

Part III Syntax

1. The Noun Phrase

2. The Verb Phrase

The concept of English Nouns

Nouns are used to represent “THINGS”. In English 3 concepts are involved when we want to talk about THINGS.

- **Definiteness and Non-definiteness**
- **Mass Noun and Count Noun**
- **Singularity and Plurality**

The concept of Definiteness

Definiteness is the concept referring to the known, mentioned, or the only noun. It is marked by the Definite Article <the>.

Non-definiteness is the opposite concept of Definiteness. It refers to any noun or nouns, not specific or known. It is marked by the Indefinite Article <a, an>.

Non-definiteness is unmarked when the noun is the plural count noun.

The concept of Mass Noun and Count Noun

All the nouns in English can either be the Mass Noun or the Count Noun.

The Mass Noun is not counted and it does not have the plural form.

The Count Noun is counted and it has the plural form.

The Mass Noun can be counted using the countable unit to put it in, for example, a glass of milk, a spoon of sugar, a pinch of salt.

The Concept of Singularity and Plurality

If the noun is countable. It can be a single item, or thing, or concept and is referred to as Singular noun.

Singular noun is not morphologically marked.

Plural noun is morphologically marked by an {s} or an {es}

Singular noun can be definite, referring to the only noun, the known or mentioned. The definite singular noun is marked with “the” article.

Definite Plural noun is also marked with “the” article.

The Concept of Singularity and Definiteness

Singular noun can be definite, referring to the only noun, the known or the mentioned. The definite singular noun is marked with “the” article. For example:

Give me the book.

Singular noun can also be non-definite, referring to any noun. The non-definite singular noun is marked with “a” if the noun begins with a consonant sound. The non-definite singular noun begins with a vowel sound is marked with “an”.

Give me a book and an apple.

The Concept of Plurality and Definiteness

Definite plural noun is also marked with “the” article. For example:

The dogs in her apartment are too fat.

Non-definite plural noun is not marked. The plural form of the plural noun is used to mark plurality and non-definiteness. For example:

She loves dogs. Dogs are human good friends.

The Noun Phrase in Thai English

The 3 concepts of definiteness vs non-definiteness, mass vs count, and singular vs plural, are not syntactically marked in Thai.

Nouns in Thai are always morphologically unmarked. There is only one form. The context will tell whether the noun is definite or non-definite, mass or count, and singular or plural.

When the Thai want to count the noun, they have the classifier after the number. For example:

/dek (child) sa:m (three) khon (man-classifier) /

/na:m (water) si: (four) khu:at (bottle-classifier)

The Concept of English and Thai Nouns

English Thai

Definiteness and Non-definiteness	marked	unmarked
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Mass Noun and Count Noun	marked	unmarked
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Singularity and Plurality*	marked	unmarked
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*Plurality in Thai is sometimes marked by reduplication of noun, for example, /dek dek/ children from /dek/ child, /sa:w sa:w/ young girls from /saw/ young girl.

Characteristics of Noun Phrase in Thai English

Noun phrases in Thai English exhibit the lack of syntactic markers to mark the 3 concepts of English nouns. For example:

I am going to buy book.

(a book, books, the book, the books?)

I like book.

(books, the book, the books?)

He gave me book.

(a book, books, the book, the books?)

Conclusion

The nouns in Thai English are always unmarked. This could create a confusion between the known and the unknown, the given and the new, the singular and the plural, and the mass and the count noun.

The most problematic concept is the concept of definiteness and non-definiteness marked by the definite and indefinite article. It is claimed that Thai L2 speakers of English will acquire this concept very late, and some never acquire it.

Part III Syntax

1. The Noun Phrase

2. The Verb Phrase

The concept of English Verbs

- Tense, Time, and Aspect
- Verb and Subject Agreement
- Verb Forms

The concept of Tense

Tense is the form of verb used to mark the semantic of time and aspect in English.

The concept of time is either present, past, or future.

The connotative meaning of time (time in the speaker mind) is aspect. It is either progressive, near, definite, emphatic etc.

Tenses or verb forms in English are used to refer to the actual time and to express the speakers' attitude about the time.

The Linguistic Expression of

Time and Aspect in Thai and English

Thai does have expressions of time and aspect. However, it is not marked in the verb forms as in English. There are lexical items such as adverb of time, and modal verbs used to mark time and aspect in Thai. For example:

/khawR pajM l→:wH /

he go already

The verb is not marked for past time but the adverb signifies that the time is past.

The Serial Verb Construction (SVC)

Thai also use Serial Verb Construction (SVC) to express the time and aspect of the state or action. For example:

/khawR d^{hand}:nM pajM l^{arrow}:wH/

he walk go already

(He walked away already.)

/k^{arrow}:wF t^{arrow}:k pajM l^{arrow}:wH/

glass break go already

(The glass was broken already)

Thai English exhibits this interference very clearly as in the following sentences.

He go to school everyday.

He go to school yesterday.

He already go to school.

In the present tense the verb in English is marked if the subject is a singular third person. Thai English does not mark the verb as in the case of past tense

The Concept of Subject Verb Agreement

In English the verbs have to agree with the subjects. Since Thai has only one verb form. Thai English, again, exhibits no relationship between the verb form and the subject.

However, Thai verbs can have many forms according to the degree of politeness and the status of the subject. For example:

/kinM/ eat, is used for ordinary occasion with common people. /tha:nM/ eat, is a more polite form for /kinM/.

/chanR/ eat, is used for monks.

/sa w[☞]:jR/ eat, is used for the royal family

The State Verbs or the Adjectives

Thai do not have Adjectives like English. The English Adjectives give rise to many theoretical questions in the linguistic description of English Grammar. Pedagogically speaking, people still keep Adjectives as one of the Verb class in English. They have to have a verb to be in front of them. They can be used to modify the right Head Nouns that follow them.

Thai State Verbs can be equated to Adjectives. However, these verbs do not need any helping verb coming in front of them.

In Thai English, we find Adjectives in English are used without any Verb to be. For example:

The glass break.

Jane beautiful.

Friend pregnant.

Car very modern but very expensive.

Wait wait. Noodle very hot.

Game interesting.

Dog very happy, he old but very happy.

The Verb Phrase in Thai English

Since Thai do not express time and aspect in the verb forms. There is only one verb form for each verb. So in Thai English we find Thai say, “He go.” for the English “He goes.”, or “He went.”, or “He has/had gone.”.

The English verbs in the future tense that are marked with the auxiliary verbs “will” or “shall” are easily adopted. The process is the same in Thai. Future tense is marked by the auxiliary /caL/.