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Proto-Tai negation system from Comparative and Historical Tai perspectives

Part of the Project on Language and Human Security in Thailand, within the Integrated Academic Center (IIAC), Chulalongkorn University’s Academic Development Plan (CU Centenary)
Reconstructing Proto-Tai

Outline of Proto-Tai phonology (Pittayaporn 2009)

- PT was most likely a sesquisyllabic language.
- PT had no aspiration contrast.
- PT had a richer array of consonants than attested in modern Tai languages, i.e. *q-, *g-
- Vowel length contrast in all monophthongs
- Final *-l, and final *-c.
- Three tones contrasting with respect to pitch, voice quality, and duration.
- CT is not a genetic subgroup.
Proto-Tai grammar: the unknown

- Very little diachronic work on Tai grammatical change, i.e. Diller (2001), Enfield (2003), Kullavanijaya (2008).
- None on Proto-Tai morphosyntax and semantics.
### Negators in Tai languages

- **Tai languages show a variety of etyma as standard negators.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>*mi</th>
<th>*baw&lt;sup&gt;B&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>*paj&lt;sup&gt;B&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>maj&lt;sup&gt;B2/C1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td></td>
<td>maw&lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td></td>
<td>paj&lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not yet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Nung</td>
<td></td>
<td>bo: &lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td></td>
<td>paj&lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not yet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bao Yen</td>
<td>*mi&lt;sup&gt;A1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td>bo: &lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td></td>
<td>saŋ&lt;sup&gt;A2&lt;/sup&gt; ‘still not’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yay</td>
<td>*mi&lt;sup&gt;A1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td>bo&lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td></td>
<td>fi&lt;sup&gt;B2&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not yet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du’an</td>
<td></td>
<td>baw&lt;sup&gt;B1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
<td></td>
<td>di&lt;sup&gt;A1&lt;/sup&gt; ‘not’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Only *mi and *baw<sup>B</sup> have been analyzed from a diachronic perspective, cf. Burusphat (2006).**
Reconstructing the PT negation system: methodology

- Identify PT negator etyma using data from 66 Tai languages.
- Posit forms and meanings of the reconstructible PT negator etyma.
- Propose the PT negation system based on the reconstructed etyma.
- Find further support from textual materials.
Proposal

- PT negation system made distinctions between:
  - perfect/non-perfect
  - emphatic/non-emphatic

![Diagram showing the distinctions between Aspect, non-perfect, perfect, emphatic, and non-emphatic with *paj^B, *baw^B, and *mi labels.]

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Data

Geographical distribution of Tai languages surveyed
Reconstructible negators

- *baw^B
- *mi
- *pa^B
The etymon $baw^B$

- Found in all groups.

Geographical distribution of $baw^B$
Modern reflexes of *baw\textsuperscript{B}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reflex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wuming (NT)</td>
<td>baw\textsuperscript{C1} (irregular tone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanshan Nung (CT)</td>
<td>bo\textsuperscript{B1}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yong (SWT)</td>
<td>bo\textsuperscript{.B1}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan (SWT)</td>
<td>maw\textsuperscript{B1}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai nüa (SWT)</td>
<td>m\textsuperscript{iB1}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ‘not’ in modern languages
- Regularly with B1 tone
- The range in forms are due to changes that occurred in individual languages, cf. Burusphat 2007.
The etymon *mi

- Found in all the three groups.
Modern reflexes of *mi

- Tianlin (NT)  \( mi^{A2} \)
- Yongbei (NT)  \( m^{C1} \)
- Chongzuo (CT)  \( m\omega^{A2} \)
- Thai (SWT)  \( mi^{C2} \)

- Typically glossed as ‘not’.
- Irregular tonal correspondence, i.e. tone not reconstructible
- In some languages, *mi may appear with other morphemes
  - /mi^{B2} mej^{A2}/ ‘not yet’ (Qiubei)
  - /man^{C1}/ ‘not yet’ (Shangsi)
The etymon *paj\textsuperscript{B}

- Found only in CT and SWT groups.

Geographical distribution of *paj\textsuperscript{B}
Modern reflexes of *paj$^B$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ningming (CT)</td>
<td>paj$^{B1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangnan-Nung (CT)</td>
<td>paj$^{B1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Nung (CT)</td>
<td>paj$^{B1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan (SWT)</td>
<td>paj$^{B1}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Glossed as ‘not yet’ in every language.
- Regularly with B₁ tone
- Reconstructed
  - Not explainable as loan or internal development.
  - Found in a wide geographical area.
Negators not reconstructed

- *duːjA
- *wiːB
- *janA
The etymon *duːjA

- Only found in China among NT languages and one CT language.
## Modern reflexes of *duːjA*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hengxian (NT)</td>
<td>?iA1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanglin (NT)</td>
<td>diA1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenma (CT)</td>
<td>diB1/B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Always glossed as ‘not’, except when appear with *janA*.
  - /diA1 ɛanA2/ ‘not yet’ (Du’an)
- Mashan has /diA1/~/duːiA1/ ‘if not, otherwise’
- Not reconstructible
  - Confined to NT, except for Wenma
  - Semantic change: ‘if not’ > ‘not’
The etymon *wi:B

- Only found in a few NT languages in China (except for Yay, which migrated to Vietnam)
Modern reflexes of *\text{wi}^B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tianlin (NT)</td>
<td>fi^B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingyue (NT)</td>
<td>fi^B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouyei (NT)</td>
<td>wi^B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yay (NT)</td>
<td>fi^B2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Glossed as ‘not yet’ in every language.
- Chinese borrowing:
  - 未 wèi ‘not yet’ (EM vi^C < LMC vjyj^C/vji^C < EMC muj^C)
  - Correspondence between Tai *\text{B} and Chinese *\text{C}
The etymon *\textit{jan}^A

- Found in CT and NT, not at all in SWT.
Modern reflexes of *ʔan̥A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hengxian (NT)</td>
<td>ʈʔan̥A²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pingguo (NT)</td>
<td>ʔan̥A²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liujiang (NT)</td>
<td>ʈʔan̥A²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hechi (NT)</td>
<td>ʔan̥A²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenma (CT)</td>
<td>ʈson̥A¹ diB²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Difference in meaning among languages
  - ‘not yet’, i.e. /ʔan̥A²/ (Shanglin)
  - ‘yet’, i.e. /miA² ʔan̥A²/ (Nandan)
- Contamination: ‘ever, yet’ > ‘not yet’
- Chinese borrowing: 而 céng ‘once’ (< EMC *dʐəŋA)
# Perfect/non-perfect distinction (Comrie 1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFECT</th>
<th>NON-PERFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express a relation between a present state and a past situation and indicate the continuing present relevance of a past situation.</td>
<td>Other aspects which do not satisfy the criteria for perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have lost a penknife. (perfect)</td>
<td>I lost a penknife. (past/non-perfect)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reconstruction of Tai negation system

- Three negators in PT: *ɓaw\textsuperscript{B}, *mi and *paj\textsuperscript{B}
- Aspectual distinction between perfect and non-perfect
- Contrast between *ɓaw\textsuperscript{B} and *mi unclear
- Bao Yen is one of the languages that still retain the original aspectual distinction.
Modern attestation: Bao Yen

Non-perfect

- /bỳw³/ = no, not
- /miː²/ = not
- /pỳj³/ = not yet
- /saŋ¹/ = still not yet

perfect

/pɔː⁴ phaː⁶ kaː⁴ bỳw³ phɛːt³ bỳw³ daŋ¹/
The sky god would not make lightning and thunder.

/phaː⁶ lɛːŋ⁶ thaːm¹ piː¹ miː² phɔn¹/
The drought lasted for three years, during which it did not rain.

/laːn¹ pỳj³ huŋ¹ khỳw⁵/
Grandchild has not cooked rice.

/laːn¹ saŋ¹ huŋ¹ khỳw⁵/
Grandchild still has not cooked rice.
Support from Old Thai literature

- Use of negators in *Lilit Phra Lo* (early Ayutthaya; 15th century) matches the reconstructed PT system.

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Old Thai represented by *Lilit Phra Lo* had 3 negators:
- บ <bɔ:B> from *ɓawB
- ｍ <mi> from *mi
- ฬ <pajB> from *pajB
Old Thai had an aspectual distinction between perfect and non-perfect negators.
<paj^B> as perfect negator

- 70% of <paj^B> were used in perfect aspect.
- Only 15% occurred in non-perfect situation.

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<paj<: Example 1</p>

Since I was born, I have never once had an experience yet.

- Perfect aspect
- ยัง /jan⁴/ indicates persistence of a situation.
- เคย /khaj¹/ refers to a situation that has held at least once up to some reference point in time.

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Never had an experience

past  now  future

Have an experience

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<paj<: Example 2

Our love has not lasted one day but you have to leave so early.

- Perfect aspect
- ทัน/than₁/ expresses that a situation persisted up to a certain point in time but did not reach the expected end point.
a day

past
love
now
future
leave
$<$bɔ:ʰ$>$ as non-perfect marker

- 95% of $<$bɔ:ʰ$>$ was used in non-perfect situations
- Only 3% was used in perfect sentences
To each district, he travels not for long.

- Non-perfect
- No relevance to present situation
- No relation between past situation and present state
Those whom he calls on come; those he summons do not stay put.

- Non-perfect
- No relevance to present situation
- No relation between past situation and present state
 millennials as non-perfect marker

- 90% of millennials as non-perfect marker occurred in non-perfect contexts.
- Only 5% occurs in perfect situations.
<mi>: Example 1

The two of us do not wish to go away from you.

- Non-perfect
- A description of a state that does not have relevance to the present.
<mi>: Example 2

If we stay, he will not sleep.

- Non-perfect
- A situation that will take place at a particular point in time without persistence.
Old Thai and PT negation system

- Sentences with perfect aspect tended to use นบ <paj^B>.
- ป <bɔː:B> and ฝน <mi> generally occurred in non-perfect contexts.
- The aspectual distinction (perfect vs. non-perfect) in Old Thai lends support to the proposed PT reconstruction.
Prosodic distinction between ป <bɔːːp> and มี <mi>

- ป <bɔːːp> and มี <mi> are both non-perfect markers.
- Sometimes both are used in combination, e.g. ปมี <bɔːːp mi>
- Morphosyntactictic and semantic differences unclear.
- Khlong verses in Lilit Phra Lo shows that ป <bɔːːp> and มี <mi> had different prosodic behaviors.
Syllables counts in *khlong si suphap*

- The appropriate number of syllables in each *khlong si suphap* line is fixed to 7.
- Light unstressed syllables are not counted.
Unstressed syllables in Khlong verses

**KHLONG SI SUPHAP**

5 + 2 = 7

5 + 4 = 9

/examples/

/sa.'th'bnokA1/

/tha.'nomA1/

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The negator ป <b>c:B> and มี <mi>, when occurring alone, are counted like normal syllables.
Metrical count of ปมิ <bɔː:B mi>

- Lines containing the compound negator ปมิ <bɔː:B mi> always have 8 syllables.
- In recitation, ปี่ <mi> does not receive stress.
- ปี่ <mi> in the compound ปมิ <bɔː:B mi> is not counted metrically.
Contrast between  responseBody and <!--mi-->

- Metrical count of *khlong* verses in *Lilit Phra Lo* suggests that <!--mi--> was possibly unstressed in Old Thai.
- Stresslessness often correlates with lack of emphasis.
- The prosodic distinction between  responseBody and <!--mi--> thus supports the speculated emphatic/non-emphatic contrast between PT *ɓawB* and *mi*.
The perfect/non-perfect contrast between ฎฎ <paj\textsuperscript{B}> and ฏฎ <bɔːː\textsuperscript{B}>/ฏฎ <mi> in Old Thai literature attests the aspectual distinction in the reconstructed PT negation system.

The prosodic defect of ฏฎ <mi> supports the speculation that PT *ɓaw\textsuperscript{B} and *mi contrasted in terms of emphasis.
A note on $h\text{a} hB$  

- The ton $<h\text{a} hB>$ from $*h\text{a} hB$ is another negator in Thai.
- Currently means ‘not’ but used only in poetry.

The state does not ever let the people exercise their own (rights).

(อภิปรายถึงจำนวน ธุร, 1873)
A note on *ʰrənB (cont.)

- **Royal Institute Dictionary**
  - ‘ever’
  - ‘not’ only in poetry, i.e. ท่อนแค่เคร่าใจควรม
    ‘Not seeing you made me sad’

- **Southern Thai**
  - ‘ever’ used in negative sentences only
  - หรานทนไม่ผู้สูรางตูาน /ʔɔːn³ maj⁶ hɔːn¹ paj³ su¹raːt⁶/
    I have not ever been to Suratthani.

- **Also in Ahom and old texts in some other SWT languages**
Path of semantic change:

‘ever’ > ‘never’ > ‘not’

- contamination: not+ever
- bleaching: ‘never’ > ‘not’
- Obsolescence
- Poetic adoption
Conclusion (1)

- Comparative evidence indicates that the PT negation system possibly made two important distinctions:
  - a perfect/non-perfect
  - possible emphatic/non-emphatic (possible)
Conclusion (cont.)

- A historical study of negators in Old Thai literature provide supports for the proposed system of PT negation.
- A promising approach to investigating PT grammar is to reconstruct smaller subsystems based on lexical reconstruction of closed-class vocabulary items, e.g. question words, aspect markers, classifiers, etc.
Special thanks

- Dr. Theraphan L-Thongkum
- Dr. Sirivilai Teerarojanarat