

Grammaticalization paths of the Thai verb **day3**:

A corpus-based study

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Previous studies on the polysemous meanings of the verb **day3** in Thai and Lao (e.g. Sindhvananda 1970, Matisoff 1991, Bisang 1996, Meesat 1997, Diller 2001, Enfield 2003, inter alia) assume that the original, core meaning of **day3** is ‘to be able’ or ‘to get (gain, obtain, acquire, attain) something’ or ‘to come to have (possess) something as a result of some prior event’. However, few, if any, studies have seriously tried to provide historical evidence for this assumption.

Based on examination of diachronic corpus data of expressions including **day3** that are gathered from Thai inscriptions in the 13th century through the present time (Takahashi 2005), I hypothesize that originally **day3** was a non-volitional ‘emergence’ verb (whose basic syntactic pattern is [**day3** quantity-NP] which means ‘some quantity emerges’), from which different functional meanings have derived under different syntactic and semantic-pragmatic conditions. Specifically, my investigation of the data shows that it is likely that the meaning of **day3** has undergone changes along the following paths.

- Path 1: [**day3** quantity-NP] (Verb of ‘emergence’)
- > [**day3** NP DATIVE human-NP]
 - > topic-NP [OPTATIVE CAUSATIVE **day3** DATIVE human-NP]
 - > preceding discourse [OPTATIVE **day3** (as I wish)]
 - > [OPTATIVE **day3** VP]
 - > [**day3** VP] (Auxiliary for participant-external actuality or ‘realization’)
e.g. **day3 pay1** ‘I did go.’
- Path 2: [**day3** quantity-NP] (Verb of ‘emergence’)
- > [seeking-VP NP] [NEGATIVE **day3** quantity-NP]
 - > [seeking-VP NP] [NEGATIVE **day3**]
 - > [[VP] NEGATIVE **day3**]
 - > [VP **day3**] (Auxiliary for participant-external possibility or ‘circumstance possibility’)
e.g. **pay1 day3** ‘It is possible to go.’
- Path 3: [**day3** quantity-NP] (Verb of ‘emergence’)
- > [VP] [**day3** quantity-NP]
 - > [VP] [**day3** NP]
 - > [VP] [**day3** NP] -conclusion (Modal copula for ‘conclusion’)
e.g. **nap4 duay3 dUan1 day3 saam5 sip2 dUan1** ‘If I count the period by month and then I should conclude that it amounts to thirty months.’
- * **day3** in present-day Thai is no longer used as a modal copula.

These grammaticalization paths all involve the two major processes of semantic change: (a) ‘abstraction’ or ‘generalization’ (Bybee&Pagliuca 1985) (cf. ‘semantic bleaching’ (Sweetser 1988), ‘schematization’ (Langacker 1991), ‘attenuation’ (Langacker 1999)); (b) ‘specification’ (Traugott&König 1991, Kuteva 1999) (cf. ‘pragmatic strengthening’ (Traugott 1988), ‘subjectification’ (Traugott 1989, 1995)). Particularly, they involve (a) abstraction of the referential, content meaning of **day3** and its nominal argument (i.e. the described emergence event with an emerging entity) and (b) specification of the constructional, “frame”-like meaning of the **day3** expression in question and a certain modal meaning associated (i.e. the speaker’s subjective construal).

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