1. Introduction

It has been suggested in my previous studies (Prasitrathsint 1985, 2001) that the adversative passive is an areal feature of Southeast Asian languages. It is marked by a word regarded here as an auxiliary verb meaning 'to come in contact with or undergo (an unpleasant experience)'; for example, /thùuk/ in Thai, /bi/ in Vietnamese, and /trəw/ in Khmer.

Such words are not transparent or simple semantically and syntactically. Dictionaries normally list several meanings of the words, as in the Vietnamese-English Dictionary by Nguyen-Dinh-Hoa (1966), the Vietnamese-Thai Dictionary by Watcharaprapa (1986), and The Thai Royal Institute Dictionary (1982). Others give several entries of the words, such as the Thai-English Dictionary by Haas (1964), and the Khmer-Thai Dictionary by Phraya Anuman-Rachathon (1974). In any case, all we are shown is that these words have multiple meanings, some of which are equivocal. Grammar books tend to overlook or underrate these words. Their grammatical function is not unanimously accepted among linguists--some regard them as auxiliary verbs functioning as passive markers; others maintain that they are lexical verbs that have nothing to do with passives.

In brief, we never have a clear description of these words--what they mean and how they are used in sentences. So far there has been no study that focuses specifically on the semantic and syntactic features of these words. This study thus aims to fill that gap. Its purpose is to analyze the multiple
meanings and diverse syntactic environments of the
adversative passive markers in Southeast Asian languages,
hypothesizing that the features that are found are parallel in the
languages.

The data used in the analysis was taken from grammar
textbooks, dictionaries, and informants. The languages in
focus are Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer (Buriram dialect), and
Malay. In addition, for some particular points, I also allude to
Tai Nuea (spoken in Yunnan Province, China), Zhuang
(spoken in Guangxi Province, China), and Phuthai (spoken in
Mahasarakham, Northeast Thailand).

It is hoped that the findings in this study will contribute to the
areal approach to linguistic research, language contact, and
grammaticalization. The study also reveals that Malay has a
typical Southeast Asian adversative passive, which seems to
have been overlooked in previous linguistic studies.

2. The adversative passive markers in Southeast Asian
languages

The analysis shows that the adversative passive markers in
Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Malay are exactly the same
semantically and syntactically. They mean 'to come in contact
with or undergo'. Syntactically, they are verbs preceding a
transitive verb that has an unpleasant or unfavorable meaning,
as in the following examples.

Thai  (1)  khąw  thùuk  khâa
he/she  PSSV.  kill
'He/she was killed.'

(Viet.  (2)  nò  bǐ  danh
he/she  PSSV.  beat
'He/she was beaten.'

(Prasithrathsint 2001)

(Thạch 1991)²
Khmer (3)  
ki:  trəw  wəy  
he/she  *PSSV.*  beat  
'He was beaten.'  
(Informant)

Malay (4)  
budak jahat itu  kena  pukul  
boy  naughty the  *PSSV.*  beat  
'The naughty boy was beaten.'  
(Sulaiman 1995:121)

As shown in (1)-(4) above, the passive marking verbs /thùuk/, /bi/, /trəw/, and /kena/ are followed by verbs with unfavorable meanings (i.e., 'kill', 'beat'). The sentences are regarded here as **adversative passive constructions**.

It should be noted that in all the languages, there are other ways of marking the adversative passive. These passive markers in Thai, Vietnamese, and Khmer may be replaced by other words with the same meaning and function, as in (5)-(7). In Malay, the situation is different. This will be explained further.

Thai  (5)  
khəw  doon  khâa  
he/she  *PSSV.*  kill  
'He/she was killed.'  
(Prasithrathsint 2001)

Viet.  (6)  
nô  phài  đánh  
he/she  *PSSV.*  beat  
'He/she was beaten.'  
(Thạch 1991)

Khmer (7)  
ki:  paʔ  wəy  
he/she  *PSSV.*  beat  
'He was beaten.'  
(Informant)
The words /doon/, /phai/, and /pa?/ can be used as alternative adversative passive markers in Thai, Vietnamese and Khmer, respectively, but they occur less frequently than /thùuk/, /bi/, and /trəw/.

In Malay, /kena/ does not have an alternative that behaves like it, but the language has other devices for formulating passive constructions. The most common one is to add the prefix /di-/ to the verb stem as in (8 b), and also optionally add the preposition /oleh/ 'by' in front of the agent NP as in (9 b).

Malay (8a) (active)
salji tebal meliputi kemuncak gunung fuji
snow thick Active+cover summit mount Fuji
'Thick snow covers the summit of Mount Fuji.'

(8b) (passive)
kemuncak gunung fuji diliputi salji tebal
summit mount Fuji Passive+cover snow thick
'The summit of Mount Fuji is covered by thick snow.'

(9a) (active)
ali membersihkan bilik itu
Ali Active+clean room the
'Ali cleaned the room.'

(9b) (passive)
bilik itu dihersihkan oleh ali
room the Passive+clean by Ali
'The room was cleaned by Ali.'

It is interesting to note that all transitive verbs in Malay can be passivized by adding the prefix /di-/ but that only transitive verbs with unpleasant meanings, such as /pukul/ 'to beat', /langgar/ 'to knock down', /bom/ 'to bomb', and /curi/ 'to steal', can occur with /kena/ to form adversative passive constructions. (Sulaiman 1995: 121)
3. The multiplicity of passive marking words in Southeast Asian languages

The words /thùuk/, /bị/, /trəw/, and /kena/ in Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Malay, respectively, all have multiple meanings and functions which are strikingly similar. The result of the analysis of their syntactic and semantic features reveals that these words can be organized into eight categories, which are differentiated from one another by two significant syntactic features; namely, [auxiliary] and [transitive], and six semantic features: [adversative], [target hitting], [suitability], [incur], [obligation], and [neutral passive]. The [adversative] feature is the most important because the word that marks adversative passives is likely to develop its adversative meaning from originally non-adversative words. This feature is thus divided into [+adverse] and [-adverse]. The [auxiliary] feature is divided into [+aux] and [-aux]. The difference is that the former occurs with other verbs but the latter does not. Also, only [-aux] verbs can be divided into [+trans] (transitive verbs) and [-trans] (intransitive verbs). It would be irrelevant to classify [+aux] verbs into transitive and intransitive. The semantic features are not binary. They have only positive values. The configurations of the features and the eight categories of passive marking words (henceforth "PM VERBS") are shown in the diagram below.
Figure 1: Configurations of the syntactic and semantic features of passive marking verbs

PM VERBS

[-adverse]           [+adverse]
|                   |
[-aux]          [+aux]

[-aux]       [+aux]

[-trans]        [+trans]

[+hit]       [+suitable]       [+hit]       [+suitable]       [+oblig]       [+neut pass]       [+incur]       [+contact]

I          III          II          IV          VII          VIII          V          VI

The eight categories are described as follows:

I. the non-adversative transitive verb meaning 'to touch or hit off exactly'
II. the non-adversative intransitive verb meaning 'to touch the right spot'
III. the non-adversative transitive verb meaning 'to be suitable to or compatible with'
IV. the non-adversative intransitive verb meaning 'to be proper or suitable; to be right; to be exact'
V. the adversative transitive verb meaning 'to incur; to be hit by'
VI. the adversative auxiliary verb functioning as the adversative passive marker meaning 'to come in contact with or experience'
VII. the non-adversative auxiliary verb meaning 'must or have to'
VIII. the non-adversative auxiliary verb used as the neutral passive marker
3.1 The non-adversative transitive verb meaning 'to touch or hit off exactly' (I)

The first category of the multiplex verbs /thùuk/, /bi/, /trəw/, /kena/ is their usage as non-adversative transitive verbs meaning 'to touch or hit off exactly'. The structure of a construction in which this category of verbs occurs is as follows.

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERBS I} + \text{NP} \\
[-\text{adverse}, -\text{aux}, +\text{trans}, +'hit', ] [+\text{target}]
\]

Hence the term "PM VERB" with a Roman numeral (I, II, etc.) will be used to represent a category of the multiplex verbs that have the same form as the adversative passive markers. Those in the first category are transitive (+trans), and signify the meaning 'to hit', which does not suggest any adversity. The first NP is the subject of the verb. The NP that follows them is something like a target. The following are examples from Thai, Khmer, and Malay. (No data from Vietnamese).

Thai (10) mît thùuk mîi
knife hit hand
'the knife hit the hand.'

(Prasitrathintsint 1985, 2001)

Khmer (11) cor thama: trəw sawa:y
throw stone hit mango
'(He) threw a stone and it hit the mango.'

(informant)

Malay (12) kena batang hidung dia
hit bridge nose he
'(It) hit him right on the bridge of the nose.'

(Coope 1995: 170)
3.2 The non-adversative intransitive verb meaning 'to touch the right spot' (II)

The second category of the verbs is very likely to derive from the first. The only difference is that here the verbs are intransitive. The structure of the construction in which they occur is:

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERB II} \# \\
\hspace{1cm} [-\text{adverse}, -\text{aux}, -\text{trans}, , +'hit the right spot']
\]

The symbol \# signifies that these verbs are not followed by an NP. Examples from Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Malay are as follows.

Thai (13) \(\text{yin}\ \text{may} \text{ thuùk}\)
shoot not \text{touch the right spot}
'The shot missed the target.'
(informant)

Khmer (14) \(\text{kii} \ \text{cor} \ \text{man} \text{ trəw}\)
he throw not \text{touch the right spot}
'His throw did not touch the right spot.'
(informant)

Malay (15) \(\text{tak} \text{ kena}\)
not \text{touch the right spot}
'(It) missed the target.'
(Coope 1995: 170)

3.3 The non-adversative transitive verb meaning 'to be suitable for' (III)

The third category is the transitive verb meaning 'to be suitable for or compatible with'. It occurs in a construction as follows:

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERB III} + \text{NP} \\
\hspace{1cm} [-\text{adverse}, -\text{aux}, +\text{trans}, , +'suitable']
\]
The following are examples from Thai, Khmer, and Malay.

Thai (16)  sɔŋ khon nǐ mão thūuk kan
two person this not compatible each other
'These two people are not compatible with each other.'

(informant)

Khmer (17)  sī ni man trəw ñom
color this not suit I
'This color does not suit me.'

(informant)

Malay (18)  tidak kena pada tempat dan saatnya
not suit enough place and occasion
'(It) is unsuitable to the place and the occasion.'

(Coope 1995: 170)

3.4 The non-adversative intransitive verb meaning 'to be suitable; to be proper; to be right; to be exact'  (IV)

This category is very likely to develop from the third category. This one is intransitive and the meaning is similar to that of 3.3. The structure of a construction in which the verb of this category occurs is as follows.

```
NP + PM VERB IV #
[-adverse, -aux, -trans, +'suitable/ right']
```

The verbs of this category are not followed by an NP. However, they may be followed by a PP as /kāp/ with' + NP in the Thai example (19) and /pada/ 'to' + NP in the Malay example (22). However, in most instances, they occur alone, as in the other examples below.
Thai (19) シリ ニ マイ  thụิก กะเป _chan
color this not suit with I
'This color does not suit me.'  
(informant)

(20) ทาม ยาณ นิ マイ  thụิก
do like this not right
'To do like this is not right.'  
(informant)

Khmer (21) ធี ยาณ قه? man ตรํํว
do like this not right
'To do like this is not right.'  
(informant)

Malay (22) บจุ ิตุ genic บนาร ปาดา มุ
shirt that right exact to you
'That shirt is just right for you.'  
(Echols & Shadiny 1994: 279)

(23) ทัศสิรานมุ genic
your interpretation right
' Your interpretation is right (on the mark).'  
(Echols & Shadiny 1994: 279)

3.5 The adversative transitive verb meaning 'to incur or be hit by' (V)

The fifth category of PM VERBS is the transitive verb with the adversative meaning of 'to incur or be hit by (an unpleasant thing or experience)'. It occurs in the following structure.

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERBS V} + \text{NP} \\
[+\text{adverse, -aux, +trans, + 'incur']} \quad [+\text{unpleasant}] 
\]
This type of verb is a transitive verb occurring with an NP which refers to an unpleasant thing. The following are examples from Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Malay.

Thai (24) khăw หลวง yaa-phít
he  incur poison
'He was poisoned.'
(Prasithrathsint 1985, 2001)

Viet. (25) anh ấy bị tai nạn
he  incur accident
'He had an accident.'
(Thạch 1991)

Khmer (26) koon ຖ្លៈ phlīn
child  incur rain
'The child got wet in the rain.'
(informant)

Malay (27) dia  kena denda
he  incur fine
'He incurred a fine.'
(Coope 1995: 170)

(28) tangannya  kena cat basah
his hand  incur color wet
'He got wet paint on his hands.'
(Echols & Shadinsky 1994: 279)

3.6 The adversative auxiliary verb functioning as the adversative passive marker meaning 'to come in contact with or experience' (VI)

The sixth category is the type that this study focuses on. It is the auxiliary verb functioning as the adversative passive marker. Its meaning is similar to the fifth category, but since it occurs with another verb referring to an unpleasant action, the meaning of PM VERBS in this category is 'to come in contact
with or undergo'. The subject is always animate. The structure of the adversative passive is as follows.

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERBS VI} + \text{V} \\
[+\text{animate}] [+\text{adverse}, +\text{aux}, +'\text{contact'}] [+\text{trans}, +'\text{unpleasant'}]
\]

Examples of the verbs in this category are (1)-(4) above.

3.7 The non-adversative auxiliary verb meaning 'must or have to' (VII)

This category of verbs has the meaning of obligation, which I interpret as non-adversative. However, it is not difficult to see how such a meaning is derived from the meaning of 'undergo' in the sixth category. When one undergoes an unpleasant experience, one does not like it. If one cannot avoid it, one has to do it as an obligation. There is a sense of being forced to do it. The unpleasantness of the action is implied. Syntactically, the verb is an auxiliary followed by another verb. The subject is always animate. The structure of a construction containing this type of verb is as follows.

\[
\text{NP} + \text{PM VERBS VII} + \text{V} \\
[+\text{animate}] [-\text{adverse}, +\text{aux}, +'\text{obligation'}]
\]

Examples:

Thai (29)  chăn thàuk pay ηaαn thẹẹn câaw-naay  
I  have to go party replace boss  
'I had to go to the party on behalf of my boss.'  
(informant)

Viet. (30)  tôi  bỉ  đị  ngay bây giờ  
I  have to go right now  
'I have to go right now.'  
(Thạch 1991)
Malay (31) besok saya *kena* pergi ipoh
Tomorrow I *have to* go Ipoh
'Tomorrow I have to go to Ipoh.'
(Coope 1995: 170)

3.8 The non-adversative auxiliary verb used as the neutral passive marker (VIII)

The last category of PM VERBS found in this study is the auxiliary verb used as the marker of the neutral passive. Only data from Thai is available--Examples (32)-(33). The structure of a construction in which this type of verb occurs is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP + PM VERBS VIII + V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[-adverse, +aux, +pass. marker]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that unlike the adversative passive marker (VI), the neutral passive marker has a very opaque meaning, and the subject can be either animate or inanimate.

**Examples:**

Thai (32) aahāan *thùuk* tàk sày caan
Food PSSV. dip up put in plate
'The food was dipped up and put on the plate.'
(Prasithrathsint 2001)

(33) aacaan khon nán *thùuk*
lecturer person that PSSV.
klàaw-thǐŋ bòy-khráŋ
mention often
'That lecturer has been spoken of often.'
(Prasithrathsint 2001)
4. Grammaticalization

Evidence from my studies of change in the passive in Thai (Prasithrathsint 1985, 2001) reveals a process of grammaticalization of a lexical verb into a passive marking auxiliary verb. At the final stage the passive marker becomes a real grammatical word—the meaning has been bleached and very generalized. The lexical verb /thùuk/ 'to touch or hit off the target' in Thai has developed into /thùuk/ meaning 'to incur', which later became an auxiliary marking an adversative passive. Then this auxiliary became the marker of the neutral passive in Thai. These four stages of development are clearly supported by diachronic evidence. They are represented by Categories I, V, VI, and VIII shown in Section 3. The emergence of the other categories cannot be definitively determined due to a lack of evidence.

Evidence from some other Southeast Asian languages that do not have passive constructions also supports the grammaticalization process. Since items at later stages imply those at earlier stages, we can formulate a theory for Southeast Asian languages that if a language has a neutral passive marker, it is likely to have an adversative passive marker and a lexical verb meaning 'to incur' and one meaning 'to hit off exactly.' On the other hand, if it does not have a passive, it may have a lexical verb with related meaning. The first one to emerge should be the one meaning 'to hit off exactly' (Category I) followed by the others in the order signified by the numerals in 3. Phuthai and Nantan Zhuang have only two categories (I and II)—the transitive and intransitive verbs meaning 'to hit off exactly'--/thî/ in Phuthai and /tîw/ in Nantan Zhuang.

Evidence from Tai Nueva spoken in Yunnan Province, China, supports the stages of grammaticalization. The word /cô/ in this language has multiple meanings, which are parallel to the PM VERB categories shown above. The adversative passive marker in this language is also likely to have developed from /cô/, meaning 'to incur'. The sixth category in which /cô/ is an
auxiliary functioning as the adversative passive marker is also found in this language, but always with an Agent NP, such as /kôn-khăw/ 'men' or 'they' in Example (34) below.

Tai Nuea (34) cò kôn-khăw sèw kāa

*PSSV. men/they catch go*

'(He) was caught by some men.'

(Prasitrathsint 1992:887)

It is very likely that this pattern foreshadows the adversative passive without the Agent NP.

5. Conclusion

The findings in this study show that the passive markers in Southeast Asian languages are auxiliary verbs that are grammaticalized from lexical verbs originally meaning 'to touch or hit off exactly.' The process of grammaticalization is complicated and involves several stages. This brings about the multiple meanings of the words.

It is remarkable that all the stages of grammaticalization are common to all the Southeast Asian languages under study, as evidenced in the parallel multiple meanings or polysemic characteristics of the words, which in one type of environment are used as the adversative passive markers in the languages. Further study is needed to determine whether the semantic change inferred from this study is a specific Southeast Asian areal feature or a universal trait.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Jim Placzek, Nick Enfield, Praneet Kullavanijaya, and Kingkarn Thepkanjana for their valuable comments, which have helped me improve this paper. Many thanks go to Michael Crabtree for editing this paper.
2. In his paper, Thạch (1991) argues that there is not a passive voice in Vietnamese. He regards the verb / bĩ/ as a lexical
verb and functions as the main verb in a sentence. Therefore, it should be emphasized here that I only took examples from his paper, but my position is opposite to his. I maintain that there is a passive in Vietnamese and such a sentence such as (2) is a passive construction with /bij/ as a passive marker.

References