

THE SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF RECIPROCAL VERBS IN THAI

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CONCEPTS: reciprocal verb

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- Reciprocal verbs=verbs that refer to an action that two or more people do to each other or one another;
- for example, the verb *meet* in *My client and I sometimes **meet** in a restaurant.*
- *to meet* = reciprocal verb

CONCEPTS: reciprocal verb

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□ JAPANESE

□ *kodomo-tachi-ga otagai-o naguri-at-ta*

child-PL-NOM otagai-ACC hit-aw-PST

‘The children hit each other.’

□ *kodomo-tachi-ga mato-o uchi-at-ta*

child-PL-NOM target-ACC shoot-aw-PST

‘The children shot the target one after another.’

CONCEPTS: reciprocal construction

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□ FRENCH

□ *Nous nous aimons même si nous nous disputons un peu.*

‘We love each other even if we fight a little bit.’

□ *Ils se téléphonent chaque soir.*

‘They call each other every night.’

□ *Ils s'aiment beaucoup*

□ ‘They love each other very much.’

CONCEPTS: reciprocal construction

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□ ITALIAN

- *Si abbracciarono affettuosamente.*

They embraced each other affectionately.

- *Ci scambiammo alcune informazione.*

We exchanged some information.

- *Vi scriveste frequentemente, dopo quell'estate.*

You frequently wrote to each other after that summer.

CONCEPTS: reciprocal construction

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□ SPANISH

□ *Antonio y yo nos besamos.*

‘Antonio and I kiss each other.’

□ *¿Vosotros os conocéis?*

‘Do you all know each other?’

□ *Juan y María se casaron.*

‘Juan and Maria got married to each other.’

□ *Los estudiantes se ayudan.*

‘The students help each other.’

PREVIOUS STUDIES

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- Dalrymple, Mary, Makoto Kanazawa, Yookyung Kim, Sam Mchomobo, and Stanley Peters. 1998. **Reciprocal** Expressions and the Concept of **Reciprocity**. In *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21.159-210.
- Faller, Martina. 2007. The Ingredients of **Reciprocity** in Cusco Quechua. In *Journal of Semantics* 24: 255-288.
- Fiengo, Robert, and Howard Lasnik. 1973. The Logical Structure of **Reciprocal** Sentences in English. In *Foundation of Language* 9: 447-468.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

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- Heim, Irene, Howard Lasnik, and Robert May. 1991. **Reciprocity** and Plurality. In *Linguistic Inquiry* 22. pp.63-101.
- Yamada, Masahiro. 2007. **Reciprocal** without **Reciprocal** Relation between *Two (Syntactic) Arguments: Verbal Reciprocal* in Japanese. <http://udel.edu/~myamada>. **Reciprocals** cross-linguistically @ Berlin, Germany. November 30th, 2007.

OBSERVATION OF RECIPROCAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN THAI

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□ *raw phóp kan thúk sàpdaa*

‘We meet every week.’

Here *phóp* ‘to meet’ is a reciprocal verb, which occurs with *kan* ‘each other.’

□ **raw phóp thúk sàpdaa* is ungrammatical.

‘We meet every week.’

MOTIVATION

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- Not all verbs with *kan* ‘each other’ signify reciprocal relation.
- No previous study that focuses specifically on reciprocal verbs in Thai.
- Many questions about reciprocal verbs in Thai.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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- Are reciprocal verbs a separate subcategory of verbs?
- Are they similar to English reciprocal verbs?
- Are they implicitly signified by their lexical meaning and plural subjects?
- What are syntactic and semantic features that differentiate them from other types of verbs?

DATA

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- Thai Concordance Online
- Thai National Corpus
- Both provided by the Department of Linguistics, Chulalongkorn University.

FINDINGS

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- **Preliminary finding:** There are certain verbs found to occur with *kan* ‘each other’ and *kap* ‘with’
- **Examples:**
- *tâm lɛ́ nít thaló́ kan*
- Tam and Nid quarrel each other
- Tam and Nid quarreled.
- *tâm thaló́ kàp nít*
- Tam quarrel with Nid
- ‘Tam quarreled with Nid.’

PROBLEMS

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1. Not all verbs can occur with the two markers: ***kan*** and ***kàp***. *So are the verbs that can occur as such inherently reciprocal?*
2. Certain verbs can occur only with ***kan*** only. *Why?*
3. Certain verbs can occur with ***kan*** and ***kàp***, but semantically non-reciprocal. *What are they?*

FINDINGS: THREE TYPES OF RECIPROCALLS IN THAI

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- 1) **true reciprocal** verbs marked by *kan* or *kàp* ONLY and the meaning of **true exchange**, e.g., *thalǎ* ‘to quarrel,’
- 2) **semi-reciprocal** verbs marked by *kan* only and two-way **resultative** meaning, e.g., *khâa* ‘to kill,’ and
- 3) **pseudo-reciprocal** verbs marked by *kan*, *kàp*, *dûay-kan* ‘together’, and **comitative** meaning, e.g., *kin* ‘to eat.’

MARKERS

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- ***kan*** (adverb) ‘each other, one another’
- ***kap*** (preposition) ‘with’
- ***dûay-kan*** (adverb) ‘together’

dûay means ‘also, too’ as in

*khun cà kin chaam nîi **dûay** mǎy*

‘Are you going to eat this one, too?’

EXAMPLES: TRUE RECIPROCAL

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□	เกี่ยวพัน	<i>kiàw-phan</i>	‘to connect’
□	ขัดแย้ง	<i>khaɿ-yéɛŋ</i>	‘to be in conflict’
□	เข้า	<i>khaʼw</i>	‘to get along’
□	คบ	<i>khóp</i>	‘to date, to be friends’
□	คบคิด	<i>khóp-khit</i>	‘to conspire’
□	คบหา	<i>khóp-hǎa</i>	‘to be friends’
□	พลาดแคล้ว	<i>khlaát-khléɛw</i>	‘to miss, fail to meet’
□	แต่งงาน	<i>téɛŋ-ŋaan</i>	‘to get married’
□	คล้ายคลึง	<i>khlaáy-khlɿŋ</i>	‘to resemble’
□	คุย	<i>khuy</i>	‘to talk’
□	ชก	<i>chók</i>	‘to box’

TRUE RECIPROCAL (true exchange)

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- (1) *dam kàp nít tɛ̀ɛŋ-ŋaən kan* ‘Dam and Nit got married.’
- *dam tɛ̀ɛŋ-ŋaən kàp nít* ‘Dam got married to Nit.’
- (2) *chǎn kàp khǎw khâw kan day dii* ‘He and I get along well.’
- *chǎn khâw kàp khǎw dâay dii* ‘I get along well with him.’
- (3) *sǒɔŋ r̄tang níi khlaáy-khliŋ kan* ‘
These two stories are similar.’
- *r̄tang níi khlaáy-khliŋ kàp r̄tang nán* ‘
This story resembles that one.’

03/06/54

SEMI-RECIPROCAL (resultative)

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- (1) *chôṽp* ‘to like’
- *raw chôṽp kan* ‘We like each other.’
- *chan' chôṽp khon nan'* ‘I like that guy.’
- **chan' chôṽp kap (with) khon nan'* ‘I like with that guy.’
- (2) *thôṽt-thiṅ* ‘to neglect, abandon’
- *săamii phanrayaa khuu nii thôṽt-thiṅ kan*
- ‘this couple (husband and wife) neglect each other,’
- *săamii thôṽt-thiṅ phanrayaa* ‘the husband neglects the wife.’
- **săamii thôṽt-thiṅ kap phanrayaa*

PSEUDO-RECIPROCAL (comitative)

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- (1) *chum-num* ‘to gather, assemble’
- *raw chum-num kan ph̄ta riāk-r̄óη khwaam-pen-tham*
- ‘We gather together to fight for justice.’
- *raw chum-num kap̄ ʔiik fàay ...*
- ‘We gather together with another group.’
- *raw chum-num dūay-kan...* ‘We gather together.’
- (2) *kin* ‘to eat’
- *nāk-rian kam-laη kin ʔaahaǎn kan* ‘the students are having a meal together.’
- *chañ kin khāaw kap̄ ph̄tan* ‘I eat with my friend.’
- *nāk-rian kin ʔaahaǎn dūay-kan* ‘The students eat together.’

SUMMARY

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TYPE OF RECIPROCAL	SYNTACTIC FEATURES	SEMANTIC FEATURES
TRUE RECIPROCAL	ONLY <i>kan, kàp</i>	True exchange in action
SEMI-RECIPROCAL	ONLY <i>kan</i>	Resultative meaning
PSEUDO-RECIPROCAL	<i>kan, kàp, duây-kan</i>	Comitative meaning (togetherness) <small>03/06/54</small>

CONCLUSION

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- Thai has a group of verbs that can be labeled as “true reciprocal verbs” or “inherently reciprocal verbs.” Syntactically, they occur with the adverb *kan* ‘each other’ and the preposition *kap* ‘with’. Semantically, they signify exchange of action.
- Other verbs that can occur with only *kan* ‘each other’ are not true reciprocal verbs. Semantically, they only suggest the meaning of mutual result of some action represented by the verb. This class of verbs are labeled as “semi-reciprocal”.
- Most verbs can occur with *kan*, *kap*, and also *duay-kan* ‘together’ to signify comitative action or togetherness. These are classified as “pseudo-reciprocal verbs”.