Thai speaker (although some younger brothers might



claim that both meanings are equivalent!)).

The fact that Thai is a tonal language creates problems mainly for people trying to learn Thai as a second language, but there is a marginal problem which the existence of tones creates for Thai trying to learn English. The use of Thai names by Thai speakers in English discourse often causes a conflict between the tone patterns of Thai and the intonation patterns of English. For example, a girl might be named Niisāa (with level tone on the first syllable, but with rising tone on the last syllable). If asked her name, she might very well reply in English:

My name is Niisāa,

a pronunciation that might make some English speakers wonder whether she was actually sure of her own name. It is obvious that Thai speakers must learn to "anglicize" Thai words in English so that they use correct English intonation:

My name is Niisaa.

#### 1.1.1. Intonation

As already mentioned in the introduction to this section on phonology, intonation patterns seem more intrinsic to a language than other features of a language, like vocabulary items, and therefore they are more difficult for a non-native speaker to learn. Despite this fact, most English speakers are not overly aware of intonation mistakes of Thai speakers conversing in English for two reasons: 1) the attention of the conversation is usually focused on the lexical and grammatical features of the utterances, and 2) intonation differences in English rarely signal the difference between a minimal pair of utterances.

It was also pointed out that Thai does have intonational patterns somewhat similar to English, but because every syllable in Thai has a tone and because there are always grammatical particles in Thai to mark the difference between statements and questions, intonation is not nearly as important in Thai as it is in English. From this, we can readily assume that all intonation patterns in English are a source of possible difficulty for Thai learners. Because of the inherent difficulty in mastering the intonation patterns of a foreign language completely, especially those of a language as unrelated to Thai as English, it is impossible to expect Thai speakers to acquire the ability to recognize and produce English intonation patterns almost as fluently as a native speaker. It is important, however, for Thai speakers to master intonation patterns when they signal minimal contrasts, and it is also important for them to be aware of some of the more commonly-used patterns.

#### 1.1.2. Minimal Contrasts Signaled by Intonation

There are several cases where English intonation is the sole difference between two utterances, and, quite naturally, it is in these cases where a mistake by a Thai speaker, either in recognition or in production of the particular intonation pattern, is crucial.

The simplest example is one-word utterances having contrasting intonation patterns. Besides the example of the telephone conversation (see Section 1.0.), the following sentences also illustrate that the speaker is signaling three entirely different ideas by voice intonation:

1. (The front door squeaks open late at night.)

John's wife: John? (Is that you, John?)

2. (Someone asks: "What is your husband's name?")

John's wife: John. (He is called John.)

3. (John walks into the house after being mysteriously absent from home for two years.)

John's wife: John! (I'm astounded!)

Just as the three different yes's signaled three different attitudes of the speaker, the three different responses of John by John's wife signal three completely different attitudes. It is in cases such as this, where only the intonational contour signals the speaker's attitude, that the correct recognition and production of intonation patterns is crucial. And it is in exactly these kinds of responses that Thai speakers encounter most of their difficulty, mainly because of the fact that intonation patterns cannot be used as freely in single-word utterances in Thai as they can be in English.

It is not only in single-word utterances that intonation patterns are extremely important, however. Intonation contours alone can signal the difference between a statement or a question. The following two sentences, for example, are a statement and an incredulous question about the statement. Notice that in Thai, the only way the difference can be marked is by the addition of a grammatical particle, not through change in intonation:

English: John is dead.

John is dead?

Thai: John | tay | lɛw  
John | dead | already

John | tay | lɛw | r++  
John | dead | already | (question particle)

Any utterance that can be possibly misunderstood for another solely on the basis of its intonation contour is a source of difficulty for Thai speakers. The teacher of English must be perceptive and patient in teaching these intonation contrasts to Thai students.

### 1.1.3. Other Common Intonation Patterns

Other intonation patterns that are important in English even though they do not often occur in cases where they signal the only differences between two utterances are: 1) the intonation



of series of words and 2) the intonation of do and to be questions vs. the intonation of wh- questions.

It is important that Thai speakers learn the intonation of series in English, for even though there is a gradual diminution in pitch and stress in the pronunciation of series of words in Thai, the diminution is not as marked as in the pronunciation of a short series of words in English:

John likes ice cream, candy, and cake.

The gradual diminution of stress and pitch in the pronunciation of a series of words in English indicates to the listener that the speaker is gradually coming to the end of the series.

One other intonational pattern important for Thai speakers to produce spontaneously is the usual difference between the two kinds of question pattern in English. 1) wh-questions usually have falling intonation and 2) do and to be questions usually have rising intonation:

Where are you going?

Who did you see?

Do you like Western movies?

Are you watching TV tonight?

Although there is some similarity between these kinds of questions in English and Thai, it is difficult for Thai speakers to produce these two different intonation patterns spontaneously, and, therefore, it is important for the teacher to emphasize the differences between these two kinds of question patterning to Thai students.

#### 1.2.0. Introduction to Segmental Features

As mentioned previously, the prosodic features of a language (e.g. stress and intonation) seem to be the most basic sound features and, therefore, are the most difficult for a non-native speaker to learn. The segmental features, on the other hand, may cause great difficulty for a non-native speaker at the beginning, but, with practice, one can learn them quite thoroughly.

The segmental features of a language are its smallest sound units. They are usually illustrated in terms of contrasting minimal pairs:

|            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| beet - bit | boot - but    |
| bit - bait | but - boat    |
| bait - bet | boat - bought |
| bet - bat  | bought - baht |

We know that the difference between these pairs of words is signaled by the change of one sound unit--in this case, a change in the vowel.

Charts I and II are given to illustrate the differences between the sets of Thai consonants and vowels and the sets of English consonants and vowels. By superimposing the Thai segmental features on top of the English ones, the gaps and overlaps are readily apparent. It is quickly apparent, for example, that there are many more fricatives in English than in Thai. Conversely, it is obvious that there are three stop contrasts in Thai (voiceless aspirated, voiceless unaspirated, and voiced unaspirated). It is natural to assume that certain predictions can be made, by comparing sets of segmental features, about the problems a language learner will face when learning the segmental features of another language. For example, it seems probable that an English speaker would have difficulty in learning a three-way contrast in the production and recognition of stops in Thai. In the same way, it is obvious that a Thai speaker would have trouble mastering the contrast between /f/ and /v/ since Thai has only the voiceless fricative /f/. Similarly, it would seem that the English vowel system would present problems for a Thai because there is no apparent opposition between short and long vowels, an important opposition in Thai. And, when we do analyze the difficulties Thai speakers encounter in learning the English vowel system, we find they have great difficulty in even recognizing the five front vowels, for example.

It must be quickly pointed out, however, that a contrastive analysis of this kind, in which the absence or presence of a sound in language A is compared with the absence or presence of a "similar" sound in language B, gives only a superficial awareness of the problems involved. What is essential to the differences between two languages, then, is not the differences in individual features, but the differences among the functions of individual features. In other words, the whole system of English vowel and consonant patterns must be compared with the whole system of Thai vowel and consonant patterns. For example, even though Thai has no voiced fricative /v/, many Thai can learn to pronounce the English /v/ and use it correctly. Since the voiced-voiceless opposition is an important one in the consonantal sound patterns of both Thai and English, it is not too difficult or unnatural for a Thai speaker to recognize and produce this same voiced-voiceless contrast in word final position in Thai. Even though Thai has the /p/ vs. /b/, and /t/ vs. /d/ opposition, it is very hard for Thai speakers to learn this same opposition in word final position. The following pairs are difficult for Thai speakers to learn with any degree of consistency:

cup - cub    cap - cab    cut - cud    and    cat - cad

It is the way the sounds function in a language that is important to a comparison of the sound patterns of two languages. This fact is important to keep in mind when reviewing the following sections on phonology, especially in the section dealing with vowel contrasts, a particularly difficult problem for Thai learning English.

Chart I (A)

| English Consonants |           |                         |   |   |   |   |   |                     |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
|                    |           | BOTH LIPS<br>(bilabial) | LOWER LIP AND UPPER<br>TEETH<br>(labiodental) | TIP OF TONGUE AND<br>TEETH<br>(interdental) | TIP OF TONGUE AND<br>TOOTH RIDGE<br>(apicoalveolar) | FRONT PART OF TONGUE<br>AND HARD PALATE<br>(laminoalveolar) | BACK OF TONGUE AND<br>SOFT PALATE<br>(dorsovelar) | THROAT<br>(glottal) |
| stops              | voiceless | p                       |   |   | t   |   | k   |                     |
|                    | voiced    | b                       |   |   | d   |   | g   |                     |
| affricates         | voiceless |                         |   |   |   | tʃ  |   |                     |
|                    | voiced    |                         |   |   |   | (dʒ)  |   |                     |
| fricatives         | voiceless |                         | f   | θ   | s   | ʃ   |   | h                   |
|                    | voiced    |                         | (v)   | (ð)   | (z)   | (ʒ)   |   |                     |
| nasals             |           | m                       |   |   | n   |   | ŋ   |                     |
| laterals           |           |                         |   |   | l   |   |   |                     |
| semivowels         |           | w                       |   | ʋ   | r   | y   |   |                     |

Sounds enclosed by circles are not phonemic in Thai.

Chart I (B)

| English Vowels |        |         |        |
|----------------|--------|---------|--------|
|                | FRONT  | CENTRAL | BACK   |
| HIGH           | i<br>ⓘ |         | u<br>Ⓤ |
| MID            | e<br>ɛ | ə       | o      |
| LOW            | æ      | ɑ       | ɔ      |

| English Diphthongs | əI | əU | ɔI |
|--------------------|----|----|----|
|--------------------|----|----|----|

In addition to these three traditional diphthongs, other English vowels have been considered to be diphthongal in nature, as follows:

/i/ → [ij]  
 /e/ → [ej]

/u/ → [uw]  
 /o/ → [ow]

In this book we will treat only /əI/, /əU/ and /ɔI/ as diphthongs, but spell them /əy/, /əw/ and /ɔy/.

Chart II (A)

| Thai Consonants |             |    |                         |   |   |   |   |   |                     |
|-----------------|-------------|----|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
|                 |             |    | BOTH LIPS<br>(bilabial) | LOWER LIP AND UPPER<br>TEETH<br>(labiodental) | TIP OF TONGUE AND<br>TEETH<br>(interdental) | TIP OF TONGUE AND<br>TOOTH RIDGE<br>(apicoalveolar) | FRONT PART OF TONGUE<br>AND HARD PALATE<br>(laminoalveolar) | BACK OF TONGUE AND<br>SOFT PALATE<br>(dorsovelar) | THROAT<br>(glottal) |
| stops           | aspirated   | vl | ph                      |   |   | th  |   | kh  |                     |
|                 | unaspirated | vl | (p)                     |   |   | (t)   |   | (k)   | (ʔ)                 |
|                 | unaspirated | vd | b                       |   |   | d   |   |   |                     |
| affricates      | aspirated   | vl |                         |   |   |   | tʃ <sup>h</sup>   |   |                     |
|                 | unaspirated | vl |                         |   |   |   | (tʃ)  |   |                     |
| fricatives      |             |    |                         | f   |   | s   |   |   | h                   |
| nasals          |             |    | m                       |   |   | n   |   | ŋ   |                     |
| laterals        |             |    |                         |   |   | l   |   |   |                     |
| semivowels      |             |    | w                       |   |   | r   | y   |   |                     |

Sounds enclosed by circles are not phonemic in English.

Note that the four symbols /p/, /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/ enclosed by circles in this chart are identical to the four symbols /p/, /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/ in the chart of English consonants. If circled symbols represent sounds which are not shared between the two languages, why are these four symbols encircled in Chart II? The apparent discrepancy lies in the fact that the four symbols contained in the Thai consonant chart represent unaspirated voiceless sounds whereas the identical symbols in the English chart represent aspirated voiceless sounds. In reality, the English symbols /p/, /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/ represent sounds that are almost identical to the sounds symbolized by /p<sup>h</sup>/, /t<sup>h</sup>/, /k<sup>h</sup>/, and /tʃ<sup>h</sup>/ in the Thai chart. They are not written as aspirated sounds, however, because

they are almost always transcribed phonemically as /p/, /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/ (or /tʃ/) in the literature.

The fifth circled sound in the Thai chart, /ʔ/, is found in English with some free variation - for example, usually at the beginning of words starting with a vowel sound or as the consonant separating the two syllables of the interjection oh oh! It occurs more systematically in Thai - at the beginning of all words starting with a vowel sound and in final position with all words ending in a short vowel.

Chart II (B)

| Thai Vowels |       |      |         |      |       |      |
|-------------|-------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
|             | FRONT |      | CENTRAL |      | BACK  |      |
|             | short | long | short   | long | short | long |
| HIGH        | i     | ii   | ɨ       | ɨi   | u     | uu   |
| MID         | e     | ee   | ə       | əe   | o     | oo   |
| LOW         | ɛ     | ɛɛ   | ɑ       | ɑɑ   | ɔ     | ɔɔ   |

Note that although English contains all but one of these vowel positions, it does not maintain vowel length as a phonemic contrast. The English equivalents of these nine vowel positions are approximately half-way between the short and long Thai pairs.

|                 |    |    |    |
|-----------------|----|----|----|
| Thai Diphthongs | ia | ɨa | ua |
|-----------------|----|----|----|

Although these three diphthongs are the only ones cited as "pure" diphthongs, there are many other diphthongal and triphthongal combinations in Thai ending with the semivowels /y/ and /w/. Thus, Thai contains diphthongs almost identical with the three traditional English diphthongs /aɪ/, /aʊ/, and /ɔɪ/ if we consider these sounds to end in the semivowels /y/ and /w/.

Chart II (C)

| Thai Tones  |           |                         |
|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Description | Symbols   | Examples                |
| high level  | '         | /khǎa/ "trade"          |
| mid level   | no symbol | /khaa/ "to be embedded" |
| low level   | `         | /khàa/ "a spice"        |
| rising      | ˊ         | /khǎa/ "leg"            |
| falling     | ˋ         | /khàa/ "to kill"        |

### 1.2.1. Segmental Sounds

A comparison of the Thai sound system (Chart II) with English (Chart I) immediately reveals some of the main problems a speaker of either language faces when attempting to learn the other. English does not have unaspirated /p/, /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/ or vowel length as phonemic features, and conversely, Thai does not have /v/, /z/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /l/, /r/, or /æ/ as phonemic features. For the purposes of this manual, the English segmental features which are absent in Thai are the ones which are important in helping a teacher of English anticipate the kinds of problems a Thai speaker will encounter in learning the segmental features of English.

### 1.2.2. Gaps in the Thai System

It is readily apparent that there are two kinds of segmental features which are phonemic in English but not in Thai: 1) gaps in the oppositions between some Thai features, and 2) features which are absent in Thai because neither member of the opposition exists. The following features illustrate the first situation:

Thai has the voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ but not the voiced counterpart as in English /v/.  
Thai has the voiceless dental sibilant /s/ but not the voiced counterpart as in English /z/.  
Thai has both the lateral /l/ and the retroflexed (or apico-aveolar flap) /r/, but in casual speech, most Thai speakers blur the distinction between /l/ and /r/, and there is a gap in the opposition.

As might be expected, these segmental features are not as difficult for Thai speakers to learn as those features for which no opposition exists. However, there are problems which are peculiar to the production and recognition of these sounds, and they will be explained below.

### 1.2.3. /f/ vs. /v/

Most Thai speakers have a tendency to confuse English /v/ and /w/ in attempting to pronounce the voiced counterpart of English /f/. Thus, for example, the following types of pronunciation are typical for many Thai speakers:

| Common "Thai-English" Pronunciation |        |                    | Correct Pronunciation |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| vane                                | /wen/  | (sounds like wane) | fain /fen/            |
| vine                                | /wəyn/ | (sounds like wine) | fine /fəyn/           |
| veil                                | /wel/  | (sounds like wail) | fail /fel/            |

This confusion is also characterized by the way in which Thai speakers transcribe Thai names into English. Almost invariably, the Thai letter for the sound /w/ is transcribed with the English letter /v/. Thus, the Thai name /witʃəy/ is written Vichai,



causing English speakers unacquainted with Thai to mispronounce this name /vitʃhəy/.

Because Thai does not have the /v/ sound, and because there is no phonemic opposition between voiced and voiceless sounds in final position in Thai, the pronunciation and recognition of English /v/ is even more difficult for Thai speakers in final position. Words like the following, therefore, will present particular difficulty for Thai speakers:

half vs. have, safe vs. save, and leaf vs. leave.

#### 1.2.4. /s/ vs. /z/

Another English segmental feature which is a gap in the Thai system is the sound /z/. Although the /s/ vs. /z/ opposition does not seem to create as much difficulty for Thai speakers as the /f/ vs. /v/ opposition, probably because there is no feature which is close enough to /z/ in articulatory position to be confused with it, there are, again, problems in recognition and production. This is especially true of oppositions in final position because, as already mentioned, there is no opposition between voiced and voiceless finals in Thai. Thus the following pairs deserve special practice:

face vs. phase, peace vs. peas, and cease vs. seize.

#### 1.2.5. /l/ vs. /r/

Although this opposition exists in the speech of many Thai, this opposition is placed here because, at least in casual speech, /l/ and /r/ are pronounced /l/ by the majority of Thai speakers. It is true that there are two different letters for these sounds and that they are often distinguished in reading pronunciation of words, but, even then, the following words, for example, are homophonous to many Thai speakers:

/lʏaŋ/ "widely spread" vs. /rʏaŋ/ "story"

Despite the fact that the opposition or lack of opposition between these two sounds is based largely upon social and geographical dialects, it does seem true that Thai speakers who have had some degree of formal education tend to make a consistent distinction between these two sounds. For this reason, most Thai students who are studying English make a distinction between these two sounds in Thai, but, this in itself does not mean that these Thai speakers will be as consistent in making the same distinction in English. First, the Thai /r/ is not as retroflexed as the English /r/, and secondly, Thai /l/ and /r/ never occur in final position. There is, consequently, a great deal of difficulty with these sounds in final position. A problem which further compounds the issue is that the Thai letters representing /l/ and /r/ are always pronounced /n/ in final position. Hence the loan words basketball and football are pronounced /bæskhɪt-boon/ and /futboon/ in Thai. Because these two sounds are artic-

ulated in two different manners (/l/ as a flap and /r/ as retroflexed), they are rarely confused by Thai speakers when listening to spoken English. There are problems in the production of these sounds by Thai speakers, however, especially in final position. /l/ and /r/ are often unnaturally lengthened or made syllabic so that they sound unnatural to English speakers.

It must also be pointed out that Thai students are often trained in English programs which teach British English. The obvious result of this training is that some of the interference which Thai students experience in learning American English stems not from their background in Thai, but in their learning a different English dialect. The dropping of /r/ in word final or in pre-consonantal position (dear pronounced [dI:ə] and heart pronounced [ha:t]) can be accepted as a dialectal variant from Standard American English, and not solely as an interference problem from Thai.

#### 1.2.6. /ʃ/ vs. /ʒ/, and /θ/ vs. /ð/

Another group of segmental features that are phonemic in English but not in Thai are those sounds for which Thai has no counterpart in opposition, namely the sounds /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /I/, /U/, and /ə/. Although it might be expected that these sounds might present more difficulty than those sounds for which a counterpart existed (i.e., /v/, and /z/ and sometimes /r/), it actually is easier for Thai speakers to learn the consonant sounds in this section because, as completely new features, they are not easily confused with the already existing system of Thai features. Furthermore, the voiced/voiceless opposition is phonemic in Thai, at least in initial and medial position, and therefore, the new consonant pairs /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, and /θ/ and /ð/, are not at all inconsistent as pairs of voiced vs. voiceless affricates. Finally, the opposition between /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ and /θ/ and /ð/ carries very little functional load in English, that is, it is very difficult to get minimal pairs that have these oppositions as the distinguishing sounds. Indeed, it is impossible to find a minimal pair with the /ʃ/ vs. /ʒ/ opposition in initial position as /ʒ/ never occurs initially in English. Less time should probably be spent therefore on the distinction between these pairs and other affricates or stops. For example:

| /s/   | /ʃ/   | /d/  | /ð/    |
|-------|-------|------|--------|
| seep  | sheep | day  | they   |
| sin   | shin  | Dan  | than   |
| mass  | mash  | seed | seethe |
| lease | leash | load | loathe |

There is a tendency for many Thai speakers to substitute the Thai voiceless, unaspirated apico-alveolar stop /t/ for the English voiced, interdental fricative /ð/, especially in the determiners (i.e. this, that, these, those, and the).

### 1.2.7. The English Vowels /I/ and /U/

The English vowels /I/ and /U/ cause some difficulty for Thai speakers because vowel length and not vowel quality is the important phonemic feature in Thai. That is, the difference between the phonetic sounds [I] and [i:] and [U] and [u:] is not that the first member of each pair is lower than the second member, but that the first member of each pair is short and the second member is long. But in English, the situation is the reverse, that is, the difference in vowel quality is phonemic and the difference in length is phonetic. Because of this difference between the two languages, the phonetic sounds [I] and [i:] and [U] and [u:] are written /i/ and /ii/, and /u/ and /uu/ in Thai. The following examples will show how vowel quality and vowel length function in Thai and English a little more clearly.

| Thai Vowels (showing that length is phonemic) |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| short vowels                                  | long vowels              |
| [I] /si/ <u>emphasis</u>                      | [i:] /sii/ <u>rib</u>    |
| [U] /lúk/ <u>to arise</u>                     | [u:] /lúuk/ <u>child</u> |

| English Vowels (showing that length is phonetic) |  |
|--|--|
| short vowels<br>(preceding voiceless consonants) | long vowels<br>(preceding voiced consonants) |
| [I] /I/ <u>mitt</u>                              | [I:] /I/ <u>mid</u>                          |
| [i] /i/ <u>meat</u>                              | [i:] /i/ <u>mead</u>                         |
| [U] /U/ <u>put</u>                               | [U:] /U/ <u>should</u>                       |
| [u] /u/ <u>shoot</u>                             | [u:] /u/ <u>shoed</u>                        |

Thus it can be seen that vowel length is phonemic in Thai but not in English, although vowel length does help to indicate the voicing or nonvoicing of final consonants in English. Because of the opposition in vowel quality, however, in English /i/ vs. /I/ and /u/ vs. /U/, Thai speakers will have a tendency to confuse words like meat and mitt, mead and mid, and words like shoed and should and kook and cook. Patient practice should be devoted to making Thai speakers aware of the fact that 1) the vowel differences between /i/ and /I/ and /u/ and /U/ are not related to the length of these vowels, and 2) that vowel length is important in English, not as a signal of vowel opposition, but as a signal of final consonant opposition: For example, short vowels indicate the

final consonant is voiceless (meat and mitt) and long vowels indicate the final consonant is voiced (mead and mid).

#### 1.2.8. The English Vowel /æ/

Thai speakers have an inordinate difficulty in learning the contrasts between the three English front vowels /e/, /ɛ/, and /æ/. This is because the front vowels of Thai are not coterminous as a system of oppositions with the system of English front vowels:

|            | English | Thai |
|------------|---------|------|
| high front | i       | i    |
|            | I       | e    |
| mid front  | e       |      |
|            | ɛ       | ɛ    |
| low front  | æ       |      |

Most Thai speakers, therefore, have an enormous difficulty even recognizing the difference between the following words, especially between /ɛ/ and /æ/, let alone producing these vowels accurately:

|     |      |      |       |      |
|-----|------|------|-------|------|
| /e/ | bait | bane | deign | pain |
| /ɛ/ | bet  | Ben  | den   | pen  |
| /æ/ | bat  | ban  | Dan   | pan  |

Carefully selected drills will have to be provided for Thai students in order to teach them this set of differences. A class discussion on the following topic might provide many meaningful opportunities to differentiate between the /e/ and /ɛ/ sounds:

Do boys who have many dates end up with many debts?

#### 1.3.0. Syllables: comparison of Thai and English syllable shapes.

Although the segmental sound differences between Thai and English are a source of many problems for Thai speakers studying English, the greatest single source of difficulty is not the segmental sound system of English, but the syllable shape in English. English syllables are more complicated than Thai syllables; English syllables can begin and end with rather large consonant clusters whereas Thai syllables do not have large consonant clusters at all. A brief glance at the following samples will illus-

trate this difference more clearly:

Chart III

| English Syllables                            |           |                    |           |                    |                  |           |           |           |     |
|--|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| Segmental Features that compose the syllable | /s/       | Consonant          | Consonant | *Vowel             | Glide /w/ or /y/ | Consonant | Consonant | Consonant | /s/ |
|  | s         | C                  | C         | V                  | G                | C         | C         | C         | s   |
|  | s         | t                  | r         | ɔ                  |                  |           |           |           |     |
|  |           | p                  | l         | a                  | y                |           |           |           |     |
|  |           |                    | p         | a                  | y                | n         |           |           |     |
|  |           |                    | w         | i                  |                  | ŋ         | k         |           |     |
|  |           |                    | s         | i                  |                  | k         | s         |           |     |
|  |           |                    | s         | i                  |                  | k         | s         | θ         | s   |
| Thai Syllables                               |           |                    |           |                    |                  |           |           |           |     |
| Consonant                                    | Consonant | *Vowel (with tone) | Vowel     | Glide or Consonant |                  |           |           |           |     |
| C  | C         | V                  | V         | G C                | Translation      |           |           |           |     |
| p <sup>h</sup> r                             | ɔ         |                    |           |                    | because          |           |           |           |     |
| k  | l         | ɔ                  | a         |                    | dare             |           |           |           |     |
|  | kh        | ɔ                  | a         | w                  | white            |           |           |           |     |
|  | kh        | ɔ                  | a         | w                  | mountain         |           |           |           |     |
| m  | ɔ         |                    | k         |                    | likely           |           |           |           |     |
| m  | ɔ         | a                  | k         |                    | very             |           |           |           |     |

\*Both English and Thai syllables must have at least this vowel: all other segmental features are optional in both English and Thai.

It can readily be seen that an English syllable, with nine possible segmental features is longer and more complicated than the Thai syllable which has a maximum of five features. Furthermore, it is apparent that consonant clusters are more complex and more commonly used in English than in Thai. Counting /s/ as a consonant, an English syllable can begin with as many as three consonants (straw) and end with as many as four (sixths), whereas a Thai syllable can begin with a maximum of only two consonants (/p<sup>h</sup>rɔ/) and end with a maximum of only one (/má-k/).

Further contrasts are evident. The vowel nucleus of an English syllable contains only a vowel followed by a possible glide, whereas the vowel nucleus of a Thai syllable can contain two vowels (only if the two vowels are the same) followed by a possible glide, so that vowel length is an important contrast in Thai.

Thus, /khǎw/ means mountain, and /khǎaw/, with a long vowel, means white. Notice too that Thai vowels must be marked with tone while the tone or pitch of an English vowel is not an important feature of the syllable.

1.3.1. Syllables: possible initial consonant clusters in English and Thai syllables.

Not only do English syllables contain longer consonant clusters than Thai syllables, they also have a greater variation in the kinds of consonant sounds that can be combined to form initial or final clusters. Here is a comparison of the possible initials found in English with those found in Thai:

| English Syllable Initials |  | Thai Syllable Initials |   |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| Syllable Shape            | Possible Sounds  | Syllable Shape         | Possible Sounds                                     |
| 1. C                      | All English consonants except /ʒ/ and /ŋ/. 22 possible initials.   | 1. C                   | All Thai consonants without exception. 20 possible. |
| 2. CC                     | pr tr kr br dr gr<br>fr ɔr ʃr<br>pl kl bl gl fl sl<br>tw kw dw gw ɔw sw<br>hw* pw bw w<br>py ky by gy fy ɔy<br>vy sp st sk sf<br>sm sn sv sn sm sl | 2. CC                  | phl khl pl kl<br>phr thr khr pr<br>tr kr<br>khw kw  |
| 3. sCC                    | spr str skr spl<br>skl skw spy sky   | 3. sCC                 | none  |

\*Some consonant clusters depend on dialectal variation; thus some speakers pronounce the initial cluster of when as /w/ and not as /hw/.

By comparing the number of possible initial consonants and clusters (at least 72) with the number of possible initials in Thai (about 32), it is very apparent that the Thai speaker faces a system of initial syllable contrasts in English which is much larger than the Thai system. Of course there is some overlap in the types of initials that can occur (for example, the clusters /pl/, /kl/, /pr/, and /kr/), but, on the whole, a Thai speaker must master contrasts which do not exist in his own native language. Special attention will have to be paid to the teaching of these initials in English, especially to three consonant initial clusters, clusters that do not exist in Thai.

1.3.2. Syllables: possible final consonant clusters in English and Thai syllables.

Because many syntactic categories or operations are signaled by the addition of a suffix in English, the possible consonant finals in English play an important part in signaling grammatical information about a sentence. For example, the addition of the /z/ suffix to the verb tells us whether there is one sheep or more than one sheep in the following two sentences:

The sheep play on the hill.  
The sheep plays on the hill.

Sometimes, the articulation of a final cluster signals the difference between two semantic referents, as in:

I lost my pans.  
I lost my pants.

The following examples contrast the possible finals in English syllables with those occurring in Thai:

| English Syllable Finals |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Syllable Shape          | Possible Sounds                      |
| 1. C                    | All English consonants except /h/.   |
| 2. CC                   | nt rt lt nd rd ld, <u>etc.</u>       |
| 3. CCC                  | nts rts lts ndz rdz ldz, <u>etc.</u> |
| 4. CCCs                 | ksθs                                 |

| Thai Syllable Finals |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Syllable Shape       | Possible Sounds             |
| 1. C                 | Only m, n, ŋ, y, w, p, t, k |
| 2. CC                | none                        |
| 3. CCC               | none                        |
| 4. CCCs              | none                        |

Because the number of possible English finals is so large and the number of possible Thai finals is so small, the difficulty in learning English final contrasts will be even greater than the difficulty in learning English initial contrasts for Thai speakers. Careful practice with minimal pairs, especially in sentences where the difference in a final signals an important difference in the meaning of the sentence (like the afore-mentioned sentence pairs) will be of great help to Thai speakers.

#### 1.4.0. Spelling

Because Thai is an alphabetic language, it should be easier for Thai speakers to grasp the basics of the English spelling system than for speakers of non-alphabetic Asian languages, such as Chinese or Japanese. There are some basic differences between



the Thai and English spelling systems that merit particular notice for teachers of Thai speakers, however.

#### 1.4.1. Differences between the English and Thai alphabets.

English uses 26 letters (or combinations of them) to transcribe the 35 sounds of the language whereas Thai uses about 64 letters (or combinations of them) to transcribe the 38 sounds of the Thai language. The main difference between these two systems is immediately obvious. Whereas an English speaker has more sounds in his language than symbols to represent them, the Thai speaker has more symbols in his writing system than there are sounds in his language. The English system then must utilize different combinations of letters to represent sounds or the same letter or combinations of letters to represent two different sounds:

| <u>Different Combinations</u> |      | <u>The Same Letter or Combination</u> |     |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| <u>to</u>                     | /u/  | <u>can</u>                            | /k/ |
| <u>toe</u>                    | /o/  | <u>city</u>                           | /s/ |
| <u>bow</u>                    | /aw/ | <u>thin</u>                           | /θ/ |
| <u>bought</u>                 | /ɔ/  | <u>this</u>                           | /ð/ |

In Thai, the situation is almost exactly the reverse; since there are many more letters than sounds, there are many sounds which can be represented by several letters, and there are very few letters which can represent two different sounds. For example, the sounds /p<sup>h</sup>/ and /k<sup>h</sup>/ can each be represented by three different letters, and the sound /t<sup>h</sup>/ can be represented by six different letters.

Besides this basic difference in the number of letters in the alphabet and the way they represent the sounds in the language, other important differences exist.

#### 1.4.2. The spelling of English vowels.

In Thai, most of the variation in the way a sound can be spelled occurs with the spelling of consonants. For example, as mentioned immediately above, there are many different letters that represent the three Thai stops /p<sup>h</sup>/, /t<sup>h</sup>/, and /k<sup>h</sup>/. But there is an almost one for one correspondence in the spelling of vowels in Thai. In other words, if a Thai hears the vowel sound /i:/, he can transcribe it on paper in only one way; he can use only one symbol to represent that sound. The spelling of English consonants is fairly consistent. However, there is enormous variation in how most vowels are spelled. For example, there are at least 13 different ways the vowel sound /i/ can be spelled in English!

|                |                |                 |                  |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <u>be</u>      | <u>receive</u> | <u>mosquito</u> | <u>larvae</u>    |
| <u>bee</u>     | <u>party</u>   | <u>people</u>   | <u>mediaeval</u> |
| <u>beat</u>    | <u>key</u>     | <u>phoenix</u>  | <u>quay</u>      |
| <u>believe</u> |                |                 |                  |



When a Thai speaker is confronted with such inconsistency, he is tempted to claim that the English system of spelling vowels is completely haphazard! Because the Thai system of spelling vowels is very regular, the teacher must be particularly patient and attentive to the spelling mistakes of Thai students and be aware of the fact that the students are confronted with a task which requires a great deal of practice and memorization.

#### 1.4.3. Pronunciation interference from the Thai spelling system:

As already mentioned, Thai has only six final consonants: three stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ pronounced phonetically as [p<sup>h</sup>], [t<sup>h</sup>], and [k<sup>h</sup>], and three nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/. Because Thai contains a great deal of loan words from Indic languages which have finals other than the six finals mentioned above, Thai words are often spelled with final consonant letters which represent sounds other than the above mentioned Thai finals. For example, Indic loan words ending in /s/ are spelled with the final letter s in Thai. These words are always pronounced with the six Thai finals, however, so that words ending with the letter s are actually pronounced with a final /t/ in Thai. Words ending with the Thai letter r or l are pronounced with a final /n/, since /r/ and /l/ never occur finally in Thai. The English loan word ball is pronounced /boon/ in Thai. Many Thai speakers have a tendency then to pronounce English words as if they conformed to the Thai system of final consonants, regardless of which final letter the English word is actually spelled with. Thus house might be pronounced /haut/. Although this problem is directly related to the teaching of the syllable structure of English (see Section 1.3.), it is important for the teacher to realize that the spelling of final consonants in Thai contributes some interference too, especially in reading English.

#### 1.4.4. The spelling of derivations in English and Thai

Although the English spelling system has been severely criticized for many years as inconsistent and unlearnable, there are some ways in which it signals important information about the language. Indeed, some linguists have claimed that the English spelling system is a nearly optimal system for a native speaker. They make this claim largely because of the way derivations of words are signaled by their spelling. Take, for instance, the following homonyms:

him \*himal  
hymn - hymnal

sine \*sinal  
sign - signal

Because of the spelling of the "silent n" in hymn and the "silent g" in sign, we know that the meanings of hymn and sign are different from their homonym counterparts him and sine. Furthermore, the spelling of hymn and sign indicates graphically what the correct spelling of the derivations of these words is.

The Thai spelling system has much the same phenomenon operating in the spelling of derivations in Thai. These two homonyms in Thai are spelled differently in the Thai spelling system:

/théet/ "town" spelled tes (/s/ final is pronounced /t/.)  
/théet/ "to preach" spelled tesn (/n/ is not pronounced.)

From the second word /théet/ meaning to preach, comes the derivation /théesnǎ/ meaning sermon. Because to preach is spelled tesn (the n being silent), this spelling indicates that any derivation of to preach will be pronounced with an n, just as any derivation of hymn is pronounced with an n. There are many other examples of how silent letters and inconsistent spellings operate in much the same way in the spelling of derivations in both English and Thai. For this reason, there are some ways in which the peculiarities of the Thai spelling system prepare a Thai student for the peculiarities of the English system.

It may be further noted that in both systems, most of the difficulty lies in spelling the word correctly, not in reading or pronouncing it correctly. For this reason, an English program, such as this one, which emphasizes the verbal ability of the student and his ability to comprehend the written language will not encounter nearly as many problems with the teaching of English spelling as a program which is primarily interested in the ability to write English.

#### 1.5. Punctuation.

Usually the teaching of punctuation is not emphasized in English programs which are not primarily concerned with the ability to write English. However, because Thai has no punctuation, a note must be added here to prepare the teacher for problems which might arise from this fact. Actually, Thai has punctuation to the extent that sentences, clauses, and words in a series are separated by a space, but this spacing is rather arbitrary and dependent more on the style of the writer than on the dictates of convention. None of the English punctuation marks are used in Thai, although Western-influenced Thai writing does use some English punctuation symbols. Thai does not have upper or lower case letters, so even such a rudimentary convention as capitalized letters is not used in Thai. It is not difficult, though, for Thai speakers to learn the system of punctuation in English, at least in reading for comprehension, and, for the most part, the use of such conventions as capital letters and periods to mark proper nouns and ends of sentences are very useful in making explicit in English certain kinds of grammatical information which is kept implicit in Thai.

Naturally, however, it is very difficult for Thai students to master English punctuation in writing English, especially the correct use of commas and semicolons. Part of this difficulty stems from the fact, of course, that many Thai speakers are unable to recognize the difference between dependent and independent clauses in English.

## PART 2: MORPHOLOGY

### 2.0 Introduction to Morphology

The next level of our investigation of the structure of English and Thai is morphology, the study of word forms. Besides learning the sound system and the syntactic system of English, a Thai speaker must be able to understand the ways in which different word forms function in English. Thus, for example, any native speaker of English knows that the following pairs of words mean the same thing, but that the second member of each pair is grammatically odd:

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| the boy's eye        | the eye of the boy            |
| the top of the table | the table's top               |
| birds' nest soup     | the soup of the nest of birds |

This section on morphology will first introduce some of the general morphological patterns of English and then attempt to enumerate the areas of particular difficulty for Thai speakers learning English as a second language. A brief glance at Chart IV: A Comparison of English and Thai Morphology, will show that the Thai language contains almost none of the morphological patterns which are listed for English. The obvious implication is that many of these English morphological patterns will prove vexing to the Thai student. The major areas of concern are: the inflectional affixes of English, the derivational forms of English, and the morphological variation of some particular kinds of English words.

Chart IV

| A Comparison of English and Thai Morphology |         |             |
|---|---------|-------------|
| Morphological Patterns                      | English | Thai        |
| Inflectional affixes                        |         |             |
| 1. plural nouns                             | many    | none        |
| 2. possessives                              | many    | none        |
| 3. present tense, 3rd per. sing.            | many    | none        |
| 4. past tense and past participle           | many    | none        |
| 5. comparative & superlative degrees        | many    | none        |
| Derivational forms                          |         |             |
| 6. changing part of speech                  | many    | none        |
| 7. changing meaning                         | many    | almost none |
| 8. variation in "strong verbs"              | many    | none        |
| 9. variation in noun gender                 | many    | none        |
| Other kinds of morphological variation      |         |             |
| 10. case variation in pronouns              | many    | none        |
| 11. variation in ordinal numbers            | many    | none        |
| 12. variation in determiners                | many    | none        |

### 2.1.3. Inflectional affixes in English.

Many Thai speakers are slightly perturbed when confronted with the English system of inflectional affixes. Because Thai does not have any such system (see Chart IV), they feel, and not without reason, that these inflectional affixes are not important because they do not add any significant information to an utterance. Thai speakers learning English often pronounce the following sentence:

She sees two seas.            as    \*She see two sea.

Besides experiencing difficulty with the pronunciation of /z/ in final position (see Part 1.3.2.), Thai speakers claim that the "s suffix" on sees and seas is redundant. In other words, the speaker and hearer already know that the verb sees has a third person singular subject (the subject of the sentence, she precedes the verb, sees) and that there is more than one sea involved (the number two precedes the noun, sea). Although these two inflectional affixes do not usually carry much of a functional load in English (i.e. they do not signal meaningful differences in the language), there are times when they alone account for different meanings. For example, the inflectional affix of the verb tells us whether there is one sheep or many shee, in sentences 1) and 2) following, and the inflectional affix of the noun tells us whether one bee or many bees were involved in sentences 3) and 4):

1. The sheep sleeps near Bo Peep.
2. The sheep sleep near Bo Peep.
3. The bee stung me.
4. The bees stung me.

There are other inflectional affixes in English which have no counterparts in Thai. Regular verbs, for example, are inflected to show past tense or past participle forms. The verbal affix spelled ed marks the verb report with past tense in 1) and as a past participle in 2):

Bill (1) reported to us that he had (2) reported for duty.

Another important inflectional affix is the comparative and superlative inflection of English adverbs and adjectives:

|        |          |           |
|--------|----------|-----------|
| fast   | faster   | fastest   |
| pretty | prettier | prettiest |

#### 2.1.1. The /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix

The /s/, /z/, /Iz/ inflectional affix serves three different grammatical functions in English: 1) it marks the plural of most countable nouns (boys, tables), 2) it marks the possessive of most animate nouns (men's store, cat's pajamas), and 3) it marks all verbs in the present tense which have a third person singular

subject (he plays, Mary swims).

The initial problem with the correct recognition and production of these affixes is a phonological and not a morphological one. As already mentioned in the section on English phonology (see Part 1.2.4.), Thai does not have the /z/ sound. Furthermore, the /s/ sound never occurs in word final position in Thai. The contrast between the set of sounds /s/, /z/, and /Iz/ in final position, then, is difficult for Thai speakers learning English from the standpoint of the phonological differences between the two languages alone. The phonological interference with these affixes in English is not as difficult to overcome, however, as the interference with the production and recognition of the final sounds /s/ and /z/ which are not affixes. For example, there are phonological cues involved in the production of the /s/, /z/, and /Iz/ affixes that are often not present in the production of the final sounds /s/ and /z/ which are not affixes. The phonological shape of the word before the inflectional affixes are added determines whether the affix is /s/, /z/, or /Iz/:

1. /s/, /z/, /Iz/ as affix

cat vs. cats  
bathe vs. bathes  
pass vs. passes

2. /s/ and /z/ as word finals

face vs. phase  
advice vs. advise  
sparse vs. spars

It is immediately obvious that the correct production and recognition of the word pairs in 2) will be more difficult than the production and recognition of the word pairs in 1).

Aside from these phonological considerations, there is also the fact that Thai has no inflectional affixes of the kind under discussion here. Noun plurals are marked, where necessary, by additional modifiers to the noun; possessives of nouns are marked with the word /kʰǒŋ/, which means "of the"; finally, the third person singular form of the present tense is unmarked (in fact, Thai verbs are never inflected). It is for these reasons, therefore, that Thai speakers tend to speak English sentences without the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix, as typified by these three examples:

- \*Bill wear brown pant.
- \*The actress eye are pretty.
- \*The boy like ice cream.

It has already been stated that these affixes are not very important in signaling new information in English (Part 2.1.0.), so that the meaning of these three examples is clear to most speakers of English, although the last sentence is unclear as to whether one boy or many boys is involved. These sentences are obviously ungrammatical, however, and most English speakers are affronted when confronted with sentences of this kind; they feel in their bones that some very basic rules are being violated.

It is important that the Thai speaker internalize the following facts about English, not, of course, through rote memori-

zation of these facts per se, but by practicing patterns which differentiate these facts in a meaningful way. It is particularly important that the teacher use examples which signal contrasts in meaning at the beginning in order to make the Thai students realize that these inflectional affixes can serve to signal differences in meaning:

She wants to see.  
The sheep look sick.  
He gave me pat answers.  
brother-in-law  
brothers-in-law

She wants two C's.  
The sheep looks sick.  
He gave me Pat's answers.  
brothers-in-law  
brothers-in-law's

Facts about the English /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix:

#### Phonology

1. If the word ends with /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, or /dʒ/, add /Iz/.
2. If the word ends with a voiceless sound (other than those in 1.), add /s/.
3. All other sounds (i.e. voiced, other than those in 1.), add /z/.

#### Morphology

1. All regular, countable nouns are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix in the plural.
2. All verbs in the present tense which do not have an auxiliary are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix when the subject of the sentence is third person singular.
3. Most animate nouns are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix in the possessive.

#### 2.1.2. The /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix

In the same way that phonological considerations as well as morphological ones are involved in the recognition of the English /s/, /z/ and /Iz/ affix by Thai speakers, the inflectional affix /t/, /d/, and /Id/ is influenced by phonological factors as well as morphological ones. Thai has only one final stop, the voiceless, unreleased /t/ in contrast to the English opposition between final voiced /d/ and voiceless /t/. Aside from any morphological considerations then, the Thai speaker will experience some difficulty in hearing and pronouncing this voiced vs. voiceless final opposition accurately in English. This phonological interference with these affixes is not as difficult to overcome, however, as the interference with the production and recognition of the final stops /t/ and /d/ which are not affixes in English. For example, there are phonological cues involved in the production of the /t/, /d/, and /Id/ affix that are often not present in the production of the final stops /t/ and /d/ which are not affixes. The phonological shape of the word before the inflectional affixes are added determines whether the affix is /t/, /d/, or /Id/:



1. /t/, /d/, /Id/ as affix

look vs. looked  
play vs. played  
load vs. loaded

2. /t/ and /d/ as word finals

bit vs. bid  
Bert vs. bird  
lent vs. lend

It is immediately obvious that the correct production and recognition of the word pairs in 2) will be more difficult than the production and recognition of the word pairs in 1).

Because Thai does not have any verb inflection, there will be morphological interference too. Thai speakers tend to leave off the inflectional affixes of verbs in English because past time is signaled by aspect markers in Thai and not in verb inflection as in English. Thai speakers usually feel that these affixes are redundant because past time is usually marked by the situation, by auxiliaries, or by time words anyway. The following sentences typify the kinds of mistakes made with these verbal affixes:

- \*I talk to him last week.
- \*He has graduate from college already.
- \*We saw the tree in half.

Again, as with other inflectional affixes in English, the meaning of the sentence is not usually affected by the addition of the /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix; thus, the meaning of the first two starred sentences is transparent to any speaker of English, even though they are immediately judged ungrammatical. There is some ambiguity in the third sentence, however, whether the meaning is 1) we cut the tree into two parts, or 2) we saw the tree lying in two parts. When the situation is indefinite, or when auxiliaries (like have) and time words (like yesterday, already) are absent, these inflectional affixes alone very often signal important differences in meaning. Take, for example, the following two sentences:

- 1) I miss you.
- 2) I missed you. (meaning longed for)

Sentence 1) is appropriate if written to a friend in a letter. If sentence 2) were written in a letter however, the implication is that you used to miss your friend but now you don't, an implication that is not very complimentary to your friend. Conversely, sentence 2) is perfectly appropriate if you are greeting your friend after a long absence, but sentence 1) used in the same situation would prompt your friend to question your vision!

The logical consequence of the discussion above is that Thai speakers will need to devote time and practice to the learning of these inflectional affixes in English in order to overcome the phonological and morphological patterning of their native language. Emphasis must be placed, at first, on oppositions of /t/, /d/, and /Id/ which signal important differences in meaning. The following sorts of examples would be helpful to use:

John, kick the bucket.  
He found my school.  
We have smoke from pipes.

John kicked the bucket.  
He founded my school.  
We have smoked from pipes.

Hopefully, the Thai students will have internalized the following facts about the /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix and will be able to recognize them and produce them spontaneously.

Facts about the English /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix:

#### Phonology

1. If the word ends with /t/ or /d/, add /Id/.
2. If the word end with a voiceless sound (other than /t/), add /t/.
3. All other sounds (other than /d/), add /d/.

#### Morphology

1. All regular verbs are marked with the /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix for simple past tense.
2. All regular verbs are marked with the /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix in their past participle forms.

2.1.3. The Inflection of Comparative and Superlative Adverbs and Adjectives in English.

The inflectional affixes -er and -est are used in English to mark the comparative and superlative forms of adverbs and adjectives in English. In Thai, comparative and superlative degree is marked by the addition of the words /kwda/ (more) and /thiisut/ (to the nth degree):

|            | English     |             |             | Thai        |             |             |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|            | COMMON FORM | COMPARATIVE | SUPERLATIVE | COMMON FORM | COMPARATIVE | SUPERLATIVE |
| Adverbs    | fast        | faster      | fastest     | rew         | rewkwda     | rewthiisut  |
|            | well        | better      | best        | dii         | diikwda     | diithiisut  |
| Adjectives | big         | bigger      | biggest     | yday        | ydaykwda    | ydaythiisut |
|            | pretty      | prettier    | prettiest   | sday        | sdaykwda    | sdaythiisut |



It will be noticed that even irregular forms in English such as the adverb well have regular counterparts in Thai; in fact, all comparative and superlative forms conform to the schema above in Thai.

The Thai speaker, then, faces a difficult task in mastering the English system of comparative and superlative forms, a system which is more complicated and irregular than that of his native language. Essentially, he will have to internalize the following facts:

1. All one-syllable adverbs and adjectives are marked with the -er inflection in the comparative and the -est inflection in the superlative.
2. All two-syllable adjectives ending with the sound /i/ are marked with the -er inflection in the comparative and the -est inflection in the superlative.
3. All other forms are preceded by more in the comparative and most in the superlative, although there are exceptions to this rule (e.g. good-better-best, bad-worse-worst, and also words that seem to take either form 1 or 3, able-abler-ablest vs. able-more-able-most able).
4. All superlative forms are almost always preceded by the.

Besides the difficulty in mastering these morphological forms, the Thai student must also master a pronunciation pattern which differs significantly from the Thai pattern. Both /ər/ and /əst/ are impermissible finals in Thai and cause some difficulty for students not well-acquainted with English. The pronunciation of these inflectional affixes does not seem to be as difficult though for Thai speakers as the pronunciation of the other affixes (see parts 2.1.1. and 2.1.2.). Because there are no articles in Thai, however, there is a tendency for Thai speakers to delete the the from superlative forms in English, creating such mistakes as the following:

\*Tigers are fiercest animals.

Again, practice, patience, and careful gradation of materials will help the students learn the generalizations about the comparative and superlative in English that are enumerated above. Continued exposure to English will hopefully acquaint the student with the exceptions and inconsistencies to these generalizations as well.

#### 2.2.0. Derivational Affixes

Besides the inflectional affixes which signal grammatical operations in English morphology, there are other ways in which an English word can be structured. The following chart lists some of the derivational changes in English words, changes in which a word stem is expanded or modified in order to indicate a syntactic or semantic change.

Chart V

| Some Derivational Changes in English and Thai |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Derivational Change                           | English Examples                       | Thai  |
| Vowel Change in "strong verbs"                | drive-drove-driven<br>sing -sang -sung | none  |
| Changes in Part of Speech                     |  |   |
| adjective to adverb                           | slow-slowly                            | the prefix /ydaŋ/<br>changes adjectives in-<br>to adverbs |
| adjective to noun                             | serene-serenity                        | none  |
| adjective to verb                             | white-whiten                           | none  |
| noun to adverb                                | human-humanly                          | none  |
| noun to adjective                             | pastor-pastoral                        | none  |
| noun to verb                                  | beauty-beautify                        | none  |
| verb to adjective                             | agree-agreeable                        | none  |
| verb to noun                                  | run-runner                             | none  |
| Changes in Meaning                            |  |   |
|   | childish-childlike                     | none  |
|   | institute-institution                  | none  |
|   | continual-continuous                   | none  |
| Changes in both Meaning and Part of Speech    |  |   |
| noun to adjective                             | human-humane                           | none  |
| Changes in Meaning Through Prefixing          |  |   |
| negation                                      | important-unimportant                  | very rare   |
| Changes in Gender                             |  |   |
| masculine to feminine                         | actor-actress                          | a few nouns have der-<br>ivational gender con-<br>trasts. |

It is quickly apparent that the Thai language has almost no counterparts to the morphological changes that are listed above for English. This particular section will elaborate on the derivational changes in English and attempt to point out ways in which a Thai speaker can be guided in order to understand the derivational changes of English words more clearly.

### 2.2.1. English "strong verbs"

The division of verbs into strong and weak is a common characteristic of many European languages; the former, usually a small minority of the total number of verbs, are verbs which have irregular morphological forms, and the latter, usually the majority of the total number of verbs, are verbs which conform to a set of rules. English verbs like talk are examples of weak verbs and conform to the past tense inflectional affix /t, d, Id/ mentioned in part 2.1.2. Verbs like speak, on the other hand are examples of strong verbs, and therefore have irregular derivations (e.g. speak-spoke-spoken). There are three factors which make strong vs. weak distinction in English particularly troublesome for many foreign students: 1) There is no way of knowing from the form of the verb itself whether it is a strong or weak verb (in some languages, the form of the infinitive indicates in what way a particular verb may be irregular). 2) Irregular (strong) verbs in English are not uncommon verbs; as a matter of fact, many of the most common words in introductory English classes are irregular verbs (e.g. be, have, see, hear, sit, stand, write, read, eat, drink, etc.). 3) Finally, and probably most importantly, the derivational patterns that do occur in strong verbs is haphazard and unproductive. That is, two verbs can be phonetically similar, but have completely different derivational forms. From the pattern:

|                    |           |                      |         |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------|
| sing sang sung     | we have   | ring rang rung       | but not |
| fling *flang flung | and never | bring *brang *brung! |         |

After a Thai student has become acquainted with patterns like: bend-bent, spend-spent, and lend-lent, it seems illogical and inconsistent to him that the past tense form of mend is not \*ment and that the past tense form of blend is not \*blent. Furthermore, there are often "false derivations" of word forms that are similar in sound but come from completely different stems. Thus founded is not the past tense form of find, and rent is not the past tense form of rend. Similarly, bore is either the present tense form of the verb meaning to drill or the past tense form of the verb bear, and lay, the transitive verb, is often confused with the past tense form of the intransitive verb lie.

Because there are no derivational verb forms in Thai, it is obvious that this panoply of irregularities in English verb forms will be very difficult for Thai speakers to learn. The problem of mastering these forms is not insurmountable, however, especially if most of the time and emphasis is placed on delineating

between the two major classes of English verbs, strong and weak. Practicing the irregular forms in natural language situations will help the student remember the irregularities more quickly. For example, it is fruitless to have the student memorize sets of derivation changes like:

|     |        |        |
|-----|--------|--------|
| buy | bought | bought |
| eat | ate    | eaten  |
| see | saw    | seen.  |

Rather, the three forms should be practiced in real sentence situations: Who did you see? I saw Matilda. Has she seen the doctor? No, but she bought some aspirin.

Two final comparisons must be drawn between this section on the derivation of strong verbs in English, and the section on the inflectional affix /t, d, Id/ (Part 2.1.2.) which is used with weak verbs. First, unlike the /t/, /d/, /Id/ affix which is phonetically dissimilar to the final stop contrasts in Thai, the vowel (and some consonant) changes involved in the derivational changes of strong verbs in English are not usually dissimilar to the Thai phonological system. For example, whereas the voiced/voiceless opposition between the final consonants of joked and jogged does not exist in Thai, the opposition between the vowels of sing, sang, and sung does. Consequently, there is less phonological interference for Thai speakers in the pronunciation of strong verbs than in weak verbs in English. Secondly, the teacher will find, quite naturally, that Thai students will have a great deal more trouble spelling the strong verb forms than spelling the weak verbs. For example, whereas the irregular verbs often have unusual spelling (e.g. read /rid/ and read /rɛd/), the regular verbs are always spelled with -ed in their inflected forms.

#### 2.2.2. Changes in parts of speech

One of the few derivational changes in English that has an analagous change in Thai is the transforming of adjectives into adverbs through the addition of the suffix -ly, (e.g. slow-slowly, careful-carefully, beautiful-beautifully). The same derivational change in Thai is done through the addition of the prefix /ydaŋ/ (e.g. /dii/ good - /ydaŋdii/ well, /tʰáa/ slow - /ydaŋtʰáa/ slowly). Because this is one of the few examples where both English and Thai mark the same grammatical operation by a derivational process, even though these processes are dissimilar, the adjective-to-adverb change in English is a good point at which to introduce Thai speakers to the innumerable derivational processes of English. At least at this point, the Thai student can reflect back on his native language and see that, at least in the derivation of adverbs from adjectives, Thai has a process operating similar to that of English.

After the student has grasped this rather elementary derivational process in English, the restrictions and inconsistencies of this process should be pointed out if, by some great chance,

the student has not encountered them already! For example, adjectives that never can occur as predicate adjectives do not seem to be able to function as true adverbs if the -ly suffix is added. As adverbs, they usually occur as intensifiers of predicate adjectives:

The principal witness was late.  
\*The witness was principal.

He is principally involved with industry.  
\*He spoke principally to everyone..

The sole survivor is still ill.  
\*The survivor is sole.

He is solely devoted to his family.  
\*He drives his car solely.

Another inconsistency is that some words ending with -ly are not adverbs at all but adjectives (e.g. manly, homely, comely, unlikely, unsightly).

There are many other derivational processes which show changes in parts of speech in English, and, unfortunately for the language learner, these are more inconsistent and irregular than the adjective-to-adverb change in English. What makes them particularly difficult to learn is that they are neither completely regular or irregular; that is, while there is enough of a pattern to encourage the language learner to be productive, there is still enough irregularity to vex him continually:

agile - agility  
able - ability  
ample - \*ampility  
pastor - pastoral  
doctor - doctoral  
actor - \*actoral

Fortunately, most ill-formed derivations are understood by most native speakers of English and are accepted good-naturedly as jokes, witticisms, or outright mistakes, especially when they involve a change in meaning and not a change in part of speech. Thus, a fruitful remark is judged to be a much more intelligent comment than a fruity remark.

Among the many different kinds of derivational processes which mark changes in parts of speech in English (examples of which have been listed in part 2.0.), there are two processes that are similar in Thai. The Thai prefix /kaan/ is roughly equivalent to the gerund form of verbs (e.g. /kaanwin/ running, /kaanphut/ speaking, /kaankhien/ writing). Similarly, the Thai prefix /khaam/ is roughly equivalent to the English suffix -ness (e.g. /khaamaii/ goodness, /khaamsuk/ happiness, /khaam-ræw/ quickness). By emphasizing these two kinds of derivations,

it is hoped that the Thai speaker will be able to have sufficient grounding in the more productive derivations in English from which to learn the more irregular forms.

### 2.2.3. Changes in Meaning

There are many examples in which the meaning of a word changes according to the derivational form of the word. Here are some examples of words which have the same word stem but, for historical reasons, have different (and sometimes completely diametrical) meanings:

Helen has a childlike innocence but a childish disposition.  
Reginald worked at an institute before he was committed to an institution.

The interested observer was not an interesting person to talk with.

The tasty food was laid out in a tasteful arrangement.  
Even though the repairs were faulty, the mechanic claimed he was faultless.

Because Thai has no derivational processes like this, it will be difficult for a Thai speaker even to understand that there is a significant difference in these derived forms at first. Since there are very few examples of derivational changes in meaning only, compared to the innumerable examples of changes in parts of speech, the Thai student will not face too formidable a task in eventually learning these forms.

### 2.2.4. Changes in both meaning and parts of speech

There are also many examples of derivational processes which change both the parts of speech of the words and their meaning. Because of the historical development of a word or the vagaries of its usage, some words take on a different meaning when a different part of speech is derived from it:

This book was awful, but that book was awfully good.

Not all human behavior is humane.

Even though all people have spines, some people are spineless.

A club foot is congenital, but a clubbed foot isn't.

Some of these patterns are fairly regular and consistent in how they change both the meaning and part of speech of a word (e.g. -less changes nouns to adjectives and means without). As mentioned previously, these more regular patterns should be introduced first in order to give the students some sense of what kind of morphological changes are taking place. Then, more irregular forms can be introduced.

### 2.2.5. Changes in meaning through prefixing

One of the most common derivational processes in English is the one in which the meaning of a word is changed through prefix-

ing. The most common examples are those which involve a negative prefix. There are a few examples of this same process in Thai, and although they are extremely rare, they can serve as a basis from which a Thai speaker can understand prefixing in English:

| Thai    | English         |
|---------|-----------------|
| /thəm/  | righteousness   |
| /àthəm/ | unrighteousness |

Again, as in the other derivational processes which have been described, there is both regularity and irregularity in the forms of negative prefixation in English. These forms are regular in that the consonant /n/ in the prefix in- is assimilated by the initial consonant of the word:

describable - indescribable  
possible - impossible

These forms are irregular though in that there is no regularity as to which words are prefixed un-, which are prefixed in-, and which can be prefixed by either:

consequential - inconsequential  
important - unimportant  
accurate - inaccurate, unaccurate

There is also irregularity as to which words can be prefixed non-, a negative prefix which often connotes a more neutral meaning than un- or in-:

non-American - something which is foreign  
un-American - something which is against America

Other negative or neutral prefixes are ir- (as in irregular), anti- (as in anti-semitic), a- (as in apolitical), and ab- (as in abnormal). There are other ways in which a prefix can change the meaning of a word besides negating or neutralizing its meaning. There are many prefixes, for example, which change the meaning of verbs, or in some cases, change adjectives into verbs:

play - replay  
weave - interweave  
fuse - defuse  
view - preview  
large - enlarge  
little - belittle

Again, as previously mentioned, the irregularity of these derivations is a source of confusion for Thai speakers, not only in producing derivational forms, but in recognizing them. Thus, re-dress does not necessarily mean to dress again, delimit does not mean not to limit, interview does not mean to view between, and



pretend does not mean to tend ahead of time. Fortunately, these types of false derivations are not a great source of interference for language students learning English, and after a great deal of exposure of the language, these irregularities can be learned by Thai speakers.

#### 2.2.6. Changes in gender

A final derivational process which merits discussion here is the changing of suffixes to indicate whether the noun is masculine or feminine. There are a few examples of this in Thai, also, so that the following pairs do not introduce a derivational process which is completely strange to Thai speakers:

actor - actress  
duke - duchess  
hero - heroine

#### 2.3. Other morphological variations

Aside from the morphological variations mentioned above, there are three other variations that Thai speakers find troublesome in learning English.

##### 2.3.1. Case variation in pronouns

Pronouns remain uninflected in Thai. It is very difficult, therefore, for Thai speakers to remember to change the form of pronouns when the pronoun is used in different cases:

He ate his food with him.  
kʰáw | thǎan | ahǎan | khǎn | kʰáw | káp | kʰáw  
he | eat | food | of | he | with | he

Thai students have a great deal of difficulty in learning to use the correct morphological form of the pronouns in English. The differences between the pronominal systems of English and Thai will be discussed more completely in the noun phrase unit in Part 5.

##### 2.3.2. Variation in ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers in Thai are cardinal numbers preceded by /thǎi/; ordinal numbers are not inflected, and once the cardinal numbers are learned, any ordinal number can be generated. The irregular change of English cardinal numbers into ordinal numbers is difficult for Thai speakers to learn. Not only does it involve the memorization of how each cardinal number is changed, it also requires the production of final clusters that do not exist in Thai (e.g. /rst/, /nd/, /rd/, /rθ/, /θ/, /ksθ/, and /nθ/). Thai speakers often leave the cardinal number unchanged and the following mistakes are common:

\*He read the two chapter.

Because Thai speakers also tend to delete plural markers, it is



sometimes difficult to determine whether the speaker intended to say the second chapter or the two chapters. Since Thai does not have any articles, there is also a tendency to delete the definite article, even when the ordinal number is changed correctly:

\*He read second chapter.

### 2.3.3. Variations in determiners

Finally, there are variations in the pronunciation of articles in English. Since there are no articles in Thai to begin with, it is important for the Thai students to be able to handle articles in English adequately before these morphological variations are learned.

The definite article the is generally pronounced /ðə/ in front of words beginning with a consonant sound and /ði/ in front of words beginning with a vowel sound.

The definite article a is pronounced /ə/ in front of words beginning with a consonant sound and /æn/ or /ən/ in front of words beginning with a vowel sound. There is some variation, however:

This is a historical problem.  
or This is an historical problem.

## PART 3: SYNTAX: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### 3.0. Introduction to Sentence Types

It is now logical to proceed to a comparison of how nominal and verbal forms combine in both English and Thai. Although this unit is titled Sentence Structure, it will cover relationships which exist both above and below the sentence level. The following three sentences show, for example, that the same relationship (in this case co-ordinate conjoining) exists in 1) the clause structure, 2) the sentence structure, or 3) the structure of discourse. The distinction between these three levels in English is related more to punctuation than to any specific grammatical relationship:

John and Mary will go.

John will go, and Mary will go, too.

John will go. Mary will go, too.

The following chart compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between sentence types in English and Thai. This chart will also serve as a general outline to this unit:

Chart VI

| A Comparison of Sentence Types in English and Thai |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Sentence Types                                     | English                                       | Thai   |
| 3.1. Minor Sentences                               |   |  |
| 3.1.1. Exclamations                                | many  | many   |
| 3.1.2. Aphorisms                                   | few   | few  |
| 3.1.3. Answers                                     | followed by auxiliaries: <u>Yes, I do.</u>    | followed by verbs: <u>Yes, I like.</u>           |
| 3.2. Simple Sentences                              | subject obligatory                            | subject optional                                 |
| 3.3. Compound Sentences                            | many conjunctions                             | few conjunctions                                 |
| 3.4. Complex Sentences                             |   |  |
| 3.5. Adjectival Constructions                      | many: <u>She is eager to help.</u>            | none   |
| 3.6.1. Nominalizations                             | many: <u>To be sick is annoying.</u>          | few  |
| 3.6.2. Relative Clauses                            | restrictive & non-restrictive clauses similar | restrictive & non-restrictive clauses dissimilar |

|                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 3.7. Negation                     | marked by <u>not</u> and the auxiliary <u>do</u>  | marked only by /máy/ <u>no</u>   |
| 3.8. Questions                    | marked by the auxiliary <u>do</u> or inversion  | marked only by final particles   |
| 3.9. Tag Questions                | content of question is answered   | form of question is answered   |
| 3.10. Emphatic                    | marked by <u>do</u> : <u>I do like rice.</u>  | marked by final particles  |
| 3.11. Imperative                  | subject is deleted  | subject deletion & final particle  |
| 3.12. Passive                     | 1) subject-object inversion 2) use of auxiliary <u>to be</u> 3) verb changed to past participle | 1) subject-object inversion 2) use of /dooy/ by 3) use of particle marking passive |
| 3.13. Direct and Indirect Objects | <u>SVD</u> to <u>I</u> or <u>SVID</u>   | <u>SVD</u> /kèe/ to <u>I</u> or <u>SVD</u>   |
| 3.14. Stylistic Inversions        | several: <u>Here we find fish.</u>  | none   |

### 3.1. Minor Sentences

In both English and Thai there are clauses or sentences which most native speakers feel are either abbreviated or idiomatic. These forms are not considered to be sentences, and yet they occur frequently, especially in spoken conversation in both languages.

#### 3.1.1. Exclamations

In both English and Thai, there are exclamatory utterances that occur in spoken conversation which are commonly only a word or two in length. They are usually vocatives (John! My son!) or interjections (Darn! Holy Cow!). Thai speakers do not encounter any problem with these two kinds of exclamations in English.

#### 3.1.2. Aphorisms

There are also minor sentences which are composed of a group of words and are used as a single unit in idiomatic sayings. Some of these aphorisms in English have equivalents in Thai (The more the merrier.) but generally the Thai student must learn them as he does all idioms in the language, through memorization and practice.

### 3.1.3. Answers as Minor Sentences

Finally, there are minor sentences which are used as abbreviated answers to questions. These forms present the most difficulty for speakers of Thai because in English, the abbreviated answer uses the auxiliary verb, whereas in Thai the abbreviated answer uses the main verb:

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Do you like to swim? | Yes, I do.       |
|                      | tʰəy pʰəm   tʰəp |
|                      | yes I like       |

Because the main verb is used in the abbreviated answer in Thai, Thai speakers have a tendency to answer questions in English with the main verb rather than with the auxiliary.

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Do you like to swim?    | *Yes, I like. |
| Will you swim tomorrow? | *Yes, I swim. |
| Are you swimming today? | *Yes, I swim. |

### 3.2. Simple Sentences

The basic difference between the structure of simple sentences in English and Thai is that the subject of a sentence is obligatory in English, whereas it can be optionally deleted in Thai:

|                |                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| It's very hot. | Do you like to swim?           |
| rɔn   mək      | tʰəp wáy   nám   máy           |
| hot   much     | like   swim   water   question |
|                | particle                       |

Notice that in the first example in English, the expletive it serves as the grammatical subject of the sentence. Even though the speaker might not be referring specifically to a particular logical subject (i.e. he might be referring to the sun, day, weather, room, or country), the sentence must have a grammatical subject. The grammatical subject is often deleted in Thai if the speaker feels the context is sufficient to signal who or what is being referred to. In the example given in the previous section (section 3.1.3.), a Thai speaker might reply to the English question Do you like to swim? with simply \*Like, implying Yes, I do like to swim, or \*No like, implying No, I don't like to swim. It is easy to see then that even at the level of simple sentence structure there is a basic difference between the structure of English and Thai, a difference great enough to cause many problems for Thai speakers of English.

Another difference between the two languages in the structure of simple sentences is the use of linking verbs with adjectives. English uses the linking verb be (or, depending on the semantic meaning intended, verbs such as: feel, appear, seem, etc.); Thai does not use a linking verb with adjectives:

|                  |
|------------------|
| He is very tall. |
| khəw   sūn   mək |
| he   tall   much |

It can thus be seen that there are two major mistakes that Thai speakers tend to make in the formation of simple sentences in English. They are the deletion of the subject of the sentence and the deletion of the linking verb, to be. There are two probable mistakes that will occur then in the production of a sentence such as He is very tall:

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Deletion of the subject:   | *Is very tall. |
| Deletion of <u>to be</u> : | *He very tall. |

The deletion of the verb to be also occurs when a simple sentence is imbedded into another sentence as a relative clause. Since the relative pronoun replaces the subject of a relative clause, if the subject is being referred to, the deletion of the subject is not a problem here:

He is a man who is very tall.  
 khǎw | pen | khon | thǎi | sǔn | mǎak  
 he | is | person | that | tall | much

Because of the absence of the verb to be, however, in the relative clause of the Thai sentence, the English sentence is likely to be produced as:

\*He is a man who very tall.

### 3.3. Compound Sentences

Both English and Thai contain compound sentences, that is, sentences of two or more independent clauses which can occur alone as simple sentences. Usually, compound sentences contain one or more conjunctions, words which link the independent clauses in the sentence together:

He will go today and I will go tomorrow.  
 khǎw | tǎ | pay | wannǐ | lǎ | phǎm | tǎ | pay | phǎnǐ  
 he | will | go | today | and | I | will | go | tomorrow

In both languages, either clause in the above sentence can occur as a simple sentence in the language. Notice too that the conjunction and implies some logical connection between the two independent clauses in both languages; there is some implicit understanding that the fact he will go today is related to, or should be related to, the fact that I will go tomorrow. By introducing a different conjunction to the sentence (e.g. but), a different kind of relationship is implied:

He will go today, but I will go tomorrow.  
 khǎw | tǎ | pay | wannǐ | tǎ | phǎm | tǎ | pay | phǎnǐ  
 he | will | go | today | but | I | will | go | tomorrow

Now the implication in both languages is that the independent clauses are contrasted in some way; the speaker is emphasizing the difference, not the similarity between the two clauses. Note

that in both English and Thai, if the subjects of both clauses are identical, the use of a coordinating conjunction (e.g. and) is acceptable, whereas the use of a contrasting conjunction (e.g. but) is wholly unacceptable:

I like to read books and I like to go see movies.  
 phǒm | tʰhǎp | dān | naŋsɯ̌ | lɛ̌ | phǒm | tʰhǎp | pay | duu | nǎŋ  
 I | like | read | books | and | I | like | go | see | movies

\*I like to read books but I like to go see movies.  
 \*phǒm | tʰhǎp | dān | naŋsɯ̌ | tɛ̌wāa | phǒm | tʰhǎp | pay | duu | nǎŋ  
 I | like | read | books | but | I | like | go | see | movies

Again, in both languages, if a contrast is made between the two clauses (for example, if the second clause is negated), the use of the contrasting conjunction but becomes perfectly acceptable, and, conversely, the use of the coordinating conjunction and becomes unacceptable:

I like to read books but I don't like to go see movies.  
 phǒm | tʰhǎp | dān | naŋsɯ̌ | tɛ̌wāa | phǒm | māy | tʰhǎp | pay | duu | nǎŋ  
 I | like | read | books | but | I | no | like | go | see | movies

\*I like to read books and I don't like to go see movies.  
 \*phǒm | tʰhǎp | dān | naŋsɯ̌ | lɛ̌ | phǒm | māy | tʰhǎp | pay | duu | nǎŋ  
 I | like | read | books | and | I | no | like | go | see | movies

The similarity between the ways compound sentence clauses are related to each other in English and Thai is readily apparent. It is not difficult, then, for a Thai speaker to produce compound sentences in English using and and but. A problem does arise, however, when other conjunctions are used, conjunctions which imply semantic and stylistic relationships other than simple coordination (and) or simple contrast (but). Chart VII lists some of the conjunctions used in English, and shows that, in many cases, Thai has no equivalent to the English examples cited. All English conjunctions without an equivalent form in Thai will be a source of interference.

Aside from the interference caused by the lack of some conjunctions analogous to English conjunctions in Thai, there is the interference caused by the similarity of some English conjunctions with other parts of speech. Thai speakers very often find this similarity puzzling:

Conjunction: Who was sitting besides you?  
 Preposition: Who was sitting beside you?

Conjunction: I didn't study; instead, I watched television.  
 Preposition: Instead of studying, I watched television.

As already mentioned, the division between sentence level and discourse level is a fairly arbitrary one in English. This is

especially true of compound sentences. The conjunctions mentioned in this section, therefore, can serve to mark relationships between sentences at discourse level as well as the relationship between clauses at the sentence level.

### 3.4: Complex Sentences

In contrast to compound sentences which are composed solely of independent clauses, complex sentences are made up of at least one dependent clause. There is at least one clause that is subordinated in a complex sentence. In both English and Thai, compound sentences can be divided into dependent clauses (or simple sentences), whereas complex sentences cannot:

Before going, you must do your homework.  
 ก่อน | ที่ | จะ | ไป | คุณ | ต้อง | ทำ | งาน | บ้าน  
 before | that | will | go | you | must | do | work | home

\*Before going. You must do your homework.  
 \*ก่อน | ที่ | จะ | ไป | คุณ | ต้อง | ทำ | งาน | บ้าน  
 before | that | will | go | you | must | do | work | home

There are three general types of complex sentences which are covered in this unit: those involving adjectival constructions, those involving nominalizations, and those involving relative clauses.

### 3.5. Adjectival Constructions

There are three ways in which predicate adjective constructions can combine with a subordinate clause to form complex sentences. Only the first type of adjectival construction has any equivalent construction in Thai, and, therefore, the second and third constructions will impose special problems for Thai speakers learning English:

#### 1) Nominalization + linking verb + predicate adjective

To fail the exam is disturbing.  
 Failing the exam is disturbing.  
 That he fail the exam is disturbing.

#### 2) Subject + linking verb + predicate adjective + infinitive (or gerund)

He is happy to pass the exam.  
 He is happy passing the exam.  
 It is disturbing to fail the exam.  
 It is disturbing having failed the exam.

#### 3) Subject + linking verb + predicate adjective + preposition

He is happy with his exam results.  
 He is happy over his exam results.  
 He was interested in the movie star.  
 The movie star was interesting in the movie.

Note that all three of these adjectival constructions have a clause that is subordinated to an independent clause. That is, each example can be split into a simple sentence and an ungrammatical sentence fragment:

- \*That he failed the exam It is disturbing.
- He is happy.                      \*to pass the exam
- He was interested.                \*in the movie actor

Perhaps the greatest difficulty Thai speakers face in learning adjectival constructions in English is differentiating between the -ing and -ed forms of adjectives derived from verbs. Take the last pair of sentences from the third category above, for example:

He was interested in the movie star.  
The movie star was interesting in the movie.

Thai speakers continually confuse these two forms since the difference in Thai between the two derived forms is not in their suffixation but in their prefixation:

I am interested in...  
phǒm | sǒntfay...  
I | interest...

I am interesting.  
phǒm | ndasǒntfay  
I | adjective | interest (literally \*interestable)  
                  | prefix

Thai speakers, then, have a tendency to say sentence 1) when they actually mean sentence 2):

- 1) I am interesting in school.
- 2) I am interested in school.

This confusion between these two forms in English leads to mistakes with other word pairs as well:

- \*The book was very confused.
- \*We ate boiling eggs.
- \*My shoes were polishing well.
- \*They saw an amused picture.

The student must learn that adjectival forms with the -ed suffix are forms derived from passive verbal constructions in which the modified noun is the recipient of the verbal action:

The shoes were polished very well. The polished shoes...  
The eggs were boiled. The boiled eggs...

Adjectival forms with the -ing suffix, on the other hand, are



forms derived from active verbal constructions in which the modified noun is the initiator of the verbal action:

The book confused us. The confusing book...  
The picture amused us. The amusing picture...

Obviously, not all English verbs can be inflected as -ing or -ed adjectives; therefore Thai speakers must consequently learn from attention and practice which English verbs are productive forms and which are not. Until the distinction between the two different sources of the -ing and -ed adjectival forms is made clear to Thai students, these adjectival forms will be a continual source of interference.

### 3.6.1. Nominalizations

Nominalization, the use of verbal forms as nouns, is discussed in the Noun Phrase unit (See section 5.7.). It is mentioned in this section also, however, because the use of nominalizations involves complex sentences. The nominalized clause is subordinated to the independent clause of a complex sentence:

Drinking coffee keeps me awake.  
(I drink coffee.) + (Coffee keeps me awake.)

Nominalized forms with that followed by a clause have an equivalent pattern in Thai; however, there is no distinction between verbal infinitives and gerunds used as nominals in Thai:

That I am failing makes me feel unhappy.  
kaan | thii | phom | sɔɔptɔk | tham | hay | phom | ruus+k | may | sabayt fay  
nominal | that | I | fail | make | for | I | feel | no | happy  
prefix

Failing makes me feel unhappy.  
kaansɔɔptɔk | tham | hay | phom | ruus+k | may | sabayt fay  
nominal | fail | make | for | I | feel | no | happy  
prefix

To fail makes me feel unhappy.  
kaansɔɔptɔk | tham | hay | phom | ruus+k | may | sabayt fay  
nominal | fail | make | for | I | feel | no | happy  
prefix

Although there is little difference in meaning among the three examples cited above, Thai speakers have a tendency to confuse the grammatical forms when trying to produce this kind of complex sentence:

\*To failing makes me feel unhappy.  
\*That I to fail makes me feel unhappy.

### 3.6.2. Relative Clauses

The use of relative clauses and relative pronouns is also

discussed in the Noun Phrase unit (See section 5.6.), and the similarity between relative clause construction in English and Thai is carefully noted. In both languages, for example, the relative clause is subordinated to the independent clause; the former is ungrammatical if it occurs alone, whereas the latter is not:

He likes food which his mother makes.

kháw | tʰhǎp | ahǎan | thii | khunmêe | tham  
he | like | food | that | mother | make

He likes food.      \*which his mother makes

kháw | tʰhǎp | ahǎan      thii | khunmêe | tham  
he | like | food      that | mother | make

English and Thai differ, however, in that restrictive and non-restrictive clauses in English are usually distinguished only by a pause in speech, whereas in Thai restrictive and non-restrictive are distinguished by the addition of a classifier in restrictive clauses:

Restrictive clause:

My friend who lives at school is a doctor.

(My friend, the one who lives at school, is a doctor.)

phǎn | phǎm | khon | thii | yuu | thii | roŋrian | pen | mǎo  
friend | I | person | that | live | at | school | is | doctor

My friend, who lives at school, is a doctor.

phǎn | phǎm | thii | yuu | thii | roŋrian | pen | mǎo  
friend | I | that | live | at | school | is | doctor

Notice that the restrictive clause in Thai has two equivalents in English. Therefore it is not difficult for Thai speakers to distinguish between examples 1) and 2) below in which the restrictive clause is marked by a classifier (one), but it is difficult for them to understand and produce examples 3) and 4) in which the difference between the restrictive clause and the non-restrictive clause is marked only by a pause:

- 1) Restrictive:  
My friend, the one who lives at school, is a doctor.
- 2) Non-restrictive:  
My friend, who lives at school, is a doctor.
- 3) Restrictive:  
My friend who lives at school is a doctor.
- 4) Non-restrictive:  
My friend, who lives at school, is a doctor.

In a complex sentence, a wh- question word is not preceded by a relative pronoun in English:

I know where he is.

I know who(m) he spoke to.

The relative clause pattern in Thai, however, leads Thai speakers to use both that and a wh- question word together. In addition, there is a tendency to reverse the subject-verb order of the dependent clause:

\*I know that where is he.

\*I know that who(m) did he speak to.

In other words, Thai speakers tend to confuse the underlying questions Where is he? and Who(m) did he speak to? with their respective forms as relative clauses, where he is and who(m) he spoke to.

### 3.7. Negation

In English, negation is most frequently expressed by the word not which immediately follows the auxiliary verb or the verb BE.. If the sentence does not contain an auxiliary verb or the verb BE, the auxiliary verb DO is introduced:

He is tall.

He is not tall.

He should play football.

He should not play football.

He plays football.

He does not play football.

In Thai, negation is most frequently expressed by the word no which immediately precedes the verb (and most auxiliaries) or, if there is only an adjective functioning as a verb, no precedes the adjective:

He is not tall.

khǎw | mǎy | sǔn  
he | no | tall

He should not play football.

khǎw | mǎy | khuan | lén | fútboon  
he | no | should | play | football

He does not play football.

khǎw | mǎy | lén | fútboon  
he | no | play | football

It is obvious that because there is no distinction between no and not in Thai, because no usually precedes both auxiliaries and verbs in Thai, and because the auxiliary DO is not introduced in Thai, there are many sources of interference for Thai speakers attempting to learn negation in English. Many times, the mistakes Thai speakers make when using negation in English parallel

the word-for-word translations of the glosses to the examples given above. In attempting to construct the correct English negative form, Thai speakers also frequently neglect other structures that are operating at the same time. For example, they will forget to inflect the verb in the third person singular, present tense. Here are a few examples of the kinds of mistakes Thai speakers make in generating negative sentences in English:

- 1) Confusion between no and not:  
 \*He is no tall.  
 (Note that no can be used to mean not a: He is no fool.)
- 2) Omission of the verb BE:  
 \*He not tall.
- 3) Incorrect placement of not:  
 \*He not is tall..  
 \*He not should play football.
- 4) Omission of the verb DO:  
 \*He not play football.
- 5) Incorrect inflection of the verb:  
 \*He do not play football.  
 \*He do not plays football.

Coupled with the problem of not-negation in English, is the use of those adverbs which function as negatives, e.g. never seldom, and the use of modifiers which usually occur only in the negative (e.g. any, ever, until). Since these words have no direct equivalent in Thai, Thai students find it difficult to use these forms correctly:

- I never eat meat
- \*I don't never eat meat.
- I seldom eat meat.
- \*I don't seldom eat meat.
- I don't have any meat.
- \*I don't have some meat.
- \*I have any meat.
- I don't ever go home late.
- \*I ever go home late.
- I don't go home until late
- \*I go home until late.

Notice that some of these words are used in questions (e.g. Do you have any meat? Do you ever go home late?) and some of them are related to the type of verbs used as well as the use of negation (e.g. \*I go home until late. but I stay home until late.).

Since indefinite pronouns in English can only be paraphrased in translation into Thai, the use of negative indefinite pronouns in English is a source of difficulty for Thai speakers:

Nobody came.

|     |  |      |  |        |  |      |
|-----|--|------|--|--------|--|------|
| mây |  | mii  |  | khon   |  | maa  |
| no  |  | have |  | person |  | come |

Although indefinite pronouns can occur in negative sentences in English without the prefix no-, a different meaning is implied through this construction:

Nobody came. (There wasn't even one person who came.)  
Somebody didn't come. (Only one person didn't come.)

These differences are extremely subtle to Thai students, and it is difficult for them even to use negative, indefinite pronouns correctly, let alone understand the semantic differences implied in the various ways indefinite pronouns are used.

### 3.8. Questions

Aside from intonational questions--sentences which are marked by grammatical patterns as well. If the sentence contains an auxiliary verb or the verb BE, questions are marked by an auxiliary verb or the verb BE:

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| He will go today. | Will he go today? |
| He is angry.      | Is he angry?      |
| He was injured.   | Was he injured?   |

If the sentence does not contain an auxiliary verb or the verb BE, questions are marked by the introduction of the auxiliary verb DO before the subject:

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| He studies.         | Does he study?        |
| He went home today. | Did he go home today? |

In Thai, questions can only be marked by the addition of question participles in sentence final position. The order of the words in the sentence does not change. Furthermore, there is no distinction between sentences with main verbs, auxiliary verbs, or the verb BE in the formation of questions:

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Is he angry?          | Does he work?           |
| khaw   kròot   rǎi    | khaw   thamngaan   rǎi  |
| he   angry   question | he   do work   question |
| particle              | particle                |

The Thai student faces several problems then in attempting to match question-formation in English: 1) he must distinguish between sentences with auxiliary verbs or the verb BE and sentences with only a main verb, 2) he must remember to introduce the auxiliary verb DO in sentences containing only the main verb, and 3) he must remember to inflect the auxiliary verb DO and to leave the main verb uninflected. It is obvious that these restrictions to question formation in English are exceedingly more difficult

than the mere addition of a final particle to questions in Thai. As was remarked in the previous section of negation, there is a tendency for Thai speakers to neglect other English grammatical structures in their preoccupation with the formation of questions. Here are a few examples of the kinds of mistakes Thai speakers make in generating questions in English:

- 1) Omission of the auxiliary verb or the verb BE:  
\*He angry?
- 2) Misuse of DO with auxiliary verbs or the verb BE:  
\*Does he angry?
- 3) Omission of DO with main verbs:  
\*He study?
- 4) Misuse of the verb BE with main verbs:  
\*Is he study? (meaning Does he study? not Is he studying?)
- 5) Omission of the DO inflection:  
\*Do he studies?
- 6) Incorrect inflection of the verb:  
\*Do he study?

### 3.9. Tag Questions

The problems which a Thai speaker faces in learning negation and question formation in English are compounded when a Thai speaker attempts to handle tag questions, for this involves both negation and question formation. All tag questions in English are restricted by the following requirements:

- 1) If the sentence contains an auxiliary verb or the verb BE, the auxiliary verb or the verb BE is used in the tag question.
- 2) If the sentence contains only a verb, the auxiliary verb DO is used in the tag question with the appropriate inflection.
- 3) If the sentence is affirmative, the tag question is negative; if the sentence is negative, the tag question is affirmative.
- 4) Every tag question must contain a pronoun subject.
- 5) The negative particle is always contracted in tag questions.
- 6) The word order of tag questions parallels the word order of regular questions.

He is angry, isn't he? (Is he angry?)  
 kháw | kròot | tʰáɯ | mǎɯ  
 he | angry | that's so | question particle

He isn't angry, is he? (Isn't he angry?)  
 kháw | mǎɯ | kròot | rǎi  
 he | no | angry | question particle

He runs fast, doesn't he? (Does he run fast?)  
 kháw | wɪŋ | rew | tʃháy | mǎy  
 he | run | fast | that's so | question particle

In contrast to the uniformity of the tag questions in Thai (/cháy mǎy/), there is a diversity of forms in English (isn't he, is he, and doesn't he). Obviously, tag questions in English will present a real problem to the Thai speaker, and mistakes of the following kind will be abundant:

- 1) Misuse of the auxiliary verb or verb BE:  
 \*He runs fast, isn't he?
- 2) Misuse of the auxiliary verb DO:  
 \*He's angry, doesn't he?
- 3) Failure to use the negative in the tag question:  
 \*He swims fast, does he?
- 4) Incorrect word order in the tag question:  
 \*He swims fast, he does not?
- 5) Failure to contract the negative:  
 \*He swims fast, does not he?

Aside from the problem of grammaticality, there is also the problem of the correct usage of tag questions. This is not as difficult for Thai speakers as selecting the correct grammatical form because there are two question particles in Thai which are generally used with affirmative-based questions or with negative-based questions. The previous examples are cited again to show this correspondence between English and Thai:

Affirmative-based question:

He is angry. isn't he?  
 kháw | kròot | tʃháy | mǎy  
 he | angry | that's so | question particle

Negative-based question:

He isn't angry, is he?  
 kháw | mǎy | kròot | rɿ:  
 he | no | angry | question particle

In both languages, affirmative-based questions (first example) are straightforward and do not imply any perplexity. Negative-based questions, on the other hand imply that the questioner is perplexed and does not expect a negative answer to his question. Because of the similarity of the patterns of usage between the two languages, then, Thai speakers do not find it difficult to know when to use negative-based questions.

A real problem arises however, when a Thai speaker attempts to answer these tag questions in English, however, for here the two languages differ dramatically. In English, the inherent





like really as in the second sentence:

I like ice cream.

I do too! (with heavy stress on I)

You don't like ice cream.

I do too! (with heavy stress on too)

Similarly, either means also in the first sentence below, but when it is used emphatically, it means something like really as in the second sentence:

I don't like worms.

I don't either! (with heavy stress on I)

You like worms.

I don't either! (with heavy stress on either)

### 3.11. Imperative

It has already been mentioned (in section 3.2.) that the subject is obligatory in English sentences, whereas the subject is often deleted in Thai sentences, especially in sentences in which the subject is unambiguous. It is true, however, that subjects are deleted in imperative sentences in English, and that this subject deletion is often the only formal distinction between declarative and imperative sentences in English:

Declarative: You eat your food like a lady.

Imperative: Eat your food like a lady!

Besides subject deletion, however, English imperatives are also marked by an uninflected form of the verb, so that the main verb never occurs with an auxiliary verb and is never inflected to show tense or person:

Declarative: Sally is eating like a lady.

Sally ate like a lady.

Sally eats like a lady.

Imperative: Sally, eat like a lady!

Since there is no verb inflection in Thai, imperative forms are naturally uninflected in Thai as well as English. The subject and auxiliary verbs are deleted also. In addition, a sentence final particle is added to the imperative in Thai:

Go home!

kláp | bāan | sīi

return | home | imperative particle

In simple imperative sentences, then, Thai speakers do not encounter much difficulty with the English forms; indeed, there is more interference from English to Thai with this grammatical cat-

egory than there is from Thai to English because Thai speakers use different final particles to imply different speaker attitudes (e.g. gentle urging, incessant prodding, belligerent demand!).

What causes Thai speakers great difficulty is the way speaker attitudes are marked in English, a gradation all the way from a negative question (or request) to a simple imperative. Thai speakers must learn that whereas the attitude of the speaker is usually reflected by his choice of final particle in Thai, the attitude of the speaker is reflected by the form of the question or imperative sentence in English. The Thai student should be able to recognize the gradation of attitudes exemplified below, a gradation from an extremely polite request to a curt command:

Please, 'wouldn't you like to be quiet?  
Please, would you like to be quiet?  
Please, wouldn't you be quiet?  
Please, would you be quiet?  
Please, be quiet!  
Be quiet please!  
Be quiet!  
Quiet!

In both English and Thai, the speakers attitude is also reflected in his tone of voice and by the context of the situation. Hence, even though the speaker may be using an extremely polite grammatical form in both languages, the situational context and the speakers's tone of voice may imply in reality a very sarcastic and impolite attitude.

### 3.12. Passive

In both English and Thai, there is a distinction between active and passive forms of sentences. This distinction is marked by fairly straight-forward grammatical changes in both languages. Generally, the use of the passive in both English and Thai signals a change in style and focus but no change in meaning.

The transformation of active sentences into English involves four grammatical changes:

Active sentence: John ate candy.

- 1) Inversion of subject and object: candy ate John
- 2) Addition of by: candy ate by John
- 3) Addition of inflected form of BE: candy was ate by John
- 4) Changing the verb to past participle:

Candy was eaten by John.

In Thai, there are three grammatical changes which signal the passive, the first two of which are exactly similar to English:

### First Type of Passive Pattern in Thai:

- 1) Inversion of subject and object
- 2) Addition of /dɔɔy/ by
- 3) Addition of passive particle in front of main verb

In comparing the passive between these two languages we can see that the main difference between English and Thai is that the former introduces the auxiliary verb BE whereas the latter does not use any auxiliary:

He was killed by a knife.

|      |                  |      |      |       |
|------|------------------|------|------|-------|
| khǎw | thùuk            | khǎa | dɔay | mɪt   |
| he   | passive particle | kill | by   | knife |

Obviously, the main source of interference for Thai speakers with this grammatical pattern of the passive in English will be with the addition and correct inflection of BE. Mistakes like the following will be common:

\*He killed by a robber.

\*I am hit by a bicycle yesterday.

There is another pattern for passive sentences in Thai which does cause confusion with word order in English passives, however. In this pattern, both the subject and the object of the sentence precede the verb:

### Second Type of Passive Pattern in Thai:

He was bitten by a dog.

|      |                  |     |      |
|------|------------------|-----|------|
| khǎw | thùuk            | mǎa | kàt  |
| he   | passive particle | dog | bite |

Since both the subject and object precede the verb in this type of passive in Thai, Thai speakers are sometimes confused about the word order of passives in English if they use this type of passive construction as a frame of reference:

\*He robber killed. (He was killed by a robber.)

\*He by dog bit. (He was bit by a dog.)

It would be helpful to the Thai student if the teacher pointed out the similarity between the English passive and the first passive pattern in Thai. This first pattern is used only with instruments and not with animate subjects. However, this pattern closely parallels the passive pattern in English. It is obvious that if the Thai students uses this first passive pattern as a frame of reference, he will experience difficulty mainly with the verb form of English passives, whereas if he uses the second pattern as a frame of reference, he will experience difficulty with both the verb form and the word order of English passives.

Thai students should be aware of the fact that there is a class of verbs in English which have objects but are not true transitive verbs. These verbs (e.g. cost, last, weigh) are never used in the passive:

- \*Three dollars was cost by the book.
- \*A week was lasted the carnival.
- \*One hundred pounds was weighed by you.

### 3.13. Direct and Indirect Objects

In both English and Thai, there are two grammatical patterns which can be used with sentences containing direct objects and indirect objects:

#### Pattern 1: Subject Verb Direct Object (to) Indirect Object

|     |      |           |        |
|-----|------|-----------|--------|
| He  | gave | the book  | to me. |
| She | sent | the money | to me. |

#### Pattern 2: Subject Verb Indirect Object Direct object

|     |         |            |
|-----|---------|------------|
| He  | gave me | the book.  |
| She | sent me | the money. |

Thai speakers experience a great deal of interference in learning these two patterns in English because the Thai pattern which corresponds to pattern 2 in English has exactly the reverse word order of the English pattern:

#### Pattern 1: Subject Verb Direct Object (to) Indirect Object

|      |      |          |          |
|------|------|----------|----------|
| He   | gave | the book | to me.   |
| kháw | háy  | naŋsɯ̌i  | kêe phǎm |
| he   | give | book     | to me    |

#### Pattern 2: Subject Verb Indirect Object Direct Object

|      |             |           |
|------|-------------|-----------|
| He   | gave me     | the book. |
| kháw | háy naŋsɯ̌i | phǎm      |
| he   | give book   | me        |

Thai speakers who use pattern 2 as a frame of reference in Thai will experience continual difficulty in trying to form the correct corresponding pattern in English. Mistakes like the following are abundant:

- \*He gave the book me.
- \*She sent the money me.
- \*I gave the cat a baby. (meaning I gave the baby a cat.)

If the teacher introduces his Thai students to pattern 1 in which the word order in English parallels the word order in Thai, the

students will have less difficulty in learning the correct order of direct and indirect objects in English than if they are introduced to both patterns simultaneously.

### 3.14. Stylistic Inversions

Just as a sentence may be changed into the passive in order to shift the focus of discourse, it is also possible to change the word order of sentences in both English and Thai in order to shift the focus of discourse. This change in word order is most generally done with time adverbs, which seem exceptionally flexible as to their position in a sentence:

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| I will go today.        | Today, I will go.       |
| phǒm   tǎ   pay   wanní | wanní   phǒm   tǎ   pay |
| I   will   go   today   | today   I   will   go   |

Aside from time adverbs, however, there are other adverbs which can be inverted in both languages, for example, adverbs which mark location:

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| We catch fish here.       | Here, we catch fish.      |
| raw   tǎp   plaa   thǐntǐ | thǐntǐ   raw   tǎp   plaa |
| we   catch   fish   here  | here   we   catch   fish  |

There are some words which can be inverted for stylistic reasons in English sentences but cannot be inverted in Thai sentences. Adverbs of manner are an example of this and their inversion to sentence initial position may be baffling to Thai speakers:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| He runs home very slowly. |                             |
| kháw   wǐn   kláp   bǎan  | Yaan   tǎat   tǎat   tǎat   |
| he   run   return   home  | adverbial prefix   slowslow |

Slowly, he ran home.  
 \* Yaan | tǎat | tǎat | tǎat | kháw | wǐn | kláp | bǎan  
 adverbial prefix | slowslow | he | run | return | home

Another stylistic inversion which is common in English but absent in Thai is the inversion of pronoun subjects in sentences where there and here have been inverted to subject position. This double inversion of normal word order in English is confusing to Thai speakers:

#### Inversion of there and here

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| John is <u>there</u> . | There is John. |
| John is <u>here</u> .  | Here is John.  |

#### Inversion of the pronoun object:

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| There is John. | There <u>he</u> is. |
| Here is John.  | Here <u>he</u> is.  |

Notice that it is ungrammatical to invert any noun except a pro-

noun when it is in object position:

- There he is.
- \*There John is.
- Here he is.
- \*Here John is.
- Here lies the father of our country.
- \*Here the father of our country lies.

Notice too that the pronoun in object position must be inverted:

- Here he lies.
- \*Here lies he.

In teaching this kind of stylistic inversion to Thai students, it would be helpful if the teacher began with the inversion of there and here to sentence initial position first. Since this pattern is also used in Thai, the student will be able to grasp the pattern and its usage quite rapidly. Then, the teacher can introduce the inversion of pronoun objects in these kinds of sentences to pre-verb position. The teacher must point out that the inversion of pronouns can only occur in sentences beginning with there and here (when they mean location). That is, sentences like the following are ungrammatical:

- \*John it reads every morning.

## PART 4: SYNTAX: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### 4.1. Verb Tense, Mood and Aspect

The ability to use English verb tense, mood, and aspect correctly is probably the most difficult skill for Thai speakers of English to acquire. Chart VII, an English to Thai verb form comparison, shows how the English verb takes almost twice as many different forms as the Thai verb. Thus, the same Thai verb form is often used for several different English verb forms.

#### 4.1.1. Chart VII

| English-Thai Verb Form Comparison |                        |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| English                           | Thai                   |
| 1. work                           | 1. verb                |
| 2. worked                         | 1. none                |
| 3. will work                      | 2. tʃd + verb          |
| 4. have worked (completion)       | 3. verb + lɛɛw         |
| have worked (habitual)            | 4. khəəy + verb        |
| 5. had worked (completion)        | 3. none                |
| had worked (habitual)             | 4. none                |
| 6. will have worked               | 5. none                |
| 7. I am working (future)          | 2. none                |
| I am working (continuous)         | 6. kamlaŋ + verb       |
| 8. I was working                  | 6. none                |
| 9. I will be working              | 7. tʃd + kamlaŋ + verb |
| 10. I have been working           | 1. none                |
| 11. had been working              | 1. none                |
| 12. will have been working        | 5. none                |
| 13. would work                    | 2. none                |
| 14. would have worked             | 5. none                |



4.1.2. Summary of Thai Verb Forms  
(The numbers correspond to those used in Chart VII.)

1. Verb
2. tʃà + Verb
3. Verb + lɛɛw
4. khəy + Verb
5. tʃà + Verb + dáy +  $\begin{cases} \text{lɛɛw} \\ \text{time} \end{cases}$
6. kamlaŋ + Verb
7. tʃà + kamlaŋ + Verb

4.1.3. Chart VIII, a Thai-English verb comparison chart, shows how a single Thai verb form can be used to express as many as four different English verb forms:

Chart VIII

| Thai-English Verb Form Comparison  |  |
|--|--|
| Thai   | English  |
| 1. Verb - unmarked tense   | 1. present<br>2. past<br>10. present perfect continuous<br>11. past perfect continuous |
| 2. tʃà + Verb - future tense   | 3. <del>future</del><br>13. present continual<br>14. past continual                    |
| 3. Verb + lɛɛw or<br>Verb + dáy + lɛɛw<br>perfective                         | 4. present perfect-completion<br>5. past perfect-completion                            |
| 4. khəy + Verb - habitual  | 4. present perfect-habitual<br>5. past perfect-habitual                                |
| 5. tʃà + Verb + dáy + $\begin{cases} \text{lɛɛw} \\ \text{time} \end{cases}$ | 6. future perfect<br>12. future perfect continuous                                     |
| 6. kamlaŋ + Verb - continuous  | 7. present continuous<br>8. past continuous  |
| 7. tʃà + kamlaŋ + Verb<br>future continuous                                  | 9. future continuous   |

(Numbers of the English examples correspond to those in Chart VII.)

#### 4.1.4. Resulting Errors

The following section deals with the errors which Thai speakers make with various English verb tenses, aspects, and moods, due to the fact that the English tense system has many more distinctions than the Thai verb system does.

##### 1) Errors With Past Tense

The most important error, which probably accounts for a majority of all errors that Thai speakers make in using verbs, is the use of the present tense when the past form is required:

\*I am hungry yesterday.

\*She study here last year.

\*I don't see him this morning.

\*After I buy some oranges, I go home.

##### 2) Errors With the Past and Present Perfect Continuous

The errors made with the use of these tenses are of two types:

a) The shorter, simpler tense forms would be used instead of the present or past perfect continuous. Thai speakers of English see no need for using the perfect continuous forms, since there is no distinction for them in Thai:

\*I work for three years.

(I have been working for three years.)

\*He sleeps for an hour.

(He has been sleeping for an hour.)

\*He drove for three hours when it began to rain.

(He had been driving for three hours when it began to rain.)

b) The incorrect combination of various verb forms is a common type of error made when trying to express ideas which are expressed in English by the present and past perfect continuous tenses:

\*I be living here many years.

\*I have living here many years.

\*I living here many years.

\*I have been live here many years.

##### 3) Errors With the Conditional Mood

Such errors arise because in Thai the future form is also used for expressing ideas which would be expressed in English by either the present or past conditional.

a) Difficulty arises in comprehending the meaning of English conditional sentences. For example, the sentence:

I would work but I'm too tired.

might be misinterpreted as:

I'll work, although I'm very tired.

Similarly, the sentence:

He would have come but he was too busy.

might be misinterpreted as:

He came in spite of the fact that he was very busy.

b) Will is often used when would is required. In the traditional grammars of English which are used to teach Thai students in secondary schools, would is regarded as the past tense of will. Thai speakers of English tend to overuse will and never use would because: 1) will was learned first, and has a Thai equivalent; it comes to mind before would. 2) The Thai speaker tends not to think in terms of past tense, since there is none in Thai. For example, he may say:

\*I will sing if he'll let me.  
(I would sing if he would let me.)

\*I will sing if you let me.  
(I would have sung if you had let me.)

#### 4) . Errors With the Past Perfect Tense

The present and past perfect tenses in English are not differentiated in Thai. The Thai perfective is roughly equivalent to the English present perfect; therefore, the errors which Thai speakers of English make occur most often in the use of the English past perfect tense, which has no Thai equivalent.

##### 4.1.5. Overuse of the Past Perfect Tense

The following example shows the type of error which occurs with the past perfect tense:

\*He had sat down; then he picked up a magazine.  
(He sat down; then he picked up a magazine.)

This error may also be due to the fact that the Thai learn to say After he sat down, he picked up a magazine. They cannot understand why the presence or absence of the subordinating clause marker after would necessitate a change in verb tense. The sentence type He did X, then he did Y should be pointed out to the students as requiring a different verb form from After he had done X; he did Y. Another example of overuse of the past perfect tense is:

\*I had received your letter a long time ago.  
(I received your letter a long time ago.)

The Thai student uses the past perfect tense here because he thinks of the many events which have occurred since he received

the letter.

Another less important type of error which is caused by the lack of a past perfect tense in Thai is that of using the past tense when the past perfect form is required:

\*He left already, by the time I arrived.

(He had left already, by the time I arrived.)

This type of error is of minimal importance because spoken English sometimes seems to be losing the distinction between the past and past perfect tenses:

He didn't know I (had) waited two hours to see him.  
After he (had) finished painting, he took a nap.

#### 4.1.6. Errors in the Future Perfect and Future Perfect Continuous

Since the English future perfect and the future perfect continuous verb forms are both expressed in Thai by a future-like form, Thai speakers often lack an understanding of the necessity for the English future perfect and future perfect continuous. They would therefore tend to substitute:

- 1) the English future form
- 2) other verb forms (such as the present or present perfect) which have exact equivalents in Thai
- 3) an incorrect combination of various forms

when the English future perfect form should be used. Below are several incorrect forms which are often substituted for the future perfect by Thai speakers of English:

By the time you get here, I { will have eaten } already  
  \*will eat  
  \*eat  
  \*have eaten  
  \*eaten  
  \*will eaten

The future perfect continuous form is usually misused in the same way as the future perfect form.

#### 4.1.7. Errors With the Continuous Tense

Although there is a continuous tense in Thai, Thai speakers of English still have difficulty with the continuous verb forms in English because the respective structures of the English and Thai verb forms are different:

He is singing.

kháw | kamlan                      | rǎn | phlɛɛn  
he | continuous particle | sing | song

The English continuous form requires the presence of:

- 1) the verb BE
- 2) the correct inflexion of the verb BE
- 3) an -ing suffix attached to the main verb

while the Thai form requires only one morpheme and this morpheme is uninflected.

#### Errors With the Present Continuous

Thai speakers of English thus tend to make one or more of the following errors with the English present continuous form:

- 1) Failure to insert the verb BE.
- 2) Use of an incorrect form of the verb BE.
- 3) Failure to add the -ing suffix to the main verb.

Examples:

- 1) \*I teaching.
- 2) \*I are teaching. or \*I be teaching.
- 3) \*I am teach.

#### Errors With the Past Continuous

The errors made in the use of this tense would be the same as those made in the use of the present perfect tense. There is, of course, an additional error which is commonly made; that is, the use of the present forms of the verb BE when the past forms are required. This error occurs because there is no distinction in Thai between the present and past tenses:

- \*I am teaching yesterday.
- \*I teaching yesterday.
- \*I were teaching yesterday.
- \*I was teach yesterday.

#### 4.1.8. Additional Factors Which Complicate the English Verb System

1) Third person singular inflection is used for the present tense forms. (Also see section 2.1.1.) There is no inflection in Thai for the third person singular verb form:

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| I run.     | He runs.   |
| phǒm   wɨŋ | khǎw   wɨŋ |
| I   run    | he   run   |

In addition, English third person singular verb inflections take three possible forms, /s/ after words ending in voiceless sounds:

He walks.

/z/ after words ending in voiced sounds:

The cat sheds.

and /Iz/ after words ending in /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ or /dʒ/:

He always catcheses cold.

Thus Thai speakers almost invariably neglect to add the /s/, /z/, or /Iz/ suffix when they speak English. Even if they do think of this suffix, it is often obscured by incorrect pronunciation, since there are no final /s/ or /z/ sounds in Thai.

## 2) Irregular Verbs

The copula BE is the most highly inflected verb in English. There are no inflections for person and number in Thai:

| English            | Thai           |
|--------------------|----------------|
| I am a teacher.    | phǒm pen khruu |
| You are a teacher. | khun " "       |
| He is a teacher.   | kháw " "       |
| She is a teacher.  | kháw " "       |
| We are teachers.   | raw " "        |
| They are teachers. | kháw " "       |

The verbs DO and HAVE are also irregularly inflected in English whereas they are uninflected in Thai:

I do my homework.  
phǒm | thǎm | kaanbǎan  
I | do | homework

He does his homework.  
kháw | thǎm | kaanbǎan  
he | do | homework

I have a pen.  
phǒm | mii | paakkaa  
I | have | pen

He has a pen  
kháw | mii | paakkaa  
he | have | pen

## Resulting Errors

Thai speakers make very few errors with the inflections of BE because they tend to omit the copulas quite often. There are quite a few errors made with the inflected forms of DO and HAVE, however:

\*He have many problems.

\*John do homework every night

## Errors With Irregular Past and Perfective Verb Forms

Many of the most common English verbs form their past tense and past participle irregularly:

He goes to school.

kháw|pay|roŋrian  
he|go|school

He went/has gone to school.

kháw|pay|roŋrian|léəw  
he|go|school|already

He eats dinner.

kháw|thaaŋ|ahǎanyen  
he|eat|food evening

He ate/has eaten dinner.

kháw|thaaŋ|ahǎanyen|léəw  
he|eat|food evening|already

#### Resulting Errors

- \*He go to school yesterday.
- \*He has went to school already.
- \*He eated dinner already.
- \*He has eat dinner already.

#### 4.1.9. Conclusion

When using English verbs, Thai speakers have to make a whole new set of differentiations which they have never made in their own language. They have to distinguish between the following:

- 1) present and past tenses
- 2) the future tense and the conditional mood
- 3) past and perfective
- 4) regular and irregular verbs
- 5) person and number

Thus, it is not surprising that such a great number of errors are made with English verbs.

#### 4.2. Modals

4.2.1. English modals fall into two main groups for the purpose of this analysis:

- 1) modals followed directly by a verb:

- |          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| 1. may   | 6. will         |
| 2. might | 7. would        |
| 3. must  | 8. should       |
| 4. can   | 9. would rather |
| 5. could | 10. had better  |

- 2) modals followed by TO + verb:

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 11. got to     | 15. be supposed to |
| 12. have to    | 16. be to          |
| 13. be able to | 17. hope to        |
| 14. ought to   | 18. expect to      |



19. decide to
20. promise to
21. need to
22. be likely to

23. prefer to
24. would like to
25. want to
26. plan to
27. intend to etc.

4.2.2. The English modals are translated in the following ways in Thai:

Chart IX

| A Comparison of English and Thai Modals |  |
|---|--|
| Group 1                                 |  |
| 1. may                                  | dat tʃɑ + Verb (1)   |
| 2. might                                | dat tʃɑ + Verb (1) <u>none</u>                               |
| 3. must                                 | tʃɑŋ + Verb (2)  |
| 4. can                                  | Verb + { dɑy (permission, ability) (3)<br>pen (ability) (19) |
| 5. could                                | <u>none</u> (3), (1)   |
| 6. will                                 | tʃɑ + Verb (4)   |
| 7. would                                | <u>none</u> (4)  |
| 8. should                               | khuan tʃɑ + Verb (5)   |
| 9. would rather                         | yɑak tʃɑ + Verb + (mɑak kwɑa) + V <sub>2</sub> (6)           |
| 10. had better                          | <u>none</u> (2)  |
|   | <u>none</u> (5)  |
|   | Verb + dii kwɑa (7)  |
| Group 2                                 |  |
| 11. get to                              | dɑy + Verb (8)<br>mii ookdat (tʃɑ) + Verb (9)                |
| 12. have to                             | <u>none</u> (2)  |
| 13. be able to                          | <u>none</u> (8)<br>mii ookdat (tʃɑ) + Verb (9)               |
| 14. ought to                            | <u>none</u> (5)  |
| 15. be supposed to                      | <u>none</u> (2)  |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 16. are to        | <u>none</u> (2)   |
| 17. hope to       | yàak + (tʃà) + Verb + (dây) (10)                          |
| 18. expect to     | khòat wàa + tʃà + Verb (11)                               |
| 19. decide to     | tàt sɪn } + tʃay tʃà + Verb (12)<br>tòk lɔŋ }             |
| 20. promise to    | sǎnya wàa tʃà + Verb (14)<br>tòk lɔŋ tʃay tʃà + Verb (13) |
| 21. need to       | <u>none</u> (2)<br><u>none</u> (5)                        |
| 22. be likely to  | khon + Verb (15)<br><u>none</u> (1)                       |
| 23. prefer to     | <u>none</u> (6)   |
| 24. would like to | yàaktʃà + Verb (16)                                       |
| 25. want to       | yàaktʃà + Verb (16)                                       |
| 26. plan to       | mii khronkaan tʃà + Verb (17)                             |
| 27. intend to     | tàŋ tʃay tʃà + Verb (18)                                  |

4.2.3. It may be seen from Chart IX that while English has at least 27 modal forms, there are only 18 equivalent Thai expressions which express the same ideas. Thai speakers often make errors with English modals due to the lack of the distinction in Thai between modals which are distinct in English. For example, there is no distinction in Thai between may, might, and be likely to.

#### 4.2.4. Comments on Chart IX

Chart IX illustrates the reason for the most common errors made by Thai speakers using English modals--the overuse or omission of the particle to after modals--the reason being that there are many two-word pairs of English modals, one of which is followed by to and one of which is not:

Group A  
must  
would rather  
should  
had better

Group B  
have to, be to  
prefer to  
ought to  
be supposed to

Thus Thai speakers tend to associate the presence of to with a certain idea, so they use the to no matter whether they have chosen a modal form group A (modals not followed by to) or from Group B (modals followed by to). There is no system in English which allows a non-native speaker to determine which modals are followed by to and which are not. Thai speakers thus have to memorize to which group any particular modal belongs.

Thai has a similar post-modal particle /tʃà/ but its presence does not correspond with the presence of the English to. In other words, a modal in English followed by to does not always correspond to a Thai modal followed by /tʃà/, and vice versa:

| English        | Thai     |
|----------------|----------|
| may, might     | àat tʃà  |
| have <u>to</u> | tʃon     |
| must           | tʃon     |
| want <u>to</u> | yàak tʃà |

#### 4.2.5. Resulting Errors

1) Overuse or omission of the to before the post-modal verb:

- \*I can to go.
- \*John could not to see anything.
- \*You must to sign your name here.
- \*Harry should to study harder.

- \*Harry needs study harder.
- \*I hope go abroad next year.
- \*He decided sell his car.

2) Irregular tense forms of some modals:

Can and must form their past tenses irregularly. Thai speakers tend to use could when the past of be able to is necessary. They also use must when a past form is obligatory:

- He was able to see the doctor yesterday.
- \*He could see the doctor yesterday.

- I had to see the doctor yesterday.
- \*I must see the doctor yesterday.

3) Comprehension difficulty with modals:

Some English modals which have no distinct Thai equivalents are not fully understood by Thai students:

- He said he could come.
- \*He said he can come.

It must be pointed out, however, that the can-could, will-would distinctions have become less common in spoken English.

4) May and might confused:

Many Thai speakers of English never clearly understand the difference between may and might, but, since the difference between them is not always recognized by many native speakers, this would not seem to be an important problem.

5) Errors with prefer to and would rather:

|                |         |                  |                   |
|----------------|---------|------------------|-------------------|
| I prefer       | walking | to               | running.          |
| I prefer       | to walk | rather than (to) | run.              |
| I would rather | walk    | than             | run.              |
| Modal          | Verb    | Conjunction      | to V <sub>2</sub> |

These sentences are all translated in Thai by the same sentence:

phǒm | tʰhǎɔp | dǎen | mǎak | kwǎa | wɨŋ  
I | like | walk | much | than | run

Resulting Errors

a) Thai speaker either don't realize or don't remember the necessity for parallel construction between the two verbs in such sentences.

b) They also overuse the conjunction more than because it is a direct translation from the equivalent Thai expression.

c) They tend to confuse the prefer and would rather constructions:

\*I prefer to walk than run.  
(I would rather walk than run.)

Other common mistakes:

- \*I prefer walking more than to run.
- \*I preferring to walk more than running.
- \*I would rather walking than running.

4.3. Verbal Complements

4.3.1. The chart beginning on the next page will illustrate the differences in structure between English and Thai complements.

4.3.2. The possible forms English and Thai can take are listed below in summary:

| English   | Thai  |
|---|---|
| 1. V <sub>1</sub> + <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub>          | 1. V <sub>1</sub> + V <sub>2</sub>                    |
| 2. V <sub>1</sub> + object + <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub> | 2. V <sub>1</sub> + conjunction + Clause              |
| 3. V <sub>1</sub> + V <sub>2</sub> + -ing               | 3. <u>none</u> (1)<br>V <sub>2</sub> + V <sub>1</sub> |

(Summary continued on page 75.)

# Chart X

| A Comparison of English and Thai Verbal Complement Forms |                   |          |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|------|
|  |                   |          |                   |                   | English<br>Thai   |                   |                   |   |      |
| 1.   | I                 | like     | to                | swim.             |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | to                | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
| 1.   | phǒm              | lǐk      | wáy nóm           |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | I                 | like     | swim              |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
| 2.   | We                | taught   | him               | to                | swim.             |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | object            | +                 | to                | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |   |      |
| 2.   | raw               | sǒn      | háy               | khǎw              | wáy nóm           |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | we                | teach    | for               | him               | swim              |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | conjunction       | +                 | third person      | +                 | Verb <sub>2</sub> |   |      |
| 3.   | He                | stopped  | working:          |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> | +                 | -ing              |                   |                   |   |      |
| 3.   | khǎw              | yút      | thamnaan          |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | he                | stop     | work              |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
| He finished  |                   |          |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> | +                 | -ing              |                   |                   |   |      |
| khǎw   |                   |          |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | he                | thamnaan | sét               |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  |                   | work     | finish            |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>2</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>1</sub> |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
| He continued   |                   |          |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> | +                 | -ing              |                   |                   |   |      |
| khǎw   |                   |          |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | he                | thamnaan | tò                |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  |                   | work     | continue          |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
| 4.   | He                | began    | to                | work.             | He                | began             | working.          |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | to                | Verb <sub>2</sub> | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +                 | Verb <sub>2</sub> | + | -ing |
| 4.   | khǎw              | rǎm      | thamnaan          |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | he                | begin    | work              |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |
|  | Verb <sub>1</sub> | +        | Verb <sub>2</sub> |                   |                   |                   |                   |   |      |

| English<br>Thai   |   |
|---|---|
| 5. I had   my car   washed.<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + Verb <sub>2</sub> (past participle)                                     |   |
| 5. phôm   háy   kháw láan rót léew<br>I   order   he wash car already<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + Clause                                 |   |
| 6. I made   him   wash   my car.<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + Verb <sub>2</sub>  |   |
| 6. phôm   ban kháp   háy   kháw láan rót<br>I   force   for   he wash car<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + conjunction + Clause               |   |
| 7. I helped   him   clean.<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + Verb <sub>2</sub>  | I helped   him   to   clean.<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + to + Verb <sub>2</sub> |
| phôm   tǎi háy   kháw tham   kwaom sà?àt<br>I   help   him   clean<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object do + Verb <sub>2</sub>             |   |
| 8. I saw   him   teaching<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + Verb <sub>2</sub> + -ing  |   |
| phôm   hén   kháw   kam lan   sǎn<br>I   see   he   (continue)   teach<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + continue + Verb <sub>2</sub> |   |
| 9. John wanted   him   (to   be)   in the room.<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object (to + Verb <sub>2</sub> ) + adverb                    |   |
| John   yàak   háy   kháw yùu nay hǎn<br>John   want   for   he stay in room<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + conjunction + Clause             |   |
| 10. We considered   him   (to   be)   the leader<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + object + (to + Verb <sub>2</sub> ) + noun                   |   |
| raw   kháw tǎi kan   wáa   kháw pen hǎn áa<br>we   consider   that   he be leader<br>Verb <sub>1</sub> + conjunction + Clause       |   |

| English<br>Thai |            |                   |               |                            |                       |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 11.             | We         | called            | him           | governor.                  |                       |
|                 |            | Verb <sub>1</sub> | + object      | + noun                     |                       |
|                 | raw<br>we  | riak<br>call      | kháw<br>he    | wáa<br>that                | kháa lǎaŋ<br>governor |
|                 |            | Verb <sub>1</sub> | + object      | + conjunction              | + noun                |
| 12.             | They       | believed          | him           | (to be)                    | insane.               |
|                 |            | Verb <sub>1</sub> | + object      | + (to) + Verb <sub>2</sub> | + adjective           |
|                 | kháw<br>he | hǎa<br>accuse     | wáa<br>that   | kháw bǎa<br>he crazy       |                       |
|                 |            | Verb <sub>1</sub> | + conjunction | + Clause                   |                       |

#### 4.3.2. (cont.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4. V <sub>1</sub> + <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub><br>V <sub>2</sub> + -ing | 4. <u>none</u> (1)                                     |
| 5. V <sub>1</sub> + object + V <sub>2</sub> (p.p.)                      | 5. V <sub>1</sub> + Clause                             |
| 6. V <sub>1</sub> + object + V <sub>2</sub>                             | 6. <u>none</u> (2)                                     |
| 7. V <sub>1</sub> + object + ( <u>to</u> ) + V <sub>2</sub>             | 7. V <sub>1</sub> + object + V <sub>2</sub>            |
| 8. V <sub>1</sub> + object + V <sub>2</sub> + -ing                      | 8. V <sub>1</sub> + object + continue + V <sub>2</sub> |
| 9. V <sub>1</sub> + object + ( <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub> ) + adv.      | 9. <u>none</u> (2)                                     |
| 10. V <sub>1</sub> + object + ( <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub> ) + noun     | 10. <u>none</u> (2)                                    |
| 11. V <sub>1</sub> + object + noun                                      | 11. V <sub>1</sub> + object + conjunction + noun       |
| 12. V <sub>1</sub> + object + ( <u>to</u> + V <sub>2</sub> ) + adj.     | 12. <u>none</u> (2)                                    |

#### 4.3.3. Analysis of the Charts

In section 4.3.2. we can see that there is no correlation at all between the respective structures of English and Thai complements. There are twelve possible English forms and seven possible Thai forms.



#### 4.3.4. Resulting Errors

The errors stem not from the fact that several distinct English verbal complement forms are expressed by the same form in Thai, but from the great variety of English verbal complement structures, none of which have any systematized relation to each other or to the Thai verbal complement forms. Thai speakers of English face the monumental task of memorizing the type or types of complements which can follow English verbs.

~~Another characteristic of English which adds to the confusion~~ of Thai speakers trying to form correct English verbal complements is the fact that many English verbs which take complements can also be followed by clauses:

He decided to go.  
He decided that he would go.

He expected us to go.  
He expected that we would go.

We saw her swimming.  
We saw her while she was swimming.

We considered him to be the leader.  
We considered that he was the leader.

Because of this, Thai students often use the nominative form of the pronoun in the complement. They consider the pronoun as the subject of the subordinate clause, similar to the form the Thai complement takes:

|                       |       |     |      |         |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|------|---------|
| I taught him to swim. |       |     |      |         |
| phǒm                  | sǎon  | háy | khǎw | wáy nám |
| I                     | teach | for | him  | swim    |
| Clause                |       |     |      |         |

\*I taught he to swim.

Below are some typical errors which are made:

- \*I like to swimming.
- \*We taught him swim.
- \*He stopped to work.. (He stopped working.)
- \*He finished to work.
- \*He began to working.
- \*I had my car to wash.
- \*I made him to wash/washing my car.
- \*I helped him to cleaning.
- \*I saw him to teach.
- \*He decided that to go.
- \*He expected that we go.
- \*We saw she swimming.
- \*We considered him that leader.

It might be useful for the teacher to point out the contrasting meanings of stop + Verb + -ing and stop to + Verb. The students should be shown from the outset that stop to + Verb means the same as stop + in order to + Verb.

#### 4.3.5. Conclusion

The types of errors made are mostly results of the Thai speaker's uncertainty as to 1) whether or not to use to and 2) whether or not to use the -ing suffix.

By listing the various types of complements that follow commonly-used verbs in English, the teacher can assist the students to learn these patterns more quickly.

#### 4.4.1. Adverb of Manner Form

The English adverb of manner is formed by 1) the addition of -ly to the adjective (bad-badly), 2) and unchanged adjective form (hard-hard), or 3) an irregular change from the adjective form (good-well).

The Thai adverb of manner is formed by 1) the use of the adjective form unchanged or 2) the addition of the adverbial prefix /yàaŋ/ placed before the adjectival form. The examples below will show the structure of English and Thai adverbs more clearly:

| English   |         |    | Thai      |            |  |
|-----------|---------|----|-----------|------------|--|
| Adjective | Adverb  |    | Adjective | Adverb     |  |
| 1. quick  | quickly | 1. | rew       | (yàaŋ) rew |  |
| 2. hard   | hard    | 2. | nàk       | (yàaŋ) nàk |  |
| 3. good   | well    | 3. | dii       | (yàaŋ) dii |  |

It should be noticed that the first type of Thai adverb structure, that of not modifying the adjective form at all, is the most common.

#### Resulting Errors

1) The most common error with adverbs which Thai speakers make is failure to add the -ly suffix to differentiate manner adverbs from adjectives:

- \*He sings beautiful.
- \*Mary drives careful.

2) The second type of error which is made with manner adverbs is that of over-generalizing and adding -ly to adverbs which do not take an -ly suffix:

- \*He worked hardly.
- \*The horse ran fastly.

3) The third type of error stems from the irregular formation of adverbs which some adjectives undergo:

- \*You write good.
- \*You write goodly.

4.4.2.

Chart XI

| Position of Adverbs  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Type of Adverb   | English  | Thai   |
| 1. <u>Attribution</u><br>(of course, certainly)                      | Beginning of sentence, before verbs, after copula and auxiliary. | End of sentence.   |
| 2. <u>Time</u><br>(next year, at 6 o'clock)                          | Beginning or end of sentence.                                    | same   |
| 3. <u>Frequency</u><br>(usually, always)                             | Before verb, after auxiliary and copula.                         | Beginning or end of sentence, before verb. No auxiliary before copula. |
| 4. <u>Modifying Adjectives</u><br>(very, a little, rather)           | Before adjectives.   | Before or after adjectives.  |
| 5. <u>Direction</u><br>(towards or away from the speaker) (up, down) | After verb.  | After verb, included in a verb of direction.                           |
| 6. <u>Place</u><br>(in the house, at home)                           | Varying positions.   | same   |

#### Resulting Errors

##### 1) Adverbs of Attribution

They might be misplaced to the end of a sentence:

\*He's happy certainly.

##### 2) Adverbs of Time

Thai and English adverbs of time have the same sentence positions, so there is little interference for Thai speakers.

### 3) Adverbs of Frequency

The adverb most often might be placed at the beginning of a sentence instead of its usual position because it occurs in this position in Thai:

\*Usually he is very happy. (Instead of the more common:  
He is usually very happy.)

### 4) Adverbs Modifying Adjectives

Most Thai adverbs of this type, except for one, /khònkhan/ rather, occur after the adjective. Therefore, Thai speakers tend to misplace these adverbs after the adjective:

\*Tom is tall very much.

\*I am tired a little.

### 5) Adverbs of Direction

In Thai, such prepositional adverbs as up, down, onto and out of are expressed by another verb or verbs after the main verb:

He walked into the building.

kháw | dæen | kháw | pay | nay | ták  
he | walk | enter | go | in | building

Thai speakers thus often add an extra verb when they speak English:

\*He ran go up the stairs.

\*The man walk go in the building.

Also, many Thai verbs of action are followed by either /maa/ come or /paj/ go to express whether the action is originating from the speaker or not. Thai speakers, then, will incorrectly insert this second verb into English sentences:

He wrote a letter to his mother.

kháw | khian | tʃotmáay | pay | thǎŋ | mæc  
he | write | letter | go | to | mother

\*He wrote a letter go to his mother.

He will come here tomorrow (by car).

kháw | tʃá | kháp | rót | maa | prǎn níi  
he | will | drive | car | come | tomorrow

\*He will drive come here tomorrow.

We went to see the doctor (on foot)

row | dæen | pay | hǎa | mǎc  
we | walk | go | see | doctor

\*We walked go to see the doctor.

6) Adverbs of Place

These may occur in various places in a sentence in both English and Thai, so few errors are made with them.

4.4.3. Prepositions

There are many areas where the prepositions used in English do not coincide with Thai prepositions:

at + time

He came at three o'clock.

kháw | maa | (mʔa) | sǎam | moon  
he | come | (at) | three | o'clock

Resulting Error

\*He came three o'clock.

at/in + time of day

There are two prepositions used with the time of day:

in the morning  
at noon  
in the afternoon  
at night  
in the daytime

All of these are expressed in Thai by the same preposition:

|    |             |     |             |
|----|-------------|-----|-------------|
| in | the morning | tǎn | chǎaw       |
|    | evening     |     | yen         |
|    | afternoon   |     | baay        |
|    | daytime     |     | klaangwan   |
| at | noon        |     | thiaa       |
|    | night       |     | klaangkhaan |

Thai speakers thus often forget whether to use in or at with words marking the time of day, since there is no semantic difference to aid their memory.

Resulting Errors

\*We worked at the morning.

\*We ate in noon.

#### 4.4.4. Prepositions With Dates and Places

The chart below will give a clearer picture of the absence of any correlation between English and Thai prepositions used with dates and places:

Chart XII

| English     |                           | Thai               |                                    |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| preposition | date or place             | preposition        | date or place                      |
| on          | November 18               | mfa<br>when        | wan thii sip èt<br>day 18th        |
| on          | Saturday                  | mfa<br>when        | wan sǎaw<br>Saturday               |
| in          | August                    | mfa<br>when        | dʔan sǐhǎakhom<br>month August     |
| in          | 1956                      | mfa nay<br>when in | pīi thii 1956<br>year at           |
| —           | this year                 | —                  | pīi nīi<br>year this               |
| —           | last month                | mfa —<br>when at   | dʔan thii lǎew<br>month at already |
| —           | next week                 | —                  | atʔitnǎa<br>week next              |
| on          | State Street              | thii<br>at         | chanǎn State<br>road               |
| at          | 1324 State St.            | thii<br>at         | bǎan lǎk thii<br>house number at   |
|             |                           |                    | chanǎn State<br>road               |
| in          | Detroit<br>France<br>Ohio | thii nay<br>at in  | Detroit<br>France<br>Ohio          |

From the chart, it can be seen that prepositions before dates and places are often omitted in Thai, while they are usually obligatory in English. Also there is no semantic difference

which can be used to explain to Thai speakers when to use which preposition; each expression must be memorized separately. This is difficult for Thai speakers, because in their system if a preposition is used, one meaning when can be used before all dates and one meaning at can be used before all places.

#### Resulting Errors

Thai speakers generally get the idea that in English prepositions are obligatory before expressions of time and place, so they misuse them by overusing them:

\*I saw him { in November 18.  
at Saturday.  
on today.  
on yesterday  
on this year.  
in last month.

They may also use the wrong preposition:

\*I saw him { on August.  
on 1956.  
at Main Street.  
in 1324 Main Street.  
at Detroit.

#### 4.4.5. Prepositions After Verbs of Motion and Place Names

In English, the prepositions used or omitted after verbs of motion and before place names, do not correspond with the prepositions used in Thai except before the words home and downtown, where there is no preposition used in either language:

He came to Ann Arbor yesterday.  
kháw | maa | Ann Arbor | m'awaan  
he | come | Ann Arbor | yesterday

Verb + to + place

Verb + place

They went to Detroit this morning.  
kháw | pay | Detroit | m'a | t'f'áaw  
they | go | Detroit | when | morning

Verb + to + place

Verb + place

I go to school every morning.  
ph'om | pay | ro'rian | thúk | t'f'áaw  
I | go | school | every | morning

Verb + to + place

Verb + place



John arrived at school.  
 John | pay | t<sup>h</sup>ɔ̌n | roŋrian  
 John | go | reach | school

arrive + at + place

arrive + place

The child left school at 3:00.  
 dek | ɔ̌k | t<sup>h</sup>ɔ̌k | roŋrian | 3 moon  
 child | leave | from | school | 3 o'clock

leave + place

leave + from + place

### Resulting Errors

- \*He came Ann Arbor yesterday.
- \*They went Detroit this morning.
- \*John arrived school on time.
- \*The child left from school at 3 o'clock.

### 4.4.6. Difficulties Using Since, For, and During

In English since is used with the perfective aspect to refer to the beginning of an action or event. For and during refer to the length of time of an action or event. For is used before a length of time, while during is used before the name of an action or event:

He has been here since morning.

kháw | maa | (tán) tɛɛ | t<sup>h</sup>ɔ̌aw  
 he | come | since | morning

He has been here for two weeks.

kháw | yùu | nīi | sɔ̌n | athít  
 he | stay | here | two | week

He was here during the meeting.

kháw | yùu | nīi | rawdān | kaan prat<sup>h</sup>um  
 he | stay | here | during | meeting

### Resulting Errors

1) Because there is no Thai equivalent for for, since is incorrectly substituted for it:

\*He has been here since two weeks.

2) When speaking English, Thai speakers tend to use since with aspects other than the perfective, because in Thai since does not occur in perfective sentences:

\*He was here since 6 o'clock.

\*I wake up since 8 o'clock

3) There is no Thai equivalent for during. Therefore, an English sentence containing this word is paraphrased (in Thai)

using a morpheme best glossed as while, followed by a clause. Thai speakers tend to substitute during for while:

\*He laughed during I was talking.

\*I slept during it was raining.

#### 4.4.7. Two and Three-Word Verbs

In English, many verbs consist of a verb plus one or two prepositions. The prepositions often lose their original meanings of location or direction:

He looked up and saw the ceiling.  
(direction)

He looked up his friend in New York.  
(no meaning)

The thief ran out of the house.  
(direction)

The thief ran out of bullets.  
(no meaning)

There is no corresponding pattern of such two or three-word verbs in Thai, which usually has only one verb plus a verb-adverb of direction:

He looked up his friend.

|      |     |     |        |
|------|-----|-----|--------|
| kháw | pay | hǎa | phǎn   |
| he   | go  | see | friend |

Speakers of Thai as well as every non-native speaker of English must memorize separately all the numerous combinations of verbs and prepositions which can be used in English two and three-word verbs. To complicate their task, two and three-word verbs which are transitive fall into two groups, depending on whether or not the direct object is placed before the preposition or after.

Group A: Noun object can precede or follow the particle. Pronoun object ~~must~~ precede the particle:

He put away his shoes.

He put his shoes away.

He put them away.

The clerk wrote my name down.

The clerk wrote down my name.

The clerk wrote at down.

Group B: Both noun and pronoun objects must follow the particle:

I thought of the answer.

I thought of it.

We sent for the doctor.  
 I looked at the map.  
 She waited for the bus.  
 He lived up to our expectations.  
 He put up with the noise.

We sent for him.  
 I looked at it.  
 She waited for it.  
 He lived up to them.  
 He put up with it.

#### Resulting Errors

1) Thai speakers tend to omit the preposition because they have no consistent meaning:

- \*He waited the bus.
- \*The boy looked the picture.
- \*He listened the radio.

#### 4.4.8. Comparison of Adverbs

In English adverbs can be used comparatively in the following ways:

- 1) as + adverb + as

He speaks as quickly as you.

- 2) less/more + adverb + than

He speaks less/more quickly than you.

- 3) adjective + -er

He works harder than I do.

In Thai, such comparison is expressed by the adjective (which is not differentiated from the adverbs) followed by /kwàa/ than, or /mʔan/ same.

He speaks as quickly as you.  
 kháw | phǔut | rew | mʔan | khun  
 he | speak | fast | like/same | you

He speaks more clearly than you.  
 kháw | phǔut | tʰát | kwàa | khun  
 he | speak | clear | than | you

The less + adverb + than construction is never used in Thai. Instead it is paraphrased into a more + adverb + than equivalent:

He speaks less slowly than you.  
 kháw | phǔut | rew | kwàa | khun  
 he | speak | fast | than | you

#### Resulting Errors

- \*He sings better more than I.
- \*I speak clearly than you.
- \*The tree is high like a mountain.
- \*It's hard same a diamond.

#### 4.5. Linking Verbs

In English, linking verbs feel, taste, smell, sound, look, and seem are unlike other verbs in that they take adjectival forms or complements:

I feel good.  
It tastes fine.  
The cake smells burnt.  
Your story sounds true.  
The book looks interesting.

This structure is the same in Thai, but errors occur when Thai speakers fail to differentiate between linking verbs and ordinary verbs and use adverbial complements:

\*It tastes deliciously.  
\*He felt sadly.  
\*The story sounds falsely.  
\*My head feels badly.

#### 4.6. Non-Continuous Verbs

In English, some verbs cannot be used in the continuous tense. For example, the following sentences express the same semantic notion as the continuous tense, but the continuous form of copula + verb + -ing is never used:

He believes us now.  
John knows the answer.  
I like this song.  
I have a headache.

Thai speakers of English might tend to use the continuous tense:

\*He is believing us now.  
\*John is knowing the answer.  
\*I am liking this song.  
\*She is having a headache.

## PART 5: SYNTAX. NOUN PHRASE

### 5.0. Noun Phrase: Introduction

Every language has a distinction between nominal and verbal elements in sentences. Even though sometimes this distinction is not always clear-cut, we nevertheless find nouns and verbs in all languages. It is, of course, debatable whether or not this dichotomy is a grammatical superficiality or not; that is, many linguists believe that the superficial forms noun and verb or nominal and verbal relate to the same fundamental deep structure phenomenon. In both English and Thai, for example, the word comb is both a noun and a verb (a comb /wli/, to comb /wli/), and it is a moot point whether the noun comb is derived from the verb combing or vice versa. For the purposes of language teaching, however, it seems practical to consider nouns and verbs as separate grammatical forms, and therefore they will be introduced in separate units in this manual.

This unit, which describes the noun phrase, contrasts the following nominal forms in English and Thai: names, pronouns, uncountable nouns, countable nouns, determiners, relative clauses, nominalization, compounding, adjectives, intensifiers, possessives, prepositions, numbers, classifiers, and expletives. Chart XIII compares the way these nominal forms occur in English and Thai, and gives an over-all view of some of the problems discussed in this unit.

### 5.1. Names

In both English and Thai there is a fairly clear distinction between names, or proper nouns, and common nouns. The former are not usually modified by articles, demonstratives, genitives, adjectives, or relative clauses, but the latter usually are. Furthermore, names are used as vocatives whereas common nouns are not:

- 1) Bob is here.
- 2) \*The Bob is here.
- 3) \*This Bob is here.
- 4) \*His Bob is here.
- 5) \*Bob whom I know is here.

There are exceptions to some of these restrictions, of course. For example, if there are two fathers at a picnic who both have a son named Bob, we might point to one of the fathers and say sentence 4), His Bob is here to tell someone which Bob was attending the picnic. But, generally speaking, names are clearly distinct from the class of common nouns in both English and Thai.

In English, names are always capitalized, and this sometimes serves to signal the difference between words which can be either proper nouns or common nouns.

#### Common Nouns

bill  
animal farm  
the mountains of the moon

#### Names

Bill  
Animal Farm  
The Mountains of the Moon



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Chart XIII

| A Comparison of Nominal Forms in English and Thai |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Nominal Forms                                     | English   | Thai   |
| 5.1 Names   | rarely modified   | rarely modified  |
| 5.2 Pronouns                                      | case often unmarked   | case <del>never</del> marked                           |
| 5.3 Uncountable Nouns                             | marked by <u>how much</u><br><u>uncountable noun</u> ?                            | marked by <u>how much</u><br><u>uncountable noun</u> ? |
| 5.4 Countable Nouns                               | marked by <u>how many</u><br><u>countable noun</u> ?                              | marked by <u>how many</u><br><u>countable noun</u> ?   |
| singular  | if unmarked with any<br>determiners, always<br>marked by <u>a</u> (or <u>an</u> ) | unmarked   |
| plural  | almost always marked<br>by {-s} affix   | unmarked   |
| 5.5 Determiners                                   | articles, demonstra-<br>tives, genitives  | only demonstratives<br>and genitives                   |
| 5.6 Relative Clauses                              | many relative<br>pronouns   | only two relative<br>pronouns                          |
| 5.7 Nominalization                                | many ways of<br>nominalizing  | few ways of<br>nominalizing                            |
| 5.8 Compounding                                   | frequent  | frequent   |
| 5.9 Adjectives                                    | prenominal  | postnominal  |
| 5.10 Intensifiers                                 | few   | many   |
| 5.11 Possessives                                  | marked by <u>of</u> or<br>inflectional suffix                                     | marked only by<br>/kʰǎŋ/                               |
| 5.12 Prepositions                                 | used in prepositional<br>phrases and as<br>verbal complements                     | used mainly in<br>prepositional<br>phrases             |
| 5.13 Numbers                                      | ordinal numbers<br>inflected  | ordinal numbers<br>marked by /tʰǎisùt/                 |
| 5.14 Classifiers                                  | relatively few  | many   |
| 5.15 Expletives                                   | <u>it</u> and <u>there</u>  | none   |



In Thai, there is no capitalization, so Thai students might find the capitalization of names a little troublesome at first; but any student who has studied English for a few years should be able to use capitalization automatically, since it is a very straight-forward kind of procedure.

In contrast to speakers of English, Thai people are generally introduced and known by their first names (their given names), whereas usually only close friends and relatives know a person's last name (family name). It would be perfectly appropriate, therefore, for the English teacher to call his Thai students by their first names. This is all the more desirable because Thai family names are generally longer and more difficult for English speakers to pronounce than Thai first names. Thai people do not have middle names.

As a sign of respect, Thai speakers often call their teachers by their occupational title, rather than addressing them as Mr. or Mrs. Consequently, a doctor will often be called Mr. Doctor, and a teacher will almost always be called Mr. Teacher or, simply, Teacher. Thai students should learn that we generally address people as Mr. or Dr. followed by their last names, and that generally only children address teachers simply as Teacher.

## 5.2. Pronouns

Chart XIV

| A Comparison of English and Thai Pronouns |           |          |        |          |        |
|---|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
|   |           | English  |        | Thai     |        |
|   |           | Singular | Plural | Singular | Plural |
| 1st person                                | masculine | I        | we     | phôm     | raw    |
|   | feminine  | I        | we     | hit hân  | raw    |
| 2nd person                                | masculine | you      | you    | khun     | khun   |
|   | feminine  | you      | you    | khun     | khun   |
| 3rd person                                | masculine | he       | they   | khăw     | khăw   |
|   | feminine  | she      | they   | khăw     | khăw   |
|   | neuter    | it       | they   | mên      | mên    |

Thai pronouns in boxes e.g. are those pronouns which do not parallel the English pronoun system and, therefore, are a source of interference for Thai speakers learning English.

### 5.2.1. Person and Number in English and Thai Pronouns

Despite the fact that English and Thai are totally unrelated, it is interesting to note the similarity between the pronominal systems of these two languages, as shown in Chart XIV. Notice, for example, that the form of the second person pronoun is the same in both the singular and plural, in Thai and also in English. The languages also have similar forms for both the masculine and feminine first and third persons plural. The differences between the two languages, however, are sources of interference for Thai speakers learning English, and the nature of this interference should be carefully noted.

First of all, Thai has different forms for the first person singular masculine and feminine pronouns (Thai forms which do not parallel the English forms are shown in boxes in Chart XIV). Since English uses the same form for both males and females in this instance, it is easier for Thai speakers to learn the English pattern than vice versa.

The second major difference between the two pronoun systems is a great source of interference for Thai speakers learning English. The Thai third person singular pronoun does not specify the sex of a human antecedent, whereas in English whether the antecedent is human or non-human, and the sex of the human antecedent are obligatorily specified in the third person singular. It is very difficult for Thai speakers to learn to make these distinctions in gender, and mistakes such as the following are extremely common:

I saw Mary yesterday. \*He was walking down the street.

\*Mrs. Clayton is our teacher, and we like him very much.

\*Sam asked Sue if she (meaning Sam) had passed.

Mistakes such as these are often crucial to the meaning of a sentence. The form of the third person singular pronoun in the last sentence tells us whether Sam wanted to know about his examination results or Sue's.

The remaining difference between these two sets of pronouns lies in the third person neuter plural forms in English and Thai. The Thai form /mən/ means more than one it, while English uses the form they which is indistinguishable from the masculine and feminine plural forms. The Thai sometimes use the third person singular form it when they are actually referring to the third person plural they:

\*It (the books) fell off my desk.

\*I saw it (the termites) all through the house.

The Thai student must learn that the third person plural, unlike the third person singular, is unmarked by gender in English. Care must be taken that the forms its (third person possessive) and it's (contraction of it is) are not misunderstood by the student to be the plural of the third person singular it.

## 5.2.2. Pronominal Forms in English and Thai

Chart XV

| A Comparison of English and Thai Pronominal Forms |  |                                       |                                      |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| English   |  |                                       | Thai                                 |
| Interpersonal Relationships                       |  |                                       |                                      |
| age   | none   |                                       | /nũu/ <u>young girl</u>              |
| social position                                   | none   |                                       | /phrádɔŋ/ <u>he</u><br>(the king)    |
| plural markers                                    | all (as in <u>you all</u> )  |                                       | /tháŋlǎay/ <u>all</u>                |
| stylistic   | use of passive <u>It is said that</u> , use of <u>indefinite One can see</u> , editorial <u>we</u> , <u>We believe</u> |                                       | /kháphétjǎw/ <u>I</u><br>(formal)    |
| Grammatical Relationships                         |  |                                       |                                      |
| possessive adjective                              | my<br>your<br>his, her, its  | our<br>yours<br>theirs                | none<br>/khǎɔŋ/ <u>of</u> is used    |
| possessive pronoun                                | mine<br>yours<br>his, hers   | ours<br>yours<br>theirs               | none<br>/khǎɔŋ/ <u>of</u> is used    |
| indefinite  | somebody<br>everybody<br>nobody  | someone<br>everyone<br>anyone<br>etc. | none<br>/khon/ <u>people</u> is used |
| objective   | me<br>you<br>him, her, it  | us<br>you<br>them                     | none                                 |
| reflexive   | myself<br>yourself<br>himself,<br>herself,<br>itself   | ourselves<br>yourselves<br>themselves | none<br>/eɛŋ/ <u>self</u> is used    |

### 5.2.3. Pronominal Forms Which Show Interpersonal Relationships

Chart XV divides the pronominal forms of English and Thai into two categories: forms which indicate interpersonal relationships, and forms which indicate grammatical relationships

It is readily apparent that whereas Thai has more pronominal forms which indicate interpersonal relationships than English, English has more pronominal forms which indicate grammatical relationships than Thai. Even though the grammatical relationship category will be the greater source of difficulty for Thai speakers learning English, it is important that some of the differences between English and Thai in the interpersonal category be brought out here.

Because Thai has many different pronominal forms to indicate various relationships between speaker and listener (e.g. instead of I, young girls use /nǔu/, which literally means mouse, when talking to superiors), it is sometimes difficult for a Thai speaker to know which pronominal form to use, especially if he is confused about his status in relation to his listener or to a third person. Thai speakers often drop the pronoun altogether in such cases, in order to avoid making a decision and committing themselves to stating what their relationship to someone else is. In colloquial speech, pronouns are often deleted in Thai if there is no confusion over who the pronouns refer to. Sometimes, however, names or titles are used instead of pronouns, a substitution which sounds peculiar if used in English:

Father to child:      Father will help you.      instead of  
   I will help you.

Teacher to students:      Teacher will assign a lesson.      instead of  
   I will assign a lesson.

One pronominal form indicating impersonality through style which is difficult for many Thai speakers to learn is the deletion of I in formal style. Although this manual is not concerned with the problems of writing prose, it may be important for the students to realize the stylistic use of the passive or the indefinite pronoun one in place of I in formal English.

### 5.2.4. Pronominal Forms which Show Grammatical Relationships

A far greater source of interference for Thai speakers is the English system of inflecting pronouns to show case relationships. There is no pronominal inflection in Thai. Therefore, the marking of case relationships through pronominal inflection in English is difficult for Thai students to master.

The possessive adjective and possessive pronoun forms are both marked simply by /khǎɔŋ/ of in Thai:

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| my book...              | This one is mine.    |
| nǎŋsɨt   (khǎɔŋ)   phǎm | ǎnnɨi   khǎɔŋ   phǎm |
| book   (of)   I         | one this   of   I    |

It is hard for Thai speakers to distinguish between the possessive adjective and the possessive pronoun forms in English, since both forms are similar and uninflected in Thai. Mistakes like the following are consequently quite prevalent:

\*This is mine book.

I will bring my book. \*So, you bring your.

There is also a tendency to confuse the possessive adjective its with the contraction it's. Also, English has no possessive pronoun its:

Do you have your coat? Yes, I have mine.

Does the dog have its coat? \*Yes, it has its.

Because there are no indefinite pronouns in Thai, the indefinite pronouns in English are difficult for Thai speakers to learn quickly. The Thai equivalents of indefinite pronouns are phrases with /khon/ people:

somebody

mii | khon

have | people (There are people.)

nobody

mây | mii | khon

no | have | people (There are no people.)

Pronouns are not inflected to show the objective case in Thai, thus, the objective pronominal forms are a source of interference for Thai speakers learning English:

He saw us yesterday.

khâw | hên | raw | m'awanii

he | see | we | yesterday

Part of the difficulty that Thai speakers have in learning these pronominal forms in English lies in the fact that these forms are not inflected consistently. For example, of the following eight forms of the pronoun in English, three forms remain unchanged in the objective case:

|                  | Singular        | Plural          |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| First Person     | I → me          | we → us         |
| Second Person    | you (unchanged) | you (unchanged) |
| Third Person (m) | he → him        | they → them     |
| Third Person (f) | she → her       |                 |
| Third Person (n) | it (unchanged)  |                 |

Reflexive pronouns in Thai are pronouns which are followed (not always directly) by the word /een/ self. Although the reflexive pronouns in English are fairly similar to the Thai pattern, the possessive adjective directly followed by self (except himself), there are two differences in the English system that are difficult for Thai speakers to learn: 1) himself is the exceptional form which replaces the form his-self, which follows the pattern, and 2) all plural forms are followed by selves. Aside from the actual form of the reflexive pronouns in English, there is the much more vexing question of how to use the reflexive correctly in English.

Generally speaking, the reflexive is used to show that 1) someone is doing something to his own body, or 2) someone is doing something alone and unassisted. In Thai, /een/ self is used for both meanings, too, although in the first meaning (to oneself), it is always accompanied by the word /tua/ body:

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| He killed himself.      | He did it himself. |
| kháw   khâa   tua   een | kháw   tham   een  |
| he   kill   body   self | he   do   self     |

It is important for Thai speakers to recognize, therefore, that reflexive pronouns carry both meanings in English without the addition of other words. Sometimes a sentence is ambiguous because of the fact that reflexive pronouns can be interpreted in two different ways:

He tried to eat himself.

### 5.3. Uncountable Nouns

The division of common nouns into countable and uncountable nouns, as in English, becomes an artificial division in Thai. In English this division serves to indicate such grammatical functions as when the indefinite article is used, when the plural suffix is used, and when such modifiers as much, many, little, few, etc. are used. In Thai, nouns are considered uncountable when followed by how much and countable when followed by how many, but this division does not serve any grammatical function. All uncountable nouns can be countable nouns if they are followed by a classifier. Neither uncountable nor countable nouns are ever marked in Thai with articles, plural suffixes, or different modifiers such as much, many, little, few, etc.

### 5.4. Countable Nouns

Chart XVI: A Comparison of Countable and Uncountable Nouns in English and Thai indicates quite clearly that the use of articles and plural suffixes in English is a grammatical operation which is completely lacking in Thai. It is also seen that whereas countable nouns are obligatorily marked with number in English, number is never obligatorily marked in Thai and thus number is usually only indicated by context.

Chart XVI

| A Comparison of Countable and Uncountable Nouns<br>in English and Thai |                            |                        |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|
|  | English                    | Thai                   |
| Uncountable  | I eat rice.                | phǒm thaan khǎaw       |
|  | I eat <u>the</u> rice.     | phǒm thaan _ khǎaw     |
| Countable  | He is <u>a</u> doctor.     | khǎaw pen _ mǎo        |
|  | He is <u>the</u> doctor.   | khǎaw kh++ _ mǎo       |
|  | You are doctors.           | khun pen mǎo _         |
| Uncountable  | He has <u>much</u> food.   | khǎaw mii ahǎan mǎk    |
| Countable  | He has <u>many</u> books.  | khǎaw mii nangst+ mǎak |
| Uncountable  | He has <u>little</u> food. | khǎaw mii ahǎan nǎoy   |
| Countable  | He has <u>few</u> books.   | khǎaw mii nangst+ nǎoy |

Articles, plural suffixes, and modifiers are underlined in the English examples. The underlining in the Thai examples shows the absence of articles and plural suffixes in the equivalent Thai words and the similarity between modifiers of countable and uncountable nouns (e.g. mǎak in the above examples means both much and many).

There are three prominent sources of interference that stem from the difference between countable nouns in English and in Thai. First of all, since Thai has no articles, it is difficult for Thai speakers to remember that all singular nouns in English must have an article if there is no other kind of determiner modifying the noun. The following sentence typifies the kind of mistakes Thai speakers tend to make:

\* \_ Happy boy comes from \_ happy family.

Secondly, since there are no plural suffixes in Thai, Thai students have great difficulty in remembering to mark plural nouns with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ suffix (see section 2.1.1.):

\* Many boy \_ and girl \_ enjoy movie \_.

A problem related to the omission of the plural suffix is the fact that some English nouns either are unmarked in the plural or have irregular plural forms (e.g. deer, sheep, men, women, children, phenomena, etc.). Since there are relatively few nouns such



as these, they do not pose an insurmountable problem to Thai speakers; nevertheless, the very fact that formation of plurals in English is irregular further burdens the Thai student.

The final problem that a Thai student must face in learning how to use countable nouns in English is the fact that countable nouns (specifically, plural nouns) often take different modifiers than uncountable nouns. For example, although some modifiers occur with both kinds of nouns, there are some which do not.

I have some candy.  
I have some apples.

I have no candy.  
I have no apples.

(Same)

I have much candy.  
I have many apples.

I have little candy.  
I have few apples.

(Different)

### 5.5. Determiners

There are three kinds of determiners in English (articles, demonstratives, and genitives) and only two in Thai (demonstratives and genitives).

#### 5.5.1. Articles

Mistakes involving the misuse or omission of articles in English are probably more prevalent than any other single grammatical error in the speech of Thai students. Although a great number of the mistakes are grounded in the fact that Thai has no articles, many mistakes occur because, contrary to what most native speakers of English assume, the use of articles is not a simple, straightforward procedure. Most speakers of English are at a loss to explain the usage of the articles in the following sentences other than to say that the first sentence of each pair sounds better:

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.  
A bird in a hand is worth two in a bush. (!)

Many an American loves his country.  
Many the American loves his country. (!)

I'll run down to the store and get some milk.  
I'll run-down to a store and get some milk. (!)

We learned how to play the piano.  
We learned how to play a piano. (!)

The gangster was E.G. Robinson.  
A gangster was E.G. Robinson. (!)

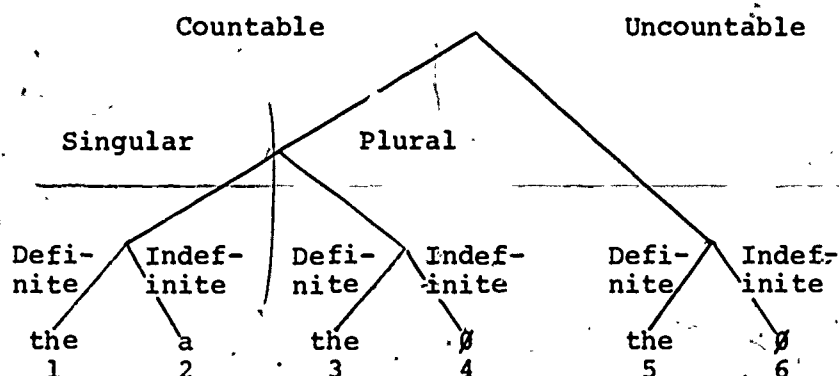
He was arrested by the police.  
He was arrested by police. (!)

The problems that are brought up by these pairs of sentences as well as many other kinds of irregularities in the usage of arti-



cles in English are too numerous to be covered in this manual. For this reason only a few basic generalizations are made in order to assist the teacher in helping Thai students learn when to use a, the, or no article at all.

Generally speaking, the following criteria are used to decide whether the definite or indefinite article is to be used with a common noun, or whether no article is used at all: 1) the noun is countable or uncountable, 2) the noun is singular or plural, and 3) the noun is definite (the speaker is referring to a specific X), or indefinite (the speaker is making a general reference to any X). A tree diagram with examples will show how these criteria are used in the selection of articles in English:



1. He wants the red bicycle.
2. He wants a red bicycle.
3. He wants the red bicycles
4. He wants ∅ red bicycles.
5. He wants the red candy.
6. He wants ∅ red candy.

As mentioned previously, Thai students will have a great deal of difficulty mastering the correct usage of articles in English; but if the teacher can provide the students with generalizations such as the above, a great deal of what the Thai speaker feels to be haphazard and redundant about the English system of articles will be eliminated. Although the distinction between countable and uncountable and singular and plural is not very difficult for Thai students to learn, the distinction between definite and indefinite poses a great deal of difficulty. Here are a few generalizations that will be helpful in delineating between definite and indefinite reference:

- 1) In a continual conversation or discourse, the indefinite article is generally used when the noun is first referred to and the definite article is used in every successive use of the noun:

Yesterday I saw a large ship. The ship had a tall mast towering above its decks. On the mast was a flag flying freely, and above the flag was a yellow pennant.

2) In a conversation, the definite article generally is used with nouns which are of common knowledge to all the participants in the conversation. It is generally disturbing and inappropriate if a definite article is used with a noun which is not of common knowledge to the participants of a conversation:

Husband: I finally got the raise!

Wife: Wonderful! We've been hoping for it for so long.

Husband: Yes, I felt so good I went out and bought the new sports car!

Wife: What new sports car! The raise was going to pay for the mink stole!

Husband: Mink stole?

3) Finally, definite articles are used with nouns which are specified by a superlative adjective, by a relative clause, or by an ordinal number:

King Kong is the world's largest gorilla.

This is the house that Jack built.

We read the ninth chapter.

Aside from the three preceding generalizations about the distinctions between definite and indefinite articles in English, there is a verbal construction in Thai which, if known by the teacher, might be helpful in acquainting Thai speakers with the usage of definite and indefinite articles more completely. Even though Thai has no articles, there are two verbs to be in Thai which are often used to signal the difference between definite and indefinite nouns in Thai, just as a and the are used to signal the difference between definite and indefinite nouns in English:

1) pen (to be + a + Noun)

He is a doctor.

kháw | pen | mǎo  
he | is | doctor

John is a teacher.

John pen khruu  
John is teacher

2) khít (to be + the + Noun)

He is the doctor. (the doctor we're talking about)

kháw | khít | mǎo  
he | is | doctor

John is the teacher. (the teacher we're talking about)

John | khít | khruu  
John | is | teacher

These examples show that even though there are no articles in Thai, the same definite-indefinite distinction which is signaled by the use of articles in English is signaled by the choice of the verb; that is, /pen/ is used where English speakers normally use Be + a + Noun, and /khɯ̃t/ is used where English speakers normally use Be + the + Noun. If the teacher can introduce his Thai students to the definite-indefinite distinction in English through the Thai examples above, there is a good chance that the Thai students will be able to have some confidence in handling what otherwise might prove to be a seemingly impossible system to learn.

#### 5.5.2. Demonstratives

In contrast to English, Thai has three demonstratives, /nii/ this, /nɔ̃n/ that, and /nɔ̃n/ yonder. The use of /nii/ this and /nɔ̃n/ that is fairly similar to the English pattern of usage with the major exception that in Thai, there is no contrast between singular and plural. That is, /nii/ is either this or these and /nɔ̃n/ is either that or those. This difference is not crucial, however, and generally speaking the correct use of demonstratives in English is not nearly so difficult for Thai speakers as is the correct usage of articles and genitives.

It is helpful to remember that demonstratives and articles are mutually exclusive in English. Forms like the following are ungrammatical:

\*This a book.

\*The that book.

Furthermore, it is appropriate to keep in mind the pre-articles, modifiers which are bound to articles and, for the most part, to demonstratives and genitives also. Examples of these are: many of, all of, half of, etc. Some of the differences between these modifiers are extremely difficult for Thai speakers to master. The difference between the following pairs, for example, is rarely learned as a productive pattern for Thai speakers learning English:

I have little money; we can't go to the movies.  
I have a little money; let's go to the movies.

Sometimes, the modifiers little and a little are mistaken for the adjective meaning small. It is very difficult for Thai speakers to see the ambiguity of the following sentence:

I'd like a little cake.

#### 5.5.3. Genitives

Some of the problems concerning the usage of genitives in English (e.g. my, your, their, Jim's, the King of Ireland's) are covered in other sections of this manual. The phonological and morphological problems of the /s/, /z/, /ɪz/ possessive affix

have already been described in section 3.1.1. Section 3.2.4. introduced the forms of pronominal possessive adjectives in English. And, similarly, the difference between the formation of possessives in English and Thai are covered in section 3.11. It is sufficient to state here, then, that genitives (i.e. any possessive modifiers of a noun) are mutually exclusive with both articles and demonstratives in English. There are a few rare exceptions to this rule. We sometimes use demonstratives and genitives together in such stylized expression as:

Fellow Americans, I want to introduce you to this our new President.

But the following characterization is almost without exception and should be helpful to anyone learning English as a second language. Every common noun in English is preceded by either an

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Article:            | 1) a(an)           |
|                     | 2) the             |
|                     | 3) $\emptyset$     |
| or a Demonstrative: | 4) this (these)    |
|                     | 5) that (those)    |
| or a Genitive:      | 6) my, Jim's, etc. |

For example:

- 1) I have a book.
- 2) I have the book.
- 3) I have  $\emptyset$  books.
- 4) I have this book.
- 5) I have that book.
- 6) I have my book.

#### 5.6. Relative Clauses

In both English and Thai, relative clauses are formed by subordinating one sentence to another through a relative pronoun:

I like horses. Horses run fast.  
 phôm tshâp maa maa win rew  
 I like horses horses run fast

I like horses that run fast.  
 phôm tshâp maa thii win rew  
 I like horses that run fast

Notice that in both English and Thai, the subject of the subordinated sentence is deleted in the relative clause. In other words, the relative pronoun /tshii/ that replaces the subject /maa/ horses. If the relative pronoun replaces the object of the

subordinated sentence, the object is deleted in the relative clause in both languages:

I like the food. Mother prepares the food.

phǒm | tʰhǎp | ahǎan | khunmǎe | tham | ahǎan  
I | like | food | mother | make | food.

I like the food that mother prepares.

phǒm | tʰhǎp | ahǎan | thǎi | khunmǎe | tham  
I | like | food | that | mother | make

The basic structure of relative clause formation in English, then, is not different from that in Thai, and consequently it is not difficult for Thai speakers to learn. There are several differences however, that present real problems to Thai students learning English.

#### 5.6.1. Relative Pronouns

One of these differences in relativization in Thai and English is the fact that Thai uses the relative pronoun /thǎi/ (although two other relative pronouns /sǎn/ and /phǎu/, roughly equivalent to which and who are used occasionally) where English uses that, which, who, whom, and whose, depending on stylistic and semantic constraints. Obviously, it is important for Thai students to learn how to use these pronouns correctly, a task which is confusing to him at first because of his first language background.

It is probably easiest for the teacher to begin with that, because this relative pronoun can be used in all relative clauses as a consistent substitute for /thǎi/:

This is the book that I saw.

This is the man that I saw.

This is the man that had a green hat.

It is, a little more difficult for Thai speakers to learn the correct usage of which. Which is generally substituted for that in more formal English, although it is not usually substituted for persons:

This is the book which I saw.

\*This is the man which I saw.

Even more difficult for Thai speakers, however, is the usage of the two relative pronouns which are used exclusively with persons, who and whom. Although the use of who as a referent to objects of subordinated clauses is looked down upon by traditional grammarians, it does not seem necessary to pass on this grammatical prejudice to Thai speakers, who have problems enough with the distinction between that, which, who, and whose. Thus, it is important for Thai speakers to recognize solely that who is more formal than that in the following sentences:

This is the man who saw me.  
This is the man who (whom) I saw.

Most difficult of all, however, is the usage of the relative pronoun whose, as Thai uses the phrase /thii mii/ that has instead of the simple relative pronoun /thii/ that:

My friend whose family is sick is a teacher:  
phʔanphǝm | thii | mii | khrǝp khrua | mǎy | sabay | pen | khruu  
friend my | that | has | family | not | healthy | is | teacher

Because the Thai equivalent of the English relative pronoun whose is the paraphrase that has, Thai speakers tend to produce the English sentence above in the rather stilted expression:

My friend that has a sick family is a teacher.

or in the ungrammatical expression:

\*My friend whose sick family is a teacher. (whose is confused as a contraction of who has)

By introducing the relative pronouns in relative order of difficulty for Thai speakers (i.e. that, which, who(m), and whose), it is hoped that the Thai speakers will be able to recognize and produce these forms automatically.

#### 5.6.2. Deletion of Relative Pronouns

Another difference between English and Thai relative clauses is that relative pronouns can be deleted from relative clauses in English if the relative pronoun replaces the object of the subordinated clause:

Mary liked the present that you sent her. ⇒  
Mary liked the present you sent her.

They are the young people who(m) I like. ⇒  
They are the young people I like.

Relative pronouns are also deleted if they precede the verb to be, regardless of whether the pronoun replaces a subject or an object. Note that the verb to be is deleted along with the pronoun in this context:

The man who is calling is a salesman. ⇒  
The man calling is a salesman.

The lady who was hurt was my friend. ⇒  
The lady hurt was my friend.

Relative pronouns are never deleted in Thai. Therefore



these English patterns are a source of difficulty for Thai students. Since relative pronoun deletion is solely a stylistic phenomenon in English, it is sufficient if the Thai students simply recognize that the abbreviated form is merely a variation of the form containing the relative pronoun. If the student has learned to recognize with complete ease relative clause patterns, with deleted relative pronouns, he is ready to progress to the stage where he can learn to produce these patterns automatically.

### 5.6.3. Appositive

One final difference between relative clause structure in English and Thai is the use of appositives in the former. Appositives can be considered an abbreviated form of a relative clause:

My brother, who is a doctor, lives in San Diego.  $\Rightarrow$   
My brother, a doctor, lives in San Diego.

Thai speakers have little difficulty with the first sentence of the pair, but the appositive in the second sentence is sometimes misunderstood as a conjoined subject and the sentence is mistaken as:

My brother and a doctor live in San Diego.

Since the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ verbal affix is absent in Thai, Thai speakers often overlook the form of the verb lives which to native speakers of English signals that the subject of the sentence can only be in the singular.

Sometimes Thai speakers also mistake appositives for an adjectival construction such as my doctor brother.

### 5.7. Nominalization

In section 2.2. of the unit on morphology, some of the derivational processes of English and Thai were discussed. It was noted, for example, that Thai uses the prefix /kaan/ to nominalize verbs, and the prefix /khwaa/ to nominalize adjectives:

/phəut/ to speak      /kaanphəut/ speaking  
/dii/ good              /khwaaamdii/ goodness

The patterns of nominalization in English extend far beyond derivational changes in verbs or adjectives, however, and involve the use of infinitives, prepositional phrases, and participles. Here are a few examples of the ways in which the two sentences: It is easy and John milks the cows can be conjoined and nominalized:

For John to milk the cows is easy.  
For him to milk the cows is easy.  
It is easy for John to milk the cows.  
For him to have milked the cows was easy.  
To milk the cows is easy.

To have milked the cows was easy.  
 To milk is easy.  
 It's easy to milk.  
 The cows are easy for him to milk.  
 Cows are easy to milk.  
 John's milking the cows was easy.  
 His milking the cows was easy.  
 Milking the cows was easy.

Although Thai does not have nearly as many nominalized forms as English, there are some Thai patterns that closely parallel nominalizations in English. Aside from the derivational prefixes which change verbs into gerunds, which have already been mentioned, there are some relative clause constructions that function as nouns in both English and Thai:

That I am failing this course makes me feel unhappy.  
 kaan      | thii | phǒm | sǎp | tòk | wít | haaní | tham | háy,  
 nominal- | that | I    | test | fail | course | this | make | to  
 ization  
 prefix

phǒm | rúus+k | mǎy | sǎbayt | áy  
 I    | feel. | not | happy

Sometimes the form of the nominalization in Thai can represent several nominalized forms in English. The following two English sentences which have fairly similar meanings but different patterns of nominalization can be represented by only one pattern of nominalization in Thai:

When he went to sleep is the problem.  
 or    The time that he went to sleep is the problem.  
 weelaa | thii | kháw | pay | noon | pen | pǎnhǎa  
 time    | that | he    | went | sleep | is    | problem

Similarly the English pairs where and the place, and how and the way, can only be nominalized the place that and the way that in Thai.

Fortunately for the Thai student who is confronted with the vast variety of nominalized forms in English, nominalization is used not so much to signal differences in meaning, but differences in focus. We tend to nominalize those words or phrases in a sentence which we want to emphasize or focus upon. This is true in Thai too, of course; but the Thai speaker is more limited in his choice of nominalization patterns.

It is obvious that the teacher must first introduce those nominalization patterns with which the Thai speaker is most acquainted (i.e. gerunds and relative clauses used as nouns) before he attempts to introduce the patterns exemplified by the thirteen sentences cited earlier in this section. Patterns such as infinitives used as nouns will cause unusual difficulty, and such mis-



takes as the following can be expected:

To err is human, to forgive divine.

\*Err is human, forgive divine.

#### 5.8.      Compoundin

Because the compounding of nouns does not involve inflection or grammatical patterns that do not exist in Thai, the learning of compound nouns does not present inordinate problems to speakers of Thai. Compound nouns are extremely common in Thai, and it would be especially helpful to the elementary student if he were introduced to the compound nouns in English which directly parallel those in Thai:

|           |           |             |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| ice box   | bookcase  | blackboard  |
| tāujen    | tāunaŋs   | kradaandam  |
| case cool | case book | board black |

Beginning students might have trouble, however, and confuse the noun modifier order of Thai with the modifier noun order in English. Thus, the English word bookcase might be interpreted as a kind of book and not as a kind of case. The beginning student might confuse bookcase, then, with what appears in the Thai gloss, and which actually occurs as an English compound, case-book. Careful practice with the following pairs would be especially helpful for Thai speakers beset by this kind of confusion:

|                |     |                |
|----------------|-----|----------------|
| milk chocolate | vs. | chocolate milk |
| station bus    | vs. | bus station    |
| dog house      | vs. | house dog      |
| stool pigeon   | vs. | pigeon stool   |

Naturally, there are compound nouns in English which have no equivalent compounds in Thai, and vice versa. For example, Thai has the single noun /səmùt/ for the English compound notebook and conversely, English has the single noun corn for the Thai compound /khāawphōot/ grain corn.

Because compound nouns are not separated by spaces in Thai, Thai speakers will have the subsidiary problem of spelling English compounds correctly. Some compound nouns are always spelled together in English (cupboard, notebook, mailman, etc.), some are never spelled together (milk bottle, television set, fruit juice, etc.), and some are spelled either separately or together, depending on the whim of the writer (book lover, foot stool, man power, etc.). Because these variations in spelling are, for the most part, stylistic and not semantic, and because many speakers of English are inconsistent in their spelling of compound nouns, it is not important that Thai differs from English in the spelling of compound nouns.

#### 5.9.      Adjectives

Adjectives are included in this unit on the noun phrase be-

cause they function primarily as modifiers of nouns. The many differences between adjectival modification in English and Thai will be listed in the following sections.

#### 5.9.1. Predicate Adjectives

Predicate adjectives must always be linked to a noun phrase by a copular verb in English. In Thai, the adjective simply follows the noun phrase without an intervening linking verb:

He is very poor.

kháw | tʃon | mǎak

he | poor | very

Thai speakers tend to omit the verb to be in English expressions with predicate adjectives, and the following kinds of mistakes are quite common:

\*We like movies that funny.

\*Mr. Smith very busy today.

\*The students often late on Fridays.

Although most adjectives in English can occur either as predicate adjectives or as prenominal adjectives, there are a few exceptions to this generalization:

The chief spokesman came from Boston.

\*The spokesman was chief.

Our main problem is water pollution.

\*Our problem is main.

They did a comparative study of customs.

\*The study was comparative.

Because the distinction between predicate adjectives and adjectives functioning directly as noun modifiers is not really made in Thai, it is important for Thai students to realize that there are two ways in which adjectives are used in English and that there are some adjectives (principal, chief, comparative, main, etc.) that never occur as predicates.

#### 5.9.2. Prenominal Adjectives

One of the major differences between English and Thai adjectives is that adjectives precede the noun they modify in English, whereas adjectives follow the noun they modify in Thai:

big house

bǎan | yǎay

house | big

black horse

mǎa | dam

horse | black

Prenominal adjectives are derived from predicate adjectives in English, that is, the big house comes from the house is big and the black horse comes from the horse is black. Just as there are few adjectives which never occur as predicates (See section 5.9.1.), there are a few adjectives which never occur as prenominal

modifiers:

The fish is alive.      This man is alone  
\*It is the alive fish.   \*He is an alone man

Again, as mentioned above, the distinction between predicate adjectives and adjectives functioning directly as noun modifiers does not really exist in Thai:

The children are good.  
dèk | dii  
child | good

I like good children.  
phǒm | tʰāj | dèk | dii  
I | like | child | good

Thai students must learn that prenominal adjectives in English are usually derived from predicate adjectives, and second, that predicate adjectives are always linked to the noun phrase by a copular verb.

Contrary to what might be expected, the fact that adjectives follow the noun in Thai does not interfere with a Thai speaker's ability to use the adjective in prenominal position in English. Only beginning students should have any problems with the correct positioning of adjectives. It is interesting to note that English has a few expressions, mostly French in origin, in which the adjective follows the noun it modifies:

court martial      notary public      inspector general

### 5.9.3. The Ordering of Adjectives and Modifiers

Related to the position of the adjective to the noun is the problem of the positioning of a series of adjectives and modifiers in English and Thai. Not only do adjectives follow nouns in Thai, but additional modifiers follow, instead of precede, the adjective modifying a noun. In other words, the ordering of the nominal modifiers in Thai is the mirror image of the ordering of nominal modifiers in English:

five more clever students  
nákriən | kèəŋ | līk | hǎa | khon  
student | clever | more | five | classifier

Because of the ordering of these additional modifiers in English, Thai students are apt to confuse the ordering of modifiers and make the following mistakes:

- \*There are more five students.  
(instead of There are five more students.)
- \*There are more five clever students.  
(instead of There are five more clever students.)

There are no sequences of adjectives in Thai, that is, relative clauses are used instead of a series of adjectives to modify nouns. So Thai speakers have trouble learning to produce sequences of adjectives in English:

She likes clean, tasty food.  
 k'áw | t'f'áap | ah'dan | th'i | aròy | l'é | sà?át  
 she | like | food | that | tasty | and | clean

The ordering of the kinds of adjectives which precede the noun in English is too involved to examine in this manual. Suffice it to say that the following idiomatic ordering of adjectives is difficult for Thai speakers to learn to use spontaneously:

We enjoyed the dozen beautiful red roses.  
 \*We enjoyed the red dozen beautiful roses.

My neighbor has a big red Chevrolet car.  
 \*My neighbor has a Chevrolet car red big.

The ordering of adjectives is not fixed rigidly, and sometimes the ordering indicates which group of nouns someone is referring to. If a speaker had two green coats, one old and one new, he would refer to the older one as his old green coat. If, on the other hand, the speaker had two old coats, one green and one red, he could conceivably ask for his green old coat (as opposed to his red old coat). Usually, changes in stress and not adjectival ordering are more likely to signal these differences in English.

#### 5.9.4. Comparing Adjectives

Adjectival qualities can be compared in both English and Thai through the addition of the words more than or less than. Notice in the following examples, however, that the word order is significantly different between the two languages:

He is more clever than I.  
 k'háw | k'èen | kwàa | phóm  
 he | clever | more | than | I

Because the Thai word /kwàa/ stands for the English more than, Thai speakers have a tendency to treat more than as an indivisible unit and tend to make the following kinds of mistakes:

\*He is clever more than I.  
 \*She is pretty more than my sister.

This is also true of phrases with less than. Even though there are two words in Thai, and therefore less than can be divided by an adjective, there is a tendency to follow the Thai pattern and place the adjective before less than:

Students are less busy than teachers.  
 nákrían | yún | nǒy | kwáa | khruu  
 students | busy | less | than | teachers

#### 5.9.5. Comparative and Superlative Degree in Adjectives

Some of the problems that Thai speakers face in producing the comparative and superlative degree in English have already been discussed in the morphology section 2.1.3. It was mentioned that not only does phonological interference obtain in that Thai does not have the finals /r/ and /st/ as in bigger and biggest, but there is no inflection of adjectives at all in Thai:

|     |          |              |
|-----|----------|--------------|
| big | bigger   | biggest      |
| yáy | yáykwáa  | yáythísùt    |
| big | big more | big the most |

Thai speakers must overcome these phonological and morphological differences and they must be able to distinguish between those adjectives which are inflected with -er and -est. All other adjectives take more and most:

|            |                  |                 |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| small      | smaller          | smallest        |
| pretty     | prettier         | prettiest       |
| attractive | more attractive. | most attractive |

The superlative degree is always marked by the definite article the in English. Since there are no articles in Thai, and since the regular and comparative forms of adjectives do not have the, Thai speakers frequently omit the article altogether:

Gold is the more expensive of the two metals.  
The more, the merrier.  
The fatter I get, the hungrier I am.

#### 5.10. Intensifiers

Thai speakers have much less trouble with intensifiers in English than they do with other grammatical units because, in contrast to English which has only a few intensifiers, Thai contains a great many. For example, Thai has intensifiers that occur only with a certain adjective; this kind of intensifier greatly magnifies the meaning of the adjective and is used only informally:

|                   |                     |                 |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| extremely big     | extremely small     | (teeny-weeny or |
| yáy   bǎelǎe      | lák   krátítít      | itsy bitsy)     |
| big   Intensifier | small   Intensifier |                 |

Unlike the English intensifier extremely, this kind of intensifier cannot be used freely with any adjective; that is /bǎelǎe/ cannot be used with any adjective except big, and /krátítít/ cannot be used with any adjective except little. Obviously, this kind of intensifier will cause interference only for English

speakers learning Thai, and not vice versa.

Thai does contain general intensifiers too, however, so that the use of English intensifiers like very, quite, and too is not difficult for Thai speakers. There is a gradation of intensity between the English intensifiers quite and very, though, that is often not recognized by Thai speakers.. Often this subtle difference in intensity is dependent on dialectal or even individual variation.. For example, in British English, the following pair of sentences is almost synonymous, whereas in American English, Peter is sicker in the second sentence than he is in the first:

~~Peter is quite sick.~~

Peter is very sick.

English intensifiers are troublesome in that some of them are homophonous with other words. Thus, too (very) can be confused with too (also), rather (quite) with rather (prefer), and pretty (fairly) with pretty (attractive). The intensifier pretty is often confused with the adjective pretty by Thai speakers. This confusion can be cleared up by showing students how the intensifier pretty can be used to intensify nouns which have nothing to do with attractiveness:

I look pretty ugly in this picture.

Because adjectives can be reduplicated in Thai to show intensity, beginning students often misunderstand the phrase a pretty pretty girl to mean an extremely pretty girl rather than a fairly pretty girl.

#### 5.11. Possessives

As already mentioned in the morphology section 2.1.1., the possessive affix /s/, /z/, /Iz/ poses both phonological and morphological problems to speakers of Thai because not only does Thai have no /s/ or /z/ finals, but there is no inflection in Thai. Possessives in Thai are marked by of:

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| John's book    |         |
| nəŋsɔ̌ + kʰɔ̌ŋ | John    |
| book           | of John |

Aside from the afore-mentioned phonological and morphological problems, Thai speakers have a tendency to use of with animate nouns where in English we normally use the possessive affix. There is a tendency, therefore, not only to omit the possessive affix, but to use of constructions with animate nouns:

- \*John father
- \*the boy book
- \*the book of the boy
- \*the teacher of the students (the 'students' teacher)

Inanimate nouns do not always occur strictly in of constructions in English, and Thai students have difficulty with exceptions like the following in which the possessive is a measure of time or space:

- a year's leave (a leave of a year)
- an hour's drive (a drive of an hour)
- a stone's throw (\*a throw of a stone)
- a car's length (the length of a car)

Occasionally, the two forms of the possessive may be used for the same two nouns to indicate different referents. John's book is not the same as the Book of John.

#### 5.12. Prepositions

It is probably fair to state that mistakes involving articles, prepositions, and verbs account for the overwhelming majority of mistakes made by Thai speakers using English. The great difficulty that Thai speakers have in using articles in English has already been thoroughly discussed in section 5.5.1.; the difficulties that Thai speakers face in using prepositions in English are much greater. Not only does English have many more prepositions than Thai, more importantly prepositions in English signal many different kinds of case relationships, and involve several grammatical categories (nouns, verbs, and adverbs). Chart XVII: A Comparison of English and Thai Prepositions (p. 112) serves to illustrate the complexity of the English system more clearly.

Besides being more numerous, English prepositions are used to show relationships between different grammatical categories as seen by the following examples:

- 1) He looked over the tall man.
- 2) He looked the tall man over.  
(or He looked over the tall man.)
- 3) He overlooked the tall man.

Any native speaker of English will recognize that these three sentences can mean different things; furthermore, he will note that the preposition over functions in a different way in each sentence. In sentence 1), over introduces a prepositional phrase which indicates where the subject of the sentence was looking. In sentence 2), the preposition over is bound to the verb in a way that it is not bound in sentence 1). That is, there is no prepositional phrase in sentence 2), and, therefore the object of the sentence, the tall man, can either precede or follow the preposition over. Sentence 2) can be made into a passive; sentence 1) cannot. In the last example, sentence 3), the preposition is part of the word, and as a prefix to the verb look, it changes the meaning of the verb completely. In fact, the meaning of sentence 3) is almost completely opposite from the meaning of sentence 2). In this section on prepositions in the noun phrase, we are concerned only with prepositional phrases as used in



Chart XVII

| A Comparison of English and Thai Prepositions |             |         |        |      |     |     |
|---|-------------|---------|--------|------|-----|-----|
| Kinds of Prepositions                         | English     |         |        | Thai |     |     |
| Place   | across      | against | around | yes  | yes | yes |
|   | behind      | beside  | by     | yes  | yes | —   |
|   | in back of  | down    | in     | yes  | —   | yes |
|   | in front of | inside  | near   | yes  | yes | yes |
|   | on top of   | next to | on     | yes  | —   | —   |
|   | outside     | through | over   | yes  | —   | —   |
| Direction                                     | underneath  | under   | up     | —    | yes | —   |
|   | away from   | into    | out of | —    | —   | yes |
| Time  | toward      |         |        | —    |     |     |
|   | about       | after   | around | yes  | yes | —   |
|   | at          | before  | by     | —    | yes | —   |
|   | during      | for     | in     | yes  | —   | —   |
| Accompaniment                                 | on          | since   |        | —    | —   |     |
|   |             | with    |        |      | yes |     |
| Purpose                                       |             | for     |        |      | yes |     |
| In the Capacity of                            |             | as      |        |      | —   |     |
| Agent   | by          | with    |        | yes  | yes |     |

sentence 1). Prepositions functioning as some sort of verbal complement are discussed in the verb phrase section 4. Prepositions as prefixes, as in sentence 3), will be discussed in the vocabulary section 6.

#### 5.12.1. Prepositions of Place

Chart XVII shows that prepositions are most commonly used in prepositional phrases to show the place or the positioning of an object.



There are several English prepositions which to a somewhat differing extent indicate proximity. They are difficult for Thai speakers to learn because there is only one Thai preposition which is equivalent:

He is near the table.  
 He is by the table.  
 He is beside the table.  
 He is around the table. (not meaning encircling)  
 He is next to the table.

khǎw | yùu | kláay | tó  
 he | live | near | table

Note that Thai uses a word meaning to live or to dwell where English uses the verb to be. Sometimes this causes awkward mistakes like:

\*The book lives near the table.

It is obvious that the different shades of meaning in the uses of the English prepositions above will require a great deal of practice on the part of the Thai student.

Another problem with prepositions of place is the idiomatic use of certain pairs of prepositions in English. Compare:

He lives on State Street.  
 khǎw | yùu | thǎi | thanǒn | State  
 he | live | at | street | State

He lives at 35 State Street.  
 khǎw | yùu | thǎi | 35 | thanǒn | State  
 he | live | at | 35 | street | State

Note that the same preposition is used in both sentences in Thai. Similarly, the English pairs in and at stand for the same Thai preposition in these examples:

He was born in America.  
 khǎw | kǎet | thǎi | America  
 he | born | at | America

He was born at home.  
 khǎw | kǎet | bǎan  
 he | born | home

It is obvious that sentence pairs like these must be diligently practiced until these prepositional phrases can be used automatically and idiomatically.

#### 5.12.2. Prepositions of Direction

Closely related to prepositional phrases which indicate po-

sitioning are those which show the direction of an activity. Generally, these prepositions must be paraphrases with an additional verb or noun in Thai:

He ran into the room.  
 kháw | wín | kháw | hǒng  
 he | run | enter | room

He ran toward the hospital.  
 kháw | wín | pay | thaaŋ | rǒŋphayabaan  
 he | run | go | way (path) | hospital

Sentence pairs like the following which contrast the meanings of prepositions of place and those of direction in English are useful to Thai speakers learning the use of directional prepositions:

He ran in the room.  
 He ran into the room.

5.12.3. Prepositional phrases related to time are another source of interference to Thai speakers. There are some English pairs having almost the same meaning which have only one equivalent preposition in Thai:

He came in time. or  
 He came on time.  
 kháw | maa | thaaŋ | weelaa  
 he | came | in | time

One of the greatest problems a Thai speaker faces in learning English prepositions is learning when to use during, for, and since. All three of these prepositions refer to a block of time (usually in the past), but there are differences in meaning and in grammatical restrictions among them that are difficult for Thai speakers to grasp:

- 1) Bob studied for a year.
- 2) Bob studied during the year.
- 3) Bob has studied since last year.

For implies a continuous action. Thus, we assume, from sentence 1) that Bob studied diligently throughout the year without taking much time off. During implies that the action may not have been continuous, that is, in sentence 2), Bob probably interrupted his studies intermittently throughout the year. Since implies a continuous action, but it must be from a point in time, not a period of time. Note that there are grammatical constraints on these three forms as well. For usually takes the indefinite article; during usually takes the definite article; and since usually takes the perfect:

- \*Bob studied for the year.
- \*Bob studied during a year.
- \*Bob studied since last year.

The semantic distinctions among these prepositions as well as the grammatical ones must be made apparent to the Thai student before he will be able to use these forms effectively.

#### 5.12.4. Other Prepositions

Prepositional phrases showing accompaniment or purpose do not seem too difficult for Thai speakers, since English and Thai do not differ greatly here:

|                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| He went <u>with</u> friends.   | We work <u>for</u> money.           |
| kháw   pəy   káp   phǎn        | raw   thǎm   ǵaən   sǎmráp   ǵeən   |
| he   go   <u>with</u>   friend | we   do   work   <u>for</u>   money |

The use of as, not as a conjunction, but as a preposition indicating in the capacity of, is difficult for Thai speakers to learn because there is no equivalent preposition in Thai:

He does well as a counselor.

Although Thai has prepositions which indicate relationships involving agents, there are some differences in usage between English and Thai that create problems for Thai speakers learning the correct usage of by and with. Whereas the by prepositional phrase can be deleted in English passives, it cannot be deleted in Thai:

|                             |                          |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| He was killed (by a knife). |                          |  |  |
| kháw   thùuk                | taay   dɔɔy   mǐt        |  |  |
| he   passive                | dead   <u>by</u>   knife |  |  |
|                             | particle                 |  |  |

Although Thai has the same kind of prepositional phrase, the usage of with in Thai differs greatly from English. Whereas sentence 1) below seems more usual for us as English speakers (except, of course, our answering the very specific question, What did he use to write the book?), sentence 2) is the more usual form for Thai speakers:

- 1) He wrote the book with a pencil. (usual)  
kháw | khǎn | nǎnsǎi | dɔɔy | dɪnsɔɔ (unusual)  
he | write | book | with | pencil
- 2) He used a pencil to write the book. (usual)  
kháw | tǎy | dɪnsɔɔ | khǎn | nǎnsǎi  
he | use | pencil | write | book

Because the second form is more usual for Thai speakers, they have a tendency to use use rather than with in sentences with

an agent. The following kinds of unusual sentences result:

How did you open the door?

I used a pass key to open the door.

(instead of I opened the door with a pass key.)

How did she answer you?

She used a careless shrug to answer me.

(instead of She answered me with a careless shrug.)

Practice with by and with prepositional phrases will help Thai students to understand how agent phrases are expressed idiomatically in English.

### 5.13. Numbers

In the morphology unit (section 2.2.7.), the difference between ordinal and cardinal numbers in English and Thai was discussed. The greatest source of interference for Thai speakers learning English numbers is that since ordinal numbers are not inflected in Thai, they have difficulty learning the distinctions between one-first, two-second, etc. However, there are two other sources of interference that bear mention here.

First, Thai students who have learned English plurals quite well tend to use the plural suffix with numbers. For example, although we can say hundreds of people, we do not say \*three hundreds people. This mistake is most evident in a long series of numbers:

10,281 = \*ten thousands, two hundreds and eighty-one

The other problem Thai speakers face is learning the higher numbers in English. Where Thai uses a new word for every digit, English uses a new word for every digit up to one thousand, and then repeats ten and one hundred:

| Number    | English              | Thai |
|-----------|----------------------|------|
| 1         | one                  | nɨŋ  |
| 10        | ten                  | sip  |
| 100       | hundred              | rɔɔy |
| 1,000     | thousand             | phan |
| 10,000    | ten thousand         | mɛən |
| 100,000   | one hundred thousand | sɛən |
| 1,000,000 | one million          | lɛən |

Thai speakers confuse numbers higher than one thousand because of the irregularity of the English counting system. A million is often mistaken for ten thousand or a hundred thousand by Thai students. It is interesting to note that after million, the Thai counting system has no new words. The Thai student counting astronomical sums then finds English more convenient than Thai, since the American English number one quadrillion is a million million in Thai!

The higher numbers may also be confused by Thai students because of the differences between American and French as opposed to British and German usage:

#### American and French

|                 |                       |          |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|
| one million     | 1,000,000             | (6 0's)  |
| one billion     | 1,000,000,000         | (9 0's)  |
| one trillion    | 1,000,000,000,000     | (12 0's) |
| one quadrillion | 1,000,000,000,000,000 | (15 0's) |

#### British and German

|                 |                                   |      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| one million     | 1,000,000                         | (6)  |
| one billion     | 1,000,000,000,000                 | (12) |
| one trillion    | 1,000,000,000,000,000,000         | (18) |
| one quadrillion | 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 | (24) |

#### 5.14. Classifiers

Although we still have some historical relics of an elaborate classifier system in English (e.g. a brace of pistols, a pride of lions), generally speaking, there are not nearly as many classifiers in English as there are in Thai. Except for the idiomatic usage of such classifiers as piece, set, and pair, most countable and uncountable nouns are classified by determiners:

|                      |                       |                     |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| a book               | a piece of paper      | a piece of cake     |
| nàngsɯ̌i   nɨŋ   ləm | kradàat   nɨŋ   phəɛn | khənəm   nɨŋ   ɕhɨn |
| book   one   volume  | paper   one   sheet   | cake   one   morsel |

#### 5.15. Expletives

One nominal form that has almost no correlate in Thai and thus is extremely difficult for Thai speakers to learn is the use of it and there as expletives in English. These words function only as formal elements and, in themselves, have no meaning or antecedents:

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| It's very hot today. | There is rice in the fields. |
| wanfi   rɔ̌n   māk   | nay   naa   mii   khāw       |
| today   hot   very   | in   fields   have   rice    |

Although there are Thai expressions which contain the Thai third person singular inanimate pronoun /mən/ it used as an expletive, generally there is no direct equivalent of English it and there as can be seen in the above examples. Mistakes like the following are quite common, therefore, especially for beginning students:

- \*Is very hot today.
- \*The fields have rice.

## PART 6: VOCABULARY

### 6.0 Introduction

The previous units of this manual have described the grammatical structures of the noun phrase, the verb phrase, and the sentence in English as they contrast with similar grammatical structures in Thai. These units have been devoted not so much to the meaning or use of individual words, but to the grammatical relationships and categories of English which differ from Thai in any substantial way. This final unit, which is concerned with the problems Thai speakers encounter in learning English vocabulary, is concerned essentially with the meaning and use of individual words.

The following chart lists some of the ways in which vocabulary items in English are a source of interference for Thai speakers:

Chart XVIII

| Types of Vocabulary Problems for Thai Speakers         |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 6.1. Words which have no direct equivalents in Thai    | good morning, physics, the   |
| 6.2. Word pairs with only one Thai equivalent          | borrow - lend                |
| 6.3. Words with only partial Thai equivalents          | ever - never                 |
| 6.4. Words commonly confused by Thai speakers          | wonderful - strange          |
| 6.5. Derivations                                       | to move - movable - movement |
| 6.6. Homonyms  | light                        |
| 6.7. Prepositions                                      | on time - in time            |
| 6.8. Idiomatic expressions                             | look out!                    |
| 6.9. Words which have no direct equivalents in English | reduplicating adjectives     |

### 6.1. Words With No Direct Equivalents in Thai

#### 6.1.1. Greetings

There are no Thai equivalents of these English greetings which are generally used for specific times of the day:

good morning  
good afternoon

good evening  
good night

#### 6.1.2. Loan Words

There are certain English words for which there is usually no direct equivalent in Thai but with which Thai speakers are familiar. This is because these English words have been taken over as loan words into the Thai language. In instances where there may be Thai equivalents, the English loan word is used in preference to the Thai word. The problem which these words present will be one of pronunciation. Thai speakers will often pronounce them as if they were words which should subscribe to the rules of Thai phonology. Some examples of English loan words with no direct equivalent in Thai are:

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| safe (vault) | file (verb) |
| care         | team        |
| date         | football    |

Words for which there is an equivalent Thai word but which have been replaced by an English loan word in common usage are:

|      |                              |
|------|------------------------------|
| game | program                      |
| joke | dictionary (other than Thai) |
| fair |                              |

Obviously, Thai speakers will have little problem with the use or meaning of these words; however, they will have a tendency to pronounce these words according to Thai phonology since they have first learned and used these words in the Thai language:

fair may be mispronounced /fæ/.

#### 6.1.3. Technical Terms

Most technical terms will not be part of the Thai vocabulary and therefore may be known to the Thai only as a loan word. Technical terms will make up the largest single category of English words which Thai students will be learning. There may be some problems with some English technical terms which have been borrowed into the Thai language. Thai speakers tend to pronounce these words according to the constraint of Thai phonology. Since there is no final /s/ in Thai, for example, the loan word physics is pronounced /fɪsɪk/, sounding like the English word physic.

#### 6.1.4. Grammatical Words

There are certain English words which are used solely to mark grammatical categories. These words do not exist in Thai:

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| I play <u>the</u> violin. | I play ___ football.   |
| I play <u>the</u> drums.  | I play ___ basketball. |

After the verb play, the definite article, the, is used before words describing musical instruments but, not before words describing sports. Since Thai does not have the definite article, a Thai speaker might say \*I play violin or \*I play the football.

The indefinite third person singular pronoun one has no correlate in Thai:

One should love his parents.  
khon | khuan | rák | phǎmǎe  
people | should | love | father mother

Two word connectives, both...and, not only...but also, either...or, neither...nor, are difficult for Thai speakers, as Thai does not have such expressions:

Both the house and the barn were struck by lightning.  
Either you get rid of that dog or I'm leaving you.  
Neither rain nor snow nor sleet nor gloom of night shall  
stay these couriers from their appointed rounds.  
Not only did a dog bite me, but also a cat.

#### 6.1.5. Miscellaneous

Aside from the words previously mentioned, the following have no direct equivalents in Thai and are confusing to Thai speakers learning English:

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| abnormal                     | clearance (space)    |
| aboard                       | dimension            |
| align                        | end up               |
| among                        | excuse               |
| appreciate                   | expose               |
| assume                       | flash                |
| attitude (physical position) | freeze               |
| background                   | furnace              |
| become                       | gear (apparatus)     |
| capable                      | handle (verb)        |
| index                        | recommendation       |
| individual                   | reference            |
| information                  | relative (adjective) |
| insulate                     | retain               |
| loose                        | scale                |
| maintain                     | scope                |
| mass                         | shock                |
| matter                       | sleet                |
| measure (verb)               | splice               |
| negative                     | stay (verb)          |
| objective                    | turn (verb)          |
| personnel                    | upon                 |
| pleasure                     | value                |
| precipitation                | vital                |

#### 6.2. Word Pairs with Only One Thai Equivalent

Any pair of English words for which there is only one word in Thai is confusing to Thai speakers learning English. There are many pairs of English words for which there is only one word in Thai:



|             |              |        |
|-------------|--------------|--------|
| house       | home         |        |
| boat        | ship         |        |
| table       | desk         |        |
| road        | avenue       | street |
| to remember | to recognize |        |
| to drill    | to train     |        |
| to prevent  | to protect   |        |
| to do       | to make      |        |
| to look for | to find      |        |
| to kill     | to murder    |        |
| to borrow   | to lend      |        |
| always      | everytime    |        |
| to stay     | to rest      |        |

#### 6.2.1. Be - Stay - Live

Thai speakers might not understand the difference in meaning between the English verbs stay, live, and be, as all three of these words can be expressed in one Thai verb, /yùu/ in reference to location. The distinction between stay and live is not too difficult, as this distinction can be made in Thai. However, there is no distinction between live and to be + location in Thai, so this does cause considerable difficulty:

He stays at that house.  
khǎw yùu | thii | bǎan | nán  
he | stay | at | house | that

He lives in that house.  
khǎw yùu | bǎan | nán  
he | live | house | that

He is in that house.  
khǎw yùu | nay | bǎan | nán  
he | live | in | house | that

Because Thai uses the word /yùu/ stay, where the verb be is used in English to show location. Thai speakers have a tendency to use stay rather than be in sentences dealing with the location of an object:

~~The pencil is under the book.~~

\*The pencil stays under the book.

Paul is on the bus.

\*Paul stays on the bus.

It must be emphasized to Thai students learning English that the English word stay involves being at a certain location for an extended period of time, while be is not specific as to time.

#### 6.2.2. Wonder - Doubt - Suspect

Wonder, doubt, and suspect are confused by the Thai as Thai uses the same word for all three English words:

I wonder about the truth of his story.

I doubt the truth of his story.

I suspect the truth of his story.

#### 6.2.3. Borrow - Lend

Borrow and lend are the same word in Thai. Thai speakers tend to use only borrow for both words in English. They may never use the word lend; they might say, \*Can I borrow you five dollars? instead of Can I borrow five dollars from you? Another problem in respect to the use of borrow is the positioning of the object. Thai speakers tend to reverse the object-indirect object order following borrow in English, e.g. in the examples below. Also, in Thai there is no preposition used before the indirect object as there is in English:

May I borrow your pencil?

phôm | khǎo | y+tm | dinsǎo | khun | dâi | mǎy  
I | please | borrow | pencil | your | may | question word

Can you lend me your pencil?

khun | hâi | phôm | y+tm | dinsǎo | khun | dâi | mǎy  
you | give | I | borrow | pencil | your | may | question word

6.2.4. The differences between words like win and beat, lose and defeat, are difficult for Thai speakers, as these distinctions are not made in Thai. Thai speakers often incorrectly use win with an animate object instead of an inanimate object, thus producing a sentence like, \*Our team won every team and got a prize:

Our team beat every other team.

thim | raw | tshana | thim | +n | thuk | thim  
team | we | win | team | one | every | team

Our team won the game.

thim | raw | tshana  
team | we | win

Our team was defeated.

thim | raw | phae  
team | we | lost

#### 6.2.5. Prevent - Protect

Prevent and protect may be expressed by the same word in Thai. In English they cannot be used interchangeably. Thai speakers will have difficulty understanding the difference in meaning between these two words. Thai speakers often confuse the grammatical patterns which are used with prevent and protect:

He prevented the robber from hurting us.

\*He protected the robber from hurting us.

He protected us from the robber.

\*He prevented us from the robber.

#### 6.2.6. Look for - Find

The English verbs look for and find cause a comprehension problem for Thai speakers as the same Thai word may be used to express both English words. When find is used to mean a process, as in:

Will you find my pen for me?

then find and look for are the same word in Thai:

I looked for my pencil.

phôm hăa | | dînsăo | khăoŋ | phôm  
I | look | for | pencil | of | I

I found my pencil.

phôm hăa | | dînsăo | khăoŋ | phôm  
I | find (as a process) | pencil | of | I

or phôm | phóp  
tjæe | | dînsăo | khăoŋ | phôm  
I | meet (as a result) | pencil | of | I

Two word verbs such as look for and look after cause an additional problem as there are few Thai equivalents for such verb plus preposition expressions.

#### 6.2.7. Some - Any

Thai has only one word for the two English words some and any. Thai speakers have difficulty using any and will often use some in the negatives and question positions for any:

I have some money.

Do you have any money?

I don't have any money.

#### 6.2.8. Still - Yet

Thai speakers confuse the use of still and yet as there is only one word in Thai which is equivalent to both of the English words:

He hasn't come yet.

khăw | yaŋ | mây | maa  
he | still | not | come

He's still here.

khăw | yaŋ | yu | thîntî  
he | still | is | here

6.2.9. Thai students confuse the use of since, for, and ago in two ways: first in the proper choice of word and time expression, and secondly in respect to choice of verb tense agreement. The Thai language has only one word for the two English words

since and for. Also, Thai students have difficulty distinguishing between the perfect and past tense usages (See section 4.1.4 and 4.5.4.):

I have been here since April.  
I have been here for two months.  
I was here two months ago.

6.2.10. In order to - So that - So...that - Very - Too

The use of in order to and so that corresponds to one word in Thai. This is also confused with so...that:

I came in order to build an igloo.  
I came so that I could bury the camel.  
The dog's ears were so long that they hung in his food.

Although Thai has both the word too and very used to modify adjectives, Thai speakers confuse the usage of too and very in English. This is because both too and very can be followed by a complement in Thai, whereas only too can be followed by a complement in English:

He was very sick.  
\*He was very sick to go.

He was too sick.  
He was too sick to go.

Thai speakers must be taught that although too and very mean to an extreme degree in English, too usually implies that something cannot be accomplished whereas very does not carry this implication:

The coffee was very hot.  
The coffee was too hot (to drink).

6.2.11. Sometimes - Maybe

Sometimes and maybe are confused as they are the same word in Thai. A Thai student might use sometimes when he means maybe:

\*I'm not sure if he's still alive, but sometimes he is.

6.2.12. Suddenly - Immediately

There is a tendency to misuse suddenly where immediately is intended. Instead of saying I went immediately, the Thai student might say, I went suddenly. Thai students often do not realize that suddenly does not only mean promptly, but means in an unexpected manner as well.

6.3. Words With Only Partial Thai Equivalents

There are certain English expressions which partially correspond to Thai expressions, but which differ enough to cause a confusion between the two languages.

### 6.3.1. Telling Time

Both English and Thai have words which divide the time of day into four general time periods. The difference between the two languages, however, is that whereas in English we generally divide the 24-hour day into two twelve hour sections, Thai speakers generally divide the day into four six-hour sections:

| Military Time | English           |           | Thai             |             |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|
|               | Time of Day       | Time Word | Time of Day      | Time Word   |
| 2400-0600     | night-morning     | a.m.      | d+k              | tii         |
| 0600-1200     | morning           | a.m.      | tʃhǎaw sǎay      | moon tʃhǎaw |
| 1200-1800     | afternoon-evening | p.m.      | bǎay, yen        | bǎay moon   |
| 1800-2400     | night             | p.m.      | khǎm, klaangkʰɨn | tʰuum       |

There is a problem when English or Thai speakers do not refer strictly to military time. A Thai speaker may use 3 o'clock in the morning when he is really referring to 9:00 a.m. (0900):

nine o'clock a.m.

sǎam | moon | tʃhǎaw

three | hour | morning (i.e. the 0600-1200 quadrant)

Obviously, Thai speakers must learn that, in informal English time expressions, there are only two 3 o'clocks, 3:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m., and not four 3 o'clocks as in the Thai language.

Thai has a special word for time expressions used in the night quadrant in terms of 6:00 p.m. Thus, 2000 is /sǒonthum/ 6:00 p.m. plus two. A Thai speaker might misinterpret 2:00 at night as 8:00 p.m., instead of 0200. Again, the confusion is cleared up if military time is used exclusively, or if Thai speakers can learn to use the two-way English division of time in place of the four-way Thai division.

### 6.3.2. Conjunctions

Thai speakers have difficulty in selecting the appropriate English conjunction as English has more conjunctions than Thai. This problem is especially evident in writing.

For example, the functions of because and because of are often not understood by the Thai. The Thai student might say, \*Because of the university is large, it has many problems. Or, \*It's because the problem of money. Also, Thai speakers confuse the use of while and during. They might say:

\*During I was in Bangkok I was very happy.

\*I will be in Bangkok while the holidays.

### 6.3.3. Negative Words

The use of negative words such as nobody, no one, never, nothing, nowhere, none is difficult for Thai students. In Thai, this negation is carried out only by the negation of the regular word through the use of the negating particle /mây/ no. The Thai student is therefore confused about the use of no and not in English. He also does not readily understand the use of never. The word ever is overused in English by the Thai student. In expressing the negation, they will more likely say not ever instead of never:

I have never seen a purple cow.  
phôm | mây | khăy | hên | wua | sîm dān  
I | not | ever | see | cow | purple

{No one}  
{Nobody} has ever seen a purple cow.  
mây | mii | khray | khăy | hên | wua | sîm dān  
not | (have) is | who | ever | see | cow | purple

I have been nowhere and done nothing.  
mây | khăy | pay | thîndy | lé | mây | khăy | thām | dāy  
not | ever | go | anywhere | and | not | ever | do | anything

### 6.3.4. Rarely - Seldom

Rarely and seldom do not have equivalent negative words in Thai. In English, these words contain the idea of negation within themselves, and are therefore not used with a second negative word in the same sentence:

I rarely go see movies.  
phôm | mây | khăy | pay | duu | năn  
I | no | seldom | go | see | movie

I seldom go see movies.  
phôm | mây | khăy | pay | duu | năn  
I | no | seldom | go | see | movie

Mistakes with double negatives are sometimes common when Thai speakers attempt to use rarely and seldom in English:

- \*I rarely don't go see movies.
- \*I seldom don't go see movies.

### 6.3.5. Proper Names Used Instead of Pronouns

A Thai speaker might use his own name instead of the pronoun I. Also, he might use the kinship term or name of the occupation of others whom he is talking about instead of the pronouns he or she. This is commonly done in the Thai language, and since the choice of the correct gender of the third person singular pronoun in English is confusing, a Thai student can avoid the problem of pronoun selection by using proper names. This often results in rather stilted English however:

Mary and John will go to Mary's party.  
 Bob said, "Bob wants to go to the party too."

#### 6.3.6. To have - To be + Diseases

The use of the verb BE and HAVE with diseases is difficult as there is no direct correspondence between English and Thai. Thai uses the verb /pen/ BE with diseases where English uses the verb HAVE:

I am cold.  
 phǒm | nǎaw  
 I | cold

I have a cold.  
 phǒm | pen | wát  
 I | be | cold

#### 6.3.7. To be + Time

The verb BE is used in English in places where Thai uses other verbs or omits the verb entirely. The idea of BE is expressed in several ways in Thai, as seen in the above examples. In speaking English, the Thai student might omit BE as a verb:

The wedding is at ten o'clock.

- 1) phítthiitæŋŋaan | welaa | sip | moon  
 wedding | time | ten | hour
- 2) phítthiitæŋŋaan | rǎem | welaa | sip | moon  
 wedding | begin | time | ten | hour
- 3) tǎ | mii | phítthiitæŋŋaan | welaa | sip | moon  
 will | be | wedding | time | ten | hour

#### 6.3.8. Overuse of Use

Thai speakers overuse the word use with words indicating instrumental in English because of the use of use with instrumental in Thai:

I sliced the meat with a knife.  
 phǒm | tǎy | miit | hàn | nǎa  
 I | use | knife | slice | meat

Consequently, Thai speakers often say:

I used a knife to slice the meat

instead of I sliced the meat with a knife.

#### 6.3.9. Overuse of Receive or Get

There is a tendency for Thai speakers to use receive or get with abstract nouns in English, where normally the English word give would be used. This is because the word for receive or get

is used in a passive construction with abstract nouns in Thai:

My parents gave me much happiness.

phôm | dáy-ráp | kwaamsúk | mǎak | tǎak | pǎomēe  
I | receive (get) | happiness | much | from | father mother

A Thai speaker would tend to use a rather stilted English sentence which would be similar to the word order of the gloss in the example given just above:

I received (got) much happiness from my parents.

#### 6.3.10. Overuse of Like with That

Thai speakers overuse like with that where that by itself would be more appropriate. For example, instead of:

Don't do that!

they might say:

\*Don't do like that!

#### 6.4. Words Commonly Confused by Thai Speakers

Thai speakers might mistake certain English words for other English words which seem similar to them but which, in most cases are not interchangeable.

##### 6.4.1. Some Commonly Confused Word Pairs

|              |                          |             |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| wonderful    |                          | strange     |
| almost       |                          | most        |
| even         |                          | although    |
| even         | (is used in<br>place of) | even though |
| even         |                          | even if     |
| according to |                          | because of  |
| age          |                          | years old   |
| the other    |                          | another     |
| instead      |                          | instead of  |

For example, the Thai student might say:

\*Even I studied, I failed.  
(Even though I studied I failed.)

\*According to these two reasons, I failed.  
(Because of these two reasons, I failed.)

##### 6.4.2. The other - Another

The other is often confused with another. It should be pointed out that the other is used to mean the second of two entities whereas another is used to mean the second or additional of an indefinite number:



Our team came early, but the other team was late.  
Another one of our fans came to see us off.

#### 6.4.3. Whether - If - That

Whether, if, and that are often confused. In the first sentence below, if and whether may be used interchangeably. In the second sentence, however, only if is appropriate. The Thai speaker also has difficulty in understanding the difference between if and that as used in sentences 1) and 3) below:

- 1) Tell me whether/if you can come.
- 2) Tell me, if you can come.
- 3) Tell me that you can come.

#### 6.4.4. Only - Alone

There are at least two uses of only and two of alone in English which overlap in certain instances but not in all. These different uses will be confusing to the Thai student not only in the way they differ semantically but in the way they differ grammatically as well. The absence of articles in Thai presents an additional difficulty. For both sentences 1) and 2) the Thai might say \*He is only boy:

He is the only boy (in the class).  
He is only a boy (not a man).  
He alone is a boy. (The others are girls.)  
The boy is alone. (No one else is in the room.)  
He went alone. (No one else went with him.)  
He alone went. (No one else went.)

#### 6.4.5. Next - The next

The use of next and the next also cause confusion. In Thai the definite article the is not used. Therefore, Thai students will have difficulty understanding that next is used to refer to future time, whereas the next is used to indicate a sequence of events or objects:

Next year I will buy an elephant.  
The first gift was a book. The next gift was a pen.

#### 6.4.6. A little - Little - A few - Few

Because of the absence of article in Thai, Thai speakers learning English will have difficulty in understanding the distinction in meaning between the following examples (See sections 5.3. and 5.4.):

|                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| I have a little money. | (I have some money.)            |
| I have little money.   | (I don't have very much money.) |
| I have a few books.    | (I have some books.)            |
| I have few books.      | (I don't have very many books.) |

#### 6.4.7. A lot of - Lots of

Because of the distinction between singular and plural nouns

in English, two sentences are possible, where only one sentence suffices in Thai as in the following examples:

I have a lot of friends.

I have lots of friends.

In such cases, Thai speakers might confuse the English singular and plural sentences and produce one sentence, as:

\*I have a lots of friends.

#### 6.4.8. Each - Every - All

The use of each, every, and all is confusing to Thai speakers. Each is basically used to show individual identity, whereas every is used basically to show corporate identity:

Each one (of the group) is here.

Every one (in the group) is here.

Each of them is here.

All of them are here.

Each of them and All of them are acceptable phrases, whereas Every of them is not an acceptable phrase. Each, every, and all vary a great deal in English in the ways in which they can combine with words:

Everybody is here.

is possible, but not:

\*Each body is here

\*All bodies are here.

A Thai student might mistake \*every body for everybody.

It is grammatical to say:

each time

every time

but not:

\*all time

although

all the time

all times

are possible.

Each and every require a singular noun and verb form whereas all requires a regular plural s noun and a plural verb form.

Always indicates a continuous state of being whereas every-time indicates a recurring series. Thai speakers might write and pronounce always as \*alway.

6.4.9. The same as - Like - As...as

Expressions which are similar in meaning but different in grammatical usage cause problems:

This book is the same as that one.

This book is like that one.

\*This book is as same as that one.

This book is as big as that one.

6.4.10. Vacation - Trip - Holiday

The use of vacation, trip, holiday, and the holidays is often confused by Thai students:

We enjoy vacation time.

I'm taking a trip to California.

I am spending my vacation in California.

July 4th is a holiday.

We are spending the holidays in California.

\*We enjoy trip time.

\*I'm taking a holiday to California.

\*July 4th is a vacation.

6.4.11. News

News is singular in spite of its plural-appearing ending. Thai speakers might mistakes news as plural in usage:

\*The news are interesting today.

6.4.12. Causatives

The use of certain verbs as causatives is confusing to Thai students:

I had my hair cut.

He drives me crazy.

She made me tell her.

I walk my dog every night.

6.4.13. Phonologically Similar Words

Thai speakers have difficulty with words which are both semantically and phonologically similar:.

|         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| weigh   | - weight  |
| sit     | - set     |
| rise    | - rouse   |
| lie     | - lay     |
| price   | - prize   |
| succeed | - success |
| passed  | - past    |
| rise    | - raise   |

comfortable - convertible  
die - dead  
fall - fail - fell  
live - alive  
sleep - asleep - sleepy - sleeping  
brought - bought

#### 6.4.14. Similarity in Meaning But Not in Usage

Certain words are confused due to a closeness of meaning but a difference in usage in English. For example, bring and take, come and go. Verbs which indicate directions should be carefully explained.

The difference between stative verbs (see, hear) and the active verbs (look, listen) should be made clear. The necessity of a preposition following the active verb should also be emphasized:

I see the cat.  
I look at the cat.

I hear the cat.  
I listen to the cat.

The difference between do and make can best be shown by contrasting these two verbs in context. For example, one can:

make a bed  
make a speech  
make a reservation  
make a lot of money  
make a date

or one can:

do a favor  
do the dishes  
do homework

Generally, do is used to indicate that something is performed, whereas make is used to indicate that something is constructed. However, the use of do and make is very idiomatic in English.

The difference between other verbs such as:

drive - ride  
hope - expect - wish  
learn - know - study

should also be clarified as to the difference of use in contrasting situations:

We learn to swim.  
\*We study how to swim.

#### 6.4.15. Hard - Hardly

Although these two words appear to be similar, and hardly seems to be the adverbial form of the adjective hard, actually these words have antithetical meanings. Thai speakers often confuse these two words:

He works hard.  
He hardly works.

#### 6.5. Derivations

The Changing of the forms of words in English is confusing to Thai speakers learning English as there is no equivalent process in Thai. When the meaning of the word changes as well as the form, the difficulty of understanding is increased. Compare:

no change in meaning:

move - movable - movement

change in meaning:

consider - consideration - considerate

##### 6.5.1. Derivation Which Cause Special Problems

interest - interesting.  
social - society  
institute - institution  
produce - produce (See also 2.2.2. ff.)

##### 6.5.2. -ed, -ing Forms of Modifiers

Certain -ed and -ing forms of modifiers often present great difficulty. It should be made clear that the -ed forms indicate that the noun (subject) is the receiver of an action whereas the -ing forms indicate that the noun-subject is the initiator of an action:

He is a bored man. (Life bores him.)  
He is a boring man. (He leads a dull life.)  
He is a surprised man. (Something unexpected happened to him.)  
He is a surprising man. (He does the unexpected.)  
He is an interested man. (He is concerned about others.)  
He is an interesting man. (He does many things.)

##### 6.5.3. Irregular Derivations

Not only is the derivation of English words difficult for Thai students, but also the fact that there are many irregularly derived forms in English. Also there are inconsistencies in the meaning attached to the derivational form. For example, the prefix in- (which also assumes the forms en-, em- im-) might be used to represent the English preposition in as in the words:

inland  
income  
intrust

The word income, however, carries the meaning of come in only in respect to revenue or returns that come in from property, business, or labor. Inland does not mean land in in the verbal sense, but rather land (noun) which is interior. Intrust, however, does carry the meaning of trust in.

The prefix in- more often corresponds to the use of the prefix un- which negates the idea of the word to which it is attached, as in:

inaudible,  
inarticulate  
incapable

These two very different uses of the prefix in- easily confuse Thai students and prevent them from using derivational forms uninhibitingly in English.

#### 6.6. Homonyms

There are many English words which have more than one meaning. More often than not, Thai students are acquainted with only one of the several meanings:

choose = decide  
          select

stand = tolerate  
          upright position (n., or v., to assume...)

marry = (active) to get married  
          (stative) to marry two others

miss = to long for  
          fail to attend

plane = an airplane  
          a level surface

safe = a vault  
          harmless

right = direction  
          correct

light = radiance  
          weight

##### 6.6.1. Just

Thai speakers might learn only one meaning of the word just, which corresponds to the meaning of the Thai word, and overlook the use of the other meaning of the same word. An effort should be made to point out commonly used homonyms:

I just arrived in the United States. (recently)

I have just a few cents in my pocket. (only, nothing more than)

He looks just like you. (exactly)

The various uses of just in English should be pointed out to the student. Also the difference between the following sentences should be brought out:

I am just a man. (only)

I am a just man. (upright, honest, fair)

#### 6.7. Prepositions

Prepositions cause many problems for Thai speakers learning English. The Thai language does not require the use of prepositions to the extent that English does. Also, Thai does not have as many prepositions as English. English and Thai prepositions are not coterminous and English prepositions must be learned in their English contexts by the Thai students.

Many verbs in English are composed of prepositions bound to verbs:

overlook  
understand  
overdo

Thai speakers often confuse these kinds of verbs with two word verbs with prepositions: overlook - look over, understand - stand under, and overdo - do over.

##### 6.7.1 To - In - Into - At

In English the use of the prepositions to, in, into, and at, after verbs of direction and location is different from the use of these prepositions in Thai. Thai students will often omit the preposition to between a verb of direction and the destination:

He goes to the office.  
He goes into the office.  
He is at the office.  
He is in the office.  
He is on his way to the office..

##### 6.7.2. For

There is no obligatory use of a preposition in reference to money in Thai, whereas the preposition for must be used in English expressions with money. Thus the Thai student might say, \*I bought it two dollars instead of I bought it for two dollars:

I bought a book for two dollars.  
phôm | sɔ̌i | nàŋsɔ̌i | rakaɔ | sɔ̌ɔŋ | bàat  
I. | buy | book | price | two | dollar (baht)

I bought it for two dollars.  
 phǒm | sɔ̌t | sǎɔ̌n | bát  
 I | buy | two | dollar (baht)

### 6.7.3. With

The English preposition with is used to express the idea of accompaniment as well as the idea of instrument. The Thai word meaning with expresses only the idea of accompaniment. Therefore the students should be encouraged to use the preposition with as an instrumental:

I cut my meat with a knife.  
 phǒm | tɕhǎɔ̌y | mɪt | tət | nɛ̌a  
 I | use | knife | cut | meat

Also, see section 6.3.8., Overuse of Use.

### 6.7.4. To and About After Talk

There is a confusion between the use of to and about after the English verb talk. In Thai, the preposition which is used after the verb talk means about, and is also used after verbs of motion to mean to or up to:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| He talks to me.<br>khǎw   phǔt   kàp   phǒm<br>he   talk   with   I | He talks about me.<br>khǎw   phǔt   thǎn   phǒm<br>he   talk   about   I |
|---|--|

### 6.7.5. To and For After Give

After the verb give, the use of to and for is confused by the Thai. (See section 3.13)

He gives the book to me.  
 He gives John the book for me.

### 6.7.6. Two Word Verbs (Wait for and Wait on)

In English two word verbs (verb + preposition), the choice of preposition changes the meaning of the verb. Since Thai has few corresponding two word verbs, the Thai student tends not to understand the change in meaning, and might neglect the use of a preposition entirely. He might say:

\*I will wait you.

when he intends to say:

I will wait for you.

Examples:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| I will wait for you.<br>phǒm   tɕá   khǎɔ̌y   khun<br>I   will   wait   you | I will wait on you.<br>phǒm   tɕá   ráptɕhǎɔ̌y   khun<br>I   will   serve   you |
|---|---|



#### 6.7.7. Prepositions in Time Expressions

In English time expressions, Thai students tend to misuse or omit prepositions because prepositions in time expressions in Thai (such as /m+a/ when) can be deleted whereas they cannot in English:

He came in time to catch the bus:

kháw | maa | than | rótmeē  
he | come | in time | bus

He came on time for the bus.

kháw | maa | than | rótmeē | phǎodii  
he | come | in time | bus | enough

He came at 10:00 sharp.

kháw | maa | m+a | sǐp moon | tron  
he | come | when | ten hour | sharp

#### 6.8. Idioms

Idiomatic expressions for which there is no direct translation from English to Thai are especially difficult for Thai speakers to learn:

I mean it.

Do you feel welcome here?

Take care of yourself.

Watch your step.

Do you have trouble...

It's raining cats and dogs.

Look out!

#### 6.9. Words Which Have No Direct Equivalents in English

Since this manual is designed to assist teachers in dealing with the problems of students who are going from Thai to English in their language learning, the vast majority of comments and observations have dealt with words and structures in English that do not occur in Thai. It might be appropriate, however, to conclude with a few problems that arise from the fact that there are many words and structures which occur in Thai, but do not in English. This sometimes leads to mistakes in English because the Thai student misinterprets an English form as similar to a Thai form.

For example, adjectives are reduplicated in Thai to show intensity. Thus, a very good boy would be directly translated from Thai into English as good good boy. For this reason, the English expression a pretty pretty girl tends to be understood as an extremely pretty girl by Thai speakers, instead of the real meaning, a rather pretty girl.

Thai also has many sentence final particles whereas English has none. In conversation, some Thai speakers tend to overuse short answer words in English as sentence final particles, especially as question markers, to compensate for the fact that they are completely lacking in English. This tends to make the conversational style of these Thai speakers somewhat stilted:

I'll come tomorrow, yes?  
You give me the money, no?  
Close the door, O.K.?

There are also some vocabulary items in which English has only one word whereas Thai has many. Quite often, these vocabulary items deal with verbs of motion. For example, many Thai speakers find the English word carry very perplexing, since there are many different words for this verb in Thai (e.g. to carry in the hand, to carry on the shoulder, to carry in the arms, etc.). Thai speakers find it difficult to paraphrase in English what can be simply expressed in one word in Thai.

Finally, there are some vocabulary items in Thai for which English has no equivalents. The names of certain fruits are an example of this. Again, as mentioned above, Thai speakers have difficulty in trying to express in several descriptive phrases what can be simply described by one word in Thai.

# SUBJECT INDEX

Items in this index are general topics dealt with in this text.

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# WORD INDEX

Items in this index are English words that are used in the text to illustrate or explicate particular problems of English grammar or vocabulary.

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| ever                        | 120    | hope           | 134               |
| every                       | 132    | house          | 25,123            |
| everybody                   | 133    | how many       | 90,96             |
| every time 123,133          | 133    | how much       | 90,96             |
| excuse                      | 122    | hundred        | 119               |
| expect                      | 134    | hymn           | 25,26             |
| export                      | 5      |                |                   |
| expose                      | 122    |                |                   |
| extremely                   | 111    | I              | 91,94,95,128      |
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|                             |        | immediately    | 126               |
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| feel                        | 44,88  | inaudible      | 136               |
| fell                        | 134    | incapable      | 136               |
| few                         | 96,131 | income         | 135,136           |
| file                        | 121    | index          | 122               |
| find 35,123,125             | 125    | individual     | 122               |
| flash                       | 122    | information    | 122               |
| fling                       | 35     | -ing           | 47-49,79,88,105   |
| football                    | 17,121 |                | 106,135           |
| for 85,116,125,126,137,138  | 138    | inland         | 135,136           |
| founded                     | 35     | in order to    | 126               |

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| overdo         | 137      | safe        | 121,136            |
| overlook       | 113,137  | scale       | 122                |
|                |          | scope       | 122                |
|                |          | see         | 134                |
| pair           | 119      | seem        | 44                 |
| passed         | 133      | seldom      | 52,128             |
| past           | 133      | select      | 136                |
| personnel      | 122      | self        | 96                 |
| phenomena      | 97       | senator     | 5                  |
| physic         | 121      | senatorian  | 5                  |
| physics        | 120,121  | set         | 119,133            |
| piece          | 119      | she         | 91,92,128          |
| plan           | 71,72    | sheep       | 97                 |
| plane          | 136      | ship        | 123                |
| play           | 121      | shock       | 122                |
| pleasure       | 122      | should      | 70-72              |
| precipitation  | 122      | sign        | 25                 |
| prefer         | 71,72,74 | since       | 85,116,117,125,126 |
| pretend        | 40       | sing        | 35                 |
| pretty         | 112,139  | sit         | 133                |
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| principally    | 37       | sleet       | 122                |
| prize          | 133      | smell       | 88                 |
| produce        | 135      | social      | 135                |
| program        | 121      | society     | 135                |
| promise        | 71,72    | sole        | 37                 |
| protect        | 123,124  | solely      | 37                 |
|                |          | so...that   | 126                |
|                |          | some        | 52,98,125          |
| quite          | 112      | sometimes   | 126                |
|                |          | sound       | 88                 |
|                |          | speak       | 35                 |
| raise          | 133      | spend       | 35                 |
| rarely         | 128      | splice      | 122                |
| read           | 36       | stand       | 136                |
| receive        | 129,130  | stand under | 137                |
| recognize      | 123      | stay        | 52,122,123         |
| recommendation | 122      | still       | 124                |
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| reference      | 122      | street      | 123                |
| relative       | 122      | study       | 134                |
| remember       | 123      | succeed     | 133                |
| rend           | 34       | success     | 133                |
| rest           | 123      | suddenly    | 126                |
| retain         | 122      | sum         | 5                  |
| ride           | 134      | summation   | 5                  |
| right          | 136      | summer      | 5                  |
| ring           | 35       | Sumerian    | 5                  |
| rise           | 133      | surprised   | 135                |
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| rouse          | 133      | suspect     | 5,6,123,124        |

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| overdo         | 137      | safe        | 121,136            |
| overlook       | 113,137  | scale       | 122                |
|                |          | scope       | 122                |
|                |          | see         | 134                |
| pair           | 119      | seem        | 44                 |
| passed         | 133      | seldom      | 52,128             |
| past           | 133      | select      | 136                |
| personnel      | 122      | self        | 96                 |
| phenomena      | 97       | senator     | 5                  |
| physic         | 121      | senatorian  | 5                  |
| physics        | 120,121  | set         | 119,133            |
| piece          | 119      | she         | 91,92,128          |
| plan           | 71,72    | sheep       | 97                 |
| plane          | 136      | ship        | 123                |
| play           | 121      | shock       | 122                |
| pleasure       | 122      | should      | 70-72              |
| precipitation  | 122      | sign        | 25                 |
| prefer         | 71,72,74 | since       | 85,116,117,125,126 |
| pretend        | 40       | sing        | 35                 |
| pretty         | 112,139  | sit         | 133                |
| prevent        | 123,124  | sleep       | 134                |
| price          | 133      | sleeping    | 134                |
| principal      | 37       | sleepy      | 134                |
| principally    | 37       | sleet       | 122                |
| prize          | 133      | smell       | 88                 |
| produce        | 135      | social      | 135                |
| program        | 121      | society     | 135                |
| promise        | 71,72    | sole        | 37                 |
| protect        | 123,124  | solely      | 37                 |
|                |          | so...that   | 126                |
|                |          | some        | 52,98,125          |
| quite          | 112      | sometimes   | 126                |
|                |          | sound       | 88                 |
|                |          | speak       | 35                 |
| raise          | 133      | spend       | 35                 |
| rarely         | 128      | splice      | 122                |
| read           | 36       | stand       | 136                |
| receive        | 129,130  | stand under | 137                |
| recognize      | 123      | stay        | 52,122,123         |
| recommendation | 122      | still       | 124                |
| redress        | 39       | strange     | 120,130            |
| reference      | 122      | street      | 123                |
| relative       | 122      | study       | 134                |
| remember       | 123      | succeed     | 133                |
| rend           | 34       | success     | 133                |
| rest           | 123      | suddenly    | 126                |
| retain         | 122      | sum         | 5                  |
| ride           | 134      | summation   | 5                  |
| right          | 136      | summer      | 5                  |
| ring           | 35       | Sumerian    | 5                  |
| rise           | 133      | surprised   | 135                |
| road           | 123      | surprising  | 135                |
| rouse          | 133      | suspect     | 5,6,123,124        |



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