

PSYCHO-COLLOCATIONS IN THAI

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Abstract

This paper presents the study of psychocollocations (PCs) in Thai, focusing on PCs containing the word *caj* 'heart'. The syntactic and semantic properties of PCs are studied.

It is found that although PCs are semantically idiosyncratic, syntactically they are combined through the usual complementation and modification processes. As for the collocational properties of PCs, they are explained in terms of lexical type hierarchy in the framework of Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG).

Collocations

- Collocations refer to multiple-word expressions which lie between free words combinations and idioms.
- Collocations are distinct from idioms in that individual words in a collocation contribute to its overall semantics

Psycho-collocations

- Psycho-collocations mean polymorphemic expressions referring to a mental process, quality or state [1].
- One of the constituents of psycho-collocations is a psycho noun; a noun with explicit psychological reference such as *heart, mind, soul, or temper*.
- This paper presents an analysis of psycho-collocations (PCs) that contain the word *caj* – ‘heart’ in Thai.
 - For example, *caj dii* heart-good ‘kind’

Syntactic Classification

- Psycho-collocations containing the word *caj* can be categorized structurally into two groups:
 - (1) PCs in which *caj* occurs first as the head noun. For example, *caj dii* heart-good 'kind', *caj sĩa* heart-lose/spoil 'worried', *caj dam* heart-black 'unsympathetic.'
 - (2) PCs which have V-N constructions such as *sĩa caj* lose/spoil-heart 'sad/sorry', *tòk caj* fall-heart 'startled/frightened.'

Semantics

- Based on [2], when *caj* occurs subsequently in V-N (ADJ-N) construction, this indicates temporary state-of-mind or feeling, as in *khǎw dii caj* ‘he is/was glad/happy.’
- When *caj* occurs as the head noun followed by an adjective, this indicates a more-or-less permanent quality of the heart, mind, spirit or disposition, as in *khǎw pen khon caj dii* ‘he is kind (kind-hearted).’

- However, this argument does not always hold, as in the cases of *sĭa caj* meaning ‘sad/sorry’ vs. *caj sĭa* meaning ‘be frightened, worried, be disheartened.’
- Based on the previously mentioned observation, *sĭa caj* should refer to a temporary condition and *caj sĭa* should refer to a somewhat permanent state of mind.
- However, it turns out that both *sĭa caj* and *caj sĭa* can be interpreted as temporary feelings or states of mind.

Analysis in Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG)

- Collocations are usually discussed in contrast with free word combinations at one end and idiomatic expressions at the other, collocations falling in the middle of this continuum.
- General composition rules can be used to describe free words combinations.
- An idiom is a rigid, frozen word combination to which no generalities apply.

HPSG

- HPSG is a constraint-based, unification-based grammatical theory concerned with the system of linguistic signs that constitute a language. In HPSG, signs (both lexical and phrasal) are represented as features structures or attribute value matrices (AVMs) diagrammed as follows:

ATTRIBUTE1	VALUE1
ATTRIBUTE2	VALUE2
...	

- An attribute can have an atomic value (a value for which no attribute is appropriate) or it can take another AVM as its complex value.
- All linguistic signs have the attribute SYNSEM, which, according to [3], is the information in linguistic signs that form a natural class. This means that it is precisely this information that has the potential of being subcategorized for by other signs.

Combination of Signs

- In combination of signs, the unification is the mechanism involved. Unification is a process which combines two feature structures to form a more informative feature structure.
- For example, unification is carried out when a verb combines with an object to create a verb phrase, or when a verb phrase combines with a subject to create a sentence.

Syntactic combinations

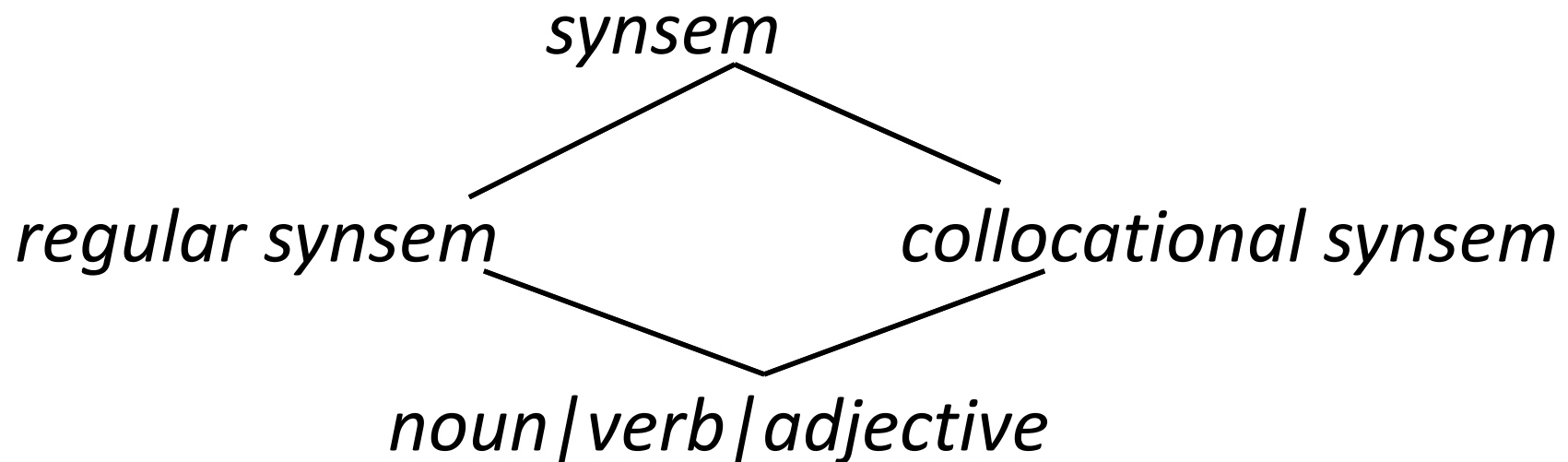
- Psycho-collocations can be described in HPSG. Syntactically, the PCs containing *caj* as head can be combined via the *Head-Adjunct Schema*, which is the rule that allows the adjunct or modifier to select the category of its modified element.
- On the other hand, if *caj* occurs as complement (in V-N construction), the combination is carried out via the *Head-Complement Schema* which combines a syntactic head with its complement(s) to create a phrase.

Semantic Constraints

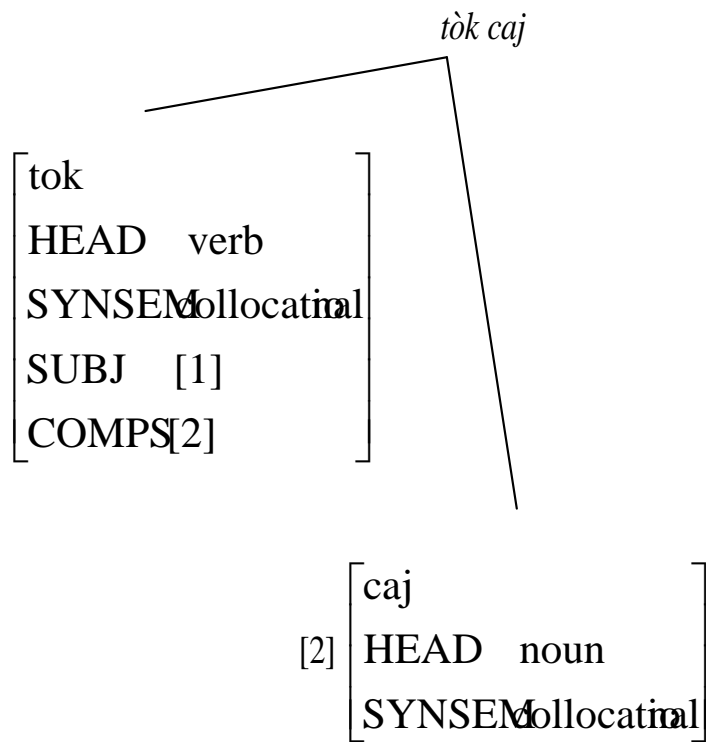
- The psycho-collocations involving *caj* are accounted for by positing the collocational meaning of *caj* in the lexicon.
- In HPSG, the lexicon's internal organization is designed to encode regularities and reduce redundancy. This is achieved by organizing linguistic types in the lexicon in a *type hierarchy* [4].

Synsem type hierarchy relating to collocations

- The basic assumption is that linguistic objects belong to the following *synsem* type hierarchy
The *synsem* type is the semantic and syntactic information of a linguistic sign



- *caj* as a noun belong to both *synsems*. *Regular-caj* means the noun *caj* which refers literally to a heart (i.e. an organ). *Collocational-caj* refers to the noun *caj* which participates in the psycho-collocations.
- The combination of *collocational-caj* is only possible with other verbs or adjectives that also belong to the type *collocational-synsem* to acquire PC meanings. For example, the verb *tòk* normally means ‘fall’ in Thai but when combined with *caj*, the PC *tòk caj* has the meaning of ‘startled/frightened’.




Conclusion

- Similar to other Southeast-Asian languages, psycho-collocations are widespread in Thai especially the PCs containing the word *caj*.
- Since the main meaning contribution of this type of PCs is specific to the word *caj*, the account that describes PCs in terms of lexicon and lexical type hierarchy is preferred in this paper.

- The lexical type hierarchy explains that *caj* as well as other words that participate in PCs contain both regular and collocational properties.
- As for the way that *caj* combines with its head or complement, this is carried out according to the usual mechanism of HPSG with no need to stipulate special structures or constructions.

References

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Thank you. Any questions?

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