TGIF
THE NTU LINGUIST CHATROOM

Is the Copula /pen/, in Thai, Meaningless?

When speaking of the semantic qualities of the copula in various languages, one would find that the copula does not have any intrinsic meaning. In the case of the Thai language, Uppakitsinlapasan, a well-known traditional Grammarian, has also claimed that the copula in Thai is a semantically empty verb that relies on the semantic content of the linguistic unit succeeding it in the predicate to form a complete sentence. The main objective of this Talk is to test these claims pertaining to the semantic emptiness of the copula /pen/ in Thai by investigating the behavior of /pen/ in various contexts. This will determine the types of occurrences one sees, as well as if /pen/ has any inherent/implicit meaning in the various contexts; if there is, the intent is to elucidate those meanings. This study is based on a total of 1,200 samples of data obtained from the *Thai National Corpus (TNC)*. This research found that the copula /pen/ in Thai can be both the main verb of a sentence and the last verb of a multi-verb construction. The linguistic element preceding /pen/ is usually a noun phrase, while the linguistic element succeeding /pen/ is variable in that it can be a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a prepositional phrase. The semantic analysis of /pen/ has uncovered three different implicit meanings of /pen/: 'belonging to a group', 'having the attribute (of)', and 'to be in one's possession'. The linguistic elements in the pre-copula and post-copula positions are related by a 'one of all' meaning, which is a unique characteristic of the copula /pen/ in Thai.

WEBINAR ●

9 April 2021
1:30pm - 2:30pm
Held on Zoom

REGISTRATION ●
Register at
**www.tinyurl.com
/tgif13-sureenate**
or scan QR code

CONTACT ●
Dr Francesco
Perono Cacciafoco
fcacciafoco@ntu.edu.sg

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Sureenate Jaratjarungkiat obtained a BA (Hons), MA, and PhD in Thai Language (Linguistics) from Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She is currently a Senior Lecturer and Thai Language Coordinator at the Centre for Modern Languages (CML), School of Humanities (SoH), Nanyang Technological University (NTU). She won the SoH Lecturers Excellence (LEX) Award 2017. Before joining NTU, she worked at *Google* as part of the *Google Voice (Thai) Team*, working on various Thai speech recognition projects. Her research interests include Semantics, Syntax, and Language and Technology.