Stylistic Differentiation of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ Nominalization in Standard Thai[1]

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1. Introduction

Nominalization is the process which derives a nominal from some other word class or part of a sentence which is not already a noun phrase; e.g., the nominalization of *happy* into *happiness* in English.

In Thai, two best known patterns of nominalization are: /kaan/ + *action* VERB, such as /kaan-kin/ 'eating' (/kin/ meaning 'eat'), and /khwaam/ + *stative* VERB[2], such as /khwaam-dii/ 'goodness' (/dii/ meaning 'good').

The /kaan/ morpheme, which functions as a nominalizer, has developed, through a process called *grammaticalization*, from the lexical word /kaan/ meaning 'work, affair(s), matter(s)'. According to Haas (1964:29), the /kaan/ nominalizer is usually rendered in English by such suffixes as *-ing, -(t)ion, -ment, -ance(-ence), -ery and -y*.

Similarly, the /khwaam/ nominalizing morpheme has developed from the word /khwaam/ meaning 'sense or substance of a matter; (legal) case or lawsuit'. Haas (1964:82) relates the /khwaam/ nominalizer to such English suffixes as *-ness, -ity, -th, -ment, -ance(-ence), -(t)ion, -(t)ude, -ure, -y, -ery, -ship*, and *-dom*.

The /kaan/ and /khwaam/ patterns of nominalization are the most frequently used among all the nominalizing patterns in Thai[3]. My study on borrowing and nominalization of technical terms in Standard Thai (Prasithrathsint 1994a) shows that among all the nominalizing strategies used in coining Thai technical terms to replace English borrowed terms[4], /kaan/ and /kwaam/ occur most frequently. My research on the emergence and development of nominalization in Thai (Prasithrathsint 1994b,

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[2] It is widely accepted that /khwaam/ connotes abstractness. Some grammarians state that /khwaam/ is usually attached to words denoting 'state of being' or 'quality' and that it precedes "adjectives" to form nominals in Thai. Here, I intentionally try to avoid the word "adjective" because such words that denote 'state of being' or 'quality', as /dii/ 'good', /suaj4/ 'beautiful' behave structurally as verbs in Thai. Also, recently some linguists have argued that there are no adjectives in Thai (e.g. Statosta--p.c.). Even though this has not totally convinced me, I think that the "adjective" category in Thai has become an unstable and controversial. More studies and arguements are needed to determine its status in Thai syntax.

[3] Other productive nominalizing patterns in Thai are, for example, /phuu2/ 'person' + VERB, e.g. /phuu2-syy3/ 'buyer', /phuu2-khaaj4/ 'seller'; /thii2/ nominalization, which is comparable to that complement clause in English, e.g. /chan4 dii-caj thii2 khun maa/ 'I am glad that you came.'

[4] Other strategies of nominalizing words to create technical terms in Thai are: using the prefix /phaawa3/ 'state of being', e.g. /phaawa3-car@@nphan/ 'fertility', /phaawa3-cuk1c@@n4/ 'emergency'; using the suffix /ni3jom/ '-ism', e.g. /sang4khom-ni3jom/ 'socialism', /chaat2-ni3jom/ 'nationalism'.

1995) reveals that /khwaam/ nominalization is the oldest, which emerged in the Sukhothai Period around the late 13th century, and that /kaan/ nominalization is the second oldest, which was found to be used for in the first time in the Ayutthaya Period during the reign of King Narai--around the latter half of the 17th century.

Even though /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations have been used for centuries, frequent use of them is often criticized by Thai language authorities. They are regarded as unnecessarily elaborate and causing the Thai language to degenerate. Thai language teachers teaching students to write compositions in Thai usually make them write /tOOn2-rap3/ 'welcome' instead of /haj2-*kaan-tOOn2-rap3*/ 'to give a welcome' and /tang2-caj/ 'intend' instead of /mii-*khwaam-tang2-caj*/ 'have intention'. They argue that nominalizations make the language sound complicated and thus unlike Thai because genuine Thai, according to them, has to be brief, simple and concise.

In my opinion, that /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations are considered to cause the Thai language to become overly complex may have something to do with speech styles. I have observed that they normally marked formal or written style in Thai and used less in casual or spoken style. In brief, I see nominalization as a linguistic device that differentiates styles in Thai. In order to prove this, I have to conduct a study based on data from different functional varieties of Thai and find out how frequently /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations occur in each variety.

Therefore, this study aims at analyzing the frequencies of the occurrences of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations in three varieties of Standard Thai[5] representing three distinctive styles; i.e., newspaper editorials representing formal style, narrations in fiction representing semi-formal style, and conversations in fiction standing for informal style. I will also analyze change in the occurrences of the two nominalizing patterns in the three varieties from 1972 to 1992 in order to see whether their frequencies have increased over time and when they started to differentiate styles in Thai.

I hypothesize that /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations occur more frequently in editorial writing than the other two varieties because its purpose is more serious and its content more abstract. I also believe that conversations contain less incidences of nominalization than narrations because the former are more spontaneous than the latter.

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[5] Standard Thai Is the variety of Thai used in the court and by leading personalities of Thailand. It functions as Thailand's national language, official language, language of the mass media, and educational language. It is the most prestigious variety, which is taught to non-Thais as a second or foreign language and used as the lingua franca among people from different regions of thailand. Some scholars call it "Central Thai". It also overlaps with "Bangkok Thai", which is the variety of Thai used by Bangkokians. Since Standard Thai happens to be used most in Bangkok, it is easy to assume that it is the same as Bangkok Thai althogh it is not despite a great deal of overlapping. In fact, the name "Standard Thai" suggests representativeness and prestige, whereas the name "Bangkok Thai" implies a geographical location, which makes it in contrast with other geographical dialects in Thailand. The source of the data used in this study is Standard Thai, but the word "Thai" will be used more often to refer to the same linguistic variety.

I hope that the findings of this study will confirm that there is stylistic variation in Thai and that syntactic features can be used to differentiate registers in a language.

2. Previous studies

Nominalization in Thai is a phenomenon that is normally taken for granted. There has been no study that focuses particularly on it. Grammar books mostly include the /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations under a topic that deals with something else. Dictionaries normally treat them as part of the entries /kaan/ and /khwaam/--primarily interpreted as lexical words.

With regard to the relationship between nominalization and stylistic variation, a number of studies show that nominalization is a distinguishing marker of register. Chafe (1982, 1985) and Danielewicz (1984) maintain that nominalizations are used for expanding ideas and integrating information into fewer words. Biber (1986) finds that they tend to co-occur with passive constructions and prepositions and thus interprets their function as conveying highly *abstract* (as opposed to *situated*) information. Janda (1985, cited in Biber 1988:227) shows that nominalizations are used during note-taking to reduce full sentences to more *compact* and efficient series of noun phrases. Biber (1988) uses computational techniques to analyze linguistic characteristics of 23 spoken and written genres in English and finds that nominalization is an important feature which distinguishes spoken and written registers of English.

In Thai, Supanee Tiancharoen (1987) finds that nominalization differentiates written texts from spoken ones. The former contain more nominalizations than the latter and is therefore marked by *detachment*, whereas the latter by *involvement*.

Tiancharoen deals with six text types: conversation, personal letters, lectures, broadcasts, magazine articles, and academic texts and does not separate /kaan/ and /kwaam/ nominalizations. Questions still remain about two other varieties, which are very common in Thai: *newspaper editorials* and *fiction*. I would like to find out whether they are different as far as nominalzations are concerned and also whether /kaan/ and /khwam/ occur with equal amount of frequency in each register.

3. Data

The data used in this study were taken from written documents in the Bangkok period from 1872 to the present decade. The time span of approximately 120 years was divided into 13 intervals of a decade each. Each decade is represented by the beginning year starting with 1872 and ending with 1992. A sample of approximately 15,000 words representing each interval was systematically selected from documents published in or a little after each representative year: 1872, 1882, 1892, 1902, 1912, 1922, 1932, 1942, 1952, 1962, 1972, 1982, and 1992.

The reason why I started with the year 1872 is that it marks the beginning of the turning-point decade in the Bangkok Period[6]. Many changes took place during this decade (1872-1881); for example, the openning of the first school in Thailand,

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[6] The Bangkok Period started in 1782. It is about 9 decades after the beginning of the period that Thailand shifted into a modernized society.

the establishment of the Royal Printing Office, the occurrence of the first Thai magazine and the first Thai newspaper, etc.

Publications from 1872 to 1992 were of many genres. However, I chose to sample my texts from only three of them, which were accessible in every decade and reasonably represent three distinctive styles of thai. They are newspaper editorials, which represent formal style, narrative parts in fiction, which represent semi-formal style, and conversations in fiction, informal style.

Newspaper editorials in each decade were random-sampled by selecting titles of newspapers first and then selecting months. Finally, the whole text of the editorials in the newspapers of days 1-10 were collected from each selected month.

As for fiction, I sampled texts from novels, which for some periods occurred in magazines or weekly newspapers but for others appeared in the form of books. The procedure of selecting those from newspapers and magazines was done by selecting five names or titles of the magazines or newspapers first. Then I random-selected an issue, from which an equal number of pages were taken for each decade. In case novels were in the form of books, I randomly selected five names of novelists in each decades. Then I selected one work for each writer. finally, an equal number of pages were taken from each work.

4. Findings

4.1. *Occurrences of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations in the three varieties*

The analysis of frequencies of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalization is based on the data of the last decade represented by the year 1992. The results show that /kaan/ nominalization occurs most frequently (2.66 per 100 words) in editorials and virtually equally in the other two varieties (0.17 and 0.12 per 100 words). (See Table 1 and Figure 1.) This suggests that /kaan/ nominalization is a factor distinguishing the style in editorials from that in narrative and conversational parts of fiction.

Table 1: /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations in the three varieties of Thai

	/kaan/	/kwaam/
Editorials	2.66	1.28
Narrations	0.17	0.55
Conversations	0.12	0.12

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Figure 1: Occurrences of /kaan/ nominalizations in three
language varieties

/k aan/

LANGUAGE VARIETIES
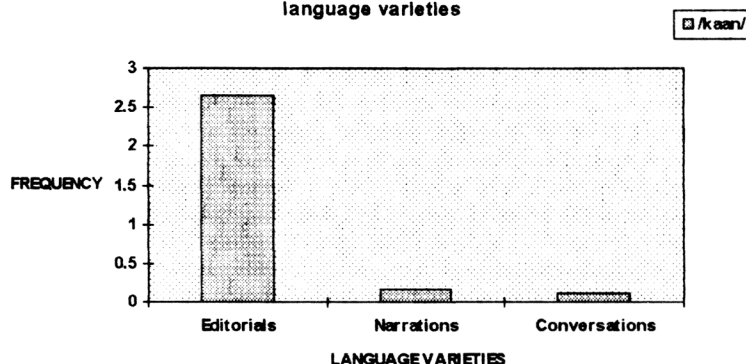
As can be seen from Table 1, the frequencies of /kaan/ incidences in editorials is about 15 times higher than those in narrations and conversations. The latter two varieties do not seem to differ as far as the use of /kaan/ nominalization is concerned. A question we may ask concerning this is: Why does /kaan/ nominalization occur significantly more in editorial writing than in narrative writing and conversations?

Biber (1988:172) distinguishes between *explicit* and *situated* text types. Newspaper editorials could be classified as explicit --the writer has to express his/her ideas clearly and support his/her ideas by explicit examples or arguments to convince the reader or to instigate a certain change. On the other hand, fiction is not as explicit as editorials but more situation-dependent. Fiction contains two varieties: the narrative and the conversation. This study covers both. Even though conversations seem to be more highly situated than narrations, both depend on what happened to whom, when and where it happened, and how much effect it had on the participants involved. In brief, the style used in narrations and descriptions does not need as much occurrence of /kaan/ nominalization to express ideas formally as that used in editorial writing, which we may name the *formal article writing style*.

It may be interesting to note that /kaan/ nominalization in Thai is comparable to gerunds in English. Although both are not totally parallel with each other in their functions and meanings, their major semantic implication of *action* is strikingly similar. Biber (1988:227) says that gerunds (or verbal nouns) are verb forms serving nominal functions. He cites studies which show that gerunds are a distinguishing marker of register in English; i.e., Carroll (1960) and O' Donnell (1974). Biber himself found that in English gerunds do differentiate one register from another. For example, he found that the frequencies of gerunds in *academic prose, press editorials, general fiction,* and *face-to-face conversations* are 8.5, 7.4, 6.5 and 4.7 per 1000 words, respectively (Biber 1988: 248-264). Comparing these findings to what I found in Thai, we may say that although the frequecies of gerunds in different registers in English and those of /kaan/ nominalization are not very comparable, the qualitative inference from them seems to show similar gradation of the occurrence of

action nominals in both language. In brief, we can conclude that the more formal the style is the more gerundive nominals are used in both English and Thai.

As for /khwaam/ nominalization, it is found to occur most in editorials (1.28 per 100 word), second most in narrations (0.55 per 100 word) and least in conversations (0.12 per 100 word). (See Table 1 and Figure 2.)

It should be remarked that although /kaan/ and /khwaam/ both mark abstract nominalization in Thai, the latter is more intangible than the former.[7]

It is interesting to note that /khwaam/ nominalizations in Thai are comparable to what Biber calls *nominalizations* (excluding gerunds) in English. In his study (Biber 1988: 248-264), it is found that nominaliztions that occur per 1000 words in *academic prose, press editorials, general fiction,* and *face-to-face conversations* are 35.8, 27.6, 10.2, and 9.2, respectively. If we compare these findings to what is found in Thai, we can say that qualitatively, there is parallel in the occurrence of nominalizations in English and /khwaam/ nominalizations in Thai. The gradation of the frequencies in different genres in English is indeed comparable to that in Thai.

Similar to what we have seen above about /kaan/ nominalizatins in editorials, the high frequency of /khwaam/ nominalizations in editorials is due to the same reason. The style of writing editorials needs a certain device for talking about *abstract ideas*, which are likely to appear more in this register than in narrations and conversations, which tend to deal more with *concrete events*.

Figure 2: Occurrences of /khwaam/ nominalizations in three language varieties
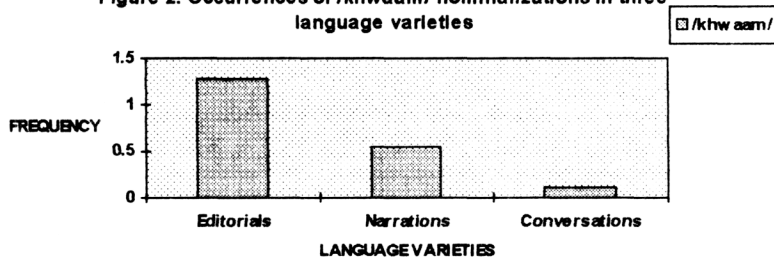
Although /khwaam/ nominalizations behave like /kaan/ nominalizations in distinguishing editorials from the other two varieties, the former also differentiate between narrations and conversations. (See Table 1 and Figure 2.) To account for the reason why these two registers differ in the use of /khwaam/ nominalizations, I will borrow terms from Biber (1988): *reported* style vs. *immediate* style. In narrating a story or describing what happened, one needs reported style, which depends considerably on nominalizations whereas in conversing, one tends to use spontaneous

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[7] In my study on the emergence and development of abstract nominalization in Standard Thai (Prasithrathsint 1995), I call /kaan/ the "gerundive" nominalizer and /khwaam/ the "intangible" nominalizer. although both signify abstractness, the former relates to action, which is to some extent tangible, whereas the latter implies state or condition, which is intangible.

or immediate style, which avoids nominalizations. Examples below show different ways of talking marked by the use and non-use of /khwaam/ nominalization.

khwaam-ngiap2 khOOng sathaan4thii2 tham-haj2 lOOn1 klua
silence   of   place   make   she   afraid
'The silence of the place scared her.'
Such a sentence with /khwaam/ nominalization (/khwaam-ngiap2/) is likely to be found in narrative parts of a novel and very unlikely to appear in conversations, which are likely to contain a sentence below instead:
thii2   nii2   *ngiap2* na3   ... naa2   klua   cang
place here silent   Prt.   leading to afraid Prt.
'It is silent here, isn't it? It's really scary.'

Without regard to which kind of nominalization, the average (See Table 2) shows the gradation of frequencies from the highest in editorials to the lowest in conversations.

Table 2: Average frequencies of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations

	Average of /kaan/ and /khwaam/
Editorials	1.97
Narrations	0.36
Conversations	0.12

Grouping both /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations as one category, Tiancharoen (1987: 159) found that they occur most in academic texts and least in conversations. She attributes this difference to the quality of *planned* and *static* writing on the one hand and that of *unplanned, dynamic* and *interactive* speech on the other. She concludes that the less interactive the discourse is, the more nominalizations it contains and that nominalizations depersonalize the agent, making the speaker/writer distance himself/herself from association with the agent. This creates *detachment* in the text. (Tiancharoen 1987: 160, 168). From the above evaluation of texts in terms of the qualities induced by the use of nominalizations, we may generalize that the more *detached, impersonal, static, compact, abstract, explicit,* and *organized* the text is meant to be, the more nominalizations are used by the speaker/writer.

4.2.. Change in the use of /kaan/ and /khwaam nominalizations in Thai
In order to analyze change in the use of both /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations in Standard Thai, I looked at the occurrences of /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations in the sampled texts representing each decade from 1872 to 1992 (13 decades). The data not only shows variation in the frequencies of each pattern but also reveals how each register has changed over time with regard to the use of nominalization. This implies also change in the qualities of each register, such as compactness, abstractness, explicitness, detachment, etc.

The results of the analysis show that the occurrences of /kaan/ nominalizations in editorials, which represent the formal article writing style in Thai, are mostly higher than those in the other two varieties thoughout the period under study (See Table 3 and Figure 3.). It is not until the decade of 1952 that the occurrences of /kaan/ nominalizations started to definitely differentiate editorial writing from the other two varieties. This implies that various functional varieties of Thai started to gain their typical characteristics or establish themselves as genres or become identified as particular registers around 1952.

A similar situation is also found to occur to /khwaam/ nominalizations. Their occurrences in the three varieties are rather irregular in the decades before 1952. It should be noted that the frrequencies of /khwaam/ nominalization are striking high in all the three varieties before 1952. Since then the occurrences of /khwaam/ nominalizations have clearly separated the three varieties from one another, grading from the most abstract (with the highest frequecies of /khwaam/ nominalizations)-- editorials, to the least abstract (with the lowest frequencies of /khwaam/ nominalization)--conversations. (See Table 4 and Figure 4.)

Table 3: Frequencies of /kaan/ nominalizations in three varieties from 1872 to 1992

	Editorials	Narrations	Conversations
1872	0.12	0.07	0
1882	0.77	0.1	0
1892	0.83	0.05	0
1902	0.23	0.16	0
1912	0.52	0.23	0.21
1922	0.57	0.16	0.24
1932	1.01	0.19	0.05
1942	0.59	0.45	0.2
1952	1.2	0.27	0.3
1962	1.63	0.2	0.08
1972	1.76	0.11	0
1982	1.69	0.19	0.23
1992	2.66	0.17	0.12

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Figure 3: Occurrences of /kaan/ nominalizations in three
language varieties from 1872 to 1992
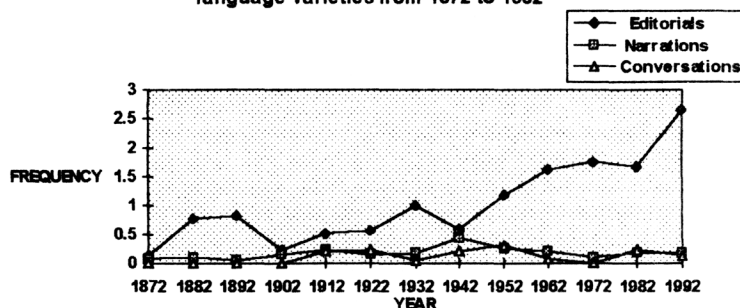
Therefore, we may conclude that generally speaking, nominalizations differentiate editorial writing, narrative writing and conversations from one another, but the latter two varieties are close to each other and overlap in some aspects.

Table 4: Frequencies of /khwaam/ nominalizations in three varieties from 1872 to 1992

	Editorials	Narrations	Conversations
1872	0.77	0.07	0.24
1882	2.36	1.23	1.28
1892	2.03	2.09	0.89
1902	0.51	0.22	0
1912	0.76	0.63	0.42
1922	1.45	0.45	0.41
1932	0.98	1.05	0.81
1942	0.87	0.85	0.6
1952	1.15	0.75	0.4
1962	1.08	0.45	0.25
1972	1.32	0.37	0.1
1982	1.29	0.64	0.6
1992	1.28	0.55	0.12

Figure 4:Occurrences of /khwaam/ nominalizations in three language varieties from 1872 to 1992

— Editorials
— Narrations
— Conversations
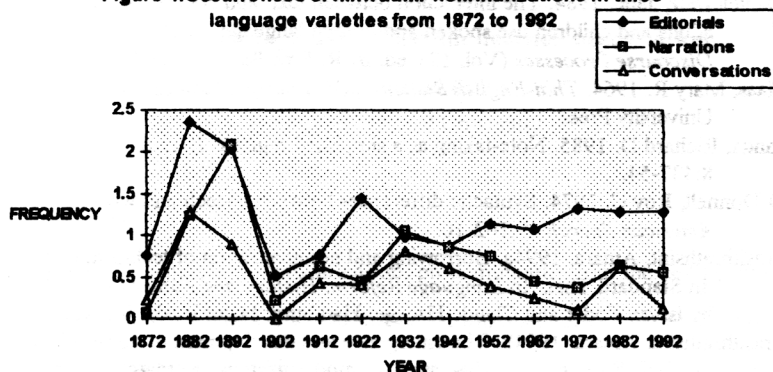
5. Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have attempted to show that /kaan/ and /khwaam/ nominalizations are features that mark registers in Thai. The quantitative evidence of counting the frequencies of their occurrences in three functional varieties of Thai confirms that they tend to be used more in explicit, compact, impartial, serious, planned and detached style. These findings seem to support what has been found in previous studies concerning the occurrence of nominalizations in both English and Thai.

The analysis also reveals that it is not until about four decades ago that registers in Thai got established with their typical characteristics and that nominalization started to become a distinguishing marker of registers in Thai.

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