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Himalayan Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discuss the different types of negative particles in Thadou, a Tibeto-Burman language of the Kuki-Chin subgroup spoken by around 231, 200 (Lewis 2009) speakers of northeast India and Myanmar. Thadou has three main negative particles–*pòo, hìq*, and *lòw*, in addition to the negative particles *dàa* and *mɔ̀ɔ* which most often occur as sentence final particles. Previous scholars working on the language, viz. Grierson (1904), Thirumalai (1971) and Krishan (1980) have discussed three of these negative particles, viz. *pòo, hìq* and *lòw*, in a much narrower sense by assigning only one negative construction for each negative particle. In this paper, I provide three constructions–declarative, interrogative and imperative–for the occurrence of each of the negative particles and argue that with the exception to the imperative construction, two or more negative particles can be used in the same construction with slight nuances of meaning.

KEYWORDS

negation, Thadou, Kuki-Chin, Tibeto-Burman language

This is a contribution from *Himalayan Linguistics, Vol. 11(2): 1–20.*
ISSN 1544-7502

Himalayan Linguistics, Vol. 11(2). © Himalayan Linguistics 2012
ISSN 1544-7502

Negation in Thadou[1]

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1 Introduction[2]

This paper attempts to discuss the different types of negative particles in Thadou, a Tibeto-Burman language of the Kuki-Chin subgroup spoken by around 231, 200 (Lewis 2009) speakers of northeast India and Myanmar. Thadou has three main negative particles, *pòo, hìq* and *lòw*, in addition to the negative particles *dàa* and *mɔ̀ɔ* which most often occur as sentence final particles. Previous scholars, viz. Grierson (1904), Thirumalai (1971) and Krishan (1980) have discussed three of these negative particles, viz. *pòo, hìq* and *lòw*, in a much narrower sense by assigning only one negative construction for each negative particle. In this paper, I provide three constructions – declarative, interrogative and imperative for the occurrence of each of the negative particles and argue that with the exception to the imperative construction, two or more negative particles can be used in the same construction with slight nuances of meaning.

2 Characteristics of Kuki-Chin shared by Thadou

Before discussing negation in Thadou, it will be worthwhile to introduce two common characteristics of Kuki-Chin, namely, agreement and verb stem alternations which will be relevant for negation in Thadou.

[1] Many thanks to Umarani Pappuswamy who gave me the idea to write a paper on the present topic and providing me with some useful questionnaires; to Rebecca T. Cover for having gone through my first draft and for her suggestion to have a section on agreement and verbal stem alternations. Many thanks to George Bedell for his insightful comments on many specific areas including alternative better glossing for many sentences; to Debborah King and Shobhana Chelliah for their comments and suggestions for many complex uses of negative particles. Many thanks to the reviewers and the editors for detailed comments and suggestions. I alone am responsible for remaining errors and shortcomings.

[2] Throughout this paper aspirated stops [p^h] and [t^h] are written as *ph* and *th*, the glottal stops [ʔ] and voiceless lateral [ɬ] are written as *q* and *hl*. Double vowels indicate length. In the glosses 1, 2 and 3 stand for first person, second person and third person agreement. Glosses like "fall.1" and "fall. 2" indicate the stem 1 and stem 2 forms respectively. Other glosses used are as follows: DECL=declarative; NEG=negative; ø=zero; LOC=locative; FUT=future; AFF=affirmative; HORT=hortative; C.HORT=cohortative; PROP=proposal; Q.MKR=question marker; (EE)=optional; CONJ=conjunction.

2.1 Agreement

Thadou, like many other Kuki-Chin languages, is characterised by a system of agreement between the finite verb and its subject and object, in which the subject and object can be optionally dropped but the agreement particles are obligatorily present.

(1) kêy$_i$ Lamka àq kâ$_i$ tsêŋ êe
1 Lamka LOC 1 live DECL
'I live in Lamka'

(2) nâŋ$_i$ Lamka àq nà$_i$ tsêŋ êe
2 Lamka LOC 2 live DECL
'You live in Lamka'

(3) amâ$_i$ Lamka àq â$_i$ tsêŋ êe
3 Lamka LOC 3 live DECL
'S/he lives in Lamka'

Like in Mizo and Hmar and other Kuki-Chin languages, in Thadou, the personal agreement markers and the possessive pronouns are homophonous.

2.2 Verb stem alternations

Like in many other Kuki-Chin languages, Thadou verbs have two forms generally referred to as stem 1 and stem 2 in the literature on Kuki-Chin. The two stem forms differ in their final segments and tone, e.g. *náa ~ nàt* 'pain', *díŋ ~ dìn* 'stand', *gɔ́m ~ gɔ̀p* 'unite', *pɔ́ɔt ~ pɔ̂ɔt* 'go out', *háaŋ ~ hàan* 'bold'. The choice of stem 1 and stem 2 is conditioned by a number of factors such as nominalization, subordination, disambiguation in relative clauses/WH questions and valency changing (King 2009:141). But generally, the choice of the two stems depends on whether the verbal stem is in the main or subordinate clause. Stem 1 is used in main clauses while stem 2 is used in subordinate clauses (VanBik 2009). The following examples show the use of stem 1 and stem 2 in main and subordinate clauses.

	Main clause	Subordinate clause
(4)	sâa kâ nêe êe	sâa kâ nèq lèq...
	meat 1 eat.1 DECL	meat 1 eat.2 if
	'I eat/eat meat'	'If I eat meat…'
(5)	sinima kâ vée êe	sinima kâ vèt lèq...
	cinema 1 look.1 DECL	cinema 1 look.2 if
	'I am watching cinema'	'If I watch cinema…'
(6)	nâwsêen â lûum êe	nâwsêen â lùp nûŋ...
	baby 3 sleep.1 DECL	baby 3 sleep.2 after
	'Baby slept'	'After the baby slept…'

Although, this paper is focussed primarily on Thadou, much of what will be said in this paper will also apply to mutually intelligible languages such as Paite, Vaiphei, Simte, Gangte and Zou. The paper is built up as follows. In § 3, I will review some of the relevant literature on Thadou negation. In § 4, I will discuss the different types of negative particles in declarative, imperative and interrogative constructions. In § 5, I will discuss double negation. In the remaining section, I will discuss negative emphasis/strengthening and conditional negative.

3 Relevant literature

Three previous studies as they pertain to Thadou negation are surveyed in this section: Grierson's (1904) *Linguistic survey of India*, hereafter referred to as *LSI*, Thirumalai's (1971) 'Some aspect of negation in Thadou' and Shree Krishan's (1980) *Thadou: A grammatical sketch*. As stated above, these studies discuss Thadou negation in a much narrower sense by assigning only one negative construction for each negative particle. The present paper attempts to fill in the gap left by the previous researchers by providing more data to show how these negative particles are used in different types of constructions.

Grierson (1904) presents a very sketchy account of Thadou negation in just one small paragraph (see p. 68 of Vol. 3. part 3 of *LSI*). As shown in examples (7a)-(13a) below, Grierson provides a list of sentences showing that the *hi*, *poi* and *lo/lou* are the negative particles. Out of three negatives, only one negative particle which Grierson lists as *hi* (the correct form of which is *hiq*) occurs in imperative construction as in (8a). The rest occur in non-imperative constructions, e.g. declarative. Grierson's data contains many transcription problems and often morpheme boundaries are not properly marked. In the following examples, I exemplify Grierson's data in (a), followed by my own corrected examples in (b). I have also provided alternate, more accurate, glosses.

(7)	a. kein ka num hi-e kati-hi-e	'I wish not, I said not'
	b. kêy-n kâ nôom hǐq êe kâ tǐi hǐq êe	'I did not say I did not agree'
(8)	a. hung hi in	'Come not'
	b. hûŋ hìq ìn	'Don't come'
(9)	a. ahi poi	'It is not, no'
	b. à-hîi pòo êe	'It is not true/correct'
(10)	a. ni-pe-poi	'thou gavest not'
	b. nêy pêe pòo êe	'You did not give it to me'
(11)	a. a-num-ta-poi	'He wished not'
	b. à -nôom tâ pòo êe	'S/he is not willing anymore'
(12)	a. a-falo	'Bad'
	b. à-phàa lòw	'A bad person/thing'

(13) a. mighi-lou 'Bad, etc'
b. mîi gîi lòw 'A bad person'
(Lit: A person without manner)

In his paper "Some aspect of negation in Thadou", Thirumalai (1971) lists *hih, po and lou* to be the negative particles in Thadou. According to him, the negative *hih* (written as *hiq* in this paper) occurs only in imperative sentences, the negative *po* in non-imperative sentences ending in *ahi* and the negative particle *lou* occurs only in non-sentence negation. Regarding the use of the negative particles, Thirumalai differs from *LSI* in two important aspects. First, Thirumalai overstated that the negative particle *hiq* occurs only in imperative sentences and pointed out the use of *hiq* in non-imperative sentences by that of the *LSI* example (7a) above as inconsistent and confusing. As shown in the following section, the present analysis shows that the negative particle *hiq* can be used interchangeably with the negative particle *poo* in declarative constructions. Of course, Thirumalai has admitted that with limited data at his disposal it is difficult to draw a definitive conclusion. Second, Thirumalai rightly pointed out that the negative particle *poi* by *LSI* is actually *poo*. Thirumalai argues that the negative particle *poi* is the result of a morphophonemic rule whereby *po-e* becomes *poi* (see § 4.1.1 for discussion of *poo*). Thirumalai also pointed out some of the transcription problems committed by *LSI*, such as the use of *hi-in* as opposed to the correct form *hiq in* (written as *hih in* by Thirumalai) as the imperative negative particle. (see p. 68 of *LSI*).

Shree Krishan (1980) also provides three negative suffixes: *lou, po* and *hiq*. Krishan makes no comments on the earlier works but simply lists four conditions for the occurrence of each of these negative suffixes: (a) *lou* occurs in any construction ending with *ahi* '3.be' (b) *po* occurs in any clause that ends in future marker *iŋ* which is followed by auxiliary *e* while occurring alone, (c) *lou/po* occur in free variation and (d) *hiq* occurs only in imperative constructions in which neither *lou* nor *po* can occur. Krishan pointed out that the negative suffix *lou* occurs in free variation with *po* in simple statements but did not provide any evidence to substantiate his claim. Like Thirumalai, Krishan also posited *po* as one of the negative particles as in *cie po nge* 'I will not go'.

4 Thadou negative particles

As stated above, negation in Thadou is handled by negative particles, which most often occur as sentence final particles. This section discusses the different types of negative particles in different types of constructions, viz. declarative, imperative and interrogative constructions.

4.1 Declarative construction

This section discusses the use of different negative particles in different types of declarative clauses, viz. *êe* clauses, *â-hîi* clauses, nominalised clauses and relative clauses.

4.1.1 êe clauses

The negative particle *pôo* is used to negate ordinary declarative sentences ending in *êe* clauses. All declaratives ending with *êe* clauses take the stem 1 form and never the stem 2 form. The reason why the stem 1 form occurs in simple declarative sentences is that *êe* clauses are truly verbal (see Cover ms. for further details). Simple declarative constructions follow the template order (SUBJECT+ PERSON+STEM 1 (+NUMBER)+*êe*, where *êe* is a declarative marker (Cover ms).

(14) a. bùu kà nêe êe
food 1 eat.1 DECL
'I eat/ate food'

b. bùu kà nêe pôo êe
food 1 eat.1 NEG DECL
'I do/did not eat food'

c. *bùu kà nêq pôo êe
food 1 eat.2 NEG DECL
'I do/did not eat food'

(15) a. gòo â zùu êe
rain 3 fall.1 DECL
'It is raining'
(Lit: The rain is falling)

b. gôo â zùu pôo êe
rain 3 fall.1 NEG DECL
'It is not raining'
(Lit: The rain is not falling)

c. *gôo â zùq pôo êe
rain 3 fall.2 NEG DECL
'It is not raining'

The negative particles *pòo* and *hìq* can be used interchangeably in declarative constructions ending in *êe* clauses with slight nuances of meaning in the sense that the negative particle *pòo* is used to negate a sentence which may not be expected, while the negative particle *hìq* is used to negate a sentence which is expected to occur. An affirmative sentence such as the one in (15a) above can be negated in (16-17) with the negative particles *pòo* and *hìq* to produce their respective meanings.

(16) gòo â zùu pòo êe
rain 3 fall.1 NEG DEC
'It is not raining' (Not expected)

(17) gòo â zùu hìq êe
rain 3 fall.1 NEG DECL
'It is not raining' (Expected)
(It was suppose to rain but did not rain)

4.1.2 â-hîi clauses

â-hîi clauses on the other hand are negated by the negative particle *lòw* as shown in (18b) below.

(18) a. gòo ø zùu dîŋ â-hîi
rain 3 fall.1 FUT 3be
'It is going to rain'

b. gòo ø zùu lòw dîŋ â-hîi
rain 3 fall.1 NEG FUT 3be
'It is not going to rain'

Note that the negative particles *pòo* and *hìq* in *êe* construction (16-17) cannot occur in the *â-hîi* construction in (18) and vice-versa as the negative particle *lòw* occurs with *â-hîi* constructions. Also note that the *â* in *â-hîi* shows third person subject agreement. As a result, the *a* is missing in front of the verb *zùu* in (18a-b) because it already appears in front of *hîi*. But with first and second

person the subject agreement occurs in front of the main verb. This can be further illustrated with the help of the three persons as in (19-21) below:

(19) kêy kâ tsìi lòw dîŋ â-hîi
I 1 go.2 NEG FUT 3-be
'I will not be going'

(20) nâŋ na tsìi lòw dîŋ â-hîi
you 2 go.2 NEG FUT 3-be
'You will not be going'

(21) à-mâa ø tsìi lòw dîŋ â-hîi
s/he 3 go.2 NEG FUT 3-be
'S/he will not be going'

As can be seen from the above examples (19-21), the agreement particles appear in front of the main verb in (19) and (20), whereas in (21) the agreement marker is absent.

4.1.3 Nominalised clauses

The only permissible negative particle which can occur within a nominalised clause is *lòw*. Cover ms, argues that nominalizations involving stem 1 forms always denote a set of individuals.

(22) sâa nêe lòw mîi
meat eat.1 NEG man
'Vegetarian' (One who does not eat meat)

(23) zûu dɔ̂ɔn lòw mîi
wine drink.1 NEG man
'Teetotaler' (Literally: One who does not drink wine)

(24) lɛ̀khàa sìm thêy lòw mîi
book read.1 know NEG man
'Illiterate' (Literally: One who does not know how to read)

4.1.3.1Relative clauses

The negative particle *lòw* is also used to negate relative clauses. Relative clauses are often nominalised in Tibeto-Burman languages, for instance, Lahu (Matisoff 1972), Bodic (DeLancey 2002) and Rawang (LaPolla 2008) as cited by Cover ms. Thus, the following constructions are characterized as relative clauses as opposed to adjectives due to facts like the obligatory presence of subject agreement. Cover argues that the stem 1 form in relative clauses is syntactically verbal but the relative clause as a whole is nominal. The following examples also support this claim.

(25)

a. à hâat
3 strong.1
'A strong person'

b. à hâat lòw
3 strong.1 NEG
'A weak person'

(26)

a. à hòoy
3 beautiful.1
'A beautiful person'

b. à hòoy lòw
3 beautiful.1 NEG
'An ugly person'

(27)

a. à phàa
3 good.1
'A good person'

b. à phàa lòw
3 good.1 NEG
'A bad person'

4.1.4 Phonologically-induced variations of pôo

Before proceeding further to other discussions, it would be helpful to discuss the variant forms of the negative particle *pòo*. Due to morphophonemic operations that take place between two morphemes, three phonologically induced variations of the negative particle *pòo* viz. *[pôoj], [pôoŋ]* and *[pôon]* are established on the basis of the phonological shapes of the morphemes that follow. First, the negative particle *pòo* is realized as *[pôoj]* when occurring with a singular subject that ends with the declarative marker *êe*. The reason why [*pôoj]* appears only with singular subjects is that with plural subjects as in (28d), the *oo* of *pòo* and the declarative marker *êe* are separated by the plural marker *u* so that the glide doesn't get inserted. Similarly the *u* becomes *uv* before *êe,* for phonological reasons. The answers to the interrogative sentences in (28a-b) are negated in (28c-d) so as to realize *[pooj]* and *[poo]*, respectively.

(28)

a. în náa nâ tsìi ham
house LOC 2 go.2 Q.MKR
'Did you (sg) go home?'

b. în náa nâ tsìi u ham
house LOC 2 go.2 PL Q.MKR
'Did you (pl) go home?'

c. în nàq kâa tsìi pòoj êe
house loc 1 go.2 NEG DECL
'I do/did not go home'

d. în nàq kâa tsìi pòo ùv êe
house LOC 1 go.1 NEG PL DECL
'We do/did not go home'

Second, the negative particle *pòo* is realized as *pôoŋ* in (29c) when the negative particle *pòo* and the future marker *íŋ* are optionally fused resulting in the deletion of *i*. Similarly, the negative particle *pòo* is realized as *pôon* (30c) when the negative particle *pòo* and the future marker *in* are optionally fused resulting in the deletion of *i*. It is to be noted that both *íŋ* and *in* are phonological variants of the future tense marker *íŋ* whose shapes are determined by the phonological shape of the following sound. The future tense marker *íŋ* is realized as *íŋ [ŋ]* in (29b-c) if the following sound begins with a velar or vowel sound. Similarly, the future tense marker *íŋ* is realized as *ín [n]* in (30b-c) if the

following sound begins in an alveolar sound. The probable questions in (29a-31a) are negated in (29b-c, 31b-c) to show how *pòo* is realised as *pôoŋ* and *pôon*. Note that *têe*[3] is glossed as definitive as opposed to declarative as its appearance as a sentence final particle indicates that the action so negated is most likely not to take place.

(29)

a. în nâa nâ tsìi dîŋ hâm
house LOC 2 go.2 FUT Q.MKR
'Will you go home?'

b. ø tsìi pòo[4] íŋ kâ têe
I go.1 NEG FUT 1 DEF
'I will not go'

c. ø tsìi pôoŋ kâ têe
I go.1 NEG FUT 1 DEF
'I will not go'

(30)

a. în nâa kâ tsìi dîŋ hâm
house LOC 1 go.2 FUT Q.MKR
'Will I go home?'

b. ø tsìi pòo ín nâ tê
you go.1 NEG FUT 2 DEF
'You will certainly not go'

c. ø tsìi pôon nâ tê
you go.1 NEG FUT 2 DEF
'You will certainly not go'

(31)

a. âmâa în nâa tsìi dîŋ hâm
3 house LOC go.2 FUT Q.MKR
'Will s/he go home?'

b. àmâa tsìi pòo ín ø têe
3 go.1 NEG FUT 3 DEF
'S/he will certainly not go'

c. àmâa tsìi pôon ø têe
3 go.1 NEG FUT 3 DEF
'S/he will certainly not go'

As seen from examples (29b-c) and (30b-c) above, pronominal subjects can be dropped when they can be recovered from their agreement particles which are placed just before the definitive marker *tee*. But, in (31) the pronominal subject cannot be dropped unless it is known from the context, and hence the pronominal agreement particle is absent before the definitive marker *têe*.

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[3] Depending on the phonological shape of the preceding sound, the declarative marker *êe* is realized either as *êe*, *ŋêe* or *têe*. *êe* occurs if the preceding sound ends in a vowel, *ŋêe* if the preceding sound ends in the velar consonant *ŋ* and *têe* if the preceding sound ends in the alveolar consonant *n*.

[4] It was pointed out in § 4.1.1 that the negative particle *pôo* occurs in declarative constructions ending in *êe* clauses. The reason why *pôo* occurs in *têe* clauses in (examples 29b-c, 30b-c and 31b-c) is that *têe* is a phonological variant of *pôo*.

The negative particle *pòq* is another semantic variant of the negative particle *pòo*. The felicitous context for its occurrence is when the answer to the above question in (31a) is not known or is unlikely to take place. The bound morpheme *táq* which follows the negative *pòq* gives a sense of possibility or probability. Like the negative particles *pôoŋ* and *pôon*, the negative particle *pòq* may or may not occur with the pronominal subject as in (32a-b). But, unlike the other two, it never takes the agreement particle (32c).

(32)

a. àmâa tsìi pòq táq
3 go.1 NEG POS
'S/he might not go'

b. ø tsìi pòq ø táq
3 go.1 NEG 3 POS
'S/he might not go'

c. *ø tsìi pòq á táq
3 go.1 NEG 3 POS
'S/he might not go'

4.2 Imperative construction

The negative particle *hìq* is used to negate imperative sentences, be they polite requests/advice, commands or hortative as shown in (33b-35b) below.

(33)

a. zûu dɔ̂ɔn ôo
liquor drink.1 IMP
'Drink liquor'

b. zûu dɔ̂ɔn hìq ôo
liquor drink.1 NEG IMP(advice)
'Don't drink liquor'

(34)

a. bɔ̂ɔl în
do.1 IMP
'Do it'

b. bɔ̂ɔl hìq în
do.1 NEG IMP (command)
'Don't do it'

(35)

a. zòw sêy hên
lies tell.1 IMP
'Tell lies'

b. zòw sêy hìq hên
lies tell.1 NEG hort
'Don't tell lies' (Lit: Let him/her not tell lies)

4.3 Interrogative constructions

Interrogative constructions (both *WH* and *yes* or *no* questions) are negated by the negative particle *lòw* as shown in (36) – (37) below.

(36)

a. ìpîi nâ bɔ̂ɔl hâm
what 2 do.2 Q.MKR
'What are you doing?'

b. ìpîi nâ bɔ̂ɔl lòw hâm
what 2 do.2 NEG Q.MKR
'What is it that you do not do?'

(37)

a. Lâmkà á nâ tsìi dîŋ hâm
Lamka LOC 2 go.2 FUT Q.MKR
'Will you go to Lamka?'

b. Lâmkà á nâ tsìi lòw dîŋ hâm
Lamka LOC 2 go.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR
'Will you not go to Lamka?'

Non-perfective interrogative sentences on the other hand can be negated by both the negative particles *lòw* and *dàa*. The former is used to negate general interrogative sentences (as in 38a-39a) which may not involve a request or proposal while the latter is used to negate interrogative sentences which involve a request or proposal (38b-39b). The latter (the negative particle *dàa*) is especially used when a person who had proposed the action, on account of certain unforeseeable reasons feels that the action cannot be or is unlikely to be executed. In such cases, a person who had proposed the action will use such types of constructions as an indirect way of requesting him/her not to perform the action.

(38)

a. lâa nâ sàq lòw dîŋ hâm
song 2 sing.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR
'Will you not sing a song?'

b. lâa nâ sàq dàa dîŋ tâm
song 2 sing.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR
'Will you not sing a song?'

(39)

a. nâ tsìi lòw dîŋ hâm
2 go.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR
'Will you not go?'

b. nâ tsìi dàa dîŋ tâm
2 go.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR
'Will you not go?'

The expected answer to the questions in (38b & 39b) is always expected to be positive as shown in (40-(41) below.

(40) sàq dàa tàŋ êe
sing.2 NEG PROP DECL
'Let me not sing' (positive answer)

(41) tsìi dàa tàŋ êe
go.2 NEG PROP DECL
'Let me not go' (positive answer)

On the other hand, when the negative particle *dàa* is absent to the above questions (38b & 39b), a person who asks such questions can never be sure whether he/she would get a positive or negative answer as shown in. (42-43) below.

(42)

a. sàq dàa tàŋ ŋêe
sing.2 NEG PROP DECL
'Let me not sing' (positive)

b. sà îŋ ŋêe
sing.1 FUT DECL
'I will sing' (negative)

(43)

a. tsɨ̀i dàa tàŋ ŋêe
go.2 NEG PROP DECL
'Let me not go' (positive)

b. tsɨ̀i îŋ ŋêe
go.1 FUT DECL
'I will go' (negative)

When the negative particle *dàa* is used in place the negative particle *lòw* in perfective interrogative sentences as in (44-45) below, it renders the interrogative sentences as a question of dislike or hatred to carry out the action.

(44)

a. lâa nâ sàq lòw hâm
song 2 sing.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Did you not sing a song?'

b. lâa nâ sàq dàa hâm
song 2 sing.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Did you hate to sing a song?'

(45)

a. nâ tsìi lòw hâm
2 go.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Did you not go?'

b. nâ tsìi dàa hâm
2 go.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Did you hate to go?'

The negative particles, *dàa* and *lòw* can also be used to negate a question with a slight difference in meaning with the future marker *dîŋ* in *â-hîi* constructions in the sense that the negative particle *dàa* is used as a proposal and *low* as an advice as indicated in the parenthetical comments in (46b&c) below.

(46)

a. bùu nɛ̀q a phàa hâm
food eat.2 for good Q.MKR
'Is it good to have food?'

b. bùu nɛ̀q dàa dîŋ à-hîi
food eat.2 NEG FUT 3-be
'Food should not be eaten' (proposal)

c. bùu nɛ̀q lòw dîŋ à-hîi
food eat.2 NEG FUT 3-be
'Food should not be eaten' (advice)

4.3.1 The negative particle mɔ̀ɔ

The negative particle *mɔ̀ɔ* is used to negate interrogative constructions involving a state of affair or well being of a person, when there is prima-facie evidence which suggests that the person so interrogated is not keeping himself/herself in good health. The contrast between the use of the negative particle *lòw* and *mɔ̀ɔ* is shown in (48) and (49) below.

(47) nâ dàm nâm[5]
2 well.2 Q.MKR
'Are you well?'

(48) nâ dàm lòw hâm
2 well.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Are you not well?' (No external evidence)

(49) nâ dàm mɔ̀ɔ hâm
2 well.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Are you not well?' (External evidence)

Similarly, the negative particles *pòo* and *mɔ̀ɔ* are used as a positive answer (i.e. if the person so interrogated turns out to be unwell) to the above interrogative sentences (48) and (49). But, the latter, i.e. *mɔ̀ɔ* is used when the speaker's state of affairs is more serious.

(50) kà dám pòo êe
1 well.1 NEG DECL
'I am not well'

(51) kà dám mɔ̀ɔ êe
1 well.1 NEG DECL
'I am not well'

When the negative particles *mɔ̀ɔ* is substituted by *lòw* in interrogative constructions other than the one which involves a state of affairs as in (53) and (54), the question so negated is no longer negative. Instead this type of construction is used by a speaker to rebuke or scold a person who did not carry the job as per the expectation of the speaker.

(52) kùy hûŋ hâm
who come.2 Q.MKR
'Who came?'

(53) kùy hûŋ lòw hâm
who come.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Who did not come?'

(54) kùy hûŋ mɔ̀ɔ hâm
who come.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Who can't come?' (Anybody can come in)

[5] In affirmative interrogative sentences as in (47), the interrogative marker is *nâm*, whereas in negative interrogative sentences as in (48-49), the interrogative marker is always *hâm*.

Felicitous context for (54) would be when a person who is made to fence a fencing to avoid trespassers did the job so poorly that, it wouldn't keep anyone out. In such instance, the speaker may use this type of construction.

(55) ìpîi nâa bɔ̂ɔl hâm
what 2 do.2 Q.MKR
'What are you doing?'

(56) ìpîi nâa bɔ̂ɔl lòw hâm
what 2 do.2 NEG Q.MKR
'What did you not do?'

(57) ìpîi nâa bɔ̂ɔl mòɔ hâm
what 2 do.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Why can't you not do it?'
(You can do it, but why didn't you do it?)

Felicitous context for (57) would be when a person who has been assigned to do a simple job such as cleaning a house did the job so poorly that it would not keep the house. In such instance, the speaker may use this type of construction.

5 Double negation

Thadou exhibits two types of double negations– one in which the two negatives cancel each other to make a positive and the other in which the two negatives remain negative.

5.1 Declarative constructions: lòw and pòo

Thadou declarative constructions exhibit double negation in which there are two semantically active cases of negation which effectively cancel each other out to make a positive. This type of construction is used as an answer to a question which the speaker is already aware of. It is to be noted here that the occurrence of the negatives, *lòw* and *pòo*, belongs to two separate clauses, with *lòw* occurring in the embedded clause and *pòo* in the matrix declarative clause.

(58) kâ hɛ̂q lòw à-hîi pòo êe
1 know.2 NEG 3-be NEG DECL
'It is not the case that I do not know'

The felicitous context in which example (58) would be used is when a speaker is informed about a sudden death of a person in the village or locality which the speaker is already aware of the event of the dead person. In such instances, the speaker may use this type of construction.

(59) kâ nɛ̀q lòw a-hîi pòo êe
1 eat.2 NEG 3-be NEG DECL
'It is not the case that I do not eat'

The felicitous context in which example (59) would be used is when a speaker wanted to deny a statement issued by some that he is not used to eating certain kind of dishes. In such instances, the speaker may use this type of constructions.

(60) zúu kâ dɔ̂ɔn lòw â-hîi pòo êe
liquor 1 drink.2 NEG 3-be NEG DECL
'It is not the case that I do not drink liquor'

The felicitous context in which example (60) would be used is when a speaker wanted to deny when someone who thinks of him never to indulge in a bad habit of drinking wine makes a positive comments about the speaker. In such instances, if the speaker wants to deny such statement, he may use this type of constructions.

5.2 Double negation of mɔ̀ɔ and pòo

The negative particles *mɔ̀ɔ* and *pòo* are used to counter-negate the falsity of a statement or claim that is contained in a negative sentence. This type of construction is used by the hearer/listener to refute a statement made by another person, which he/she thinks it to be false.

(61)

a. bɔ̂ɔl ŋêy lòw â-hîi êe
do.2 habit NEG 3-be DECL
'It is a thing that is not habitually done'

b. bɔ̂ɔl mɔ̀ɔ â-hîi pòo êe
do.2 NEG 3-be NEG DECL
'It is not a thing that is not habitually done'

(62)

a. sèy ŋéy lòw â-hîi êe
say.2 habit NEG 3-be DECL
'It is something that is not habitually said'

b. sèy mɔ̀ɔ â-hîi pòo êe
say.2 NEG 3-be neg decl
'It is not a thing that is not habitually said'

The negative statements in sentences (61a & 62a) can be counter-negated by the negative particles *mɔ̀ɔ* and *pòo* as in (61b) and (62b). I argue that the sentence so negated by *lòw* is a nominalised clause because in Thadou *lòw* is used to negate nominalised constituents (see Cover ms).

This type of parallel construction can be found in Manipur a Tibeto-Burman language of Manipur. Just as in Thadou, Manipuri also exhibits double negation, as shown in example (64) below:

(63) heigru ca ba ya de
gooseberry eat NOM allow NEG
'Gooseberry cannot or is not usually eaten'

(64) heigru ca ba ya da ba nat te
gooseberry eat NOM allow NEG NOM NEG-DEF
'It is not the case that gooseberry cannot be eaten'

5.3 mɔ̀ɔ and hìq

The negative particles *mɔ̀ɔ* and *hìq* are used to negate the falsity of a statement contained in an interrogative negative sentence. This type of construction is used when the person so interrogated turns out to be perfectly fine as in (65b) or the person so interrogated is capable of performing the action as in (66b) and (67b) below. Example (65a) is reproduced from example (48) above.

(65)

a. nà dám lòw hâm
2 well.2 NEG Q.MKR
'Are you not well?'

b. kà dám mɔ̀ɔ hìq êe
1 well.1 NEG NEG DECL
'I am absolutely fine'

(66)

a. nâ nèq thêy lòw hâm
2 eat.2 know NEG Q.MKR
'Can you not eat?'

b. kà nɛ̂ɛ mɔ̀ɔ hìq êe
1 eat.1 NEG NEG DECL
'I can eat' (without you helping me)

(67)

a. nâ zǐq thêy lòw hâm
2 write.2 know NEG Q.MKR
'Can you not write?'

b. kâ zǐq mɔ̀ɔ hìq êe
1 write.1 NEG NEG DECL
'I can write' (without you writing for me)

5.4 Double Negation: Negative coordinator

Double negation also occurs in coordinated sentences. The negative coordinator *hìlòw* is used when neither of the two participants are involved in the act of performing an action.

(68) kêy zôoŋ hìlòw nâŋ zôoŋ hìlòw
1 also be-NEG 2 also be-NEG
'Neither me nor you'

(69) mîi zôoŋ hìlòw sâa zôoŋ hìlòw
man also be-NEG animal also be-NEG
'Neither man nor animal'

5.5 Imperative constructions: lòw and hìq

Unlike the case of the declarative constructions, where the two negative particles cancel each other to make a positive, in imperative constructions the two negative particles may or may not cancel each other. In the following examples, the negative particles *lòw* and *hìq* are especially used to scold or warn a person who says, does or looks things one is not supposed to say, do or look. For the sake of emphasis, the speaker may reduplicate the negative particle *lòw* as shown in examples (70b) to (72b) below.

(70)

a. sêy lòw dîŋ sèy hìq in
say.2 NEG FUT say.1 NEG IMP
'Do not say what is not/should not be said'

b. sêy lòw lòw dîŋ sèy hìq in
say.2 NEG NEG FUT say.1 NEG IMP
'Do not say what is not/should not be said'

(71)

a. bɔ̂ɔl lòw dîŋ bɔ̂ɔl hìq ìn
do.2 NEG FUT do.1 NEG IMP
'Do not do what is not/should not be done'

b. bɔ̂ɔl lòw lòw dîŋ bɔ̂ɔl hìq ìn
do.2 NEG NEG FUT do.1 NEG IMP
'Do not do what is not/should not be done'

(72)

a. vèt lòw dîŋ vée hìq ìn
see.2 NEG FUT see.1 NEG IMP
'Do not look what is not/should not be seen'

b. vèt lòw lòw dîŋ vée hìq ìn
see.2 NEG NEG FUT see.1 NEG IMP
'Do not look what is not/should not be seen'

In the above examples (70-72), the two negative particles do not cancel each other and the resulting meaning is always negative. The two negative particles can also be used to cancel each other to make a positive meaning.

(73) bùu nêe lòw vîn ûm hìq î̂n
food eat.1 NEG IMP stay.1 NEG IMP
'Don't stay without eating' (Literally: eat food)

(74) ì̀múu lòw vîn ûm hì̀q ît̂n
sleep.1 NEG IMP stay NEG IMP
'Don't stay without sleeping' (Literally: sleep)

(75) lèkhâa sì̀m lòw vîn ûm hì̀q ît̂n
book read.1 NEG IMP stay NEG IMP
'Don't stay without reading' (Literally: read book)

Also note that like in the declarative construction the two occurrences of negation, *lòw* and *hìq*, belong to two separate clauses, with *lòw* in the embedded clause and *hìq* in the matrix clause.

6 Negative emphasis/strengthening

As stated earlier, simple declarative constructions are negated by the negative particle *pòo*. For the sake of emphasis, a post verbal element *khaa* 'never' is usually prefixed before the negative particle *pòo*. This may be further followed by another emphatic marker *hìmhìm* 'certainly' for the sake of further emphasis or strengthening.

(76) zòw kâ sêy pòo êe
lies 1 tell.1 NEG DECL
'I do not tell lies'

(77) zòw kâ sêy khâa pòo êe
lies 1 tell.1 never neG DECL
'I never tell lies'

(78) zòw kâ sêy khâa hìmhìm pòo êe
lies 1 tell.1 never at all NEG DECL
'I never tell lies at all' (certainly)

7 Conditional negative particle

Conditional statements in Thadou are negated by negative particle *lòwlèq* which is composed of the negative *lòw* and the conjunction *lèq*. The presence of the conditional negative particle implies the consequence if an action is not performed. The following examples are illustrative.

(79) lèkháa nâ hàa sìm lòw lèq nâ fail dîŋ à-hîi
book 2 more read.2 NEG CONJ 2 fail FUT 3-be
'If you don't study hard, you will fail'

(80) nâ máa tsìi lòw lèq nâ hlùn zòw lòw dîŋ à-hîi
2 early go.2 NEG CONJ 2 reach.2 finish NEG FUT 3-be
'If you don't start early you won't be able to reach'

8 Summary and conclusions

Through a systematic investigation, the paper begins with a brief introduction about the language and the relevant literature on Thadou negation including two common characteristics of Kuki-Chin languages exhibited by Thadou, namely, agreement and verb stem alternations as a clue for further discussion. Having identified the shortcomings and defects of the previous researchers who provide only one type of negative construction for the occurrence of each of the negative particles, the paper tries to fill in the gap by providing three constructions, viz. declarative, imperative and interrogative for the occurrence of each of the negative particles and argues that with the exception to the imperative construction, two or more negative particles can be used in the same type of construction with slight nuances of meaning. The paper further discusses two types of double negations: one in which the two negatives cancel each other to make a positive and the other in which the occurrence of the two negatives remains negative. The last two sections discuss negative strengthening and conditional negative particles in Thadou. The negative particles and their occurrence in different environments are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below. The different types of negative particles are given in the vertical axis and the environment in which they occur are provided in the horizontal axis.

negatives	environment
pôo	(1) The negative *pôo* is used to negate declarative constructions ending in *êe* clauses. (2) In declarative constructions ending in *êe* clauses, the negatives *pôo* and *hìq* can be used interchangeably with slight nuances of meaning, i.e. *pôo* is used to negate unexpected event while *hìq* is used to negate expected event.
hìq	The negative *hìq* is used to negate imperative constructions be they polite, request/advice, command or hortative.
lòw	(1) The negative *lòw* is used to negate declarative constructions ending in *â-ahîi* clauses, *nominalised* clauses and *relative* clauses. (2) It is also used to negate interrogative constructions both WH and yes/no questions. (3) The negatives *lòw* and *dàa* can be used to negate non-perfective interrogative sentences. The former is used to negate general interrogative sentences while the latter is used to negate interrogative sentences which involve a request or proposal. (4) When the negative *dàa* is used in place of the negative *lòw* in perfective interrogative sentences. The interrogative sentences so negated by *dàa* render the entire construction as a dislike or hatred to carry out the action. (5) The negative particles, *dàa* and *lòw* can also be used to negate a question with a slight difference in meaning in *â-hîi* constructions in the sense that the negative particle *dàa* is used as a proposal and *lòw* as an advice.
mɔ̀ɔ	(1) The negative particle *mɔ̀ɔ* and *lòw* can be used to negate interrogative constructions. The former is used to negate interrogative sentences involving a state of affairs or well being of a person with prima-facie or external evidence while the latter is used when there is no prima-facie or external evidence. (2) Similarly, the negative particles *pôo* and *mɔ̀ɔ* are used as a positive answer (i.e. if the person so interrogated turns out to be unwell) But, the latter, i.e. *mɔ̀ɔ* is used when the

	speaker's state of affair is more serious. (3) When the negative particles *mɔ̀ɔ* is substituted with *lòw* in interrogative constructions other than the one which involves a state of affair, the question so negated is no longer negative. Instead this type of construction is used by a speaker to rebuke or scold a person who did not carry out the job as per the expectation of the speaker.

Table 1. Comparative chart of negative particles in different environments

double negatives	environments
lòw and pôo	The negatives *lòw* and *pôo* cancel each other to make a positive meaning in declarative constructions. This type of construction is used by a speaker to answer a question which is already known to him/her.
mɔ̀ɔ and pôo	The negatives *mɔ̀ɔ* and *pôo* are used to counter negate the falsity of a statement or claim contained in a negative sentence. This type of construction is used by the hearer/listener to refute a statement made by another person which the speaker thinks it to be false.
mɔ̀ɔ and hìq	The negatives *mɔ̀ɔ* and *hìq* are used to negate the falsity of a statement contained in interrogative negative sentences.
lòw and hìq	(1) The negatives *lòw* and *hìq* are used in imperative constructions to scold or warn a person who says, does or looks at things one is not supposed to say, do or look. Here the two negative do not cancel each other and the resulting meaning is always negative. (2) The two negatives can be used to cancel each other to make a positive meaning in imperative construction when the speaker wanted to ensure that the action is really carried out by a person.

Table 2. Comparative chart of double negation in different environments

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