

Thîi Cà? and Control Infinitives

Thai has been regarded as an uninflected language in which tense and aspect are not grammaticalized (Suwattee 1971, Hudak 1990, Hoonchamlong 1991 among others). Thai makes no use of inflection; therefore, there are no tense and agreement markings in clausal structures. Time reference is expressed by time adverbs and aspect/mood markers or interpreted from discourse contexts. Examples of declaratives varying in tense and aspect are shown in (1a) to (1d) below.

- (1) a. Somsak ?àan ?ǎŋsǔuu thúk wan c. Somsak cà? ?àan ?ǎŋsǔuu phrûŋnî
Somsak read books every day Somsak will read books tomorrow
“Somsak reads a book/books every day.” “Somsak will read a book/books tomorrow.”
b. Somsak ?àan ?ǎŋsǔuu mûuawaannîi d. Somsak kamlaj ?àan ?ǎŋsǔuu tœnnîi
Somsak read books yesterday Somsak Prog read books at this time
“Somsak read a book/books yesterday.” “Somsak is reading a book/books at this time.”

In (1a) and (1b), the verb *?àan* remains constant in the present and past contexts, time reference is conveyed by time adverbs *thúk wan* and *mûuawaannîi*. In (1c) and (1d), the verb form remains the same; there is an element preceding the verb, namely *cà?*, an aspectual modal (Haas 1964, Noss 1964, Iwasaki and Ingkaphirom 2005, among others) comparable to English “will” in (1c), and *kamlaj*, a progressive marker in (1d). These examples support the presence of IP, and consequently finiteness, due to the implicit tense and overt aspect/mood markers.

Single clauses aside, let us turn to finite and non-finiteness in Thai bi-clausal structures. Given that Thai does not have overt morphology to express tense and agreement, an immediate question arises as to how one can distinguish between finite and non-finite clausal complements. I will discuss finite complements first. Thai marks finite clausal complements with two complementizers *wâa* and *thîi* (cf. Kobsiriphat 1988, Hoonchamlong 1991, among others). Ekniyom (1982) (cited in Hoonchamlong 1991) suggests that *thîi* and *wâa* differ in that *wâa* introduces “assertive” clauses while *thîi* introduces “non-assertive” clauses. Consider (2) and (3), which illustrate sentences containing finite clauses. In (2) and (3) below, *phûut/ khít* and *sîadaaj* take assertive and non-assertive types of complements, respectively. Since Thai is a pro-drop language, the overt pronoun *kháw* is optional. And as finite, the embedded clauses can freely occur with time adverbs such as *phrûŋnîi* “tomorrow” in (2) and *mûuawaannîi* “yesterday” in (3).

- (2) Somsak phûut/khít wâa (kháw) cà? maahăa Prapa (phrûŋnîi)
Somsak said/thought Comp (he) will come-see Prapa (tomorrow)
“Somsak said/thought that he would come to see Prapa.”
(3) Somsak sîadaaj thîi (kháw) mâjdâj maa ŋaan.wankœt chán (mûuawaannîi)
Somsak regrets Comp (he) neg come party.birthday I (yesterday)
“Somsak regretted that he was unable to come to my birthday party.”

As for non-finiteness, I will focus on Thai control infinitives, a typical non-finite structure. On a standard assumption, a control construction is bi-clausal; the matrix subject serves as an argument and the verb requires a non-finite complement. To determine whether a clause is finite or non-finite, Hoonchamlong (1991) suggests that one inserts perfective *khuj* or progressive *kamlaj* and overt pronouns into the clause in question. In non-finite clauses, these aspect markers and overt pronouns cannot appear, while they can in finite clauses. Take the relevant examples in (4) below as examples.

In the grammatical sentence (4a), *jàak* precedes an embedded clause with or without *cà?*, which is conventionally considered a clitic (imposing informality but no difference in meaning). In the ungrammatical sentences (4b) and (4c), *jàak* cannot take a complement extended by a perfective modal *khuj* or a progressive modal *kamlaj*, nor can it appear with an overt pronoun. Interestingly, in (4d), when

thîi appears, *cà?* is obligatory, and the infinitive conveys emphatic focus (shown as ‘specifically’ in the translation). The grammaticality of (4a) and (4e) vs. the ungrammaticality of (4b) and (4c) strongly suggests that the embedded clause is infinitival.

- (4) a. Somsak jàak (*cà?*) maa ɲaan.wankəət chán
 Somsak want come party.birthday I
 “Somsak wants to come to my birthday party.”
- b. Somsak jàak *khuj/ *kamlaŋ (*cà?*) maa ɲaan.wankəət chán
- c. Somsak jàak *kháw (*cà?*) maa ɲaan.wankəət chán
- d. Somsak jàak thîi *cà?* maa ɲaan.wankəət chán
 Somsak want THII INF come party.birthday I
 “Somsak wants to specifically come to my birthday party.”

Consider the individual elements that form *thîi cà?*. As discussed earlier, the *thîi* element is a complementizer, and *cà?* is an aspectual modal. While *thîi* continues to be a marker for subordination, *cà?* is unlikely to be a typical modal auxiliary, but rather a marker for an irrealis feature. By virtue of this, I argue that *thîi* and *cà?* constitute a marker which introduces infinitives (as Jenks 2006 also claims) with additional specificity. Specificity aside, while *thîi cà?* is optional in (4), it is obligatory when the matrix predicate requires an infinitival clause with a hypothetical tense. See (5), a relevant example, below.

- (5) Somsak sabajcaj thîi *cà?* thamɲaan kàp raw
 Somsak comfortable THII CA? work with us
 “Somsak feels comfortable [to work with us].”

Sentence (5) without *thîi cà?* is ungrammatical. The fact from (5) suggests a strong affinity between this type of predicate and a hypothetical tense, which is expressed by *thîi cà?*-clauses. This obligatoriness is reminiscent of Kayne’s (2000) account for Romance *de/di*-infinitives such as his (21) *Jean a oublié *(de) mettre ses gants* “John has forgotten DE put-on his gloves.” *De* here is obligatory and, according to Kayne, it plays the licensing role of infinitives. Using *de/di* as a starting point, I will argue that *thîi* is similar to *de/di* by showing their common properties, and present my analysis for control infinitives with *thîi*, incorporating Kayne’s (2000) account. In my analysis, a point that departs significantly from Kayne’s approach is that I will propose a Mood(Irrealis) Phrase, MIP, as a functional category needed for the checking of Mood (Irrealis) features. I will also establish the role of the MIP, which enables the expression of a hypothetical tense that occurs in infinitival complements introduced by markers (i.e. *thîi* in Thai, *di* in Italian, and *de* in French).

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