SOME ASPECTS OF THAI SYNTAX

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Introduction

There are two main purposes for this paper. First, I have tried to write a basic transformational/generative grammar of Thai, which is a relatively new field of study. Secondly, this paper is intended to be used as a reference for Thai syntax for my students who major in English. Supposedly they will be able to see the structural differences between English and Thai sentences analyzed transformationally, and this will help them both in studying these two languages and in their teaching careers.

The paper provides some aspects of Thai syntax starting from tense/aspect, negatives, and questions, and gradually moving to more complex structures including relative clauses. I also discuss certain common sentences whose correct analysis is not entirely clear.
Section I: Tense/Aspect

There are at least two reasons for taking tense/aspect as the place to begin. First, this section provides kernel structures of sentences for those who have no acquaintance with the language, and second it forms some foundation for what follows in the later sections.

Consider the following data:

1.1 / khaw du: ti:wi: /
   he watch T.V.
   " a) He watches T.V. "
   " b) He watched T.V. "

1.2 / khaw kamlaj du: ti:wi: /
   he prog. watch T.V.
   " He is watching T.V. "

1.3 / khaw ca` du: ti:wi: /
   he fut. watch T.V.
   " He will watch T.V. "

1.4 / khaw ca` kamlaj du: ti:wi: /
   he fut. prog. watch T.V.
   " He will be watching T.V. "

Sentence 1.1: Comparing it with the other sentences, no tense/aspect marker can be seen in the surface structure. Without any adverbs of time in the sentence, it is ambiguous. The sentence can be interpreted as present or past tense as in the translation (a) and (b). To disambiguate this sentence, an adverb is needed.

1.5 / khaw du: ti:wi: thu`kwan /
   he watch T.V. everyday
   " He watches T.V. everyday. "

1.6 / khaw du: ti:wi: m`a:wa:n /
   he watch T.V. yesterday
   " He watched T.V. yesterday. "
Sentence 1.2: / kamlan ̣ / is the aspect marker of progressive. There are three possible progressive aspects: progressive at present, in the future and past. The present and past are identified by adverbs and the future is indicated by an additional tense marker / ca / right in front of / kamlan ̣ /, plus optional adverbs.

   he prog. watch T.V. right now  
   "He is watching T.V. right now."

1.8 / khaw kamlan ̣ du: ti:wi: ma:wa:n yen /  
   he prog. watch T.V. yesterday evening  
   "He was watching T.V. yesterday evening."

1.9 / khaw ca kamlan ̣ du: ti:wi: phun ̣ ni: /  
   he fut. prog. watch T.V. tomorrow  
   "He will be watching T.V. tomorrow."

Sentence 1.3: / ca / is the tense marker for future. As already mentioned, / ca / itself with some kind of verbs such as / set / "complete, finish" indicates that the actions will be completed in the future.

1.10 / khaw ca du: ti:wi: set to:nba:y /  
   he fut. watch T.V. finish in the afternoon  
   "He will finish watching T.V. in the afternoon."

At this point, one thing that can be concluded is that either adverbs or tense/aspect markers are used to indicate time of action. For sentences that depend only on adverbs to signify tenses, there will be two possible analyses of the structure. The first one is that there is no tense/aspect marker at all in the deep structure. The other one is that there is a tense/aspect marker in the deep structure and whatever it is, it is deleted by a transformation so that it does not show up in the surface structure.

The first analysis is probably simpler, so phrase structure rules
to cover all the data that has been already given will be:

1.11  
a) \( S \rightarrow NP \ VP \ (Adv.) \)
b) \( VP \rightarrow (Tns.) V (NP) \)
c) \( Tns. \rightarrow (ca) (kamlaŋ) \)

Rules developing \( NP \) will be given below in section IV. Rule (c) depends on the usual convention that in such situations at least one element must be chosen. As long as we group / ca / and / kamlaŋ / as elements for a higher unit, this is the only way to avoid awkward rules such as:

\[
Tns. \rightarrow \begin{cases} 
ca (kamlaŋ) \\
kamlaŋ
\end{cases}
\]

One thing that should be worked out now is adverbs. The correct analysis of adverbs is a difficult and complicated topic. For the purpose of this paper, only what is relevant is going to be dealt with.

1.12 /khaw pai ba:n\ uw:a:n/  
he go house yesterday  
"He went home yesterday."

1.13 /m\ u:s\ u:a:n khaw pai ba:n/  
yesterday he go house  
"Yesterday, he went home."

1.14 */ba:n\ khaw pai m\ u:s\ u:a:n/  
house he go yesterday  
"Home he went yesterday."

/ba:n/ "home" and /m\ u:s\ u:a:n/ "yesterday" are adverbs of sentence 1.12. /m\ u:s\ u:a:n/ is preposed in sentence 1.13 which is still grammatical, but if /ba:n/ "home" is preposed in 1.14, it is ungrammatical in Thai.

Structurally there are two kinds of adverbs, namely adverbs dominated by S which can be preposed and adverbs dominated by VP which can not be preposed. This fact answers why 1.13 is grammatical but 1.14 is not.
THIS BOOK CONTAINS NUMEROUS PAGES WITH DIAGRAMS THAT ARE CROOKED COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE INFORMATION ON THE PAGE. THIS IS AS RECEIVED FROM CUSTOMER.
Adverbs can be classified as adverbs of time, place, reason, manner, etc. The kind of adverbs that can be preposed may vary from language to language. For example, in Thai just adverbs of reason and time can be preposed.

The adverb /lə:w/, translated as "already" by Warotamasikkhadit (1972), very often occurs with semantic past time. /lə:w/ has the position under VP only. Example:

1.15 /khaw  kin  kha:w\ lə:w  ma:a\wa:n /  
   he   eat   rice   already yesterday 
   "He ate rice yesterday."

\[ S \]
  \[ NP \]
    Pro.  \[ VP \]
      \[ V \]
        \[ NP \]
          kin \[ Adv. \]
            \[ N \]
              \[ Adv. \]
                kha:w\ lə:w wa:i\wa:n  
                eat   rice   already   yesterday

The claim that /lə:w/ can not be dominated by S is based on the fact that it never occurs in the front of a sentence. In other words, adverbs dominated by VP can not be moved up to be dominated by S.

But can sentence adverbs occur dominated by VP? Consider the following sentences and deep structures.

1.16 /khaw  ti:  ma:  nai  ba:n\ /  
   he   hit   dog   in   house 
   " a) He hit the dog in the house."  
   " b) He hit the dog in the house."
When the adverb phrase / nai ba:n/ is dominated by VP as in (b), it can not be preposed. Rather it functions as, and presumably derives from, a relative clause: \[ \text{\( NP \rightarrow \) ma: (thi: \( yu: nai ba:n \))} \]

"the dog that is in the house".
Section II: Modals and Position of Modals in Sentences

Thai has the following modal verbs:

2.1 a) / sa:\ma:t\ / "can; be able to"
b) / ?a:\t / "may" (possibility)
c) / khoŋ / "might" (weaker possibility)
d) / khu:an / "should"
e) / tɔːŋ\ / "must"

More than one consecutive modal is allowed, for example:

2.2 a) / khoŋ sa:\ma:t\ / "might be able to"
b) / tɔːŋ\ sa:\ma:t\ / "must be able to"
c) / ?a:\t tɔːŋ\ / "may have to"

In sentences without the tense markers / ca \ and / kamlàng /, modals precede other verbs. For example:

2.3 / khaw ?a:\t ta:y phuŋ\ni:\ / he may die tomorrow
"He may die tomorrow."

2.4 / khaw ?a:\t tɔːŋ\ ta:y phuŋ\ni:\ / he may must die tomorrow
"He may have to die tomorrow."

Modals can either precede or follow the future marker, with a characteristic difference in meaning. Modals following / ca \ are within its scope semantically:

2.5 a) / khaw ca sa:\ma:t\ dɔːn / he fut. can walk
"He will be able to walk."
b) / khaw ca tɔːŋ\ kamlàng dɔːn / he fut. must prog. walk
"He will have to be walking."
Modals preceding tense markers include them in their scope:

2.6 a) / kʰaːw səːmạːtː ca dəːn /  
    he  can  fut.  walk  
    "He is able to walk." (future)

b) / kʰaːw ʔaːt kəmlaŋ  dəːn /  
    he  may  prog.  walk  
    "He may be walking."

c) / kʰaːw kʰuːan  ca  kəmlaŋ  dəːn /  
    he  should  fut.  prog.  walk  
    "He should be walking." (future)  
    (He has an obligation to walk.)

Since tense markers precede verbs and so do modals, I will include them within the same node "Aux". To modify the rules to generate all the sentences so far, they will be as follows:

2.7 1)  S  →  NP ( Aux. ) VP ( Adv. )

2)  Aux.  →  ( M )( Fut. )( M )( Prog. )

Notice that rule 2.7.2 is not a very good rule in the sense that it is clumsy, but this is the way it is when modals are treated as a separate kind of word from verbs. Later on there will be another proposal to avoid this clumsiness.
Section III: The Positions of the Negative Marker in Sentences

The negative marker in a sentence without modals comes directly in front of the verb if the sentence has no tense markers; otherwise it is before the progressive aspect marker / kamlaj / but after the future tense marker / ca /

3.1 / khaw mai\kin kha:w/  
   he neg. eat rice  
   "He did (does) not eat rice."

3.2 / khaw mai\kamlaj kin kha:w/  
   he neg. prog. eat rice  
   "He is not eating rice."

3.3 / khaw ca\mai\kin kha:w/  
   he fut. neg. eat rice  
   "He will not eat rice."

3.4 / khaw ca\mai\kamlaj kin kha:w/  
   he fut. neg. prog. eat rice  
   "He will not be eating rice."

In a sentence with modals, the negative marker can either precede or follow the modals, with differences in meaning. To see the contrast the data will be given in pairs A and B, with varieties of tenses/aspects.

3.5A / khaw mai\sa:\ma:t\noop /  
   he neg. can sleep  
   "He is not able to sleep."

B / khaw sa:\ma:t\mai\noop /  
   he can neg. sleep  
   "He is able to not sleep."

3.6 A1 / khaw ca\mai\khu:an noop /  
   he fut. neg. should sleep  
   "He will not have an obligation to sleep."

A2 / khaw mai\khu:an ca\noop /  
   he neg. should fut. sleep  
   "He does not have an obligation to sleep (in the future)."
B. / khaw khu:an ca mai\ nɔ:n /  
he should fut. neg. sleep  
"He has an obligation not to sleep (in the future)."

3.7 A. / khaw mai\ tɔ:ŋ\ kamlaŋ \ nɔ:n /  
he neg. must prog. sleep  
"He does not have an obligation to be sleeping."

B. / khaw tɔ:ŋ\ mai\ kamlaŋ \ nɔ:n /  
he must neg. prog. sleep  
"He must not be sleeping."

3.8 A₁ / khaw ca mai\ ?aːt kamlaŋ \ nɔ:n /  
he fut. neg. may prog. sleep  
"It will not be possible for him to be sleeping."

A₂ / khaw mai\ ?aːt ca kamlaŋ \ nɔ:n /  
he neg. may fut. prog. sleep  
"It is not possible for him to be sleeping (in the future)."

B. / khaw ?aːt ca mai\ kamlaŋ \ nɔ:n /  
he may fut. neg. prog. sleep  
"It is possible for him to not be sleeping (in the future)."

Modified phrase structure rules to include negative sentences will  
be as follows:

3.9  
1) S ----> NP (Aux.) VP (Adv.)

2) Aux. ----> { (M)(Fut.)(Neg.)(M) } (Prog.)

Rule 3.9.2 is clumsy and highly suspicious. There is hopefully a  
more enlightening analysis of the data presented so far.

Unlike the modal auxiliaries of English, it is possible to claim that  
in Thai modals are true verbs syntactically in all respects. If this is  
true, sentences with modals will be derived from deep structures with  
embedded clauses. Take, for example, / khaw \ saːmaːt\ nɔ:n /
"He can sleep." This will have deep structure 3.10(a), and after Equi-NP Deletion rule applies we will get the surface structure 3.10(b).

Then sentences that have various combinations of modals, negation and tense markers like those in $A_1$-$A_2$ and B will also have embedded clauses in the deep structures. We can look at the deep structures of data 3.8 as an example:

3.11 Deep structure $A_1$

```
S
   /\  \\
S1   S2
   /  \
khaw ca mai ?a:t
he  fut. neg. may

khaw kamlan nɔ:n
he  prog. sleep
```
Using the same analysis, sentences that have more than one modal, such as /khaw  khoń  sa:ma:t  do:n/ "He might be able to walk." he  might  can  walk will have the following deep structure:
3.12

The later analysis greatly reduces the clumsiness of the phrase structure rules. If modals in Thai are really true verbs, then phrase structure rules 3.9 above which account for the whole data but rather awkwardly can be forgotten.
Section IV: Questions

Two different kinds of questions will be discussed in this paper. The first type structurally looks like an affirmative or negative sentence with one or more words indicating question at the end. I avoid calling these words "question particles", for the following analysis will suggest that they are words left from fuller sentences undergoing deletion.

4.1 a) / khaw ?a:n naŋːː: rːː:/
   he read book or
   "Does he read books?"

   b) / khaw maːl? aː:n naŋːː: rːː:/
   he neg. read book or
   "Does he not read books?"

4.2 / khaw ?a:n naŋːː: rːː:maːl/:
   he read book or neg.
   "Does he read books?"

4.3 / khaw ?a:n naŋːː: rːː:plaː/:
   he read book or neg.
   "Does he read books or not?"

4.4 / khaw caː maːl? aː:n naŋːː: rːː:plaː/:
   he fut. neg. read book or neg.
   "Will he not read books or not?"

4.5 a) / khaw kamaːŋ ?aː:n naŋːː: chaːi rːː:maːl( chaːi maːl)/
   he prog. read book yes or no
   "Is it true that he is reading a book?"

   b) / khaw maːl? kamaːŋ ?aː:n naŋːː: chaːi rːː:maːl( chaːi maːl)/
   he neg. prog. read book yes or no
   "Is it true that he is not reading a book?"

First let's look at the differences between the words which mean "neg." / plaː/ and / maːl/. Semantically they mean the same
but syntactically they are different. In general, it is clear that
4.6 / khaw chɔ:p lɛk rɔ:/
   he like Lek or
"Does he like Lek?"

Possible answer:

1. / plaw; khaw mai chɔ:p lɛk /
   neg. he neg. like Lek
"No, he does not like Lek."

2. / plaw; khaw chɔ:p yai /
   neg. he like Yai
"No; he likes Yai."

Here / plaw / could serve as a one-word answer. But in the fuller
answer 1, / mai / negates all or part of the proposition "he likes Lek"
of the question.

Just glancing through the data, it looks like an addition of some
lexical item(s) to either negative or affirmative sentences makes questions.
But not every additional item can go with every kind of sentence, and this
requires the statement of certain restrictions. For example:

4.7 * / khaw mai ?a:n nαṣː rɔː mai /
   he neg. read book or neg.

Looking further, however, we see additional data that may be relevant
here:

In the dictionary / rɔː / is a conjunction that means "or ".
This implies that data 4.1-4.4 may be conjoined sentences of which some
parts are left out in surface structure. If this is the case, sentence 4.1 can be seen as shortened versions of:

4.8 a) / khaw ?añ mäñ pš: rš: khaw mäñ ?añ mäñ pš: /
he read book or he neg. read book
"He reads books or he does not read books."

he neg. read book or he read book
"He does not read books or he reads books."

Based on this analysis, apparently Thai has no true yes-no questions. Instead it makes use of reduced conjoined clauses, counting on context to make clear when it is that speakers are supplying information or asking for it.

In sentence 4.2, / rš:mañ / is the part that is left from the conjunction and negative clause. Semantically "or" can never conjoin two identical clauses, so the clause before / rš:mañ / has to be affirmative. Sentence 4.2 can be expanded as:

he read book or he neg. read book
"He reads books or he does not read books."

In short, / rš:mañ / is just / rš: / followed by a reduced form of the clause following / rš: / in the structure underlying sentence 4.1(a) / rš:plaw / can not be the part that is left from * / khaw ?añ mäñ pš: rš: khaw plaw ?añ mäñ pš: / because this source is ungrammatical. Rather we want / khaw ?añ mäñ pš: rš: plaw;
khaw mäñ ?añ mäñ pš: /, and the function of / plaw / here is the same as what was mentioned above. Presumably then in 4.3 and 4.4 we again have a form resulting from optional deletion of the second clause in the underlying structure.
As for / ɹ̂:mai/ , this part of sentence is obviously a separate phrase from the preceding clause. It also is interjectional in effect, and means something like "Is what is mentioned before right or wrong?" Evidently no matter whether the initial sentence is negative or affirmative, it can be followed by / ɹ̂:mai/.

Questions in Thai show no inversion as in English, but do undergo optional deletion of the sort posited by Langacker (1969) for English. The rule for Thai is:

\[
4.10 \quad X [A] \quad ɹ̂: (plaw) [B - (neg.) - C] \\
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad \Rightarrow \text{opt.} \\
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad \{\text{a. 4}\} \quad \text{ç} \quad \text{ç} \quad \text{ç} \\
\{b. 6\}
\]

For rule 4.10 I assume a rule of semantic interpretation to rule out sentences with deep structures of this type having two identical clauses separated by / ɹ̂ : / which inherently contrasts or opposes two different entities. Furthermore the rule can apply to two different trees, one with / plaw / and the other one without / plaw / . The rule leaves the first of two clauses intact, either leaving / plaw / or substituting / mai/ in that position, and deletes the entire second clause. For example:
The transformation allows three possible answers:

I. When case (a) is the choice of the transformation.

/ khaw ?a:n nang ke rzi: plaw /
he read book or neg.

"He reads books or no; he does not read books."
(Does he read books or no? = Does he read books?)

II. When case (b) is the choice of the transformation.

/ khaw ?a:n nang ke rzi: mai /
he read book or neg.

"Does he read books or not?"
(Does he read books?)

III. When both (a) and (b) are optionally not chosen in the transformation.

/ khaw ?a:n nang ke rzi: /
he read book or

"Does he read books?"
Another type of question is comparable to what we call in English "question word questions". To understand the structure of these questions, some data are provided in column A with possible answers in column B.

4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. / khaw ti: ?alai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he  hit  what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What did he hit?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. / khaw ti: ma: /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he  hit  dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;He hit a dog.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. / khai ti: ma: / |
| who  hit  dog |
| "Who hit the dog?" |

3. / khaw ti: ma: thammai / |
| he  hit  dog  why |
| "Why did he hit the dog?" |

4. / khaw ti: ma: yanlai / |
| he  hit  dog  how |
| "How did he hit the dog?" |

5. / khaw ti: ma: khojkhai / |
| he  hit  dog  poss. who |
| "Whose dog did he hit?" |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. / dek ti: ma: /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child  hit  dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A child hit the dog.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. / khaw ti: ma: phrō mən son / |
| he  hit  dog  because  it  wild |
| "He hit the dog because it was wild." |
4. / kʰaw tiː mː duːːay̥ mai̯ /  
   he hit dog with rod  
   "He hit the dog with a rod."

5. / kʰaw tiː mː kʰɔːŋ kʰaw /  
   he hit dog poss. he  
   "He hit his own dog."

Apparently question words just simply take the place of the questioned elements without any structural changes. I will take advantage of the fact that every question word ends with the diphthong / −ai / by using this symbol as the question word marker in the underlying representation.

It is necessary to look at the structure of noun phrases in order to understand the position of / −ai / in the deep structure. Three types of NP will be analyzed here.

4.13 a) / mː /  
   dog  
   "1. a dog, the dog"  
   2. dogs, the dogs

b) / mː ลำ tua /  
   dog several C  
   "several dogs"

c) / mː สอง tua /  
   dog two C  
   "two dogs"

When nouns occur without any quantifiers, as in 4.13(a), they are ambiguous as to number. Context often serves to sort out the intended meaning:

4.14 / kʰaw mːŋ duːːan−ʔaː−θit /  
   he look sun  
   "He looked at the sun."

Presumably the speaker intends "the sun" since there is only one sun in the solar system.
4.15 / khaw chɔːp\ mɔŋ phu\vŋ/  
he like look girl

"He likes looking at girls."

Presumably "girls" is intended, but perhaps "girl".

If nouns occur with quantifiers of any type, as in as in 4.13(b) and 4.13(c), then certain classifiers for those nouns are needed. The restrictions on which classifier(s) may be possible with various types of nouns will not be dealt with here, as this is irrelevant to the purposes of this thesis.

The node NP may thus be expanded as in 4.16.

4.16 NP → N (Quant.) C

Quant. = quantifier including / bəŋ/ "some", / məŋ/ "one", etc.

C = classifier

Along with rule 4.16 I assume one or more readjustment rules, which will spell out "C" phonologically according to the features of the head noun. For example:

4.17 a) [+ C] → tu:a / [+ animate] (Quant.)  
[ - human  
  .  
  .  
  .  
  etc.]

b) [+ C] → sin / [ - animate] (Quant.)  
[ - human  
  .  
  .  
  .  
  etc.]

However, rule 4.16 appears wrong when "Quant." is not selected, since then we find N alone and not NC. A good rule such as 4.18 can account
for the data very well but I avoid such a rule because further data dealing
with NP will support a rule like 4.16.

4.18 \[ \text{NP} \rightarrow N \left( \text{Quant. C} \right) \]

For now, the data can be accounted by the following obligatory
transformation.

4.19 Classifier Deletion:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
X & N & C & Y \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \rightarrow \text{oblig.} \\
1 & 2 & \text{ç} & 4 \\
\end{array}
\]

For questions I allow / - ai / as an optional element after the
constituent " Quant. ". So the NP rule will be modified as:

4.20 \[ \text{NP} \rightarrow N \left( \text{Quant. } \right) ( - \text{ai } ) \ C \]

4.21 Question words will have the following deep structures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. what</td>
<td>1. / ?a-lai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( WH-some-thing )</td>
<td>( kho:n - ba:n - ai C )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thing some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. who</td>
<td>2. / khai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( WH-some-one )</td>
<td>( kho:n - ba:n - ai C )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>human some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. why</td>
<td>3. / thammai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( WH-some-reason )</td>
<td>( he:t phon - ba:n - ai C )</td>
</tr>
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<td>reason some</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. how</td>
<td>4. / ya:nrai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( WH-some-way )</td>
<td>( withi: - ba:n - ai C )</td>
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<td>way some</td>
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<td>5. whose</td>
<td>5. / kho:nkhai /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( WH-some-one's )</td>
<td>( kho:n khon - ba:n - ai C )</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poss: human some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being</td>
</tr>
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</table>
6. when
   (WH-some-time)
   / mi:a\lai /  
   (we:la: - ba:n - ai C)
   time some

7. at what time
   (WH-some-specific time)
   / we:la:dai /
   (chaphɔ - we:la: - ba:n - ai C)
   specific time some

8. which
   (WH-some-specific thing)
   / sinnai /
   (chaphɔ - khɔn - ba:n - ai C)
   specific thing some

9. where
   (WH-some-place)
   / thi:nai /
   (sathnai -thi:n - ba:n - ai C)
   place some

Suppose we know that / khaw ti: khɔn ba:n sίn / " He hit
he hit thing some C
something. ", and we want to ask what he hit. The deep structure will be:

4.22

How we are going to get the right question word here is the task
of morphological or readjustment "spelling" rules. In this case, of
course, it is / ?alai / " what ". Every question word derived by
readjustment rules was already given in 4.21 in column B.

Some proposals about questions:

Consider the question:

4.23 / khaw ti: mɔ: thammai /
he hit dog why

" Why did he hit the dog? ", from the underlying:
4.24 / khaw ti: ma: þhrə ʰe:þphon ba:n ʰai / he hit dog because reason some
"He hit dog for some reason."

Another possible word order for this question is:
4.25 / thammai khaw ti: ma: /
why he hit dog
"Why did he hit the dog?"

Judging by sentence 4.25, it might appear that question words in Thai can be fronted as in English. In fact it is the adverb that is preposed in this sentence. As was mentioned in section I, adverbs can be daughters under two different nodes, VP and S. As in English, adverbs dominated by S can optionally be preposed, while those under VP can not. In Thai adverbs of reason and time (both specific and non-specific) are constituents of S and can be preposed, whether questioned or not.

No other adverbs, questioned or not, may prepose by the following rule:
4.26

\[
X - \text{Adv. time (Adv. reason)} - Y \\
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad \Rightarrow \text{opt.}
\]

2 \# 1 \quad \text{c} \quad 3

Note, however, that the rest of the question words may appear right at the front of sentences, but always with / thi:\ / after them. Normally / thi:\ / is a preposition or pronoun. In this case / thi:\ / functions as the pronoun of relative clauses. My claim here has to deal with relative clauses, so I shall take this opportunity to mention them before returning to further discussion of questions.

4.27 / khaw ca ti: dek (khon) thi:\ kamlan\ ?ai:n ngsi:/
he fut. hit child C pro. prog. read book
"He will hit the child who is reading a book."
"He ironed the two shirts that he likes."

Notice that the classifier of the noun without quantifier followed by a relative clause is optional. Therefore rule 4.19 needs a condition saying if "Y" contains a sentence, the rule is optional.

4.29 Classifier Deletion (revised):

\[-X - N - C - Y\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
1 & 2 & c & 4 \\
\end{array}\]

Cond.: 1. Y \(\neq\) \(\left[ \begin{array}{c} W \\ S \end{array} \right]\)-Z, the rule is obligatory.

2. Y = \(\left[ \begin{array}{c} W \\ S \end{array} \right]\)-Z, the rule is optional.

Since NP can be modified by a sentence, another rule for NP is 4.30.

4.30

\[\text{NP } \longrightarrow \text{NP} \ S\]

As in English, a relative clause transformation is needed for NP followed by a clause. The relative clause transformation is:

4.31

\[-X - \text{NP} \left[ \left[ \begin{array}{c} -Y - \text{NP} - Z \end{array} \right]\right] - X\]

\[\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
1 & 2 & 4 & c & 5 & 6 \\
\end{array}\]

Cond.: 1. \(2=4\)

2. I assume noun phrases with and without classifier are identical.
Classifier Deletion:  

Relative Clause -  
Formation: \[
\begin{align*}
&\text{ma:} \\
&+ \text{pro.}
\end{align*}
\]

Readjustment Rule:
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ma:} & \quad \text{tua thi:} \quad \text{kat dek} \quad \text{thi:} \\
\text{dog} & \quad \text{C pro.} \quad \text{bite child} \quad \text{pro.}
\end{align*}
\]

"The dog that bit the child that did not like Linguistics died."
The classifier of NP₃ in 4.32 is not deleted by "Classifier Deletion" because the rule is optional when N is followed by a clause. If we do want it to apply to NP₃ on the last cycle before "Relative Clause Transformation" applied, this is also possible.

Now we can go back to question words that appear at the front of sentences and that are followed by /thiː/ . Certainly the questions in A and B are related.

4.33  A. /khaw pai thiːːnai /
     he go where
     
B. /thiːːnai thiːː khaw pai /
     where pro. he go
     "Where did he go?"

4.34  A. /khaw chɔːpˋ khai /
     he like who
     
B. /khai thiːː khaw chɔːpˊ/
     he pro. he like
     "Who did he like?"

4.35  A. /khaw kin yaːnlai /
     he eat how
     
B. /yaːnlai thiːː khaw kin /
     how pro. he eat
     "How did he eat?"

4.36  A. /khaw chɔːpˋ sinŋai /
     he like which one
     
B. /sinŋai thiːː khaw chɔːpˊ/
     which one pro. he like
     "Which one did he like?"
4.37 A. / kʰaw tiː mɑː kʰɔːŋkʰəi /
   he hit dog whose

B. / mɑː kʰɔːŋkʰəi thiː kʰaw tiː /
   dog whose pro. he hit

"Whose dog did he hit?"

4.38 A. / kʰaw tiː ?alai /
   he hit what

B. / ?alai thiː kʰaw tiː /
   what prog. he hit

"What did he hit?"

It is not obvious how to derive B from A, but one possibility would
be to derive B from the same source as the following sentences, by a rule
optionally deleting parenthesized material.

4.39 / thiː nai ( kʰιː sathɔːnθiː ) thiː kʰaw pai /
   where be place pro. he go

"Where was the place that he went?"; or perhaps:

"Where was it that he went?"

4.40 / kʰai ( kʰiː kʰon ) thiː kʰaw chɔːp/
   who be person pro. he like

"Who is the person that he likes?"; or perhaps:

"Who is it that he likes?"

4.41 / yəŋlaɪ ( kʰiː ?aːkʰəːn ) thiː kʰaw kʰin /
   how be manner pro. he eat

"What is the manner that he eats?"; or perhaps:

"How is it that he eats?"

4.42 / sɪŋnai ( kʰiː sɪŋ ) thiː kʰaw chɔːp/
   which one be thing pro. he like

"Which one is the thing that he likes?"; or perhaps:

"Which one is it that he likes?"
4.43 / məː khoŋ khaî (khîː məː) thiːː khaːw tiːː /
   dog poss. who be dog pro. he hit
   "Whose dog was the dog that he hit? ", or perhaps:
   "Whose dog was it that he hit? ".

4.44 / ʔəlai (khîː sîŋ) thiːː khaːw tiːː /
   what be thing pro. he hit
   "What was the thing that he hit? ", or perhaps:
   "What was it that he hit? ".

The transformation optionally deleting the material in the parentheses will be:

4.45 BE-NP Deletion:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
X-ai & -khiː & NP & -thiːː- Y \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4
\end{array}
\]

\[1 \rightarrow \emptyset\]

To summarize, there are two processes accounting for the position of question words at the front of sentences when they are not supposed to be there:

a) by adverb preposing, as in: / thammai khaːw tiːː məː /
   why he hit dog
   from / khaːw tiːː məː thammai / "Why did he hit a dog? "
   he hit dog why

b) by selection of NP be NP S in the phrase structure rules, with

Relative Clause Formation followed by BE-NP Deletion, as in: / ʔəlai what

thiːː khaːw tiːː / from / ʔəlai khîː sîŋ thiːː khaːw tiːː /
   pro. he hit what be thing pro. he hit
   "What was the thing that he hit? ".
Section V: Some Further Complex Sentence Structures

The reason that certain structures will be discussed here comes from the fact that they are highly used in the language and yet, to my knowledge, have not been successfully analyzed elsewhere.

It is quite often true that certain data can be solved using different methods, or in other words, can be interpreted several ways. Which analysis is right depends on empirical evidence. Of course what is put forth tentatively in this paper can not be guaranteed in any way as the best analysis, but at least I believe that what I say is reasonable and consistent with other facts about Thai.

There are complex sentences in Thai whose second verb is what I call a "Directional Verb".

5.1 / khāw nāŋ lōŋ /
    he sit get down
    "He sat down."

5.2 / khāw ca wīŋ pāi /
    he fut. run go
    "He will run away."

5.3 / khāw kamlāŋ dā:n mā:/
    he prog. walk come
    "He is walking towards the speaker."

5.4 / khāw yī:n khīn /
    he stand get up
    "He stood up." (active)

These directional verbs can themselves occur as the only verbs in sentences such as:

5.5 / khāw kamlāŋ lōŋ krādāi /
    he prog. get down stairs
    "He is coming down the stairs."
5.6 / khaw p'ai ro:jri:an /  
  he go school  
"He went to school."

5.7 / khaw ma: bai:n\ kh$n\ chan /  
  he come house poss. I  
"He came to my house."

5.8 / khaw ca kh$n\ ton\:mai /  
  he fut. get up tree  
"He will get up (climb up) a tree."

There are at least two possible ways to account for this type of structure. The first involves a lexical feature for verbs that can be followed by directional verbs: \[+\text{directional}\]. Then I assume some redundancy rule in the lexicon saying that V may be made of one or more directional verbs following another verb. Thus a complex verbal element may enter into a tree under V. For example:

5.9

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
| \\
NP \quad VP \\
| \\
Pro. \quad V \\
| \\
khaw \quad V \\
| \\
'h\e \quad V \\
| \\
wit\y\khaw\ma: \\
run get in come \\
\end{array}
\]

"He ran in towards the speaker."

But when the boxed V in the above structure is transitive, the context will be as in the following examples.

5.10 / khaw yip samut kh$n\ ma: /  
  he pick book get up come  
"He picked a book up."
5.11 / khaw chu: mì: khán\ /
   he raise hand get up
   " He held his hand up. "
   " He raised his hand up. "

5.12 / khaw luán nın ?ō:k ma: /
   he search- money get out come
   around
   " He got the money out. "

The deep structure of example 5.10 would have to be:

5.13

```
S
   NP
   Pro.
   khaw
   he
   V
       V
       yip
       samut
   V
   ma:
   V
   pick
   book get up come
```

" He picked a book up. "

But 5.13 can not possibly be a deep structure. It is rather the result of some obligatory transformation saying that if an NP is present within VP, it must move to a position following the boxed V in structure 5.9.

5.14 Object Movement:

```
X - [ ( Aux. ) - V - Z - NP ] - X
   VP

1  2  3  4  5  6

==⇒ oblig.

1  2  3 4  5  6
```

The other possibility is the claim that in deep structure we have conjoined sentences. For example, 5.10 might have the following tree.
To get the surface form, there has to be an obligatory transformation to delete the identical elements in the later sentences. I will suggest something roughly like:

5.16 Sentence Reduction:

\[
A \rightarrow \begin{array}{c}
S \quad S \\
X - V - X & X - V - X \\
S & S \\
\end{array} \quad B
\]

\[
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8
\]

\[
1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad \text{⇒ oblig.} \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8
\]

After transformation 5.16 has applied to the tree 5.15, the structure will look like 5.17.

5.17

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
\text{NP} & \text{VP} \\
\text{Pro.} & \text{VP} \\
\text{khaw & he} & \text{yip} \\
\text{pick & samut} & \text{get up} \\
\text{book & book & book} & \text{come} \\
\end{array}
\]

OR
Negative versions of sentences of this type might cause a little confusion, because there appear to be two different negative forms. According to the rule of negative in the previous section, negation never comes after true verbs, but negation may show up before the directional verb.

5.18 a) Aff: / khàw naŋ\ loŋ /  
         he sit get down  
         " He sat down. "

b) Neg: / khàw maí\ naŋ\ loŋ /  
         he neg. sit get down  
         " He did not sit down. "

c) ? / khàw naŋ\ maí\ loŋ /  
         he sit neg. get down  
         " He could not sit down. " (Suggesting that he had stiff legs.)

5.19 a) Aff: / khàw yí:n khín\ /  
         he stand get up  
         " He stood up. "

b) Neg: / khàw maí\ yí:n khín\ /  
         he neg. stand get up  
         " He did not stand up. "

c) ? / khàw yí:n maí\ khín /  
         he stand neg. get up  
         " He could not stand up. " (Suggesting that he had a cramp in his legs.)
If we want to follow the first analysis, we have to say that 5.18C and 5.19C are idioms listed idiosyncratically in the dictionary. But if we follow the second analysis we might expect four possibilities for the location of "Neg." in the structure \[
\begin{bmatrix}
  S & \begin{bmatrix}
    S & \text{khaw} \\
    S & \text{nanj}
  \end{bmatrix} & \begin{bmatrix}
    S & \text{khaw} \\
    S & \text{loj}
  \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}^S
\]
"He sat down.". They are:

5.20

A

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
  S & S \\
  S & \text{khaw} \\
  S & \text{nanj} \\
  \text{he} & \text{sit}
\end{bmatrix}
\]

B

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
  S & S \\
  S & \text{khaw} \\
  S & \text{maiv} \\
  \text{he} & \text{Neg. sit}
\end{bmatrix}
\]

C

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
  S & S \\
  S & \text{khaw} \\
  S & \text{maiv} \\
  \text{he} & \text{Neg. get down}
\end{bmatrix}
\]

D

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
  S & S \\
  S & \text{khaw} \\
  S & \text{maiv} \\
  \text{he} & \text{Neg. get down}
\end{bmatrix}
\]

A says "He sat down."

B says "He did not sit down."

C says "He sat but he did not get down."

(Perhaps he got stiff legs.)

D says "He did not sit but he got down."

(Perhaps he got down by tripping over something.)

After applying "Sentence Reduction", structures A, B, C become 5.20A, 5.20B, 5.20C respectively.
For D, "Sentence Reduction" may give the same resultant as with B.
Thus we may claim that / kʰaw mài nāŋ lɔŋ / is two ways ambiguous,
he Neg. sit get down
with structure B or structure D as source.

The later analysis can also be used to account for similar sentences,
but where the following verb is not directional.

5.21 a) / kʰaw dən len\ /
he walk play
"He strolled around."

b) / kʰaw te tɔːy dek /
he kick punch child
"He kicked and punched a child."

The crucial difference between 5.21 and the data above is that we
have to allow the optional / læ / " and " in the deep structures for 5.21.
In other words the deep structures can be generated by $S \rightarrow ( \text{and} ) S^n$.
Then if " and " is not chosen in the deep structure, rule 5.16 can handle
the data. But if " and " is chosen in the deep structure the transformation
can not apply, and we end up with:

5.22 a) / kʰaw dən læ len\ /
he walk and play
"He walked and played."

b) / kʰaw te dek læ tɔːy dek /
he kick child and punch child
"He kicked a child and punched a child."

Since 5.22b can optionally undergo Conjunction Reduction, just as
the English paraphrase, resulting in :

c) / kʰaw te læ tɔːy dek /
he kick and punch child
"He kicked and punched a child."
In either case, the data in 5.22 has a "sequential" AND interpretation, while the sentences of 5.21 are interpreted as having simultaneous actions.

Consider now the following data:

5.23 / khaw chɔ:p \ wa:i\naːm /  
    he like swim  
    " He liked to swim. "  
    " He liked swimming. "

5.24 / khaw yaːk nɔːn /  
    he want sleep  
    " He wanted to sleep. "

5.25 / khaw yut thamŋaːn /  
    he stop work  
    " He stopped working. "

The following deep structure will clearly explain the differences between 5.23-5.25 and the data above.

5.26

```
S
  NP        VP
  Pro.       
  khaw he   
  V
  like
  NP
  Pro. khaw he
  S
  VP
  Pro. khaw he
  wa:i\naːm
  swim
```

" He liked to swim. "
" He liked swimming. "
A transformation very similar to or identical with Equi-NP Deletion in English is needed to delete the subject of the embedded clause.

5.27 Equi-NP Deletion:

\[
S \quad X - (NP) - W - \left[ Y - (NP) - Z \right] - R - (NP) - X
\]

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

\[\Rightarrow\] oblig.

1  2  3  4  6  7  8  9

Cond.: \[\frac{2}{5} = \frac{3}{8}\]

Notice that the transformation does not say anything about the verb phrase. This means that various modals and tense markers are allowed between the verbs of the main and embedded sentences. Sentences such as / khaw he ya:k ca wa:i\-na:\-m / "He wanted to swim. (in the future)" are grammatical.

Yet sentences such as / khaw ya:k kamlaŋ wa:i\-na:\-m / "He want prog. swim  " wanted to be swimming." are ungrammatical. This, I assume, will be prevented by strict subcategorization rules restricting choice of embedded auxiliary elements.

Consider the following similar surface structures, which I think have different deep structures from the data above.

5.28 / khaw pai wa:i\-na:\-m /
he go swim
"He went to swim."

5.29 / khaw ca ma: kiŋ ṭa:ha:n thi:\-ni:\-
he fut.come eat food here
"He will come to eat the food here."
Suggested structures for 5.28 and 5.29 will be an embedded clause dominated by adverb of purpose. Let's take the deep structure of sentence 5.28, for example:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \quad \text{Adv. of purpose} \\
\text{Pro.} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{PP} \\
\text{khaw \ he} \quad \text{pai \ phí:a\ go \ for} \\
\text{S} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \\
\text{Pro.} \quad \text{V} \\
\text{khaw \ he} \quad \text{waː i\ naː m \ swim} \\
\end{array}
\]

Transformation 5.27 can be used for deriving the surface structure. But 5.30, I believe, is not the only structure underlying 5.28. When the question / khaw pai nai / "Where did he go?" is asked, one possible answer is 5.28. Obviously /waː i\ naː m / in / khaw pai waː i\ naː m / "He went to swim." which answers "Where did he go?" can not be the leftover element dominated by "Adv. of purpose" like 5.30 but rather "Adverb of direction". (cf. / khaw pai baː n / "He went home." ; / khaw he go home he pai nai māː an / "He went downtown." ) So another deep structure for 5.28 is:
Now compare / khaw chɔːp\ waːi\nəːm / and / khaw pai waːi\nəːm /.
he like swim he go swim

The subcatagorization features of / chɔːp\/ call for an object but / pai/
like
go
takes no objects other than "home/downtown" type, which are really not
objects but rather direction adverbs, and an optional adverb of purpose
as in 5.30.

To conclude, the rules of Thai allow sentences with verbs having
different properties to occur in very similar or identical structures.
Appendix

Consonants:

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Vowels:

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<td>Mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>eː</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eː</td>
<td>oː</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>æ</td>
<td>æː</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>æː</td>
<td>aː</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diphthongs: ia iːa

Tones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone mark</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mid level</td>
<td>unmarked</td>
<td>/ kha: / &quot;grass&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low falling</td>
<td>\</td>
<td>/ kha:\ / &quot;a kind of plant&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mid falling</td>
<td>\</td>
<td>/ kha:\ / &quot;kill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. High rising</td>
<td>\</td>
<td>/ kha:\ / &quot;trade&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Low rising</td>
<td>\</td>
<td>/ kha:\ / &quot;leg&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

1. I am not sure if this is the precise meaning or not. That is, I am not sure that there is a one-to-one equivalence between / set / and "already".

2. There are some restrictions on the combinations of modals which will not be included here.

3. Normally / mai/ has mid falling tone. The expected tone's changing into high rising tone is just a matter of phonetic variation. The variant environment is unpredictable but frequently found in casual speech. There are quite a few examples of this, such as: / chan /---> / chan / "I" (for woman); / phom /---> / phom / "I" (for man); / khaw /---> / khaw / "he, she".

   It may be quite reasonable to say that / r/: / in / chai:r/:mai/ is dropped out for the same reason. In other words, / chai:mai/ is the informal form for / chai:r/:mai/.

4. Directional verbs are always $[+V,+\_\_\_\_\_]$, that is, intransitive.
References Consulted

SOME ASPECTS OF THAI SYNTAX

by

KANJANEE JIRATATPASUT

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTERS OF ARTS

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1977
Abstract

This paper is a look at some aspects of Thai syntax from a transformational point of view. I begin with basic sentence structure, including tense/aspect, negatives, and questions. I also discuss relative clauses and other complex sentence structures, including certain structural ambiguities. Where there are various possible interpretations of the data, I try to provide reasonable evidence for my analysis.

It is my hope that the present paper may serve as a starting point for later studies in contrastive Thai-English syntax, especially as this may relate to the teaching of English to native Thai speakers.