A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON EARLY CHANGES OF VERBAL NEGATORS IN THAI*

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0 Abstract
This preliminary study on the evolution of the Thai negative system aims to set forth a hypothesis on part of the early development of the system. It focuses on two erstwhile verbal negators: bɔ̀ɔ mii and bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn. The hypothesis is that during the time in which both bɔ̀ɔ mii and bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn were used, these two negators were in a marked contrast with respect to the factuality status of the situation described: they were, respectively, irrealis vs. realis negators.1

1 The variety of Thai negative expressions
Standard Thai has a number of negators with different forms and functions. Examples (1) to (7) below illustrate a variety of Thai negative expressions containing a negator, which is a single negative morpheme (such as verbal negator mây in (1), mîʔ in (2) and hɔ̀ɔn in (3)) or a concatenation of two negative morphemes, one of which may be an erstwhile negative morpheme (such as verbal negator bɔ̀ɔ mîʔ in (4)2 and nominal negator mây chây in (5)3)

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1 Although a reviewer suggests that the nomenclature ‘counterfactual vs. factual’ would be more appropriate for characterizing the two negators: bɔ̀ɔ mii vs. bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn, in this paper I use the nomenclature ‘irrealis vs. realis’ since recently linguists tend to use the nomenclature ‘irrealis vs. realis’ for the notional contrast of ‘non-factual vs. factual’, or of ‘unreal vs. real’ (Palmer 2001: 1). The term ‘irrealis’ was used by Sapir (1930) in his description of Southern Paiute grammar. He notes that the ‘irrealis’ modal suffix in the language indicates that the activity expressed by the verb is ‘unreal’, i.e. either merely potential or contrary to fact (Sapir 1930: 168, 1992: 186). So far many other terms for the concept ‘irrealis’ have been used in linguistics literature. Examples are: ‘manifesting’ (Whorf 1950: 59), ‘nonfactive’ (Hooper 1975: 91), ‘non-factivity’ (Lyons 1977: 795), ‘irrealis-assertion’ (being asserted with doubt, as hypotheses; being weekly asserted) (Givón 1982: 24; 1994: 268), ‘non-actual’ (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 241), ‘non-assertion’ (Bybee et al. 1994: 239; Bybee & Fleischman 1995: 9), ‘nonfactuality’ (being undetermined with respect to its factual status, i.e., is neither positively nor negatively factual) (Narrog 2005: 182, 184), and so forth.

2 I consider bɔ̀ɔ mîʔ as compound verbal negator consisting of the erstwhile authentic negative bɔ̀ɔ and another negative mîʔ on the grounds that the following syntactic structure of a negative expression, which is found in an inscription produced around the 19th century, shows that bɔ̀ɔ and mîʔ were functioning as a single negator: bɔ̀ɔ [mîʔ VP1 mîʔ VP2] ‘neither VP1 nor VP2’.

3 In old days chây by itself was a nominal negator (Bradley 1873: 170).
or a composite form consisting of at least one negative morpheme plus other morpheme(s) (such as formulaic verbal negator *hāa* … *mây* in (6) and formulaic nominal negator *hāa chây* … *mây* in (7)).

(1) **mây** yàak  
NEGATIVE want  
(I) do not want. [NWRP_EN016]

(2) **nāŋ mîf?** dây côp lôŋ troŋ nân  
movie NEGATIVE REALIZATION end descend there  
The movie does not really end up at that point. [NWRP_EN015]

(3) **ŋaa sǎan ruuu hɔ̀ɔn hîan hôt**  
ivory big elephant INTERROGATIVE NEGATIVE be worn out  
Is it the ivory of a big elephant that would not be worn out? [POET018]

(4) **mɔ̀Ɂ sǒm kê chaay yĩŋ thîi bɔ̀ɔ mîf?**  
fit DATIVE man woman RELATIVIZER NEGATIVE  
sǒm thaaŋ phèet maa láay pìi dìi nák  
copulate come many year good INTENSITIVE  
(This vitamin) is fit indeed for a couple who have not had sex for many years.  
[NACNS024]

(5) **mây chây** chaaw rooman  
NEGATIVE people Roman  
(They) are not the Romans. [NACHM070]

(6) **hāa rūu tua mây**  
NEGATIVE (front part) be aware NEGATIVE (rear part)  
(He) is not aware. [NACHM]

(7) **hāa chây sînlapâ? mây**  
NEGATIVE (front part) the arts NEGATIVE (rear part)  
(They) are not the arts. [ACHM054]

The syntactic configuration of negative expressions with a simple negator (a single negative morpheme and a concatenation of two negative morphemes) like those in (1) to (5) is relatively simplex; that is, the negator is placed immediately before the negated verb

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4 Sample negative expressions in (1) to (7) are derived from the Thai National Corpus (TNC) which is the largest electronic Thai corpus that comprises numerous corpora of various discourse genres (e.g. ‘fiction’, ‘newspaper’, ‘academic’, ‘law’, etc.) [http://www.arts.chula.ac.th/tnc2/]. The English glosses and translations are mine. The sequence of signs following my free translation of each sample expression (e.g. [NWRP_EN016]) is the ID code given to a component corpus that includes the expression. I would like to thank Wirote Aroonmanakun for directing my attention to the public availability of the TNC corpus. Besides, negative expressions in old-day Thai cited in this paper, which are transcribed into phonetic equivalents in modern Thai, are all from *Corpus of Thai Inscriptions* (see the reference section below).
phrase or noun phrase. On the other hand, the syntactic configuration of formulaic negative expressions with a composite negator like those in (6) and (7) is complex; that is, the negated verb phrase or noun phrase is put between the front and the rear parts of the negator. Thus, negative expressions in present-day Thai are quite diverse in form. In order to identify the exact period in which the diversity of Thai negative expressions became conspicuous, I have consulted the corpus of Thai inscriptions (for the details of this corpus, see the reference section at the end of this paper) which contains Thai inscriptions from the end of the 13th century (the Sukhothai dynasty) through the 20th century (the present Ratanakosin dynasty). With this diachronic corpus data, I have learned that Thai negative expressions had been of great variety all the time since the earliest period in the documented history of the Thai language, namely since the end of the 13th century. The number of tokens of negators that I have found in the inscriptions is approximately 550 in total (Takahashi 2008). In examining the inscription discourses, I found a variety of verbal and nominal negators.5

This preliminary study on early development of the Thai negative system focuses on two erstwhile verbal negators, bɔ̀ɔ mii and bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn, as well as their probable descendants, mii / mîʔ 6 and hɔ̀ɔn. These negators were frequently used in inscriptions produced in the period from the 14th century to the middle of the 19th century (Takahashi 2008). Their possible historical changes are shown in diagrams (8) and (9).

(8) a. bɔ̀ɔ mii ‘not exist’, negative existential construction
   [negation of existence]
   > b. bɔ̀ɔ mii VP
      [irrealis negative situation (unwitnessed non-factual situation)]
   > c. mii / mîʔ VP
      [regular negation]

(9) a. bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn ‘not accustomed’, negative experiential construction
   [negation of experience]
   > b. bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP
      [realis negative situation (witnessed factual situation)]
   > c. hɔ̀ɔn VP
      [regular negation]

Some twenty years ago, Kullavanijaya (1996 [original ms., 1988]: 89) raised a question about the relationship between bɔ̀ɔ mii and mii, as follows: “Could it be that the form bɔ̀ɔ mii ‘have not’ has gradually developed into mii ‘not’?” Since then, however, this question has been left open. This study, therefore, will investigate a plausible development

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5 For example, bɔ̀ɔ VP, pây VP, hɔ̀ɔn VP, mii VP, mîʔ VP, mây VP, bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP, bɔ̀ɔ mii VP, bɔ̀ɔ mîʔ VP, hǎa VP mây, VP hǎa mîʔ dây, chây VP, chây NP, chây (NP) câʔ VP hǎa mîʔ dây, mîʔ chây NP, mây chây NP, hǎa chây NP mây, and so on are attested (Takahashi 2008: 356-357).

6 The negative morpheme mii had several variants such as mii, mîʔ and mîʔ.
from $bɔ̀ɔ$ mii to $mii$ / $mɨʔ$, as indicated in (8) above. I will also examine a plausible development of $bɔ̀ɔ$ ḥɔ̀ɔn to $hɔ̀ɔn$, as indicated in (9) above, in order to show a parallel between the two plausible developments (8) and (9).

The purpose of the present study is to motivate a hypothesis on early changes of the two erstwhile verbal negators, $bɔ̀ɔ$ mii and $bɔ̀ɔ$ hɔ̀ɔn, drawing on Croft’s (1991) account of the typical evolution of negation (see Section 2). The organization of the remainder of this paper is as follows. Section 2 first reviews Croft’s proposal on the course of historical changes in negative existential expressions, which he named ‘negative-existential cycle’. In line with this suggestion, Sections 2.1 to 2.3 present a hypothesis on the early changes of Thai negative expressions based on examination of actual tokens gathered from the inscription data. Essentially, I am suggesting the following. As diagrams (8) and (9) above show, expressions for ‘negation of existence’ (8a) changed into those for ‘irrealis negative situation’ (8b), which is parallel to the change from expressions for ‘negation of experience’ (9a) to those for ‘realis negative situation’ (9b). Furthermore, the two contrastive negative expressions (8b) and (9b) were similarly transformed into expressions for ‘regular negation’ (8c) and (9c). In Section 3, then, I will clarify the types of language change probably involved in the early development of Thai negative system. In particular, I will explain my hypothesis that three well-known types of the diachronic process of language change (i.e. syntactic reanalysis, generalization by analogy and phonological reduction) were involved at different phases of the developments (8) and (9). Section 4 is a brief summary of this study.

2 Negative-existential cycle
Croft (1991) posits a historical linguistic process of ‘negative-existential cycle’, shown graphically in Figure 1 which is adopted from Figure 2 in Croft (ibid.: 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. FUSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type A (‘regular’ negative + existential construction)</td>
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<td>2. EMPHASIS</td>
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<td>Type C (verbal negator)</td>
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1. FUSION
Type A (‘regular’ negative + existential construction) $\rightarrow$ Type B (special negative existential form)

3. WEAKENING

2. EMPHASIS

Type C (verbal negator)

Figure 1: Croft’s (1991) proposal for a diachronic ‘negative-existential cycle’

In a negative-existential cycle, a special negative existential form (Type B) arises and comes to be used as a verbal negator (Type C) and then is supplemented by the positive existential predicate in its existential function, restoring a ‘regular’ negative + existential construction (Type A). Croft (1991: 22) states that in this diachronic cycle, fusion of negative and existential occurs first, then the emphatic use of the negative existential as a verbal negator, and finally the analogical use of the positive existential predicate in negative existential constructions being accompanied with attenuation of emphasis. However, he adds that the sequencing is not absolute. For example, in Mandarin Chinese, fusion (Type B) did not occur but the ‘regular’ negative existential (Type A) jumped straight to the emphatic verbal negator (Type C). Diagram (10) illustrates this.
(10) Development of the negative existential *méi* in Mandarin Chinese:

Type A (‘regular’ negative existential): *méi* NP ‘NP does not exist’

> Type B: none

> Type C (verbal negator): *méi* VP [for negation of complete action]  
  cf. *bu* VP [for normal declarative negation]

The negative existential *méi* in Mandarin Chinese came to function as verbal negator for negating the completion of an event (Li & Thompson 1981: 421) without any phonological fusion taking place.

Likewise, one of the erstwhile negators in Thai, *bɔ̀ɔ mii*, is supposed to have consisted of the negative *bɔ̀ɔ* ‘not’ and the existential verb *mii* ‘exist’. A plausible evolution of *bɔ̀ɔ mii* is diagrammed in (11).

(11) Development of the negative + existential construction in Thai:

Type A (‘regular’ negative + existential construction): *bɔ̀ɔ mii* NP (e.g. (12))

> Type B: none

> Type C (verbal negator): *bɔ̀ɔ mii* VP (e.g. (13))

(12) *bɔ̀ɔ mii* ɲɯan *bɔ̀ɔ mii* thɔɔŋ  
NEGATIVE exist silver NEGATIVE exist gold  
*There was not silver; there was not gold.* [1](1292)

(13) *bɔ̀ɔ mii* khananaa thii ləəy  
NEGATIVE recount careful INTENSITIVE  
(We) do not recount (what he did) in a careful manner at all (because it was too much to be fully described). [2](1341-1367)

Examination of the inscription corpus data reveals that *bɔ̀ɔ mii* NP (Type A) was used until the 16th century and *bɔ̀ɔ mii* VP (Type C) until the 18th century (Takahashi 2008).

2.1 From ‘negation of existence vs. of experience’ (Type A) to ‘negation of irrealis vs. realis situation’ (Type C): the process of emphasis

Although in Thai there has been no negative existential with a unique form distinct from other negators (like *méi* ‘not exist’ in Mandarin Chinese), I assume that the development of the Thai negative existential construction *bɔ̀ɔ mii* basically corresponds to that of the Mandarin Chinese negative existential *méi* in that both are not fully associated with

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7 The bracketed number (e.g. [1]) and the parenthesized number (e.g. (1292)) after my free translation of each sample expression from the inscription corpus are, respectively, the ID number and the estimated production year of the source inscription.
phonological fusion. The change occurred in the negative existential construction in Thai, however, has something different from its Mandarin Chinese counterpart. Crucially, it is likely that the evolution of  bɔ̀ɔ mii was not an isolated change in the Thai negative system, but another erstwhile negator  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn appears to have undergone a similar change, as shown in (14) below.  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn is composed of the negative  bɔ̀ɔ ‘not’ and the experiential verb  hɔ̀ɔn ‘be accustomed’. Therefore, we may call  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn a negative experiential construction.

(14) Development of the negative + experiential construction in Thai:

The negative + experiential construction:  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn ‘not accustomed’

> verbal negator:  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP (e.g. (15))

(15)  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn khàat sàk wan sàk khɯɯn
NEGATIVE lack just day just night
(He did) without missing a single day or a single night. [3](1357)

I hypothesize that the verbal negator  bɔ̀ɔ mii, which likely originates from the negative existential construction, and the verbal negator  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn, which likely originates from the negative experiential construction, were once contrastive in terms of modal sense (whether the described situation in question is non-factual or factual): irrealis (non-factual) versus realis (factual) negator. The grounds for this hypothesis is my observation of the inscription corpus data that all the 13 tokens of ‘ bɔ̀ɔ mii VP’ could be interpreted as representing negative situation of the irrealis kind (non-factual situation such as non-realization, impossibility, hypotheticals, dispositional necessity, and generalization) whereas all the 6 tokens of ‘ bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP’ could be interpreted as representing negative situation of the realis kind (factual situation such as experience and perception). Note that unfortunately the number of tokens of negation by the verbal negators  bɔ̀ɔ mii and  bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn that I have found in the inscriptions is very small: in total, 13 tokens of ‘ bɔ̀ɔ mii VP’ (see Appendix A) and 6 tokens of ‘ bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP’ (see Appendix B).

As exemplified in (16) to (18) below,  bɔ̀ɔ mii is used to express an irrealis situation: such as a non-realized or impossible situation (16), a conditional situation (17), or a habitual or generalized situation (18).

(16)  bɔ̀ɔ mii sadèt loŋ maa
NEGATIVE proceed descend come
(The relics) did not come down. [3](1357)

(17)  phìʔ  bɔ̀ɔ mii kanwon …
if NEGATIVE worry
If (they) do not worry … [64](15C)
In contrast, $bɔɔ\ hɔɔn$ is used to express a witnessed or experienced negative situation, as illustrated in (19) and (20).

(19) $bɔɔ\ hɔɔn\ khâa\ fan$
    \begin{align*}
    \text{NEGATIVE} & \text{.kill\ hit} \\
    (He) & \text{has not killed or hit (the person quarrelled with him).} \ [5](1361)
    \end{align*}

(20) $ŋən\ thɔɔŋ\ bɔɔ\ hɔɔn\ mii$
    \begin{align*}
    \text{silver\ gold} & \text{NEGATIVE\ exist} \\
    \text{As for silver and gold, they have not existed.} & \ [160](1782-1925)
    \end{align*}

Hence, in past ages there seems to be division of labour between the irrealis negator $bɔɔ\ mii$ and the realis negator $bɔɔ\ hɔɔn$.

2.2 From ‘irrealis vs. realis negator’ (Type C) to ‘neutral negator’ (Type A): the process of weakening

I further hypothesize that the two negators $bɔɔ\ mii$ and $bɔɔ\ hɔɔn$ both changed into simplified neutral negators $mii$ / $mf\?$, as respectively diagrammed in (21) and (24) below.

(21) $bɔɔ\ mii$ VP
    \begin{align*}
    & \text{[irrealis negation]} \\
    & > mii / mf\?\ VP \\
    & \text{[neutral negation]} \ (e.g. (22), (23))
    \end{align*}

(22) $náp\ lɛɛ\ mii\ thûan$
    \begin{align*}
    \text{count\ and\ NEGATIVE\ in\ full} \\
    (They) & \text{are countless.} \ [5](1361)
    \end{align*}

(23) $mf\?$ ranjkiat
    \begin{align*}
    \text{NEGATIVE\ object\ to} \\
    (He) & \text{does not conceive a dislike.} \ [64](15C)
    \end{align*}

(24) $bɔɔ\ hɔɔn$ VP
    \begin{align*}
    & \text{[realis negation]} \\
    & > hɔɔn\ VP \\
    & \text{[neutral negation]} \ (e.g. (25))
    \end{align*}
(25)  càʔ luu⁴⁴ mii sīi ḥɔ̀ɔn dāy
      Irrealis forget exist glory Negative emerge

      It is improbable to forget the existence of the glory. [245](1925-1978)

Typically, when contrasting negators are being neutralized, one of them drops out of use as there is no need for having two generalized negators with the equal status.8 However, this story does not go for the contrasting negators bɔ̀ɔ mii and bɔ̀ɔ ḥɔ̀ɔn. After shifting to modally neutral negators mii / mīʔ and ḥɔ̀ɔn which can be used irrespective of the factuality status of the situation described, there existed differences in the distribution of their usages. mii / mīʔ served as a neutral negator occurring in non-specific, ordinary discourse; ḥɔ̀ɔn became a neutral negator, too, but it appeared only in verses, which is a peculiar type of discourse. Nowadays mīʔ is still used as neutral negator but it is rather infrequent since it is confined to formal or literary language. The most frequent negator in present-day Thai is mây, which is supposed to have risen from the fusion of mīʔ and a versatile functional morpheme dāy or hāy (see Section 2.3).

Table 1 below indicates the use time span of each of the above-mentioned old verbal negators, which I have attested in surviving available inscriptions produced during the period from the end of the 13th century to the 20th century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Use time span of old verbal negators in Thai</th>
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<tr>
<td>13C</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>bɔ̀ɔ VP</td>
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<tr>
<td>bɔ̀ɔ mii ‘exist’ NP</td>
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<tr>
<td>bɔ̀ɔ mii VP</td>
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<tr>
<td>mii / mīʔ VP</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥɔ̀ɔn VP</td>
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From Table 1, we can see the following:

(i)  the negator bɔ̀ɔ was used in the inscriptions until the 19th century, and the negative existential construction ‘negative bɔ̀ɔ + existential verb mii + NP’ in particular was used until the 16th century;
(ii) the negator bɔ̀ɔ mii lasted until the 18th century, and its probable descendants mii / mīʔ until the 20th century;
(iii) the negator bɔ̀ɔ ḥɔ̀ɔn persisted until the 20th century, and its probable descendant ḥɔ̀ɔn appeared in the 20th century.

8 This was pointed out by an anonymous reviewer.
In the 20th century, when ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn and hɔ̀ɔn coexisted, ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn barely remained as realis negator while hɔ̀ɔn was given a special function as a literary negator, or so to speak, an elegant negator. Regarding the pair of ɓɔ̀ɔ mii and mii / mĩʔ, ɓɔ̀ɔ mii disappeared around the 18th century while mii / mĩʔ was getting more and more common and became the most common neutral negator by the 19th century. I suppose that the extinction of the irrealis negator ɓɔ̀ɔ mii should have some connection with the establishment of the irrealis marker çàʔ before the 18th century (cf. footnote 9), but in this paper I shall make no further inquiry into this point.

Because I could not find a sufficient number of actual tokens of these negators in the inscription corpus data (nor could I utilize documents written in Thai before the end of the 13th century since writing did not exist), these findings concerning the period of use of these negators are clearly speculative, and so they cannot be regarded as decisive evidence for verifying my hypothesis of the evolutions of ɓɔ̀ɔ mii to mii / mĩʔ and of ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn to hɔ̀ɔn. Yet, my findings suggest at least that this hypothesis entails no contradiction. The findings that the surviving time of mii / mĩʔ is longer than that of ɓɔ̀ɔ mii and that hɔ̀ɔn came to be used later than ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn, for example, are not in contradiction to the hypothesis at all, but we could rather say that the findings form circumstantial evidence in favour of the hypothesis.

2.3 Plausible negative-existential cycle in Thai
So far I have analysed the evolution of the negative existential construction (negative ɓɔ̀ɔ + existential verb mii ‘exist’) and its parallel evolution of the negative experiential construction (negative ɓɔ̀ɔ + experiential verb hɔ̀ɔn ‘be accustomed’) by relying on Croft’s model of negative-existential cycle (Figure 1 above, which is repeated as Figure 3 below). The result of the analysis is that the negative-existential cycle in Thai, as appears to be manifested in inscriptions, is similar but not completely identical to the model postulated by Croft. Figure 2 below graphically depicts a plausible negative-existential cycle in Thai. Compared with the cycle in Figure 3 (= Figure 1), it is notable that the cycle in Figure 2 does not involve phonological fusion in the shift from Type A (regular negative ɓɔ̀ɔ plus existential verb mii) to Type C (verbal negator ɓɔ̀ɔ mii), but instead it has partial phonological loss in the shift from Type C (irrealis negator ɓɔ̀ɔ mii) to Type A (regular negative mii / mĩʔ).
It is evident that the plausible evolution of the Thai negative existential construction bɔ̀ɔ mii (Figure 2) is not in perfect accord with Croft’s model of negative-existential cycle (Figure 3 = Figure 1). A salient feature of the plausible evolution of bɔ̀ɔ mii is that in the shift to the stage of Type C (verbal negator), bɔ̀ɔ mii gained the function of irrealis negator but did not involve phonological fusion.

The idea that formerly the negator bɔ̀ɔ mii and its variants mii / míʔ had a function to mark irrealis negation is supported by Kullavanijaya’s (1996: 84) observation on uses of mii / míʔ in the Sukhothai inscriptions before the middle of the 15th century. She noted that mii / míʔ usually occur before the modal morpheme dây ‘can, capable’ and express the meaning of improbability (viz. something or an event would not happen or could not have happened), and that when they occur without dây, there will be a specific lexical item co-occurring such as cǎk ‘intend (not), shall (not)’ or mûa day lɛɛ ‘(not) any time’ which shows uncertainty in time. This is presumably because mii / míʔ are a post-irrealis-negator whose original function is to mark irrealis negation. Their affinity with ‘irrealis concept’ (to be specific, the concept of non-factuality pertaining to futurity or uncertainty, including expectation, hope, non-realization, possibility, validity, supposition, generalized situation, etc., which is apt to be marked by the irrealis marker cǎʔ in modern Thai) may remain for some time after developing into a neutral negator, given that preservation of a certain aspect of the former properties of a changing element is by and large seen in language

9 According to Diller (1988: 286; 2001: 158), the irrealis marker cǎʔ derives from the verb cǎk meaning ‘desire, intend, consider’. In the middle of the 14th century the verb cǎk began to change its form into cǎʔ by replacing the velar stop with a glottal stop, and the latter phonologically reduced form began to be frequently used in succeeding ages (Diller 1988, Takahashi 2007). The original form cǎk is now confined to a few formal formulaic expressions (e.g. cǎk khɔ̀ɔp khun yîŋ ‘I would like to thank you very much.’).
change. An additional piece of evidence in support of the identity of míʔ as post-irrealis-negator is my own observation of the inscription corpus that the irrealis marker cāʔ did not co-occur with the former negative bɔ̀ɔ, but around the 18th century at which time bɔ̀ɔ gradually became less common, cāʔ came to be used often in combination with míʔ (Takahashi 2008). This fact implies that the old negator bɔ̀ɔ had nothing to do with irrealis concepts, whereas the new negator míʔ, which I assume to be a descendant of the irrealis negator bɔ̀ɔ mii, was closely related with them.

In the cycle in Figure 2, bɔ̀ɔ mii at the stage of Type C (irrealis negator) then underwent partial phonological loss as well as attenuation of specificity in meaning, which gave rise to neutral verbal negators mii / míʔ at the stage of Type A (regular negative). In present-day Thai, míʔ is still used in formal contexts, but mii is no longer used. Ordinarily the latest negative form mây is used in both oral and written discourses. Kullavanijaya (1996) also offered a hypothesis on the development of míʔ into the currently most common modern negator mây. Example (26) is the earliest use of mây that I have found in the inscriptions.

(26) mây thuun kɛ̀ɛ câw thay …
   NRGATIVE inform DATIVE the owner
   (If that person) does not inform the owner … [38](1313-1433)

Her hypothesis on the latest change in the Thai negative system is that míʔ, which usually occurred before dây, as in (27) below, may have become contaminated with the vowel in dây and become mây (Kullavanijaya 1996: 87-88).

(27) míʔ dây rúucâk
   NEGATIVE REALIZATION know
   (They) do not get to know (it). [3](1357)

However, it is possible that mây has developed from the combination of míʔ and another versatile functional morpheme hây. A serialization of míʔ and hây is exemplified in (28).

(28) míʔ hây phón ?àatyaa thân nán
   NEGATIVE INDUCEMENT escape crime the authority that
   (They bring him) not to let (him) out of the crime. [38](1313-1433)

To investigate the latest development in the Thai negative system is another intriguing issue, but it is beyond the scope of this study.

3 Three types of changes in the early development of Thai negative system
There are three major types of the historical process of language change that are widely recognized: (i) syntactic reanalysis, (ii) generalization by analogy, and (iii) phonological reduction. ‘Syntactic reanalysis’ is defined as “change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its

10 Hopper (1991: 22, 28-30) calls this effect occurring particularly in the process of grammaticalization ‘persistence’.
surface manifestation” (Langacker 1977: 58). It is “a mechanism which changes the underlying structure of a syntactic pattern” (Harris 2003: 532). ‘Generalization by analogy’ here refers to generalization of construction\(^\text{11}\) caused by analogy or “the attraction of extant forms to already existing constructions” (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 56). It is “a mechanism which results in changes in the surface manifestation of a [syntactic] pattern” (Harris 2003: 532). ‘Phonological reduction’ or ‘phonological attrition’ means “the gradual loss of phonological substance” (Lehmann 1995: 126). It brings about the shortening of forms. I suppose that these three types of change were all involved in the plausible early development of the Thai negative system which I have described in the preceding sections. My hypothesis is as follows.

First of all, the negative experiential construction followed by a verb phrase (‘negative $bɔ̀ɔ$ + experiential verb $hɔ̀ɔn$ + VP’ meaning that ‘relevant person is not accustomed to situation denoted by VP’) underwent syntactic reanalysis leading to a new (covert) structure consisting of a novel verbal negator $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ plus a verb phrase, as depicted in (29). Concurrently, the function of $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ as realis negator was established.

(29) Syntactic reanalysis:

negative experiential construction: $bɔ̀ɔ [hɔ̀ɔn$ VP]

$>$ realis negator: $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ [VP]

Then, the negative existential construction taking a noun phrase (‘negative $bɔ̀ɔ$ + existential verb $mii$ + NP’ meaning that ‘entity named by NP does not exist’) began to take a verb phrase instead of a noun phrase ($bɔ̀ɔ mii$ VP), which can be regarded as generalization of the construction as a result of analogy. In other words, it is a kind of construction-internal generalization resulting from the language users’ recognition of structural similarity and semantic contiguity existing between $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ and $bɔ̀ɔ mii$, or more specifically, their recognition that the form of $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ is similar to the form of $bɔ̀ɔ mii$ and that the meaning of $bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ is related (speciously contrary) to the meaning of $bɔ̀ɔ mii$. This change eventually gave birth to a new verbal negator $bɔ̀ɔ mii$, as shown in (30) below. The conventional meaning of irrealis negation associated with $bɔ̀ɔ mii$ was promoted (i.e. the process of ‘emphasis’ in Croft’s terms) as the two contrastive negative constructions ‘$bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn$ VP’ and ‘$bɔ̀ɔ mii$ VP’ became equally productive and entrenched.

(30) Generalization by analogy:

negative existential construction: $bɔ̀ɔ mii$ NP

$>$ irrealis negator: $bɔ̀ɔ mii$ VP

\(\text{cf. } bɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn\ \text{VP}\)

\(^{11}\) The notion ‘generalization of construction’ here roughly corresponds to what Himmelmann (2004: 32) calls ‘host-class expansion’, which is a context-expansion that construction-internally occurs in the process of grammaticalization (viz. the expansion of the class of elements with which a substantive grammaticalizing element is in construction).
Finally, the negators ɓɔ̀ɔ mii and ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn underwent phonological reduction changing respectively into mii and hɔ̀ɔn, and the former further shortened yielding míɁ, as in (31) below. This phonological attrition was accompanied by semantic depletion (i.e. the process of ‘weakening’ in Croft’s terms), namely shift from specific to regular negator (shift from irrealis vs. realis negator to neutral negator).12

(31) Phonological reduction:

a. irrealis negator: ɓɔ̀ɔ mii VP
    > neutral negator: mii / míɁ VP

b. realis negator: ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn VP
    > neutral negator: hɔ̀ɔn VP

4 Conclusion
This study is a preliminary one intended to be an early step for future inquiry into the larger picture of the evolution of the Thai negative system. This work has paid close attention to the two now disused negators ɓɔ̀ɔ mii and ɓɔ̀ɔ hɔ̀ɔn and delved into their functions in the old negative system by analysing actual tokens of negative expressions with these negators occurring in the inscription corpus. It has offered a plausible hypothesis on their contrasting original meanings and correlated historical changes involving three major types of language change, namely, syntactic reanalysis, generalization by analogy, and phonological reduction. I hope that the ideas I have articulated in this paper can make a contribution not only to studies on the Thai grammatical system for negation in particular but also to typological studies regarding historical linguistic change in general.

References


12 The semantic depletion or weakening of these negators is equal to their ‘semantic-pragmatic context expansion’, which is the most important context-expansion involved in the process of grammaticalization (viz. the expansion of the semantic and pragmatic contexts in which the construction containing a grammaticalizing element is used) (Himmelman 2004: 33).


<Corpus data>

The Prime Minister’s Secretariat, Thailand. 1924/1978. *Corpus of Thai Inscriptions, Installment 1*. Bangkok, The Prime Minister’s Secretariat.

The Prime Minister’s Secretariat, Thailand. 1965. *Corpus of Thai Inscriptions, Installment 3*. Bangkok, The Prime Minister’s Secretariat.


The Prime Minister’s Secretariat, Thailand. 1972. *Corpus of Thai Inscriptions, Installment 5*. Bangkok, The Prime Minister’s Secretariat.


Appendix A
13 tokens of ‘บ่มี VP’ found in the inscription corpus

1. บ่มีดินเย่อย [2](1341-1367)
2. นางอาหารพระผึ้งตั้งLongrightarrow [2](1341-1367)
3. บูชาทั้งตน คณนาถี่เลย [2](1341-1367)
4. ฯลฯมีได้ขึ้น [8](1369)
5. บ่มีได้บันทึกลง [2](1341-1367)
6. พระผึ้งเป็นเจ้า [2](1341-1367)
7. พระผึ้งได้สดุดี [2](1341-1367)
8. บ่มีได้สถิต [2](1341-1367)
9. บูชาทั้งตน [2](1341-1367)
10. บ่มีพิจารณา [2](1341-1367)
11. บ่มีพิจารณา [2](1341-1367)
12. บ่มีพิจารณา [2](1341-1367)
13. บ่มีทำให้คลาดแคลง [2](1341-1367)

Appendix B
6 tokens of ‘บ่ห่อน VP’ found in the inscription corpus

1. บ่ห่อนขาดสักวันสักคืน [3](1357)
2. คู่ลักข้าว [3](1357)
3. ซือผู้ใดผิดว้าง [5](1361)
4. และจักให้เถิงที่ล้มที่ตายดังอั้นก็ดี [5](1361)
5. เราบ่ห่อนของเงินทอง [160](1782-1925)
6. บ่ห่อนในปี [201](1925-1978)