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— póo, hiq, and lów, 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. póo, hiq and lów, 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
Negation in Thadou

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1 Introduction

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 mò equality 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 Deborah 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 [pʰ] and [tʰ] are written as ph and th, the glottal stops [ʔ] and voiceless lateral [l] are written as g 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) kê̂̂̂̂yi Lamka àq kâi tseŋ̂̂̂̂̂ ee
   1 Lamka LOC 1 live DECL
   ‘I live in Lamka’

(2) nâŋ̂̂̂ Lamka àq nâi tseŋ̂̂̂ ee
   2 Lamka LOC 2 live DECL
   ‘You live in Lamka’

(3) amâ, Lamka àq âi tseŋ̂̂̂ ee
   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 ~ nát ‘pain’, dín ~ din ‘stand’, gòm ~ gòp ‘unite’, pòxt ~ pòxt ‘go out’, háng ~ hàn ‘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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main clause</th>
<th>Subordinate clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) sâa kâ née ee</td>
<td>sâa kâ nèq lèq...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat 1 eat.1 DECL</td>
<td>meat 1 eat.2 if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I eat/eat meat’</td>
<td>‘If I eat meat…’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) sinima kâ vée ee</td>
<td>sinima kâ vêt lèq...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cinema 1 look.1 DECL</td>
<td>cinema 1 look.2 if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I am watching cinema’</td>
<td>‘If I watch cinema’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) nâwsēen â lûum ēe</td>
<td>nâwsēen â lûp núŋ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baby 3 sleep.1 DECL</td>
<td>baby 3 sleep.2 after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Baby slept’</td>
<td>‘After the baby slept…’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. kéy-n kā nōom hîq êe kā tî hîq êe 'I did not say I did not agree'

(8) a. hung hi in 'Come not'
   b. hûŋ hîq in 'Don’t come'

(9) a. ahi poi 'It is not, no'
   b. â-hîî 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 lôw 'A bad person/thing'
In his paper “Some aspect of negation in Thadou”, Thirumalai (1971) lists bih, po and lou to be the negative particles in Thadou. According to him, the negative bih (written as hiq in this paper) occurs only in imperative sentences, the negative po in non-imperative sentences ending in abi 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 abi ‘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 poo 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 pôo 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 pôo 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 pôo and hìq to produce their respective meanings.

(16) gòo â zùu pôo 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 pôo 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 â 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-mâā 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 dɔɔn lòw mîi
    wine drink.1 NEG man
    ‘Teetotaler’ (Literally: One who does not drink wine)

(24) lɛ̀ kha sìm thêy lòw mîi
    book read.1 know NEG man
    ‘Illiterate’ (Literally: One who does not know how to read)

4.1.3.1 Relative 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.
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(25)  
| a. à hâat | b. à hâat lòw |
| 3 strong.1 | 3 strong.1 NEG |
| 'A strong person' | 'A weak person' |

(26)  
| a. à hòoy | b. à hòoy lòw |
| 3 beautiful.1 | 3 beautiful.1 NEG |
| 'A beautiful person' | 'An ugly person' |

(27)  
| a. à phàa | b. à phàa lòw |
| 3 good.1 | 3 good.1 NEG |
| 'A good person' | 'A bad person' |

4.1.4 Phonologically-induced variations of pòo

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

| c. în nàq kàa tsìi pòoj êe | d. în nàq kàa tsìi pòo ûv êe |
| house LOC 1 go.2 NEG DECL | house LOC 1 go.1 NEG PL DECL |
| 'I do/did not go home' | 'We do/did not go home' |

Second, the negative particle pòo is realized as pòoŋ in (29c) when the negative particle pòo and the future marker itŋ are optionally fused resulting in the deletion of i. Similarly, the negative particle pòo is realized as pòon (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 itŋ and in are phonological variants of the future tense marker itŋ whose shapes are determined by the phonological shape of the following sound. The future tense marker itŋ is realized as itŋ [ŋ] in (29b-c) if the following sound begins with a velar or vowel sound. Similarly, the future tense marker itŋ is realized as in [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 \textit{pòo} is realised as \textit{pôoŋ} and \textit{pôon}. Note that \textit{têe} 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. \textit{în nāa nā tsii diŋ hàm}
   house LOC 2 go.2 FUT Q.MKR
   ‘Will you go home?’

b. \textit{ø tsii pòô ū kà têe}
   I go.1 NEG FUT 1 DEF
   ‘I will not go’

c. \textit{ø tsii pôoŋ kà têe}
   you go.1 NEG FUT 2 DEF
   ‘You will certainly not go’

(30)

a. \textit{în nāa kà tsii diŋ hàm}
   house LOC 1 go.2 FUT Q.MKR
   ‘Will I go home?’

b. \textit{ø tsii pòo in nà tê}
   you go.1 NEG FUT 2 DEF
   ‘You will certainly not go’

c. \textit{ø tsii pôon nà tê}
   you go.1 NEG FUT 2 DEF
   ‘You will certainly not go’

(31)

a. \textit{âmâa în nāa tsii diŋ hàm}
   3 house LOC go.2 FUT Q.MKR
   ‘Will s/he go home?’

b. \textit{âmâa tsii pòo in o têe}
   3 go.1 NEG FUT 3 DEF
   ‘S/he will certainly not go’

c. \textit{âmâa tsii pôon o 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 \textit{têe}. 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 \textit{têe}.

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1 Depending on the phonological shape of the preceding sound, the declarative marker \textit{êe} is realized either as \textit{êe}, \textit{têe} or \textit{têe}. \textit{êe} occurs if the preceding sound ends in a vowel, \textit{têe} if the preceding sound ends in the velar consonant \textit{ŋ} and \textit{têe} if the preceding sound ends in the alveolar consonant \textit{n}.

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

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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 *pôo* 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 tåq*  
3 go.1 NEG POS  
’S/he might not go’

b. ø tsìi *pòq ø tåq*  
3 go.1 NEG 3 POS  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 dɔ̂ɔ n ôo*  
liquor drink.1 IMP  
‘Drink liquor’

b. *zûu dɔ̂ɔ hìq ôo*  
liquor drink.1 NEG IMP (advice)  
‘Don’t drink liquor’

(34)

a. bɔ̂ɔl ɪn  
do.1 IMP  
‘Do it’

b. bɔ̂ɔl hìq ɪn  
do.1 NEG IMP (command)  
‘Don’t do it’

(35)

a. zòw sêy hɛ̂n  
lies tell.1 IMP  
‘Tell lies’

b. zòw sêy hìq hɛ̂n  
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. îpîi nà bɔ̂ol hâm  
what 2 do.2 Q.MKR  
‘What are you doing?’

b. îpîi nà bɔ̂ol lòw hâm  
what 2 do.2 NEG Q.MKR  
‘What is it that you do not do?’
Non-perfective interrogative sentences on the other hand can be negated by both the negative particles *lòw* and *daa*. 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 *daa*) 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. лаа на sàq lòw dîŋ hâm  
   song 2 sing.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR  
   ‘Will you not sing a song?’

b. лаа на sàq daa dîŋ там  
   song 2 sing.2 NEG FUT Q.MKR  
   ‘Will you not sing a song?’

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

(40)  

sàq даa tâŋ ée  
   sing.2 NEG PROP DECL  
   ‘Let me not sing’ (positive answer)

(41)  

tsìi даa tâŋ ée  
   go.2 NEG PROP DECL  
   ‘Let me not go’ (positive answer)

On the other hand, when the negative particle *daa* 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.
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(42) a. sàq dàa tà ŋ ng ŋe  
    sing.2 NEG PROP DECL   sing.1 FUT DECL 
    ‘Let me not sing’ (positive)   ‘I will sing’ (negative)

(43) a. tsìi dàa tà ŋ ng ŋe  
    go.2 NEG PROP DECL   go.1 FUT DECL 
    ‘Let me not go’ (positive)   ‘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 ñ̂ŋ in â-hîî constructions in the sense that the negative particle dàa is used as a proposal and lòw as an advice as indicated in the parenthetical comments in (46b&c) below.

(46) a. bùu nɛ̀ q a pha  
    food eat.2 for good Q.MKR 
    ‘Is it good to have food?’

b. bùu nɛ̀ dàa diŋ à-hîî  
    food eat.2 NEG FUT 3-be 
    ‘Food should not be eaten’ (proposal)

c. bùu nɛ̀ lòw diŋ à-hîî  
    food eat.2 NEG FUT 3-be 
    ‘Food should not be eaten’ (advice)

4.3.1 The negative particle mɔɔ

The negative particle mɔɔ 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 mɔɔ is shown in (48) and (49) below.
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.

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.

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) ipi nāa bɔɔl hàm
what 2 do.2 Q.MKR
‘What are you doing?’

(56) ipi nāa bɔɔl lɔw hàm
what 2 do.2 NEG Q.MKR
‘What did you not do?’

(57) ipi nāa bɔɔl mɔ̀ hàm
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: lɔw and pɔo

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, lɔw and pɔo, belongs to two separate clauses, with lɔw occurring in the embedded clause and pɔo in the matrix declarative clause.

(58) kà hɛq lɔw à-hîi pɔo èe
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) kà nɛq lɔw a-hîi pɔo èe
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 someone 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 dɔɔn lów á-hūi 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. bɔɔl ṭɛy lów á-hūi êe
    do.2 habit NEG 3-be DECL
    ‘It is a thing that is not habitually done’

b. bɔɔl mɔ̀ɔ á-hūi pòo êe
    do.2 NEG 3-be NEG DECL
    ‘It is not a thing that is not habitually done’

(62) a. sêy ṭɛy lów á-hūi êe
    say.2 habit NEG 3-be DECL
    ‘It is something that is not habitually said’

b. sêy mɔ̀ɔ á-hūi 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 lów is a nominalised clause because in Thadou lów 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 \(m\ddot{o}\) and hiq

The negative particles \(m\ddot{o}\) and hiq 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  b. kà dám m\ddot{o} hiq êe
      2 well.2 NEG Q.MKR   1 well.1 NEG NEG DECL
  ‘Are you not well?’    ‘I am absolutely fine’

(66)
  a. nà nèq thèy lòw hâm  b. kà nèè m\ddot{o} hiq êe
      2 eat.2 know NEG Q,MKR   1 eat.1 NEG NEG DECL
  ‘Can you not eat?’     ‘I can eat’ (without you helping me)

(67)
  a. nà ziq thèy lòw hâm  b. kà ziq m\ddot{o} hiq êe
      2 write.2 know NEG Q.MKR   1 write.1 NEG NEG DECL
  ‘Can you not write?’  ‘I can write’ (without you writing for me)

5.4 Double Negation: Negative coordinator

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

(68) këy zóôŋ hilôw  nàŋ zóôŋ hilôw
    1 also be-NEG 2 also be-NEG
  ‘Neither me nor you’

(69) mïi zóôŋ hilôw sàa zóôŋ hilôw
  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 sêy 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 sêy hìq in
   say.2 NEG NEG FUT say.1 NEG IMP
   ‘Do not say what is not/should not be said’

(71)

a. bɔɔl lòw dîŋ bɔɔl hìq in
   do.2 NEG FUT do.1 NEG IMP
   ‘Do not do what is not/should not be done’

b. bɔɔl lòw lòw dîŋ bɔɔl hìq in
   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 in
   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 in
   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 nèe lòw vîn uml hìq in
   food eat.1 NEG IMP stay.1 NEG IMP
   ‘Don’t stay without eating’ (Literally: eat food)
(74) \textit{imúu low vín úm hiq in}  
\textit{sleep.1 NEG IMP stay NEG IMP}  
\textit{‘Don’t stay without sleeping’ (Literally: sleep)}

(75) \textit{lékhàa sùm low vín úm hiq in}  
\textit{book read.1 NEG IMP stay NEG IMP}  
\textit{‘Don’t stay without reading’ (Literally: read book)}

Also note that like in the declarative construction the two occurrences of negation, \textit{low} and \textit{hiq}, belong to two separate clauses, with \textit{low} in the embedded clause and \textit{hiq} in the matrix clause.

6 Negative emphasis/strengthening

As stated earlier, simple declarative constructions are negated by the negative particle \textit{poo}. For the sake of emphasis, a post verbal element \textit{khaa ‘never’} is usually prefixed before the negative particle \textit{poo}. This may be further followed by another emphatic marker \textit{himhim ‘certainly’} for the sake of further emphasis or strengthening.

(76) \textit{zòw kà sêy pòo èe}  
\textit{lies 1 tell.1 NEG DECL}  
\textit{‘I do not tell lies’}

(77) \textit{zòw kà sêy khàa pòo èe}  
\textit{lies 1 tell.1 never neG DECL}  
\textit{‘I never tell lies’}

(78) \textit{zòw kà sêy khàa himhim pòo èe}  
\textit{lies 1 tell.1 never at all neG DECL}  
\textit{‘I never tell lies at all (certainly)’}

7 Conditional negative particle

Conditional statements in Thadou are negated by negative particle \textit{lawlèq} which is composed of the negative \textit{low} and the conjunction \textit{lèq}. The presence of the conditional negative particle implies the consequence if an action is not performed. The following examples are illustrative.

(79) \textit{lèkhàa nà hàa sim low lèq nà fail diŋ à-hii}  
\textit{book 2 more read.2 NEG CONJ 2 fail FUT 3-be}  
\textit{‘If you don’t study hard, you will fail’}

(80) \textit{nà màa tsìi low lèq nà hlùn zòw low diŋ à-hii}  
\textit{2 early go.2 NEG CONJ 2 reach.2 finish NEG FUT 3-be}  
\textit{‘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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>negatives</th>
<th>environment</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| p̂o       | (1) The negative p̂o is used to negate declarative constructions ending in êe clauses.  
(2) In declarative constructions ending in êe clauses, the negatives p̂o and hîq can be used interchangeably with slight nuances of meaning, i.e. p̂o is used to negate unexpected event while hîq is used to negate expected event. |
| hîq      | The negative hîq is used to negate imperative constructions be they polite, request/advice, command or hortative. |
| l̂ow      | (1) The negative l̂ow 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 l̂ow and dáa 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 dáa is used in place of the negative l̂ow in perfective interrogative sentences. The interrogative sentences so negated by dáa render the entire construction as a dislike or hatred to carry out the action.  
(5) The negative particles, dáa and l̂ow can also be used to negate a question with a slight difference in meaning in â-hii constructions in the sense that the negative particle dáa is used as a proposal and l̂ow as an advice. |
| m̂ɔɔ     | (1) The negative particle m̂ɔɔ and l̂ow 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 p̂o and m̂ɔɔ are used as a positive answer (i.e. if the person so interrogated turns out to be unwell) But, the latter, i.e. m̂ɔɔ is used when the |
(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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>double negatives</th>
<th>environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>lòw</em> and <em>p дело</em></td>
<td>The negatives <em>lòw</em> and <em>p дело</em> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mɔ̀ɔ</em> and <em>p дело</em></td>
<td>The negatives <em>mɔ̀ɔ</em> and <em>p дело</em> 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.</td>
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<td><em>mɔ̀ɔ</em> and <em>hìq</em></td>
<td>The negatives <em>mɔ̀ɔ</em> and <em>hìq</em> are used to negate the falsity of a statement contained in interrogative negative sentences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *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 1. Comparative chart of negative particles in different environments

Table 2. Comparative chart of double negation in different environments

**References**


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