

A Reference Grammar of Thai

A Reference Grammar of Thai provides a clear, detailed, and comprehensive guide to Thai grammar, designed for both linguists and intermediate to advanced learners. Written by two leading experts on Thai, it places a special emphasis on functional accounts of Thai grammatical phenomena: the use of demonstratives, personal reference terms, the modality system, the aspectual system, pragmatic particles, verb serialization, relative clauses, question formation, passive and causative constructions, topic-marking, and many more. Unlike any other books on Thai grammar, it draws on data from everyday spoken discourse, such as informal conversations, group discussions, interviews, and narratives, as well as non-technical written texts such as folktales, short stories, and newspaper articles, to discuss grammatical phenomena at both sentence- and discourse-levels. An extensive index is provided and examples are given in both Thai orthography and IPA-based phonetic symbols, making this an invaluable resource for linguists as well as students and teachers of Thai.

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and
Preeya Ingkaphirom



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To the memory of John Hinds

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Preface

The aim of this book is to provide functional accounts of the grammatical phenomena of Standard Thai, the national language of the over 60 million citizens of the Kingdom of Thailand. The educated, middle class in the Central region of Thailand, particularly in Bangkok, use this language natively, but other dialect and language users within the country also learn it at school and are exposed to it through mass media and direct contact with native speakers. The spectrum of this language is rich in its spoken and written varieties, and in its various levels of speech. The formal language, especially the written language such as that used in government documents, exhibits specialized vocabulary and grammatical constructions, while the casual variety has its own peculiarities. The grammatical description of this book is based on the ordinary range of the language mainly found in everyday conversations, with different degrees of formality, and in non-technical written language.

The book is written with two general groups of readers in mind. The first group includes intermediate to advanced-level learners of the language and the teachers of these students. It is assumed that the learners have already acquired a basic knowledge of the grammatical structures and the writing system. However, we do not assume prior knowledge of linguistic analysis and thus have attempted to spell out potentially unfamiliar technical linguistic terms and concepts as much as possible. Most chapters start with a comparison between Thai and English to orient readers to the issues to be described.

The second group of readers that we have in mind is linguists who are interested in learning the structure of the language from a functional linguistic point of view. Excellent reference books published in the past such as Noss (1964) and Panupong (1970) have laid out the foundation for the structural analysis of the language, but none has ever provided enough information to understand the functional aspects of the language. The functional linguistics perspective is based on the premise that a language organizes its structure through constant interaction with both linguistic internal and external motivations. This perspective is particularly useful when trying to understand how different structures are used for similar meanings and how the same word may be used for different functions. Analyses provided in this book make reference to recent developments in functional linguistics, thereby providing support to the functional theory of language using Thai as a test case.

Functional linguistics considers actual language use as an important motivation for grammar formation. This stance obliges us to rely heavily on data taken from language used in real communication. Though many constructed data are included in the book for succinct description of phenomena especially in the chapters in the first half of the book, we have incorporated a large number of excerpts from our corpus of spoken data, such as informal conversations, interviews, and group discussions, and to a lesser degree from non-technical written data, such as short stories and newspaper articles (see the section on “Transcription and Data Information”).

Preface

While writing this book, we have received much support from different organizations and individuals. The following organizations have provided partial financial support: the University of California's Pacific Rim Research Program (2001), the UCLA Institute of American Cultures (1997-1998), the UCLA Academic Senate (1995-1998), and the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, UCLA (2002). The following organizations have provided work spaces: The National Institute for Japanese Language, Tokyo Gakugei University, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), and Chulalongkorn University. The following people have offered various kinds of support (in alphabetical order of first names): Amy Meepoe Baron, Barry Griner, Chaichompoo Chalermchai, Ketkanda Jatrongkachoke, Krisana Depitak, Michiko Kaneyasu, Neil Muir, Nongnut Chairangsinan (Phwangphong), Paul Quaglia, Pranee Kullavanijaya, Scott Simmer, Supa Angkurawaranon, Supattra Boonserm, Weera Ostapirat, Wirote Aroonmanakun, and Yoshiko Tomiyama.

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We could not have finished this project without the able assistance of the current editor, Helen Barton. Her predecessor, Kate Brett, encouraged us to write this book, and has been extremely patient and resourceful from the beginning of the project, and we have no words to thank her enough.

Finally, we mention our special friend, John Hinds, to whom we are dedicating this book. John was a linguist specializing in discourse analysis, and he was a mutual friend of the two authors. He fell in love with the Thai people and language and began research on Thai discourse with one of the authors in 1987. After a short battle with pancreatic cancer, he died on September 27, 1994 at the age of 51. John was the inspiration behind this book and is indeed the third co-author of the book in spirit.

Transcription and data information

1. Data presentation and types of data

Data are presented in the four-line format as follows.

Line 1	Thai orthography
Line 2	Phonetic transcription
Line 3	Gloss
Line 4	Free English translation

Line 1 represents a sentence, clause, etc. in the standard Thai orthography. Line 2 represents the same material on line 1 in a modified IPA phonetic transcription. Section 1.2 (Chapter 1) lists the phonetic symbols employed in this book. Line 3 gives glosses, or the literal meaning, of each word that appears on line 2. See page (xxv) for a list of abbreviations used on this line. Line 4 gives a relatively free English translation of the Thai sentence, clause, etc. Some crucial information not present in the sentence, clause, etc. may be put in parentheses to make the translation more comprehensible. In cases where more extended contextual information is necessary, it is added before the data.

Two types of data are used in this book: ‘constructed data’ and ‘natural (written or spoken) data.’ Constructed data are indicated by the symbol (») at the beginning of the sentence on line 1.

» สุนีย์ย้ายโต๊ะ
 sunii yáay tó
 (name).3 move table
 ‘Sunee moved the table.’

Natural data are labeled with the source identification, e.g. the name of the corpus (‘EQ #2’ in the example below). In the case of spoken data, the line identification number (‘279’ right after the name of the corpus in the example) and the speaker ID on line 1 (‘Mana’ in the example) are also provided. (See Section 4 below for the titles and descriptions of the data sources.)

EQ #2: 279
 Mana: ก็ให้ใครดูก็ได้
 kô háy khay duu kô dây
 LP give/CAUS who look LP POT
 ‘You can let anyone look (at the performance).’

Transcription and data information

2. Special notations

Notations (1) through (4) below appear on line 3 for glosses, and (5) appears on line 2 for phonetic transcriptions.

(1) Slash (/): This symbol is used to give both the original meaning and grammatical function for certain words. For example, the notation ('give/CAUS') provided for /hây/ in the example above (EQ #2: 297) denotes that the word /hây/ means 'give' but is used as a causative auxiliary in this sentence.

(2) Period (.) followed by a number: This symbol is used to indicate the referent of a noun/pronoun, i.e. speaker, addressee, or a third person. Thus, the notation ('mother.3') means that the word for mother refers to a third person, while ('mother.1') means that it refers to the speaker.

(3) Solid vertical line (|): Boundary markers, both solid and broken are supplied to increase readability of the data on lines 3 and 4, and enhance comprehension of the sentence structure. Both syntactic and phonological cues are considered, though no particular theoretical claim is implied. Sometimes a decision of boundary insertion is controversial due to the fluid nature of the language (Section 1.7 in Chapter 1). The solid vertical line (|) indicates clause boundaries, roughly corresponding to a comma or period in English.

Heineken 57
 M: มันหลายปีแล้ว อาจจะไม่วู่
 man lăay pii léew | àat cà mây yùu
 3 many year ASP | may CM NEG exist
 'It's been several years already. It probably doesn't exist any longer.'

(4) Broken vertical line (|): This symbol indicates boundaries within a clause. This often separates a topic noun phrase from the rest of the sentence, or a phrase with a quoting verb from the rest. In the following example, this symbol appears twice. The first one is placed between the complementizer /wâa/ and the complement clause, and the second one after a topical noun phrase with a sequence of pragmatic particles /nĭa ná/.

EQ # 5: 951
 Muu: เขาบอกว่าหมาเนี่ยนะ มันจะมีความรู้สึกก่อนไซ้ใหม่
 kháw bòk wâa | mǎa nĭa ná | man cà mii khwam-lúsùk kòon châ-y-má
 3 tell COMP | dog PP PP | 3 CM have PFX-feel before QP
 'They say that dogs have the feeling (of danger) first, right?'

(5) Hyphens (-): Hyphens appear within a word on line 2, but do not have strong theoretical implications in this book. The most important principle is to enhance read-

Transcription and data information

ability of example sentences (except in Chapter 2, ‘Structure of words,’ where more systematic hyphenation conventions are used). Here are a few guidelines for the use of hyphens.

(a) After certain prefixes such as noun-forming prefixes (/kaan/ and /khwaam/), adjective-forming prefixes (e.g. /nâa/), and adverb-forming prefixes (e.g. /yàaŋ/). [PFX = prefix]

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
/kaan-rian/	PFX-study	‘studying’
/khwaam-ciŋ/	PFX-true	‘truth’
/nâa-rák/	PFX-love	‘lovely, cute’
/yàaŋ-mâak/	PFX-much	‘much, a lot’
/thîi-sǐpsǎŋ/	PFX-twelve	‘twelfth’

(b) Between title and name. [TL = title]

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
phîi-nǒy	TL-(name)	‘sister Noy’
khun-sumalii	TL-(name)	‘Ms. Sumalee’

(c) Between two morphemes in reduplication.

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
ciŋ-ciŋ	really	‘really’
phûan-phûan	friends	‘friends’

(d) Between two components of a complex question particle. [QP = question particle]

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
rú-plàaw	QP	N/A
chây-máy	QP	N/A

(e) Between a noun and a resumptive pronoun. See Chapter 30 for the discussion of ‘resumptive pronouns.’ If a hyphen is not present, the pronoun is a possessive pronoun (the second case below).

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
phôo-khâw	father-3	‘the father’ (resumptive pronoun)
phôo khâw	father 3	‘his father’ (possessive)

Transcription and data information

(f) Between words in a formulaic expression.

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
khòp-khun	'thank.you'	'thank you'
mây-pen-ray	'no.problem'	'no problem'

A hyphen is not inserted in the following cases.

(g) After most other prefixes besides those in (a) above.

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss/English</u>
/malakɔɔ/ (</ma-lakɔɔ/)	'papaya'
/nákrian/ (</nák-rian/)	'student'
/roonrian/ (</roon-rian/)	'school'

(h) Generally, a hyphen is not used between components of a common compound word.

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss/English</u>
/wancan/ (</wan-can /)	'Monday'
/pàakkaa/ (</pàak-kaa/)	'pen'
/mǎɔduu/ (</mǎɔ-duu/)	'fortune-teller'
/phátlom/ (</phát-lom/)	'fan'
/phûuyǐŋ/ (</phûu-yǐŋ/)	'woman'

However, in some cases hyphens may be inserted to increase readability.

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss/English</u>
/wan-níi/	'today'
/phrûŋ-níi/	'tomorrow'
/thíi-nǎy/	'where'
/thíi-níi/	'here'
/khâa-châw-bâan/	'rent' (< fee-rent-house)

Words are separated by a blank space between components of a phrase (e.g. a head noun and a modifier). [CLS = classifier, MW = measure word]

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
yàŋ nǐi	like this	'like this'
khon díaw	CLS single	'one person/alone'
sǎɔŋ thûm	two MW	'8 P.M. (< 2 o'clock evening time)'
tamrùat caracɔɔn	police traffic	'traffic police'
lûuk phûuyǐŋ	child female	'daughter'

However, in some cases hyphens may be inserted to increase readability. In the next example, /yà̀y/ ‘big’ is a modifier for the head noun /ầy-yuunít/ ‘the unit.’ (/man/ is a resultative pronoun – see (e) above in this section.)

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	<u>English</u>
ầy-yuunít-yà̀y-man	(PRF-unit -big-3)	‘the large unit’

3. ‘Orthographic spelling’ and ‘pronunciation spelling’

The natural ‘spoken’ data were first transcribed from the tape with phonetic symbols (the ‘pronunciation spelling’) for line 2, then the corresponding ‘correct’ Thai spelling was assigned for each word on line 1. This means sometimes discrepancies arise between lines 1 and 2. For example, if a speaker pronounced the word for ‘school’ as /looŋlian/, it is accurately spelled as /looŋlian/; it is not changed to the ‘correct’ pronunciation, /rooŋrian/. However, in the Thai orthography, this word is spelled ‘correctly’ with the letter ‘ร’ (= /r/). This procedure was adopted in order to vividly capture on line 2 the actual way in which the speakers of Modern Thai produce their speech, while maintaining the conventional Thai orthography on line 1. From a theoretical point of view, actual spoken forms offer valuable information on the innovative pronunciation in contrast to the conventional, conservative orthographic pronunciation.

In contrast, the constructed data and the natural ‘written’ data are spelled out in the Thai orthography first, which are then transliterated by the phonetic symbols. This type of spelling for line 2 is the ‘orthographic spelling.’ In general, there are fairly good correspondences between lines 1 and 2 for these types of data. However, there are some exceptions. The following notes describe which spelling, the orthographic or pronunciation, is used for line 2 for different types of data. Further adjustments are made in the chapters on pragmatic particles (Chapter 15) and question particles (Chapter 23). See these chapters for details.

(1) Tones: Some common words are pronounced consistently with different tones from what the orthography suggests. In this case the pronunciation spelling is always employed.

<u>Thai orthography</u>	<u>Orthographic spelling</u>	<u>Pronunciation spelling</u> (for all data)
เขา	/khǎw/	/kháw/ ‘he’
ฉัน	/chǎn/	/chán/ ‘I’
หนังสือ	/nǎŋsǎm/	/náŋsǎm/ ‘book’

(2) Vowel length: Some words are pronounced with different vowel length from the pronunciation specified by the conventional Thai spelling. Alternations that occur in specific phonological environments (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2.6) are reflected in

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phonetic transcription for both constructed and natural data. However, vowel-length change due to minor phonetic adjustments (such as the rate of speech) is ignored. Thus, for both constructed and natural data, two alternate vowel lengths may be used for some words.

<u>Thai orthography</u>	<u>Orthographic spelling</u>	<u>Pronunciation spelling</u> (for all data)
ได้	/dây/	/dây/ - /dâay/ (auxiliary)
น้ำ	/nám/	/nám/ - /náam/ 'water'
ก็	/kôw/	/kôw/ - /kô/ (particle)

(3) The /l/ and /r/ distinction: In most speech, the orthographic /r/ is pronounced as /l/, though occasionally the 'correct' /r/ may appear. Orthographic spelling is used for constructed/written data and pronunciation spelling for natural data.

<u>Thai orthography</u>	<u>Orthographic spelling</u> (for constructed/written data)	<u>Pronunciation spelling</u> (for natural data)
โรงเรียน	/rooŋrian/	/looŋlian/ - /rooŋrian/ 'school'
รู้สึก	/rúsùk/	/lúsùk/ - /rúsùk/ 'feel'
อะไร	/aray/	/alay/ - /aray/ 'what'
เรียบร้อย	/ríabróoy/	/líabróoy/ - /ríabróoy/ 'proper, complete'

(4) Consonant clusters: The word-initial consonant clusters are often reduced to a single consonant, though in some cases the consonant cluster may be maintained. Orthographic spelling is used for constructed/written data and pronunciation spelling is used for natural data.

<u>Thai orthography</u>	<u>Orthographic spelling</u> (for constructed/written data)	<u>Pronunciation spelling</u> (for natural data)
ใคร	/khray/	/khay/ - /khray/ 'who'
ครับ	/khráp/	/kháp/ - /khráp/ (particle)
ตรวจ	/trùat/	/tùat/ - /trùat/ 'examine'
เพราะ	/phró/	/phó/ - /phró/ 'because'
ปลา	/plaa/	/paa/ - /plaa/ 'fish'

4. Data sources

The data of natural written and spoken language used in this book are described below.

Written Data

- (1) Various newspaper and magazine articles (the names of the newspapers and magazines are indicated).
- (2) *Nakhorn May Pen Ray*: A collection of short-stories by Chart Kobjit, the first edition published in 1989.
- (3) Written corpus (short story data supplied by Kingkarn Thepkanjana).

Spoken Data

The abbreviated data names, if used, are shown in parentheses. The data are listed according to the frequencies of citation in the book. The first two are most frequently cited.

- (1) Parent: A parent-teacher conference at a college in Bangkok. For the most part, a female teacher (FT) and the father (P) of a female student with an academic problem discuss how to improve the student's grade. A male teacher (MT) also participates in some parts of the discussion. Collected by Supa Chochoey, transcribed by Amy Baron (early 1990's).
- (2) Earthquake data (EQ #2-5): Conversations among strangers. Speakers retell their experiences of the 1994 Northridge earthquake in Los Angeles. The conversations were recorded a few weeks after the earthquake. Speakers were college students living and studying in Los Angeles at the time of the earthquake, but did not know each other before the conversations. At the beginning of each conversation, a female facilitator, Emi, introduced two students. The names of the participants appear below. Collected by Shoichi Iwasaki; transcribed by Amy Baron (1994).

EQ #2	Nok and Mana – both male
EQ #3	Poo and Tik – both female
EQ #4	Tim and Art – both male
EQ #5	Muu and Opas – both male

- (3) Hospital: An informal conversation between two close female friends, Daw and Aarii. Topics range from Daw's visit to a doctor's office to Aarii's story about a security guard who came to her drugstore with a deep cut in his finger. Collected and transcribed by Akkamon Santiwate, Paritchatt Dhasnasrisdi, Maleena Doramarn, and Tidarat Watananitikul (2002).

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- (4) Students: A very informal conversation between college students, Kit (a male) and Um (a female), recorded on campus. Collected and transcribed by Wichian Sit-tiphaporn (1994).
- (5) Job Interview: A job interview at a hotel in Bangkok. A male interviewer (M) interviews a female interviewee (F) who is seeking a position as a waitress. Collected by Supa Chochoey, transcribed by Amy Baron (early 1990's).
- (6) Ads: A group discussion. A female interviewer (Nisa) asks five participants about their reactions toward the thirteen TV commercials that they have just seen. Collected and transcribed by Pensiri Tosawat, Varangkana Intharasen, Nisakorn Pan-prasong, and Chanpen Wuthamontri (2002).
- (7) Heineken: A group interview. Three female graduate students interview two businessmen (C and S) from an advertising agency, which made Heineken commercials. Collected and transcribed by Kanuengnij Bhanmaka, Piya Chuenjit, and Noparat Lertsirimit (2002).
- (8) Company: A one-on-one interview. A female interviewer (Wipa) puts various questions to the managing director of a real estate company (MD). Collected and transcribed by Wilawan Pakungtiw and Siriporn Vichitamaros (2002).
- (9) Student narratives (SN #1-21): Speeches made by first-year female students at Rajabhat Institute. Collected and transcribed by Supa Chodchoey (1986).
- (10) Pear story narratives #1-21: Monologues. The speaker retells a story after seeing a short film, with ambient noises but no speech, about a boy who steals pears ("Pear Story") (cf. Chafe 1980). Collected and transcribed by Supa Chodchoey (1986).
- (11) Telephone: Telephone conversations between various people at a house in Bangkok, where one member of the family is expecting a baby. Most topics are concerned with the delivery of the baby. Data provided by Supa Chodchoey (late 1980's).
- (12) Couple #1-2: Sociolinguistic interview. An interviewer interviewed married couples living in Los Angeles about their lives in America. Collected and transcribed by Shoichi Iwasaki and Amy Baron (1997).
- (13) Colleagues: An informal chat between female college teachers. Collected by Supa Chochoey, transcribed by Amy Baron (early 1990's).

Abbreviations

1 = first-person pronoun	OS = older sibling
1M = first-person male pronoun	PASS = passive
1F = first-person female pronoun	AFX = prefix
2 = second-person pronoun	POT = potential
3 = third-person pronoun	PP = pragmatic particle
ADJ = adjective	QP = question particle
ADV = adverb	QW = question word
ASP = aspect auxiliary	REC = reciprocal
BEN = benefactive	REF = reflexive pronoun
CAUS = causative	SBR = subordinator
CLS = classifier	SLP = speech level particle
CM = challengeable marker	SPR = superlative
COMP = complementizer	TL = title prefix
COP = copula	YS = younger sibling
DEM = demonstrative	
DIR = directional aux	
DM = discourse marker	
EMPH = emphasis marker	
EXC = exclamation	
FRG = fragment	
HDG = hedge	
HES = hesitation	
LINK = linker	
LP = linking particle	
MOD = modal	
MW = measure words	
NEG = negative marker	
NIMP = negative imperative	

