

## Chapter 4

### Relative Clause Reduction

#### 4.1 Relative Clause Reduction in English

Jacobs and Rosenbaum claim that if the relative pronoun functions as the subject of the relative clause and precedes a segment with the features  $\langle + \text{copula} \rangle$  and  $\langle + \text{present} \rangle$ , it may be deleted through the relative clause reduction transformation.<sup>1</sup>

This transformation can generate:

1. participial phrases, for example:

(74) a. The child who is sitting on the rock is Timmy.

b. The child sitting on the rock is Timmy.

(75) a. The fruits that are bought at the market are not fresh.

b. The fruits bought at the market are not fresh.

2. prepositional phrases, for example:

(76) a. The book which is on the table is interesting.

b. The book on the table is interesting.

Usually when the relative pronoun, subject of the relative clause, precedes a copula segment followed by an adjective—a verbal with the feature  $\langle -V \rangle$ <sup>2</sup>, for example:

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<sup>1</sup>Jacobs and Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Jacobs and Rosenbaum have presented the view that adjectives and verbs in English are the same kind of constituent in the deep structure for they share many properties. (Ibid., pp. 63-5.)



(77) The child who is good should obey his parents.

two transformations are required in order to generate the surface string of an adjective modifying a noun:

1. the relative clause reduction transformation which deletes the relative pronoun along with the copula segment and gives:

(78) \*The child good should obey his parents.

2. the adjectival VP shift transformation which shifts the adjective to the left of the noun in the main sentence noun phrase.<sup>3</sup> This T-rule will generate the final surface string:

(79) The good child should obey his parents.

#### 4.2 Relative Clause Reduction in Thai

Generally, the relative clause in Thai may be reduced to a modifying phrase through the relative pronoun deletion transformation when the relative pronoun functions as the subject of the relative clause. This T-rule generates a verbal phrase modifying a noun.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that the prepositional phrase in Thai which functions as a noun modifier and has a locative characteristic is derived from a relative clause where the relative pronoun functions

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>For detail, see 3.3, pp. 30-32.

as its subject followed by the verb 'júu'. The transformation which generates this locative phrase is the relative clause reduction transformation. This T-rule will delete the relative pronoun, subject of the relative clause along with the verb júu, as the following statements show:

- (80) a. nańsýy thii júu bon tó? náasóncaj  
 book r.pron. be on table interesting  
 The book which is on the table is interesting.
- b. nańsýy bon tó? náasóncaj  
 book on table interesting  
 The book on the table is interesting.
- (81) a. suda chówb cękan thii júu naj túu  
 Suda like vase r.pron. be in cabinet  
 Suda likes the vase that is in the cabinet.
- b. suda chówb cękan naj túu  
 Suda like vase in cabinet  
 Suda likes the vase in the cabinet.

In Thai, there is a class of words which performs double functions, i.e. as the predicate without any helping verb, for example:

- (82) nám rón  
 water hot  
 The water is hot.
- (83) nág-rian khajǎn  
 student industrious  
 The student is industrious.

and also as a noun modifier:<sup>5</sup>

(84) kháw t̂ɔ̃nkaan nám r̂ɔ̃n  
 he want water hot  
 He wants hot water.

(85) khruu cĥɔ̃b nág-rian khajǎn  
 teacher like student industrious  
 The teacher likes industrious students.

This class of words, i.e. r̂ɔ̃n 'hot' and khajǎn 'industrious,' is like adjectives in English. Thus, the term 'adjective' used in this study will refer to words of this type. Adjectives in Thai which function as noun modifiers are derived from relative clauses. For example, dèg dii 'the good child' and bāan sǔaj 'the beautiful house' in the sentences:

(86) chán cĥɔ̃b dèg dii  
 I like child good  
 I like the good child.

(87) chán cĥɔ̃b bāan sǔaj  
 I like house beautiful  
 I like the beautiful house.

are derived from noun phrases with an embedded relative clause:

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<sup>5</sup>Phya Upakit calls this class of words khamwisèed in Phya Upakit-Silpasarn, op. cit., pp. 87-8 and Panupong 'intransitive adjectival verbs' in Panupong, op. cit., p. 125. Chaiyaratana calls them 'adjective verbs' and classifies them as a sub-class of the Thai verbs in Chaiyaratana, op. cit., pp. 160-1.

(88) dèg thîi dii  
 child r.pron. good  
 the child who is good

(89) bân thîi sŭaj  
 house r.pron. beautiful  
 the house which is beautiful

The transformational rule which applies to (88), (89) and generates the surface structure of an adjective modifying a noun in (86) and (87) is the relative pronoun deletion transformation.

#### 4.3 Similarities and Differences between Relative Clause Reduction in English and in Thai

The relative clause in English and in Thai may optionally be reduced to

1. a verbal phrase modifying a noun
2. a prepositional phrase modifying a noun
3. an adjective modifying a noun.

The transformational rules which give verbal phrases, prepositional phrases and adjectives in both languages will be compared in order to detect their similarities and differences.

The relative clauses in English and in Thai are reduced to verbal phrases through different T-rules. In English, it is the relative clause reduction transformation which deletes the relative pronoun, subject of the relative clause and the copula segment; in Thai, the relative clause is reduced through the relative pronoun deletion transformation which deletes the relative pronoun, subject

of the relative clause. Consequently, Thai students will apply the relative pronoun deletion transformation in order to give the verbal phrase in English. And since the verbal phrase in Thai is never marked by any verbal inflection like that in English, it is evident that Thai students will fail to mark the verbal phrase in English with correct verbal inflections, i.e. -ed, -ing. These differences can account for the following mistakes where incorrect verb forms beginning participial phrases are used:

(90) \*A television is a thing uses for enjoyment.

(91) \*There are many programs arranging to help those people.

(92) \*We will see the main chedi covers with copper.

The investigation reveals no mistakes concerning prepositional phrases modifying a noun in English since the relative clause reduction transformation apply in order to generate the surface structure of prepositional phrases in English and in Thai. As a result, Thai students do not have any difficulty in applying this T-rule in English as they also apply this T-rule in their mother tongue.

In order to generate the surface structure of an adjective modifying a noun in English and in Thai, different transformational rules are required. In English, two T-rules are involved, i.e. the relative clause reduction transformation and the adjectival VP shift transformation which moves the adjective to the position before the noun it modifies; in Thai only one T-rule, the relative pronoun deletion transformation, is required. Thus, Thai students will apply the relative clause reduction transformation in English but neglect the obligatory application of the adjectival VP shift

transformation since they do not apply this T-rule in their native language as the following mistakes concerning incorrect positioning of adjectives show:

(93) \*There is a program which interviews an expert professional. (a professional expert)

(94) \*I could see the world wide. (wide world)

Since there are great differences in the derivation of an adjective modifying a noun in English and in Thai, one would expect Thai students to fail to apply the adjectival VP shift transformation in English. The investigation, known, reveals few mistakes of the above type. This shows that most Thai students can learn to apply this T-rule in English correctly and only a few cannot.

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