

# A Typological Comparison of Thai and Hindi

## Morphological and Syntactic Perspectives

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**Abstract**—The present paper systematically compares Thai and Hindi, two unrelated languages in South and Southeast Asia. Thai, from the Tai-Kadai family, is an analytic language characterized by invariant morphology, tone distinctions, and a strict Subject-Verb-Object order. In contrast, Hindi, part of the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family, is a fusional-inflectional language, using bound morphology for grammatical categories such as gender, number, and case. Utilizing linguistic typology frameworks, the study highlights structural differences: Thai encodes grammatical relationships mainly through word order and lexical particles, while Hindi employs an intricate morphological marking system across nominal and verbal paradigms. The paper discusses the implications of these differences for learners in bidirectional language acquisition, noting predictable translation difficulties. Findings emphasize the instructive nature of the Thai-Hindi pairing in terms of typological distance and its impact on cross-linguistic transfer, contributing to language teaching, curriculum design, and contrastive analysis theory.

**Index Terms**—Thai, Hindi, Linguistic typology, Isolating language, Inflectional language, Morphology, Syntax, Contrastive analysis, Language acquisition

### I. INTRODUCTION

The study focuses on the typological variation between Thai and Hindi, two linguistically diverse languages situated in adjacent cultural regions of Asia. Despite their close geographical proximity, Thai belongs to the Tai-Kadai family and is characterized as a prototypical analytic or isolating language. Its grammatical structure is based on invariant lexical items with meaning conveyed through word order and particles, rather than morphological inflection. In stark contrast, Hindi, part of the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family, features a fusional-inflectional structure, where nouns undergo inflection for gender,

number, and case, and verbs show agreement with subjects and sometimes objects.

The linguistic differences between these two languages present both an intriguing domain for study and practical challenges, especially as the engagement between Thailand and India increases in educational, diplomatic, and cultural contexts. The number of learners of Hindi among Thai speakers and vice versa has seen a notable rise; however, a formal academic analysis addressing the typological relationship between them remains sparse, often relegated to pedagogical materials rather than rigorous linguistic examination.

The present paper aims to bridge that gap, utilizing frameworks from scholars like Comrie and Croft to systematically compare the morphological and syntactic structures of Thai and Hindi. It includes thorough analyses based on grammars and a bilingual noun corpus, highlighting 200 representative lexemes transcribed in IPA for both languages. The study argues that the morphological and syntactic disparities between Thai and Hindi extend beyond mere typological differences and carry significant implications for second language acquisition, translation practices, and linguistic processing.

The research probes into four specific questions: 1) the distinctions in morphological strategies for grammatical categorization; 2) variations in syntactic organization, including constituent order and placement of modifiers; 3) the challenges these differences pose for Thai speakers learning Hindi and Hindi speakers learning Thai; and 4) the ramifications of these contrasts for translation between the languages. Overall, understanding these divergences is deemed essential for developing effective pedagogical approaches in language education for both Thai and Hindi learners.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The typological literature on Thai presents a well-documented history with foundational works that establish its grammatical structure. Noss (1964) outlines key features, including the SVO word order, classifier system, lack of inflectional morphology, and the significance of lexical tone. Smyth (2002) and Iwasaki and Ingkaphirom (2005) build on this by providing detailed reference grammars that emphasize various grammatical elements and complex structures within a functional-typological framework. Consistent characterization of Thai as an isolating language is echoed in cross-linguistic surveys, highlighting the role of classifiers in compensating for the absence of inflection, as noted by Li and Thompson (1976, 1981). Nathong (2003) contrasts English and Thai, pinpointing structural challenges for language learners due to the lack of articles and the unique function of classifiers, while Kanetnig (2010) focuses on morphological processes beneficial for teaching.

On the Hindi side, major grammars such as those by McGregor (1977) and Kellogg (1938) provide classical descriptions, with Shapiro (2003) and Kachru (2006) contributing sophisticated analyses of morphological systems, case distinctions, and the interplay of verbs and agreement in Hindi. Characterization of Hindi emphasizes its complex nominal and verbal morphology and SOV word order, distinguishing it clearly from Thai.

The theoretical foundation of contrastive analysis, established by Lado (1957), posits that structural differences between native and target languages predict language acquisition difficulties. Even amidst modifications in understanding language learning, empirical evidence supports the notion of structural distance affecting learning challenges, particularly relevant in the Thai-Hindi context given their considerable differences.

Cross-linguistic typology foundations by Greenberg (1963) relate syntactic structures to word order, with SOV and SVO correlations forming typological clusters, further systematized by Comrie (1981, 1989) and enriched by Croft (2003). While previous studies have investigated Thai against English and Hindi alongside Indo-Aryan languages, direct comparative literature focusing specifically on Thai and Hindi remains scarce. This study thus aims to bridge that gap, responding to increasing interest in Thai-Indian

linguistic exchanges despite the limited prior exploration in the field.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a descriptive-comparative methodology grounded in linguistic typology and contrastive analysis, utilizing established grammatical descriptions and a primary corpus of 200 bilingual noun items from Thai and Hindi. This corpus, compiled during the author's dissertation work, supports abstract typological claims with concrete lexical data, illustrating structural asymmetries through actual linguistic forms.

The analytical framework encompasses three perspectives: first, cross-linguistic typological comparison, which situates Thai and Hindi within a broader morphological and syntactic typology, identifying typological parameters for each language; second, morphological typology, classifying languages based on their morphological complexity, and examining the encoding of grammatical categories; third, contrastive analysis, which evaluates the pedagogical and cognitive implications of structural differences for speakers transitioning between the two languages.

Data for the study includes examples from various notable sources, presented in both native scripts (Thai and Devanagari) and IPA-based phonological transcriptions, following the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The analysis prioritizes qualitative depth over quantitative coverage, focusing on features most relevant to the comparison, such as number and gender morphology, classifier systems, word formation, word order, adposition type, adjective placement, and the structure of noun phrases and relative clauses. These features highlight the sharpest structural divergences between Thai and Hindi, with significant practical implications for language learners and translators. A comprehensive typological treatment would require more extensive space than the current document allows, but the selected features are critical for understanding the languages' differences.

## IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Typological Parameters: Situating Thai and Hindi  
In the context of typological classification, the

analysis of Thai and Hindi is framed by the World Atlas of Language Structures dataset. Thai is identified as an analytic or isolating language, where words usually consist of a single morpheme, and grammatical functions are denoted through syntax and separate particles rather than morphological changes. This leads to a nearly indistinguishable line between words and morphemes, with a heavy reliance on syntax and lexical items for grammatical encoding, characterizing Thai as a prototypical isolating language per scholars like Noss and Iwasaki. In contrast, Hindi is classified as a fusional or inflectional language within the synthetic category. Its morphological structure allows for the encoding of multiple grammatical features in single segments, with suffixes marking gender, number, and case simultaneously. This fusional nature results in compact nominal and verbal paradigms that convey dense grammatical information, thus distinguishing it from agglutinating languages that use separate affixes for each grammatical category.

Table 1 summarizes the primary typological parameters along which the two languages diverge.

Table 1: Typological Profile of Thai and Hindi

| Typological Parameter    | Thai                            | Hindi                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Genealogical affiliation | Tai-Kadai                       | Indo-Aryan<br>(Indo-European)         |
| Morphological type       | Analytic / Isolating            | Fusional / Inflectional               |
| Basic word order         | SVO                             | SOV                                   |
| Adposition type          | Prepositions                    | Postpositions                         |
| Grammatical gender       | None                            | Binary<br>(masculine / feminine)      |
| Number morphology        | No inflection; classifiers used | Obligatory plural marking             |
| Case marking             | Absent                          | Present (direct / oblique / vocative) |
| Adjective position       | Post-nominal                    | Pre-nominal                           |
| Lexical tone             | Five contrastive tones          | Absent                                |

## 4.2 Morphological Systems

### 4.2.1 Number Marking

Perhaps the most immediately visible morphological difference between Thai and Hindi concerns the encoding of nominal plurality. In Hindi, the distinction between singular and plural is a grammatically obligatory category encoded through inflectional morphology on the noun itself. Masculine nouns ending in the vowel /a:/ typically form their plural by substituting /e/ (for example, laRkaa "boy" becomes laRke "boys"; kamraa "room" becomes kamre "rooms"). Feminine nouns follow their own paradigm (laRkii "girl" becomes laRkiyaa~; kitaab "book" becomes kitaabe~). This plural form is not optional: wherever a Hindi speaker refers to multiple entities, morphological marking on the noun is required, and attributive adjectives and verbs must agree with the plural noun in gender and number. Thai operates through an entirely different logic. The form nangsuue (หนังสือ) means both "book" and "books" without any morphological distinction, and numerical plurality, when it needs to be specified, is conveyed through a numeral plus classifier rather than through modification of the noun. So "three books" in Thai is expressed as: หนังสือ สาม เล่ม (nangsuue saam lem) "book three [classifier for flat-paged objects]".

The noun remains invariant, and the plurality is encoded in the numeral-classifier sequence that follows it. When context makes the plural interpretation clear, neither the numeral nor the classifier is obligatory. This typological contrast carries a direct grammatical consequence. In Hindi, a learner must track the grammatical number of every noun and propagate that information through agreement processes that touch adjectives and verbs throughout the clause. In Thai, no such tracking is required at the morphological level: plurality is treated as a contextually recoverable semantic feature rather than an obligatorily grammaticalized category. The cognitive burden of grammatical number is therefore very differently distributed in the two languages, and for the Hindi speaker learning Thai, the absence of number morphology, while superficially simplifying, requires a genuine reconceptualization of what information must be grammatically encoded.

### 4.2.2 Grammatical Gender

Grammatical gender is one of the clearest points of structural asymmetry between Thai and Hindi. Thai

has no grammatical gender whatsoever. The third-person pronoun *khaw* (เขา), as documented extensively in Thai grammatical descriptions, can refer to a male or female person depending entirely on context; the noun system draws no gender distinctions at all; and there is no agreement morphology linking nouns to adjectives or verbs on the basis of gender.

Hindi, by contrast, organizes its entire nominal system around a binary gender distinction between masculine and feminine. Every Hindi noun belongs to one of these two classes, and the class membership of a noun determines the form of any adjective that modifies it, the form of the verb that agrees with it, and in many cases the form of the postposition that marks its grammatical role. The gender of a noun is not always semantically predictable: while *mard* (man) is masculine and *aurat* (woman) is feminine as expected on semantic grounds, *kitaab* (book) is feminine and *ghar* (house) is masculine without any semantic motivation.

The following examples illustrate mandatory gender agreement in Hindi attributive adjective constructions: अच्छा लड़का "good boy",

अच्छी लड़की "good girl,

अच्छे लड़के "good boys"

The adjective *acchaa* changes its form to match the gender and number of the noun it modifies. No parallel process exists in Thai, where the adjective follows the noun in all cases and carries no agreement morphology.

For the Thai learner of Hindi, grammatical gender represents one of the most persistent difficulties in acquisition. The learner must memorize the gender of every noun as an arbitrary lexical property, apply it in attributive and predicative adjective agreement, and carry it through verb agreement under perfective aspect. This is a type of grammatical processing for which Thai provides no native-language preparation, making it a predictable site of persistent error and difficulty throughout the learning process.

#### 4.2.3 Case Marking

Hindi maintains a case system distinguishing three forms: the direct case, the oblique case, and the vocative. The direct case is used for subjects of intransitive verbs and, in the imperfective aspect, for subjects of transitive verbs. The oblique case is used before postpositions and in the ergative-like perfective construction with transitive verbs, where the subject

appears in the oblique-plus-postposition form. The vocative is used for direct address. The result is that the same noun may appear in different morphological forms depending on its syntactic role and the aspectual context of the clause:

लड़का खाता है "The boy eats",

लड़के ने खाया "The boy ate",

लड़के को "to the boy"

Thai has no case morphology. The grammatical role of a noun phrase within a clause is conveyed entirely by its position in the sentence and by its relationship to surrounding particles. The subject precedes the verb; the object follows it; and there are no morphological changes to the noun form to mark these roles. This again illustrates the fundamental typological contrast: what Hindi encodes morphologically, Thai encodes syntactically.

The absence of case morphology in Thai is not a simplification in any absolute sense. Rather, it reflects a different distributional arrangement of grammatical labor. Thai syntax must be strict to compensate for the absence of morphological role-marking: a Thai noun phrase cannot generally be moved from its canonical position without creating ambiguity or ungrammaticality, whereas in Hindi the case morphology on the noun phrase provides sufficient role information for a degree of word-order flexibility that Thai does not permit.

#### 4.2.4 Numeral Classifiers

One of the most distinctive features of Thai grammar, and one that has no counterpart in Hindi, is the obligatory numeral classifier system. When a noun is counted or quantified in Thai, a classifier must appear between the numeral and the counted noun. The specific classifier used depends on the semantic category of the noun:

คน (khon) - humans

ตัว (tua) - animals and small objects

เล่ม (lem) - book-like objects

ลูก (luuk) - round or ball-shaped objects

หลัง (lang) - buildings and houses

Where an English speaker says "three books" and a Hindi speaker says *tiin kitaabe~* (with the plural marker on the noun), a Thai speaker says: หนังสือ สาม เล่ม (nangsuee saam lem) "book three"

The classifier marks the categorical nature of the counted object rather than its plurality per se. The noun

remains unchanged, and the quantification information is distributed across the numeral-classifier compound that follows it.

Li and Thompson (1976) have argued that classifier systems function as a grammatical alternative to the gender-and-number morphology found in Indo-European languages: both systems require speakers to categorize referents according to properties, but they do so through very different formal means. In Thai, the classifier system constitutes one of the primary mechanisms through which the language compensates for its lack of nominal morphology, performing some of the semantic and pragmatic functions that inflectional systems perform elsewhere.

For the Hindi learner of Thai, the classifier system poses a significant challenge precisely because Hindi provides no structural parallel. The learner must acquire both the formal inventory of classifiers, which is substantial, and the taxonomic logic that determines which classifier applies to which type of noun, a logic that does not map onto any feature of Hindi grammar. The classifier is furthermore not optional in formal usage; omitting it when a numeral is present yields a construction that strikes native Thai speakers as deficient or foreign.

#### 4.2.5 Word Formation Processes

Despite the absence of inflectional morphology, Thai does engage in derivational word formation through three main processes, all of them extensively documented in the dissertation material and in the broader typological literature on Thai: compounding, affixation, and reduplication.

Compounding in Thai is highly productive and follows several structural patterns. Noun compounds may be formed from noun plus noun, producing new lexical items with meanings that cannot be derived compositionally from the individual constituents: *chaang + thong* ("mechanic" + "gold") yields *chaang-thong* "goldsmith"; *khon + khruua* ("person" + "kitchen") yields *khon-khruua* "cook." Noun plus verb compounding is equally common: *too + riian* ("table" + "to study") yields *too-riian* "desk." Adjective and verb compounds extend this productive system to the other major open word classes. A notable feature of Thai compounding is that in noun plus adjective and noun plus verb combinations, the modifier consistently follows the head, mirroring the post-nominal modifier order found in the syntax more broadly.

Affixation in Thai, while less extensive than in inflectional languages, operates through a small number of derivational prefixes that are grammatically and lexically productive. The prefix *kaan* nominalizes verbs and nouns to refer to processes and activities (*kaan-kin* "eating"; *kaan-phuut* "speaking"; *kaan-baan* "homework"). The prefix *khwaam* nominalizes verbs and adjectives to express states and qualities (*khwaam-ruu* "knowledge"; *khwaam-sanuk* "enjoyment"; *khwaam-khit* "thought"). The prefix *nak* functions as an agentive nominalizer (*nak-riian* "student"; *nak-roong* "singer"; *nak-khiian* "writer"). It is important to observe that all of these Thai affixes are derivational rather than inflectional: they change the word class or add new lexical meaning but do not encode grammatical categories such as tense, number, or case.

Reduplication in Thai operates through three mechanisms. Full reduplication of a base form typically creates a plurality or approximation effect: *dek-dek* is a plural or collective form of *dek* "child." Ablaut reduplication, where one vowel or consonant in the reduplicated syllable changes, creates intensification: *yung-ying* "very confused" from *yung* "confused." Tonal reduplication, where the reduplicated syllable carries a different tone, similarly intensifies the quality expressed by the base.

Hindi word formation also employs compounding and affixation, but differs fundamentally from Thai in that Hindi affixation includes the inflectional suffixes marking gender, number, and case on nouns and tense, aspect, and agreement on verbs. This means that in Hindi, the morphological structure of a word carries grammatical information that interacts with the rest of the sentence through agreement and government relationships. In Thai, morphological structure does not carry this type of relational grammatical information; the word form is invariant across all syntactic contexts.

### 4.3 Syntactic Systems

#### 4.3.1 Basic Word Order and its Consequences

The most frequently cited typological contrast between Thai and Hindi is the difference in basic constituent order. Thai is a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) language. The subject precedes the verb, which precedes the object, as in the following canonical examples:

|      |      |        |
|------|------|--------|
| ผอม  | กิน  | ข้าว   |
| phom | kin  | khaaw) |
| SUBJ | VERB | OBJ    |
| I    | eat  | rice   |
| เขา  | ไป   | บ้าน   |
| khaw | pai  | baan   |
| SUBJ | VERB | OBJ    |
| He   | goes | home   |

Hindi is a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) language, placing the object between the subject and the verb:

|      |      |      |     |
|------|------|------|-----|
| मैं  | चावल | खाता | हूँ |
| SUBJ | OBJ  | VERB | AUX |
| "I   | rice | eat  | am" |
| वह   | घर   | जाता | है  |
| SUBJ | OBJ  | VERB | AUX |
| "He  | home | goes | is" |

This difference in constituent order has consequences that extend well beyond simple sentence structure. In SVO languages, the verb serves as an early cue to sentence meaning: hearing the subject and then immediately the verb provides the listener with the predicate frame before the object is encountered. In SOV languages, the verb arrives last, meaning that the listener must hold the subject and object in working memory until the verb arrives to provide the relational structure that connects them. Psycholinguistic research has documented that this difference in the temporal ordering of predicates and arguments places somewhat different demands on parsing strategies and working memory, and this has been identified as a source of processing difficulty for learners switching between SVO and SOV language types (Ellis, 1994). Beyond the simple subject-verb-object order, the SOV type in Hindi correlates with a cluster of other syntactic features identified by Greenberg (1963) and Comrie (1981) as typologically associated. Chief among these is the use of postpositions rather than prepositions, and the placement of adjectives before rather than after the nouns they modify, features that are examined in the following sections.

#### 4.3.2 Adposition Type

Thai uses prepositions: relational words that precede the noun phrase they govern:

|     |              |     |             |
|-----|--------------|-----|-------------|
| บน  | โต๊ะ         | ใน  | ห้อง        |
| bon | too          | nai | hong        |
| on  | [the] table" | in  | [the] room" |

Hindi uses postpositions, placed after the governed noun phrase:

|             |    |            |     |
|-------------|----|------------|-----|
| टेबल        | पर | कमरे       | में |
| [the] table | on | [the] room | in  |

This reversal is not merely a formal curiosity; it interacts with word order in a systemic way that illustrates the coherent typological organization of both languages. In SOV languages, the general tendency is for grammatical relationship markers to follow their complements, placing markers at the end rather than the beginning of constituents. Postpositions fit this end-marking pattern at the noun phrase level, just as the verb-final pattern in the clause represents end-marking at the clausal level. In SVO languages, by contrast, the general tendency is for markers to precede their complements, and prepositions fit this initial-marking pattern in noun phrases, paralleling the early position of the verb in the clause. Comrie (1981) noted that while the correlation between SOV order and postpositions is statistical rather than exceptionless, it is robust across the languages of the world, and the Thai-Hindi contrast illustrates it clearly.

For learners moving from Thai to Hindi, the shift from pre-nominal relational markers to post-nominal ones requires not just memorization of new vocabulary but a fundamental reorientation of the parsing strategy for noun phrases. A Thai speaker learning Hindi must learn to delay interpretation of the grammatical relation between a noun phrase and its syntactic environment until the end of that noun phrase, reversing a deeply automatized expectation built up through years of native-language experience.

#### 4.3.3 Adjective Placement

Thai is a post-nominal adjective language: descriptive adjectives consistently follow the nouns they modify. This is illustrated by the following examples from the dissertation material:

|       |             |                 |             |
|-------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| เด็ก  | ดี          | ผู้หญิง         | สวย         |
| dek   | dii         | phuuying        | suay)       |
| child | good = good | woman           | beautiful = |
| child |             | beautiful woman |             |

Hindi is a pre-nominal adjective language: attributive adjectives precede the nouns they modify. Moreover, in Hindi, adjectives that occur in this pre-nominal

position agree with the nouns they modify in gender and number, adding the morphological complexity discussed in Section 4.2.2:

|           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| बड़ा घर   | बड़ी लड़की |
| Big house | Big girl   |

The contrast in adjective placement reflects the broader syntological orientation of each language. In Thai, the post-nominal position of the adjective creates a head-modifier sequence in noun phrases that parallels the verb-object sequence in the clause: in both cases, the head of the construction precedes its complement or modifier. In Hindi, the pre-nominal adjective creates a modifier-head sequence at the noun phrase level that parallels the object-verb sequence at the clause level: in both cases, the modifier or complement precedes the head. The two languages are thus internally consistent in ways that reflect their broader typological orientations and that give each language its characteristic structural rhythm.

For learners, adjective placement is a persistent source of error precisely because it is an automatic, below-threshold process in the native language. A Thai learner of Hindi will naturally place adjectives after nouns, replicating the native-language pattern, and a Hindi learner of Thai will place adjectives before, for the same reason. Correction requires sustained attention to a structural feature that operates without conscious awareness in fluent native-language processing.

#### 4.3.4 Relative Clause Formation

Relative clauses in Thai are formed by placing the relative clause after the head noun, introduced by the relative particle thii (ที่):

|           |               |      |
|-----------|---------------|------|
| ผู้ชาย    | ที่รัก        | ฉัน  |
| phuuchaay | thii rak      | chan |
| The man   | THAT love     | I    |
| HEAD-NOUN | PARTICLE VERB | SUBJ |

The structure is thus relativization by juxtaposition with a grammatical particle, closely paralleling the English relative clause pattern, a typologically expected configuration for an SVO language.

Hindi relative clauses have a distinctly different structure that involves a correlative construction with no parallel in Thai. The relative pronoun jo (who/which) introduces the subordinate clause, and the main clause contains a correlative pronoun vah (that) co-referential with the relativized noun:

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| जो आदमी आया वह मेरा दोस्त है        |
| "The man who came, he is my friend" |

This correlative structure, which appears widely in Indo-Aryan languages, involves what is in effect a bi-clausal construction in which the main clause contains a pronoun resuming the relativized noun from the subordinate clause. For Thai learners of Hindi, this construction requires structural reorganization that goes well beyond simple word-order adjustment: the learner must internalize a sentence architecture in which a relative clause precedes the main clause and is bound to it through co-referential pronouns, rather than following the head noun as a modifier within a single clause.

#### 4.3.5 Noun Phrase Structure

Summarizing the preceding observations, the overall internal structure of noun phrases in Thai and Hindi can be characterized as follows. In Thai, the noun phrase is head-initial: the head noun comes first, and all modifiers follow, including adjectives, demonstratives, and numeral-classifier sequences. This gives Thai noun phrases a right-branching, head-first organization:

N + Adj + Dem + Num + Classifier

หนังสือใหม่ นั้น สาม เล่ม

(nangsue mai nan saam lem)

those three new books

In Hindi, the noun phrase is internally head-final with respect to adjective placement, while case information is marked post-nominally through postpositions. The overall structure is:

Adj + N + Postposition

नई किताबें

new books

बड़े घर में

in the big house

These structural differences mean that noun phrases in Thai and Hindi not only occupy different positions in the clause relative to the verb but are internally organized according to different ordering principles, creating a layered set of structural mismatches that

learners must navigate simultaneously at both the phrase-internal and clause-level dimensions.

## V. OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

### 5.1 Summary of Structural Findings

The comparative analysis in Section 4 identifies structural divergences between Thai and Hindi across two dimensions: morphological strategy and syntactic arrangement. Morphologically, Thai uses lexical and syntactic methods with invariant word forms, classifier sequences, and specific word order to convey grammatical information, contrasting with Hindi's pervasive inflectional system, which tracks gender, number, and case through bound morphology. This results in Hindi sentences having greater morphological density compared to the broader syntactic distribution in Thai, necessitating stricter word order in Thai due to the lack of role-marking.

Syntactically, the languages differ in constituent order, adposition types, adjective placement, and relative clause structures, consistent with Greenberg's typological clusters. Thai follows a head-first SVO structure with prepositions, post-nominal adjectives, and particle-based relative clauses, while Hindi adheres to a modifier-before-head SOV structure with postpositions, pre-nominal adjectives, and correlative relative clauses. Each language's grammar reflects an internal structural logic, displaying typological consistency.

Notably, the analysis emphasizes how Hindi encodes gender, number, and case as mandatory morphological features within noun phrases, whereas Thai relies on classifier selection, numeral specification, lexical choice, and contextual inference to fulfill similar communicative roles. These differing strategies highlight unique strengths and limitations in formal complexity and communicative precision when translating and acquiring each language.

### 5.2 Implications for Second Language Acquisition

The structural findings reveal significant challenges for second language learners transitioning between Thai and Hindi, based on Lado's contrastive analysis framework. For Hindi speakers learning Thai, four major difficulties arise: 1) The lack of morphological gender in Thai necessitates abandoning habitual grammatical categories, leading to confusion in noun classification. 2) The Thai classifier system represents

a new grammatical domain, requiring extensive memorization and understanding of its selection logic.

3) The change from pre-nominal to post-nominal adjective order demands adjustment of deeply ingrained parsing habits, which resists simple instruction. 4) Thai's tonal phonology imposes additional perceptual and phonetic challenges that compound existing morpho-syntactic issues. Conversely, Thai speakers learning Hindi encounter their own set of challenges: 1) The introduction of mandatory grammatical gender complicates lexical learning and requires agreement propagation. 2) The case system demands tracking grammatical roles through morphological changes rather than positional cues, reversing familiar strategies. 3) The shift from SVO to SOV word order disrupts processing routines, as verbs appear after objects. 4) The postpositional system delays understanding of grammatical relationships until the end of phrases. These findings underscore that the Thai-Hindi pairing is a high-distance language pair, necessitating explicit and sustained instruction focused on specific structural contrasts, rather than relying solely on vocabulary enhancement.

### 5.3 Implications for Translation

The study highlights significant structural divergences between Hindi and Thai that impact translation practices, particularly regarding morphological categories. For example, Hindi nouns possess grammatical gender, which cannot be directly translated into Thai, a language without gender distinctions. Translators must evaluate the communicative significance of gender information and find alternate means to convey it, such as through lexical specification or contextual deixis. Conversely, when translating Thai to Hindi, translators face arbitrary gender assignments for nouns, necessitating consistent application to maintain grammatical agreement. A documented bilingual noun corpus illustrates this with the Thai noun "nok" (นก, "bird"), translating to the masculine Hindi "pakSii," requiring gender-consistent adjectival modifications.

Additionally, the article addresses the classifier system in Thai, where numeral quantification includes classifier information absent in Hindi, thus necessitating the use of plural inflection and explicit lexical specification for communicative clarity.



Furthermore, word-order reorganization due to the different syntactic structures of Thai (SVO) and Hindi (SOV) poses a pervasive challenge. Translators must systematically reorganize clauses, moving adjectives, converting prepositions to postpositions, and adjusting subordinate constructions. Overall, translation between Hindi and Thai demands more than mere equivalence; it requires a comprehensive bilingual understanding and structural reorganization of content to effectively convey meaning.

#### 5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The study highlights key implications for language pedagogy, emphasizing the necessity for instructors and materials designers to focus on morphological and syntactic contrasts between Thai and Hindi as central challenges. For Hindi learners of Thai, structural challenges such as the classifier system and tonal phonology should be introduced early and systematically, while emphasizing the unique aspects of Thai grammar. Conversely, Thai learners of Hindi need to prioritize memorizing gender categories with nouns from the outset, as retroactive gender assignment complicates learning. Additionally, the case and postpositional systems should be taught together, and exposure to the SOV word order is crucial for adaptation.

### VI. CONCLUSION

The paper presents a systematic typological comparison of Thai and Hindi, focusing on their morphological and syntactic structures. It reveals that Thai employs a syntactic arrangement, lexical specification, and classifier selection for grammatical encoding, while Hindi utilizes an inflectional morphological system affecting both nominal and verbal paradigms. Key syntactic differences include basic word order, adposition type, adjective placement, and relative clause construction, which create a typologically coherent representation of each language's organizational logic.

These structural divergences pose challenges for language learners: Hindi speakers must adapt to Thai's classifier system, shed gender and case morphology, and adjust to its pre-verbal object placement; conversely, Thai speakers must learn about grammatical gender, case morphology, adopt the SOV structure, and master postpositions in Hindi.

Translation between these languages necessitates a comprehensive structural reorganization rather than straightforward equivalence.

The analysis underscores that the Thai-Hindi pairing serves as an informative case study in typological distance resulting from distinct historical and cultural evolution, thereby illustrating different solutions to the universal problem of grammatical encoding. While this study emphasizes morphological and syntactic elements, a more extensive comparison would necessitate exploring phonology, discourse structure, and pragmatics. Future empirical studies, particularly learner corpus analyses tracking errors between the two languages, are encouraged to build on these findings, especially given the strengthening educational and cultural ties between Thailand and India.

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