



# Investigating the Outlines of Semantic Prosody in Thai

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## Abstract

*To date, there have been relatively few studies of semantic prosody in languages other than English. This study primarily aims to implement the two major approaches to semantic prosody in the literature on the Thai language for the first time in order to set out the parameters for subsequent research in this area. Three Thai words were selected for analysis: /kreeŋcaɯ/ 'considerate', /kòŋhâɣkàət/ 'cause', and /chòɯp/ 'like' (in the sense of enjoying (doing) something). Each word was investigated using two contrasting approaches: one oriented towards contrasting negative and positive polarity of evaluation and the other oriented around the Sinclairian concept of the Extended Unit of Meaning. The findings reveal that both approaches can be viable routes to examine the semantic prosody of the words under study, although they are useful for different purposes.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Semantic prosody is considered an important concept in corpus linguistics (Bednarek, 2008; Whitsitt, 2005). Given that it is a relatively new concept, there is no consensus on its definition (Zhang, 2009). In fact, the term has been used and defined differently by scholars such as Louw (1993), Sinclair (2004), Stubbs (1995; 2001), and Partington (1998; 2004; 2014), whose accounts of semantic prosody are briefly discussed below.

Louw was the first to introduce the term semantic prosody to the public (Whitsitt, 2005). He defines semantic prosody as “a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw, 1993, p. 159). This definition may be read as suggesting that Louw views semantic prosody as a phenomenon of semantic transfer, that is, the meaning of the collocates is transferred to the node, and the node carries this transferred meaning as its semantic prosody<sup>1</sup>. Louw primarily identifies the semantic prosody of a word from its collocates identified through concordance reading. Examining the semantic prosodies of *days are, utterly, bent on, and symptomatic of*, for example, Louw (1993) argues that these items display negative semantic prosody, because in each case most of the collocates are negative. Louw restricts semantic prosody to being positive or negative, and argues that there are more negative semantic prosodies than positive ones<sup>2</sup> (Louw, 1993). Later work has, however,

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<sup>1</sup> This is an issue first highlighted by Whitsitt (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Louw (1993) originally categorises semantic prosody as ‘good’ and ‘bad’/‘negative’. However, as subsequent work has standardised on the terms positive and negative, I will use these latter two terms.

identified some positive semantic prosodies. Xiao and McEnery (2006), for example, find that bring about tends to co-occur with positive objects and thus conclude that the verb has a positive semantic prosody.

Sinclair's view of semantic prosody is closely associated with his proposal of a model of the extended unit of meaning (Steward, 2010). Sinclair (2004) argues for the notion that "a linguistic item can be extended, at least for English, so that units of meaning are expected to be largely phrasal" (p. 29-30). This reflects Sinclair's (2004) proposal of the idiom principle, under which words are likely to go together and "make meaning by their combinations" (p. 29). Particularly, Sinclair (2004) argues that under this model, a lexical item or a unit of meaning has five components, of which three are optional and two are obligatory. The optional components are collocation, colligation and semantic preference. The compulsory components are the core (i.e. the basic word or words of the unit) and the semantic prosody, where the latter expresses the pragmatic function of a unit. Examining the concordance for the idiom *naked eye*, for instance, Sinclair (2004) finds a consistent pattern on the left of the node, which can be summarised as follows:

see/visible	with/to	the	naked eye
<b>N-3</b>	<b>N-2</b>	<b>N-1</b>	<b>node</b>

Sinclair (2004) argues that the co-occurrence between *naked eye* and the article *the* is an example of colligation or "the co-occurrence of grammatical choices" (p. 32). Similarly, the prepositions *with* and *to* in N-2 are also argued to be colligates. *See* and *visible* in N-3 are argued to form an instance of collocation, which is the co-occurrence of lexical choices. However, even though *see* and *visible* dominate N-3, there also exist concordance lines where N-3 is occupied by other words, all of which are either verbs or adjectives, such as *detect*, *spot*, *apparent*, *undetectable* and *evident*. Sinclair adds that this very restriction (to verb or adjective at N-3) is also a form of colligation. Based on all of these collocates, Sinclair argues that *naked eye* has a semantic preference for *visibility*. Closely examining the left-hand-side context of N-3, Sinclair (2004) further argues that the idiom *naked eye* has one more important element – a semantic prosody of *difficulty with visibility*. This pragmatic meaning is not evident from any individual word of the unit, but rather is spread across the unit. For instance, in *too faint to be seen with the naked eye*, difficulty with visibility is not evident from any individual word of the unit but is rather expressed jointly by *faint* and *seen* (Sinclair, 2004).

Stubbs' study of semantic prosody can be divided into two stages. In an early work on semantic prosody, Stubbs (1995) closely associates semantic prosody with collocation, which he defines as "a relationship of habitual co-occurrence between words" (p. 1). Particularly, he suggests that a word's semantic prosody can be determined by its collocates and that quantitative methods should be adopted in identifying those collocates. For example, examining the lemma *cause*, Stubbs (1995) finds out that it habitually occurs in unpleasant environments. He thus concludes that, due to its predominantly unpleasant collocates, the lemma has a negative semantic prosody. I would argue that at this point, Stubbs' account of semantic prosody is close to Louw's; they both identify semantic prosody from collocates. Nevertheless, they identify collocates quite differently. Whereas Stubbs employs quantitative



measures to identify collocates, Louw examines each concordance line and manually identifies collocates.

Stubbs' account of semantic prosody in his later work seems to develop in another direction. Specifically, he develops Sinclair's proposal of the extended lexical unit and argues, following Sinclair, that the semantic prosody is a compulsory element of the unit. Nevertheless, Stubbs does not follow Sinclair in using the term semantic prosody to refer to the pragmatic and discourse function of an extended lexical unit. Instead he changes the terminology to *discourse prosody* (Stubbs, 2001). Stubbs examines the discourse prosodies of a number of words. One of these is the lemma *undergo*. Examining its concordance, Stubbs (2001) concludes that *undergo* has a simple and typical pattern: "people involuntarily undergo serious and unpleasant events, such as medical procedures" (p. 89). Stubbs further argues that the lemma displays two related discourse prosodies: "involuntary" and "unpleasant", which are either expressed by particular words or implied by the surrounding text. Thus, although Stubbs, at this point, adopts Sinclair's proposal of the extended lexical unit, I would argue that his method for identifying semantic prosody is different from Sinclair's but still close to Louw's. Whereas Stubbs primarily identifies semantic prosody from individual co-occurring words, Sinclair observes pragmatic functions expressed over an extended co-text, rather than by looking at particular individual words.

Partington's studies of semantic prosody can also be divided into two stages. In his early studies, Partington (1998) defines semantic prosody as an aspect of expressive connotation, that is, it expresses the speaker's evaluation of what he describes. Partington highlights the difference between expressive connotation and semantic prosody. Expressive connotation, Partington argues, is an in-built evaluation of a lexical item. For example, the use of *rightly* and *flabby* alone reveals the speaker's positive or negative attitudes towards what he describes (Partington, 2014, p. 132). Semantic prosody, on the other hand, "spread[s] over a unit of language which potentially goes well beyond the single orthographic word and is much less evident to the naked eye" (Partington, 2004, p. 131-132). That is, it resides in "the collocational patterns of items in a text" (Morley & Partington, 2009, p. 150). Observing the concordance for *commit*, for instance, Partington (1998) finds that this verb tends to co-occur with negative words such as *offences* and *crime*. From these findings, Partington argues that *commit* shows a negative connotation or semantic prosody, which resides in *commit* and its individual co-occurring items or collocates.

In his later studies, Partington (2014) changes the terminology for the concept to *evaluative prosody*. He argues that evaluative prosody can be seen as a lexical item's "inherent potential to participate in evaluative interaction with other items of similar polarity" (Partington, 2014, p. 283). For example, as Partington argues, due to its positive evaluative prosody (which results from its habitual co-occurrence with positive items), *brimming with* tends to be selected by a speaker who wishes to express that an entity is full of something positive, say *confidence* or *hope*, because the positive evaluative prosody of this phrasal verb has the same evaluative polarity as *confidence* and *hope*. Their combination, say *brimming with confidence*, thus forms consistent positive evaluation in the discourse. On the other hand, a speaker who wishes to express that an entity is full of something bad would be more likely to select *fraught with*,

given its negative evaluative prosody and therefore its potential to combine with other negative words to form consistent negative evaluation.

Despite the change in terminology, the underlying concept of evaluative prosody is not greatly changed from that of semantic prosody; arguably, Partington's move primarily serves to clarify his view of semantic prosody as an aspect of evaluation. As in Partington's work on semantic prosody under that name, evaluative prosody is primarily contingent upon individual co-occurring items, and it is restricted to being positive or negative.

From the brief overview above, we see that in general there are two prevailing approaches to the study of semantic prosody. The first approach is represented by the studies of Louw, Stubbs, and Partington. Within this approach, semantic prosody is primarily identified from individual co-occurring words or collocates, and it is restricted to the positive vs. negative opposition. The second approach is represented by the work of Sinclair. Within this approach, semantic prosody is identified from pragmatic meanings that are expressed over an extended co-text. It is not confined to the positive vs. negative opposition, but can be any pragmatic function or meaning. In this study, I label Louw, Stubbs, and Partington's approach the polarity-oriented approach. Likewise, I label Sinclair's approach the EUM-oriented approach, where *EUM* stands for extended unit of meaning.

## METHODOLOGY

Most existing studies on semantic prosody have explored semantic prosody in English. The relatively few studies on semantic prosody in other languages seem in large part to be contrastive studies between those languages and English. Some of these contrastive studies are Wei and Li (2013) and Xiao and McEnery (2006) who investigate the semantic prosodies of translation equivalents across English and Chinese and Munday (2013) who studies the semantic prosodies of the lemma *loom large* and its Spanish correspondent *cernerse*. The present study aims to advance this field of research; it aims to utilise the two primary approaches to semantic prosody in the literature to investigate semantic prosody in Thai, a language which has not been subject to studies of semantic prosody before, to set out the parameters for subsequent research in this area. Particularly, it aims to address the following question:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the major approaches to semantic prosody proposed in the literature for describing semantic prosody in Thai?

The data used in this analysis was the Thai National Corpus (TNC), which is a corpus of present-day standard Thai (Aroonmanakun, 2007). The TNC is designed to be comparable to the British National Corpus (BNC), although at present only written texts are included. The criteria for text selection are similar to those of the BNC in terms of domain and medium (Aroonmanakun, 2007). In terms of domain, the TNC aims to have 75% informative texts and 25% imaginative. In terms of medium, the TNC plans to have 60% of its texts from books, 20% from journals and newspapers, 5-10% from other published works such as brochures and



leaflets, 5-10% from unpublished works (namely letters and notes), and about 5% from texts on the Internet. Since the corpus aims to represent present-day standard Thai, its creators plan to sample 90% of the texts from the period 1998 to 2007 and only 10% from the period prior to 1997. Table 1, adapted from Aroonmanakun (2007), summarises the weights of domain, medium, and time in the TNC.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of weights of domain, medium, and time in the TNC**  
**(after Aroonmanakun 2007, p. 7)**

Domain	Weight	Medium	Weight
Imaginative	25%	Books	60%
Informative	75%	Periodicals	20%
Applied science		Published miscellanea	5-10%
Arts		Unpublished miscellanea	5-10%
Belief and thought		Internet	5%
Commerce and finance			
Leisure		Time	Weight
Natural and pure science		1998-2007	90-100%
Social science		1988-1997	0-10%
World affairs		Before 1988	0-5%

The TNC is designed to consist of at least 80 million words (Aroonmanakun, 2007). However, at present only approximately 33 million words have been added to the TNC (Thai National Corpus, n.d.). In this study, the TNC was accessed via CQPweb, a web-based corpus analysis system (Hardie, 2012).

Three Thai words were selected for the analysis. They were /kreeŋcaj/ ‘considerate’, /kòŋhâykàət/ ‘cause’, and /chòŋp/ ‘like’ (in the sense of enjoying (doing) something). These words were selected for different reasons. The word /kreeŋcaj/ is interesting because there seems to be no word in English that has exactly the same meaning. Although it is a verb in Thai, most of the possible English translations are adjectives. The closest translation-equivalent is probably ‘considerate’ or ‘reluctant,’ as in ‘reluctant to impose on a person’. Also, as a native speaker of Thai, I find it difficult to explain the concept expressed by the word /kreeŋcaj/ to westerners, as it is culture-bound. /kòŋhâykàət/ is a translation-equivalent of English cause, which has been established to display a negative semantic prosody (Stubbs, 1995); it will thus be interesting to see if /kòŋhâykàət/ also has a negative semantic prosody. Finally, my impression as a speaker of Thai is that /chòŋp/ is normally used in a negative context, and it is interesting to see whether such a tendency to occur in unfavourable environments is evident in, or contradicted by, the corpus data.

Each word was examined using the polarity-oriented approach (Louw, Stubbs, and Partington’s approach) and the EUM-oriented approach (Sinclair’s approach). To apply Louw, Stubbs, and Partington’s approach to semantic prosody, I mainly looked at the statistical collocates of the selected words. Within this approach, the whole corpus data was used. I chose to look at

the collocates within a span of four preceding and four following words around the node as suggested by Sinclair, Jones, Daley and Krishnamurthy (2004). The statistical measure of collocational strength used was Log Ratio (Hardie forthcoming). Log Ratio, Hardie argues, is a better statistic for keywords than log-likelihood. It is an “effect-size” statistic and “represents how big the difference between two corpora is for a particular keyword” (Hardie forthcoming). The Log Ratio statistic can also be used for collocation (Hardie forthcoming). In this case, the Log Ratio score of a collocate represents how much more frequent the collocate is near the node than elsewhere. For example, a collocate with a Log Ratio score of 1 occurs near the node twice as frequently as it occurs elsewhere, and “every extra point in Log Ratio score represents a doubling in size of the difference between the collocate’s frequency near the node and its frequency elsewhere” (Hardie forthcoming). For this analysis, only items with a Log Ratio score of 3 or more that occur in at least five different texts were considered as collocates of a given node. That is, only items that occur at least eight times more frequently near the node than elsewhere, and that co-occur with the node in at least five different texts, were considered collocates. I chose a Log Ratio score of 3 as a cut-off point, because Log Ratio is very similar to the Mutual Information statistic<sup>3</sup>, and Hunston (2002) suggests that items with an MI-score of three or more can be considered to be significant.

Under this approach, semantic prosody is restricted to being positive or negative (or neutral). To identify the semantic prosody, I classified the statistical collocates identified into positive, negative, and neutral. (In presenting results, I will underline collocates with a positive meaning, and present collocates with a negative meaning in bold. Collocates with a neutral meaning will be left unhighlighted.) As criteria for what makes a positive or negative semantic prosody are, to the best of my knowledge, not explicitly stated by any scholars investigating semantic prosody in the literature, I created my own rule of thumb. I considered whether there were more positive collocates or more negative collocates. Only when the difference in the proportion between positive collocates and negative collocates was at least threefold did I argue that a word has a clear positive or negative semantic prosody. In cases where the difference was less than threefold, I argued that the word does not have either a positive or a negative semantic prosody. However, if 70% or more of the collocates were neutral, the word was argued to not to have any clear positive or negative prosody, even if the difference in the proportion between positive and negative collocates was threefold or more. In such cases with no clear positive or negative semantic prosody, I referred to the word as having a neutral semantic prosody.

To investigate Sinclair’s approach to semantic prosody, I examined 200 randomly-selected concordance lines for each of the selected words. I identified the major patterns around these words according to Sinclair’s model of the extended unit of meaning, looking for colligation, collocation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody. Under this approach, a semantic prosody can be any pragmatic function or meaning. I will present each proposed extended unit of meaning in a one-line format, using the notations in Table 2.

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<sup>3</sup> Log Ratio on its own is very similar to the Mutual Information statistic; they are both effect-size statistics. However, I opted for Log Ratio rather than the Mutual Information statistic because CQPweb combines “Log Ratio with a statistical-significant filter. The collocate list is sorted by Log Ratio but filtered using Log-Likelihood” (Hardie, n.d.).



**Table 2**  
**Notations for extended units of meaning**

Notation	Meaning
<b>Bold font</b>	Lexical core of an extended unit of meaning.
(...)	Items in round brackets are optional.
[...]	Square brackets contain an explanation of what is found in this position (grammatical/semantic restriction).
Column	Items in a column are alternatives in the given position.
	Sentence break.

Using these notations, for example, Sinclair's extended unit of meaning whose core is *naked eye* would be represented as follows:

[some pragmatic expression of difficulty] [verb/adjective expressing visibility] with the **naked eye** to

## FINDINGS

### 1. The Polarity-Oriented Approach

#### a. /kreenɕay/ 'considerate'

There are 1,009 instances of /kreenɕay/ in the corpus. The collocates of the word in order of Log Ratio score are:

/khii/ (grammatical particle), /kreen/ 'fear', /róopkuan/ 'bother', /caŋ/ 'quite', /khw-róop/ 'respect', /klâa/ 'brave', /klua/ 'afraid', /náamsiŋ/ 'tone', /penray/ (part of /mây penray/ 'Don't worry'), /tâataŋ/ 'gesture', /rúusùk/ 'feel', /ròk/ (pragmatic particle), /kænpay/ 'too much', /ʔəəy/ 'utter', /phôwmê/ 'parents', /phúuyà/ 'adults'

Of the 16 collocates of /kreenɕay/ that meet the criteria, 5 appear to have a negative meaning. There are two positive collocates and nine neutral collocates. It might thus be concluded that /kreenɕay/ does not have either a positive or a negative semantic prosody. That is, it shows a neutral semantic prosody.

#### b. /kòhâykàət/ 'cause'

There are 4,685 instances of /kòhâykàət/ in the corpus. The collocates of the word ranked by Log Ratio score are:

/rákhaaykhuay/ 'irritate' /phõnsi/ 'negative effect' /khwamsiähäy/ 'damage' /pháyantàray/ 'danger' /monphaawá/ 'contamination' /phõnráy/ 'negative effect' /dúatròŋ/ 'in trouble' /monphít/ 'pollution' /pànpùan/ 'frantic' /tèkyêk/ 'disunited' /

yàylǔaŋ/ ‘enormously’ /sàthɯancay/ ‘emotionally hurt’ /phǒnkràtóp/ ‘effect’ /tuŋkhríat/ ‘serious’ /lamʔiaŋ/ ‘bias’ /ʔantàraay/ ‘danger’ /wítòkkaŋwon/ ‘worried’ /ramkhaan/ ‘annoyed’ /khlúanwǎy/ ‘move’ /phǒnláp/ ‘result’ /sùamsoom/ ‘deteriorate’ /sùamsǎa/ ‘tarnished’ /yûŋyâak/ ‘complicated’ /sàpsǒn/ ‘confused’ /sǎhǎay/ ‘damaged’ /ráayrɛŋ/ ‘serious’ /khwaamkhríat/ ‘stress’ /câaŋŋaan/ ‘employ’ /khûusǎnyaa/ ‘party’ /lùam/ ‘unequal’ /khwaamkhàtyéŋ/ ‘conflict’ /rôokmáren/ ‘cancer’ /lúklaam/ ‘spread (of disease)’ /wûnwaay/ ‘in confusion’ /máren/ ‘cancer’ /nii/ ‘debt’ /wípâakwícaan/ ‘criticise’ /rɛŋkòtdan/ ‘pressure’ /siŋwêetlóm/ ‘environment’ /wítòk/ ‘worried’ /khwaamkhlúanwǎy/ ‘movement’ /ʔànaamay/ ‘hygiene’ /sǎpriap/ ‘disadvantageous’ /phlǎetphlǎen/ ‘enjoy’ /plianpleŋ/ ‘change’ /kèe/ ‘for’ /sǎnti/ ‘peace’ /sàthianráphâap/ ‘stability’ /phǒn/ ‘result’ /panhǎa/ ‘problem’ /ʔàatyaakam/ ‘crime’ /pràyòot/ ‘benefit’ /wêetlóm/ ‘surround’ /phanthúkam/ ‘heredity’ /dâypriap/ ‘advantageous’ /sàmǎəphâak/ ‘equal’ /thòkthǎŋ/ ‘dispute’ /nítkam/ ‘juristic act’ /sǎmphantháphâap/ ‘relationship’ /yôm/ ‘naturally’ /wâaŋŋaan/ ‘unemployed’ /khàatkhlɛn/ ‘lack’ /sũunsǎa/ ‘lose’ /raaydây/ ‘income’ /pàtikiriyaa/ ‘reaction’ /rópkuan/ ‘bother’ /sǒmdun/ ‘balance’ /ʔùppàsàk/ ‘obstacle’ /phùukphan/ ‘bond’ /pràthêetchâat/ ‘nation’ /khwaamklua/ ‘fear’

It is clear from the predominance of negative collocates that /kòhâykàet/ has a tendency to occur in semantically negative contexts. Of the 71 collocates, 44 have a negative meaning. There are 17 neutral and 10 positive collocates.

It can thus be concluded that like English *cause*, /kòhâykàet/ has an overall negative semantic prosody. However, the fact that it has a strong tendency towards co-occurrence with negatively evaluated items does not prevent it from appearing in neutral or even positive environments, albeit less often.

### c. /chǒp/ ‘like’

/chǒp/ appears 20,942 times in the corpus. Its collocates ranked by Log Ratio score are:

/chǒp/ ‘like (emphatic reduplication)’ /sǎmmaasàti/ ‘mindfulness’ /sǎmmaasàmaathí/ ‘right concentration’ /khîinâa/ ‘face’ /taamcay/ (part of /taam cay chǒp/ ‘as you please’) /sǒctrúusǒthên/ ‘snoop’ /sũŋsǎŋ/ ‘keep company with’ /phaatphǒon/ ‘adventurous’ /trèe/ ‘hang around’ /chít/ (person’s name) /waanthâa/ ‘act big’ /cùkçik/ ‘fussy’ /khlùk/ ‘absorbed in’ /chaŋ/ ‘hate’ /phet/ ‘spicy’ /pràphrút/ ‘behave’ /pûanpǎian/ ‘loiter’ /ciap/ (person’s name) /yèe/ ‘tease’ /damri/ ‘think’ /thútcàrit/ ‘corrupt’ /yǐŋ/ ‘woman’ /tǎm/ ‘pester’ /heehaa/ ‘enjoy oneself’ /cùucii/ ‘fussy’ /chóktǒy/ ‘have a fight’ /laaŋ/ (part of an idiom ‘one man’s meat is another man’s poison’) /piinpàay/ ‘climb’ /súkson/ ‘naughty’ /líançhǐip/ ‘make a living’ /búu/ ‘action’ /nísǎy/ ‘characteristic’ /ʔòoʔuat/ ‘boast’ /keeree/ ‘mischievous’ /mí/ ‘no’ /ʔùppànísǎy/ ‘characteristic’ /klaaŋçéŋ/ ‘outdoors’ /tèeŋtua/ ‘get dressed’ /khúkkii/ ‘cookie’ /túmhuu/ ‘earring’ /ʔàdirèek/ ‘hobby’ /pràcòp/ ‘flatter’ /kèptua/ ‘introvert’ /nǎmpleeŋ/ ‘lyric’ /yúy/ (person’s name) /hǎarǎm/ ‘pick a quarrel with’ /thamtua/ ‘act’ /phlǎeŋ/ ‘peculiar’ /rǎmçyphǎy/ ‘aimlessly’ /lǎap/ (Thai dish) /ʔawpriap/ ‘take advantage of’ /mâykhǒy/ ‘not quite’ /cǎwchúu/ ‘flirty’ /raŋkæe/ ‘bully’ /phàconphay/ ‘take adventure’ /ninthaa/ ‘gossip’ /khwaamchǒp/ ‘liking’



/chôɔpɕay/ ‘pleased’ /khǒɔŋwǎan/ ‘dessert’ /sôn/ ‘heel’ /pɾiaw/ ‘sour’ /chóɔp/ ‘shop’ /  
sǎŋsǎn/ ‘socialise’ /sàtaay/ ‘style’

Of the 64 collocates, 26 have a negative meaning. It is interesting that many of these negative collocates are verbs. Thus, it might be said that /chôɔp/ has a negative semantic prosody, which is especially strongly expressed by verbal collocates.

## 2. The EUM-Oriented Approach

### a. /kreeŋɕay/ ‘considerate’

Of the 200 concordance lines, 196 were suitable for analysis: two instances were repetitions <sup>4</sup>, and in two instances, /kreeŋɕay/ was being referred to as a word. Overall three consistent patterns emerged. The first pattern is presented below.

/cà/            [verb] ([object/adverb]) (/tèɛ/) /kô kreeŋɕay/    ([person])  
/yàak/  
/yàak cà/

This pattern arguably forms an extended unit of meaning with /kô kreeŋɕay/ as its core. /cà/ is a challengeability marker; /yàak/ and /yàak cà/ both mean ‘want to’. Between the verb and /kô kreeŋɕay/, there may be an object or an adverb, depending on the nature of the verb, which may in turn be followed by /tèɛ/, a conjunction meaning ‘but’. Overall the unit expresses the semantic prosody of ‘refraining from performing an action due to consideration for other(s)’. This meaning cannot be derived from any individual word in the sequence; there are no individual words that mean ‘refraining from’ or that show negation. Rather, it is spread across the whole sequence and is a pragmatic interpretation, as shown in Example 1<sup>5</sup>.

#### Example 1

yàak	cà	chuan	khǎw	pay	thǔu	lǎŋ	dûay
want	CM	invite	3SG	go	scrub	back	with
tèɛ	kô	kreeŋɕay					
	but	LP	considerate				

‘(I) want to invite him to go and scrub our backs together, but I feel considerate so I won’t.’

<sup>4</sup> These repetitions result from erroneous double-inclusion of a text in the TNC.

<sup>5</sup> The abbreviations used in line 2 of Thai examples are listed in Appendix 1.

The second pattern has the modal auxiliary /t̄ɔŋ/ ‘must/have to’ in the first position to the left of the node /kreŋcay/. /t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ is in turn preceded by the negator /mây/. /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ means literally ‘do not have to be considerate’. The sequence functions as an imperative, in which case a better translation would be ‘don’t worry, it’s no trouble’. These imperatives always refer implicitly to an imposition expressed in a preceding sentence. /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ may in turn be followed by one of the pragmatic particles /ná/ and /r̄ɔk/. /ná/, when used with imperatives, requests or encourages compliance, whereas /r̄ɔk/ “is used to counter argue or correct an assumption that an addressee has” (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005, p. 190, 195, 201).

Example 2

thâa	klaaŋkhɛɛn	d̄ɛkd̄ɛɛn	p̄aa	k̄əət	pen	ʔaray
if	night	late	dad	happen	COP	REL
thoo	r̄iak	ʔɔ̄ɔ	d̄ây	l̄əəy	ná	
ring	call	Or	POT	PP	PP	
mây	t̄ɔŋ	kreŋcay				
NEG	must	considerate				

‘If at night something happens to you, Dad, feel free to ring me. Don’t worry, it’s no trouble.’

In the above example, the expression /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ is bound up with the previous sentence, in which the fictive speaker encourages the interlocutor to feel free to ring her. It functions to reassure the interlocutor that the action of ringing the speaker would not be an imposition.

From that observation, it might be argued that /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ is the core of the following extended unit of meaning:

[imposition of hearer on speaker] | /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/ (/ná/)  
 (/r̄ɔk/)

This extended unit of meaning occurs six times. In all the six instances, the unit of meaning stretches into the previous sentence and encourages the interlocutor to perform an action or accept an offer. This action or offer is normally an imposition on the speaker. By saying /mây t̄ɔŋ kreŋcay/, the speaker attempts to remove the imposition implied in the previous sentence, reassuring the interlocutor that it will not be a bother. Thus, this extended unit of meaning has the pragmatic function of ‘reduction of imposition’ – which is thus its semantic prosody.

The final pattern has the negator /mây/ immediately to the left of /kreŋcay/. /mây kreŋcay/ means ‘without consideration (for)/inconsiderately’. The position immediately to the left of the expression is dominated by /ɣàaŋ/, /b̄ɛɛp/ and /dooy/, which are grammatical particles that create an adverbial clause. There are 17 instances of this pattern altogether. In all these instances, /ɣàaŋ/, /b̄ɛɛp/, or /dooy/ followed by /mây kreŋcay/ modifies the verb of the



containing clause. Many of the verbs in question refer to unpleasant actions, such as /hũaró sám tæm/ ‘laugh insultingly’, /təkoon hɛɛkpàak/ ‘yell out’, /thĩaŋ hũa chon fãa/ ‘wrangle’, and /sùup phôn khwan pũy pũy/ ‘puff out smoke’, as shown in Example 3.

### Example 3

khon	lên	kiitãa	təkoon	hɛɛkpàak		
person	play	guitar	shout	yell		
sĩaŋ	daŋ	yàaŋ	mây	kreeŋcay	kh-ray	
sound	loud	AZP	NEG	considerate	REL	

‘The man who played the guitar inconsiderately yelled out.’

There are a few neutral or even positive verbs in this context, such as /lóm tua loŋ nɔɔŋ/ ‘lie down’ and /yím khwãaŋ thũŋ bayhũu/ ‘grin from ear to ear’. However, in context these refer to actions unpleasant to another party, as can be seen from Example 4.

### Example 4

pêe	yím	khwãaŋ thũŋ	bayhũu	yàaŋ	mây		
Pay	grin	broad	till	ear	AZP	NEG	
kreeŋcay	khon	nãa	pen	tùut	thĩi	nãŋ	yùu
considerate	person	face	COP	ass	SBR	sit	ASP

khãaŋ khãaŋ  
next.to next.to  
‘Pay grinned from ear to ear, without consideration for the person sitting next to him who was frowning.’

Within this context, it might be said that /mây kreeŋcay/ is the core of the following extended unit of meaning:

[action inconsiderate to another]	/yàaŋ/	/mây kreeŋcay/	([person])
	/bɛɛp/		
	/dooy/		

This unit of meaning could thus be argued to have a semantic prosody expressing ‘disapproval of behaviour’. That is, use of the unit is motivated by the speaker’s wish to express disapproval of an action, encoded by the verb of the containing clause, which they deem inconsiderate.

We have seen from the above analyses that /kreeŋcay/ is part of the core of (at least) three different extended units of meaning. Across the 196 instances, three patterns emerged, as summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Frequency of occurrence of each extended unit of meaning containing /kreeŋcay/**

Extended units of meaning	Frequency of occurrence
/cà/ [verb] ([object/adverb]) (/tɛɛ/) /kɔ̌ kreeŋcay/ ([person]) /yàak/ /yàak cà/	6
[imposition of hearer on speaker]   /mây tɔ̌ŋ kreeŋcay/ (/nà/) (/rɔ̌k/)	6
[action inconsiderate to another] /yàan/ /mây kreeŋcay/ ([person]) /bɛɛp/ /dooy/	17

In the remaining 167 instances, I found that /kreeŋcay/ is used as a straightforward verb meaning ‘(to) be considerate’, and does not form part of any discernible fixed pattern. However, as a transitive verb of cognition, it does have the colligations and semantic preferences one would expect of a verb of this type. For example, it colligates with a subject and an object, which in turn have a semantic preference to be human. /kreeŋcay/ also has the colligations that are generally characteristic of any kind of verb. For instance, it also colligates with /khwaam/ to create a noun, /khîi/ to create an adjective, and /yàan/ to create an adverbial clause, these being grammatical particles which with any Thai verb may co-occur.

### b. /kɔ̌hâykàət/ ‘cause’

Of the 200 concordance lines, 190 concordance lines were suitable for analysis. Of these 190 instances, my observation of the right contexts reveals as many as 188 instances where /kɔ̌hâykàət/ is used as the verb of a clause and is (immediately) followed by a noun. The fact that /kɔ̌hâykàət/ is mostly followed by a noun does not come as a surprise, considering the fact that /kɔ̌hâykàət/ is a transitive verb and thus would be expected to have an object after it. Interestingly, 174 of these nouns refer to abstract concepts. 74 of these abstract nouns are formed by the nominalising particles /kaan/ and /khwaam/, such as /kaan plianplɛɛŋ/ ‘change’, /kaan phátthánaa/ ‘development’, /khwaam lamʔian/ ‘bias’, and /khwaamkhàtyéɛŋ/ ‘conflict’.

In terms of semantics, of the 188 noun tokens that follow /kɔ̌hâykàət/, 107 can be considered negative. The three most frequently co-occurring negative nouns are /panhǎa/ ‘problem’, /khwaamsǎhǎay/ ‘damage’, and /ʔantàraay/ ‘danger’, with 14, 12, and 8 examples respectively. 46 other noun tokens are positive. /pràyòot/ ‘benefit’ is the most frequent positive noun (8 times). There are 35 instances where the noun after /kɔ̌hâykàət/ is neutral in meaning.

Some of these object nouns can be categorised into more specific semantic categories such as health (/ròok/ ‘disease’ (3<sup>6</sup>), and /máren/ ‘cancer’), difficulty (/panhǎa/ ‘problem’ (14), and /ʔùpàsàk/ ‘obstacle’), and danger (/ʔantàraay/ ‘danger’ (8), and /phay/ ‘hazard’ (3)). Examples 5 shows the use of /kɔ̌hâykàət/ in context.

<sup>6</sup> Brackets show numbers of occurrences greater than one.



## Example 5

m̄a	khun	kròot	khwaamrúusùk		t̄h̄i	mák	cà
when	3SG	angry	feeling		SBR	often	CM
kòḥhâykàət	panhãa		k̄	khuu	khwaam		kròot
cause	problem	LP	COP	NMLZ			angry

‘When you are angry, the feeling that often causes you a problem is anger.’

Examining the left contexts, I found that many of the subjects of /kòḥhâykàət/ are abstract nouns, many of which are, again, formed by the grammatical particles /kaan/ or /khwaam/, such as /kaan namkhâw/ ‘import’ and /khwaamrúusùk/ ‘feeling’. There are also cases where the subject is a pronoun making general reference to the preceding clause(s). However, this pronoun is omitted, leaving only the preceding verb clause(s). These two types of subjects are linked, because they both involve a subject whose reference is the general situation under discussion. There are also a few concrete noun subjects, such as /s̄ian/ ‘sound’ and /yaa/ ‘medication’.

We have thus seen that /kòḥhâykàət/ has a semantic preference for abstractness. It also has a colligation for nouns, especially those beginning with two particular grammatical particles (nominalizers). These requirements apply to both the subject and the object of /kòḥhâykàət/. Since the grammatical particles which /kòḥhâykàət/ attracts are abstract noun-forming particles, we can say that the semantic preference and the colligation are linked here. Despite these associations, I would argue that the pattern in which /kòḥhâykàət/ is regularly used, that is, an abstract noun subject followed by /kòḥhâykàət/ followed by an abstract noun object, is not an extended unit of meaning in Sinclair’s sense. Rather, /kòḥhâykàət/ is used as a unit of meaning on its own in these examples. Its requirements for a subject and an object noun colligation are just the general requirements one would expect of any transitive verb, although in this case the object nouns tend to be (negative) abstract concepts. More importantly, this pattern does not have a clear pragmatic function that is distinct from its literal meaning. Thus, the single-word unit of meaning has colligations and semantic preferences, but not a semantic prosody beyond its base meaning.

### c. /chôḥp/ ‘like’

Of the 200 instances, 184 were suitable for analysis. Of the rest, /chôḥp/ is a person’s name in two; in 11, /chôḥp/ means ‘righteous’ (a homophone); in one, /chôḥp/ is part of a proverb; and in two instances, /chôḥp/ is part of a compound noun.

More than half of the words immediately to the right of the node are nouns or verbs. There are 55 noun tokens and 66 verb tokens. Table 4 illustrates distribution of the co-occurring noun and verb tokens across meaning categories.

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of co-occurring noun and verb tokens across meaning categories**

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Pattern with noun complement	9	8	38	55
Pattern with verb complement	2	27	37	66

From this distribution, it might be said that when /chôp/ is followed by a noun, it does not have a tendency to co-occur with a positive or negative word in particular. There is little difference in proportion between the positive and negative nouns, although the majority are neutral. However, this does not seem to be the case when /chôp/ is followed by a verb (to create a serial verb structure). There are 27 instances where /chôp/ is followed by a negative verb, but only 2 where the verb is positive. The negative verbs include /biatbian/ ‘take advantage of’, /klêeŋ/ ‘tease’, /khùu/ ‘threaten’, /wícaan/ ‘criticise’, and /pân rûaŋ/ ‘make up stories’. Example 6 exemplifies these verbs in context.

Example 6

thoŋ	sàay	nâa	bòk	wâa	phûuyŋ	phan	níi
Tong	shake	face	tell	COMP	woman	kind	DEM
chôp	pân	rûaŋ	hây	tuaʔeeŋ	lúkláp	nâa	kónhãa
like	make	story	CAUS	REFL	mysterious	PFX	earch

‘Tong shook her head, saying that this kind of women likes to make up stories to make themselves intriguing.’

Looking at the left contexts of the 121 instances where /chôp/ is followed by a verb or a noun complement, I found that the majority of subjects of /chôp/ are human beings.

Thus, we see that /chôp/ frequently appears in the pattern of a subject plus /chôp/ plus a noun or a verb complement. However, I would argue that when /chôp/ is followed by a noun complement, it is used as a single-word unit of meaning – that is, as a straightforward verb meaning ‘like’. The overall sequence of /chôp/ plus a noun complement does not have a clear pragmatic meaning beyond the literal meaning of ‘someone liking a thing’. The /chôp/ unit of meaning is, however, a transitive verb of cognition, and therefore has requirements for its (nominal) complement and for its subject, which has to be a human being or at least a conscious being, these being the general colligation and semantic preference characteristics of a verb of this type.

However, arguably /chôp/ forms part of an extended unit of meaning in Sinclair’s sense when it is followed by a verb, as follows:

[person] /chôp/ (/thîi cà/) [verb] ([object/adverb])



## Example 8

kày	yâaŋ	thîi	nîi	pen	kày	yâaŋ	thîi
chicken	grill	at	DEM	COP	chicken	grill	SBR
hêeŋnûm	mây	chum	náamman	səəp	próom	cèew	
dry	tender	NEG	soak	oil	serve	together	sauce
lê	náamcîm	hây	lúak	taam	chôp		
and	dip	CAUS	chose	follow	like		

‘The grilled chicken here is dry and tender. It is not oily. It is served with a variety of dips for you to choose as you please.’

In the remaining 52 instances, /chôp/ is also used as a verb meaning ‘like’, but no frequent patterns stand out clearly. Here, /chôp/ is followed by a variety of types of object. In 41 instances, there is no explicit object after /chôp/. Rather, the thing liked can be inferred from context (mostly the preceding discourse). In nine instances, /chôp/ is followed by a pronoun (all but one referring to human beings). In two instances, /chôp/ precedes an object clause beginning with /thîi/ (which is a complementizer) followed by a subject and a verb.

## DISCUSSION

We have seen that both the polarity-oriented approach and the EUM-oriented approach proved viable routes to investigate the semantic prosody of the words under investigation. Using the polarity-oriented approach, I discovered that /kònhâykəət/ and /chôp/ display a negative semantic prosody. /kreençay/ was found to have a neutral semantic prosody, as it does not tend to co-occur particularly with positive or negative words. Using the EUM-oriented approach, on the other hand, I was able to identify various extended units of meaning around /kreençay/ and /chôp/ and to characterise these units’ pragmatic function. The EUM-oriented approach does not discover any extended units of meaning around /kònhâykəət/, however. What we have found is that /kònhâykəət/ is always used independently as a single-word unit of meaning, at least in the 200 random examples that I looked at.

The above results fit with my expectations in the cases of /kònhâykəət/ ‘cause’ and /chôp/ ‘like’. The semantic prosody of cause has been extensively studied in the literature. It has been established to display a negative semantic prosody in English (Stubbs, 1995). Its translation equivalents in Danish and Chinese have also been found to display a negative semantic prosody (Dam-Jensen & Zethsen, 2008; Xiao & McEnery, 2006). Therefore, the fact that /kònhâykəət/ also has a negative semantic prosody does not come as a surprise.

Before investigating the corpus, I had the impression that /chôp/ is normally used with a negative verb, such as /máw/ and /ninthaa/, which mean ‘gossip’, in a serial verb construction to indicate negatively-evaluated personal habits. The word /ninthaa/ does appear as a collocate of /chôp/. Of the 19 total instances of /ninthaa/, 14 appear after /chôp/ in a serial verb structure such as /chôp ninthaa/, /chôp maa ninthaa/, or /chôp phùut ninthaa/, all of which mean ‘like to gossip’. Employing the EUM-oriented approach, I discovered the extended unit



of meaning formed by a serial verb construction and expressing the pragmatic function of a negative habit.

My only prior impression regarding /kreeŋcay/ is that it tends to be used in contexts that express that /kreeŋcay/ (“being considerate”) is a quality that (Thai) people are expected to have. I did not have any intuition regarding its semantic prosody. In line with this, the collocate analysis of /kreeŋcay/ does not seem to indicate a positive or negative semantic prosody. Employing Sinclair’s approach, on the other hand, I discovered a number of extended units of meaning with different pragmatic functions.

The preceding analysis has thus allowed me to demonstrate the differences between Louw, Stubbs, and Partington’s approach and Sinclair’s approach in great depth. In terms of methodology, Louw, Stubbs and Partington’s approach generally relies on collocate analysis. These scholars consider semantic prosody as a word’s tendency to co-occur with positive or negative words. To identify the prosodies of /kreeŋcay/, /kòŋhâykàət/, and /chòp/, it was necessary merely to examine whether they tend to co-occur with positive or negative collocates. /kòŋhâykàət/ and /chòp/ were found to display a negative semantic prosody. /kreeŋcay/ does not display a positive or negative semantic prosody, as there is little difference in the proportion of positive and negative collocates.

By contrast, the Sinclairian approach relies on concordance analysis. To identify the semantic prosody of the extended unit of meaning around /kreeŋcay/, for instance, I had to examine its extended co-text. This enabled me to identify extended units, such as /cà/ [verb] ([object/ adverb]) (/tè/) /kî kreeŋcay/ ([person]), with its semantic prosody of ‘refraining from performing an action due to consideration for other(s)’. This EUM-oriented method discovers not only semantic prosody, but also colligation and semantic preference. Thus, under this Sinclairian approach, semantic prosody cannot be discussed independently of colligation and semantic preference. Stubbs (2001) notes in a discussion of “semantic schemas” (i.e. units of meaning that “these semantic schemas can be modelled as clusters of lexis (nodes and collocates), grammar (colligation), semantics (preferences for words from particular lexical fields), and pragmatics (connotations or discourse prosodies)” (p. 96).

The analysis has allowed me to demonstrate in a very clear and concrete way the differences in both methodology and underlying concept between the two approaches, as applied to Thai. In fact, these differences have recently been made obvious by Partington’s proposal to change the terminology to evaluative prosody. Evaluative prosody, Partington (2014) argues, is a word’s inherent evaluative potential to co-occur with other items of the same evaluative polarity. Exactly this kind of evaluative potential is evident for /kòŋhâykàət/ and /chòp/ on the basis of the collocate analysis. Having a negative evaluative prosody, /kòŋhâykàət/ and /chòp/ tend to occur in negative environments to maintain evaluative harmony in the discourse. Within the Sinclairian approach, on the other hand, semantic prosody belongs to an extended unit of meaning rather than to a word and can express any pragmatic function that is not limited to an expression of evaluation.

In sum, then, my answer to the question of “what are the advantages and disadvantages of the major approaches to semantic prosody proposed in the literature for describing semantic prosody in Thai?” is as follows:

Both approaches are useful, but they are most effective for different purposes. The polarity-oriented approach is useful when one’s aim is to examine a word’s tendency to appear in an evaluatively positive or negative context. Particularly, it reveals the implicit evaluation of a word whose evaluative potential is not immediately obvious from its core semantics, as we have seen with /kònhâykàət/ and /chôp/. The knowledge obtained from this type of analysis will thus be useful for scholars interested in study of evaluation in discourse. It will also be beneficial for those who wish to exploit a semantic prosody for stylistic effects. That said, a disadvantage is that semantic prosody identified through this approach is limited to the positive vs. negative opposition rather than allowing a variety of expressions of evaluation. Unlike the polarity-oriented approach, which reveals only the implicit evaluation of a word, the EUM-oriented approach gives us more details about the patterns in which the word occurs: not only semantic prosody, but also colligation and semantic preference. Moreover, within this approach, a semantic prosody can be any pragmatic function or meaning, and is not confined to the positive vs. negative opposition or expression of evaluation or attitude. However, this approach also has a limitation. As its name suggests, the EUM-oriented approach is only applicable when we work under Sinclair’s theory of language. Scholars who do not work within, or in ways compatible with, Sinclair’s framework of the extended unit of meaning may find it of little use.

It might be objected that these answers to my research question are already obvious in the literature. I would argue that employing both of the approaches to analyse the Thai data has in fact yielded outcomes that I could not have obtained without carrying out the analysis, as follows.

First, the analysis reveals that both approaches do operate in Thai, as they do in English. Even though Thai is not very different from English in terms of syntax, it would theoretically be quite possible for syntactic differences between the languages to have the effect that only one of the approaches operates, whereas the other does not. That both approaches do operate in Thai proves the cross-linguistic validity of both.

Second, the analysis reveals that the approaches produce the same kind of results both in English and in Thai. Employing the Sinclairian approach, I identified a number of discernible extended units of meaning in Thai, as we have seen with /kreeŋcay/ and /chôp/, just as Sinclair finds with, for example, *naked eye*. In addition, in the cases where the words are used independently as a unit of meaning on their own, the concordance analysis leads to a characterisation of the very general patterns in which they are used. This is similar to what Hunston and Francis (2000) arrive at in terms of Pattern Grammar.

We have so far discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the two major approaches. Particularly, I have argued that these two approaches are useful for different purposes. Whereas the polarity-oriented approach reveals the hidden evaluative potential of a word,



the EUM-oriented approach gives details about its phraseological behaviour. Therefore, if time is not an issue, and we do not have a specific purpose in mind, applying both approaches to the study of a word will allow us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the word in question. Baker and Egbert (2016) refer to the use of multiple approaches, similarly to the combined method that I suggest, as methodological triangulation.

For instance, it is straightforward to argue that the results obtained from the polarity-oriented approach, which uses all the corpus data, can help enhance the results gained from the EUM-oriented approach, which uses much less data. In my analyses of /kòchâykàət/ and /chôp/, the polarity-oriented approach and the EUM-oriented approach produced much the same results. In the case of /kòchâykàət/, the polarity-oriented approach discovers that the verb tends to occur with negative words, many of which are negative abstract nouns. The EUM-oriented approach likewise reveals that /kòchâykàət/ is frequently followed by a negative abstract noun. In the case of /chôp/, the polarity-oriented approach demonstrates that /chôp/ tends to co-occur with negative verbs. Similarly, the EUM-oriented approach reveals that the verb is frequently followed by a negative verb in a serial verb structure. The sequence of /chôp/ followed by a negative verb forms an extended unit of meaning with a pragmatic function of expressing a bad personal habit. In these cases, then, it is easily arguable that applying both approaches is beneficial, as the results gained from one approach helps to increase the credibility of the results obtained from the other.

That said, we have also seen a case, namely /kreençay/, where the results from the two approaches do not appear to have much in common, if anything. In this case, applying both approaches does not seem to increase the credibility of the results. Rather, as earlier argued, it maximises our understanding of the word's hidden evaluative potential and its phraseological behaviour – but separately.

So we have seen the benefits that can be gained from methodological triangulation. Further studies of semantic prosody in Thai might quite legitimately opt to triangulate in this way.

This study has a limitation in terms of the corpus data. As previously pointed out that the TNC is under development and so far no spoken texts have been added to the corpus, the analysis of the present study was restricted to the written texts. The results of the study might have been more reflective of the semantic prosodies of the Thai words under study should the spoken data had been included in the analysis.

## CONCLUSION

The study has shown that both the polarity-oriented approach and the EUM-oriented approach can be applied without major difficulty to the study of semantic prosody in the Thai language, but that they are useful for different purposes. While the polarity-oriented approach reveals the hidden evaluative potential of a word, the EUM-oriented approach gives us details about the phraseologies where the word occurs.

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## APPENDIX

### List of abbreviations used in line 2 of Thai examples

3	third person
ASP	aspect
AZP	adverbializing particle
CAUS	causative
CM	challengeability marker
COP	copula
COMP	complementizer
DEM	demonstrative
LP	linking particle
NEG	negation/negative
NMLZ	nominalizer
PFX	prefix
POT	potential
PP	pragmatic particle
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBR	subordinator
SG	singular