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From objective to subjective and to intersubjective functions: The case of the Thai ‘truth’-lexeme

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Abstract

Borrowed lexemes developing into discourse markers (DMs) are uniquely valuable research topics from contact linguistic and grammaticalization perspectives. Although a large number of Sino-Thai lexemes are commonly used, there has not been any serious attempt to analyze such lexemes. The aim of this study is to describe diverse discourse functions of the Sino-Thai lexemes involving *ciŋ* ‘true’ drawing upon corpus data, to analyze their development with respect to grammaticalization mechanisms, to identify their DM properties, to compare with the developments reported in other languages, and to construct a conceptual-functional network. The data obtained from diverse sources, including historical and contemporary dictionaries, online resources, reference grammars, contemporary corpora, among others show that the lexeme *ciŋ* ‘true’ denotes ‘true, truth, real’ (objective meaning) as a lexical word, but it also functions adverbially as an intensifier marking ‘surely, definitely’ (subjective meaning) which is a natural development of its lexical meaning. In the domain of discourse, the lexeme acquired a number of interactional functions (intersubjective meaning). A review of the Thai DMs based on *ciŋ* ‘true’ (truth-DMs) in light of grammaticalization parameters shows that changes characterizable as desemanticization, extension, and decategorialization are observable, whereas erosion is either not observed or its reverse is often found. Despite variable degrees of semantic bleaching, the semantic change in the movement from objective to subjective, and further to intersubjective meanings, is prominent. The functional similarity between truth-DMs across languages notwithstanding, the differences are much greater. These findings contribute to the understanding of the role of source semantics as well as its limits in the developmental paths of DMs.

Keywords: *discourse marker, grammaticalization, (inter)subjective functions, Thai, truth*

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От объективных функций к субъективным и интерсубъективным: тайская лексема *σίη* «истина»

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Аннотация

Заемствованные лексемы, развивающиеся в дискурсивные маркеры (ДМ), являются уникальными лингвистическими феноменами с точки зрения контактной лингвистики и грамматикализации. Несмотря на то, что сино-тайские лексемы достаточно многочисленны и частотны, до сих пор не было серьезных попыток их проанализировать. Целью данного исследования является выявление и описание различных дискурсивных функций сино-тайских лексем, в том числе лексемы *σίη* «истинный», с опорой на корпусные данные. Среди наших задач – анализ их развития с точки зрения механизмов грамматикализации, выявление их свойств в качестве ДМ, сравнение с развитием, описанным в других языках, и построение концептуально-функциональной сетки. Данные, полученные из различных источников, включая исторические и современные словари, онлайн-ресурсы, справочные грамматики, современные корпуса и т.д., показывают, что лексема *σίη* «истинный» обозначает «истинный, истина, реальный» (объективное значение), но при адвербиальном употреблении в качестве усилителя она обозначает «конечно, определенно» (субъективное значение), что является естественным развитием ее лексического значения. В сфере дискурса лексема выполняет ряд интеракционных функций (интерсубъективное значение). Рассмотрение тайских ДМ на основе *σίη* «истинный» («истина – ДМ») в свете параметров грамматикализации показывает, что изменения, характеризуемые как десемантизация, расширение значения и декатегоризация, лежат на поверхности, их можно наблюдать, тогда как эрозия носит скрытый характер, либо не наблюдается. Несмотря на различную степень десемантизации, семантическое изменение в направлении от объективного значения – к субъективному и далее – к интерсубъективному является значительным. Несмотря на функциональное сходство «истина – ДМ» в разных языках, различия между ними весьма значимы. Полученные результаты способствуют пониманию роли исходной семантики, а также ее ограничений в процессе развития дискурсивных маркеров.

Ключевые слова: дискурсивный маркер, грамматикализация, (интер)субъективные функции, тайский язык, «истина»

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1. Introduction

Thai and Chinese belong to different language families, with Thai in Kra-Dai (Tai-Kadai) family, and Chinese in the Sino-Tibetan. Although the two languages are not genealogically connected, they share a number of typological features as a result of both geographic propinquity and China’s historical cultural-intellectual leadership in the region. As a result, Thai has retained a large number of words borrowed from Middle Chinese (Haarmann 2012[1986]: 165, Suthiwan & Tadmor

2009: 601, among others). One such example is the Thai lexeme *ciŋ* ‘true/real’ (*ciŋ* per IPA, *ching* per the Royal Thai General System, *jing* per the Enhanced Phonemic Transcription, and จิง in Thai script) which is borrowed from Middle Chinese *cin* ‘true, real, sincere’ (Suthiwan & Tadmor 2009: 613), and which has been the root of many derived words and expressions that have developed into discourse markers (DMs). Despite the prevalent use and polyfunctionality of the Thai DM *ciŋ* and its formal and functional relatives, collectively referred to as ‘*ciŋ*-DMs’, they have received no scholarly attention to date. This paper, therefore, intends to fill the research gap. The goal of this study is to explore the diverse functions of the *ciŋ*-DMs in contemporary Thai, drawing upon corpus data, to analyze their development from a grammaticalization perspective, to compare the functions with those reported in other languages, and to create a conceptual-functional network. Thus, this paper aims to answer the following research questions: (i) what are the DM functions of the truth-DMs of the Chinese origin, (ii) to what extent does their development conform to grammaticalization parameters, (iii) what properties do they have, (iv) how similar or different are they from the corresponding DMs in other languages, and (v) what kind of conceptual-functional network do they form?

This paper is organized in the following manner. After this introductory section, Section 2 provides a brief description of the theoretical framework; Section 3 describes the research methods; Section 4 exemplifies the lexical uses and DM uses of *ciŋ* and its relatives; Section 5 analyzes the development of *ciŋ*-DMs in view of the grammaticalization parameters, discourse marker properties, crosslinguistic perspectives, and conceptual-functional networks; and Section 6 summarizes major findings and concludes the paper.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is grammaticalization theory as pioneered by Meillet (1912), and further elaborated and refined by Kuryłowicz (1975[1965]), Lehmann (2015[1982]), Heine et al. (1991), Heine (1992), Hopper and Traugott (2003), and many other theorists. For analysis of grammaticalization of DMs, the author of this research referenced works by Heine (2013) and Heine et al. (2021), and the discussion of grammaticalization and language contact is drawn largely from Heine and Kuteva (2005), and Shibasaki and Higashiizumi (forthcoming). The analysis of conceptual motivations in the form of networks is due to Narrog and Ito (2007), and Narrog (2010). This synchrony-based reconstruction approach principally draws on the uniformitarian principle (Labov 1994, Romaine 1982), arguably the most fundamental precept in grammaticalization and in historical linguistics more generally. It is particularly notable that Labov (1994: 157) states that “we have no other choice.” with respect to methodological uniformitarianism.

3. Data and research methods

The present research is a conceptual, descriptive analysis of linguistic data, and it has involved no experimentation. The data have been collected from diverse sources, including historical and contemporary dictionaries, lexica, online resources, reference grammars, contemporary corpora, and, importantly, native-speaker intuitions of the author.

The corpus data were taken from two major sources: the Thai National Corpus and the Thai Drama Corpus. The Thai National Corpus is an online, searchable, 33.4-million-word corpus developed by Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. The data mostly date between 1988 and 2017. The Thai Drama Corpus is a 163-thousand-word corpus compiled by Kyungeun Park in 2010. It contains the scripts of 94 episodes from the 14 most popular TV dramas aired between 2005 and 2009.¹ As both of these corpora provide only contemporary data, historical information on the Thai language was garnered from other sources such as etymology dictionaries and lexica.

4. Results

Data collection and analysis of usage of *ciη* and its related forms rendered the following results at the lexical and discourse levels.

4.1. Thai lexical use of *ciη*

The lexeme *ciη* is used primarily as either an adjective denoting ‘true, truthful, real, serious, authentic, original, etc.’ or an adverb denoting ‘really, truthfully, well, etc.’ (*Royal Thai Dictionary* 2011). The word is frequently used for quality marking, as in *khǒŋ ciη* ‘genuine article’, *rǎaŋ ciη* ‘true story’, *phūut ciη* ‘serious talk’, *tham ciη* ‘act sincerely’, etc. Its other common usage is for degree marking, as in *talòk ciη* ‘very funny’, *sanùk ciηciη* ‘very enjoyable’, *nāasǒncay ciηciη* ‘very interesting’, etc. (As in the last two examples, *ciη* is often reduplicated for emphasis.)

The lexical usage of *ciη* is largely identical to that of its etymon, the Chinese *cin* (眞/真). According to SEALANG (n.d.; see entry for ‘ຈິງ’ /*ciη*/), the Middle Chinese *cin* (or *zhen*, *tsyn*) denoted ‘true, real, factual, genuine, actual, substantial, really, truly’ and ‘highest sincerity one is capable of’, suggesting that it had adjectival, adverbial, and nominal usages.²

¹ Special thanks go to Professor Kyungeun Park for granting free use of her corpus for this research.

² In Chinese historical periodization, Middle Chinese spans from the 4th to the 12th centuries. The SEALANG data, available at sealang.net/thai/chinese/middle.htm, are based on the works by Thomas Chin, William Baxter, Sergei Starostin, and others. In addition to lexical uses, the SEALANG data indicates the word was used as a family name. According to Bo Hong (p.c.), the Chinese etymon of Thai *ciη* is *qing* (情) ‘true’, which was later replaced by *cin* (眞/真). Despite the possibility of etymological difference, the Thai *ciη* being the truth-DM remains unaffected.

4.2. The *ciŋ* discourse markers

Thai *ciŋ*-DMs carry diverse discourse functions. Functional classification may vary greatly depending on the granularity of an analysis, because most functions of a form, by virtue of sharing an origin, are closely related to each other and may be consolidated into a more comprehensive category, or may be divided into multiple categories by means of fine-grained feature analysis. The present research has identified seven related, yet distinct functions of the *ciŋ*-DMs that are reasonably well-defined either by the form's taking different paths of conceptual extension or by the semantic contribution of the forms participating in the construction of polylexemic DMs, including: (dis)agreement response token, sudden realization/remembrance, surprise, confirmation solicitation, perspective shift, elaboration, and emphasis.

4.2.1. (Dis)agreement response token

Among the most common uses of the Thai DM *ciŋ* is its function as an agreement response token. It is widely observed across world languages that lexemes denoting 'true, real, right' often function as markers of agreement or confirmation response. Examples of this phenomenon include the English *right* (Gardner 2001, Bolden et al. 2023), Spanish *en efecto* 'in truth' and *efectivamente* 'truly' (Garcés 2014), German *stimmt* 'right, true' (Betz 2015), Hebrew *naxon* 'right, true' (Maschler & Shapiro 2016), Korean *cincca* '(the) real thing' (Rhee & Zhang 2024), and Korean *maca* '(that's) right', (Seongha Rhee p.c.). The conceptual motivation of [true > 'yes' 'I agree'] is straightforward. Intuitively, the development of agreement-marking DMs that arose from 'true, real, right' indeed seems to be common across languages. This usage of the Thai DM *ciŋ* is exemplified in the following excerpt:³

- (1) Some villagers are arguing with Seng, a hunter. One couple are against hunting and tell the hunter to respect the lives of animals. The hunter refuses to listen and says that those animals are just animals and that their lives do not matter.

Uncle: [Human beings are not the only species in the world, Seng. There are other species, too.]

Aunt: *ciŋ*

DM

'DM ((I) agree!')

Seng: [Hmm... talking to old people makes me mad. Anyway, I'll be the future leader of this world. Come on! Old people in this village don't know what I have experienced.]

(2008 Drama, *Thida Wanon* Episode #2)

³ In the examples presented in this paper, lines that do not require morphemic glosses are given in English translation within square brackets, and supplementary information not indicated in the original text is provided in parentheses for clarity in translation.

Other uses are closely related to agreement marking. For instance, as observed by Gardner (2001), the agreement DM may be used for back-channeling without claiming the turn, which is also the case in Thai. Furthermore, when the DM *ciŋ* accompanies a negation marker such as *mây* ‘no, not’, the DM then functions as a marker of disagreement, a conceptually straightforward functional extension with the operator of negation. Thus, the two forms *mây ciŋ* ‘not true’ and *mây ciŋ rɔ̀ɔk* ‘not true’ are used as disagreement response tokens. The two forms are nearly identical in function but the particle *rɔ̀ɔk* has the softening effect, thus *mây ciŋ* is more assertive and definitive than *mây ciŋ rɔ̀ɔk*. These two disagreement markers are exemplified in the following excerpts:

- (2) Nuan-Prang and Ong-In are female friends. Ong-In comes from a rich family unlike their male classmate Sao, who is from a poor family. Nuan-Prang and another classmate named Motdaeng are asking Ong-In if she loves Sao. Ong-In hides her true feelings.

Nuan-Prang: [Do you love Sao?]

Ong-In: [Who told you that?]

Motdaeng: [Myself. I told myself. I saw your behavior before him. You must be in love with him a lot. Come on, admit it!]

Ong-In: *mây.ciŋ* *Mótdeɛŋ* *chǎn* *khɔ̀ɔ* *patisèet*
 DM [name] I beg deny
chǎn *mâydây* *chɔ̀ɔp* *kháw* *sàk* *nòy*
 I cannot like him just little
phûuchaay *àray* *mâydây-rûaŋ* *sàk* *yàaŋ* *bûu* *bûu* *thûu* *thûu*
 man what incompetent just type dumb dumb dull dull
mây-aw-nǎy *mii* *fɛɛn* *léew* *iik-tàaŋhàak* *chǎn* *mây* *chɔ̀ɔp*
 useless have girlfriend PST as.well I not like
 ‘DM (= No, it’s not true!) Motdaeng! I deny! I don’t like him at all. He is a loser, dull and useless. Also, he (already) has a girlfriend. I don’t like him.’

Motdaeng: [OK, OK, I believe you. But why are you so angry?]

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

- (3) Saranat and Rungthip are exercising in the evening at the front yard of the house. They see Pawi, their son, about to leave the house. They talk to him and find out that Pawi and Nit (their daughter-in-law) have argued. Rungthip walks into the house to talk to Nit who is crying and packing her belongings.⁴

Rungthip: [Oh! where are you going, Nit?]

Nit: [Ah... I am going to stay at sister Ni’s house.]

Rungthip: [Umm...you are not a person who always runs away from problems. I know that Pawi loves you.]

⁴ A few notable peculiarities of address or person reference exist in Thai. Thais often use nicknames that are typically monosyllabic or truncated names (as *Wa* for *Wathit* in (11)) since most Thai names are polysyllabic and difficult to remember or say. Kinship terms, e.g., *phûi* ‘older sibling’, are often used in non-kin relations for affection, as in (6) and (12). It is also common to refer to oneself or one’s addressee in the third person, or to use one’s own (nick)name (as *Nit* in (3)) or addressee’s name (as *Phi* in (11)), instead of first person and second person pronouns.

Nit: *mây.cij.rɔ̀ɔk khâ kháw ðɔ̀kà kliat Nit cà-taay*
 DM F:PTCL 3SG:M tend hate [name](=I) extremely
 ‘DM (= It’s not true). He really hates me.’

Rungthip: [You two are so stubborn. Anyway, you were hurt so much and now you are crying. I have never seen you cry. Put your clothes back in the closet, please. Trust me.]

(2006 Drama, *Khing Ko Ra Kha Ko Raeng* Episode #9)

4.2.2. Confirmation solicitation

Another function of *cij*-DMs, closely related to agreement marking, is that of confirmation solicitation. The confirmation or agreement function of REAL/TRUE-DMs has been discussed in a number of studies, notably regarding the English (*that’s*) *right* (Schegloff 1996). The confirmation/agreement function can easily be extended to confirmation solicitation by means of question markers or prosodic variation (e.g., *That’s right. – Is that right?; Right? – Right.*). In Thai, three variant DMs carry this function of confirmation solicitation: *cij pàaw*, *cij rɔ̀ɔ* and *cij rɔ̀ɔ pàaw*, all involving markers resembling a ‘P or not P’ question. It is evident from their formal shape that these three DMs are closely related in form, as they exhibit variable degrees of erosion, and involve, in addition to the central form *cij* ‘true’, *rɔ̀ɔ* ‘or’ (a colloquial form of *rɔ̀ɔ* ‘or’), and *pàaw* (an eroded form of *plàaw* ‘no, nothing, plain’). Thus, their lexical sources may be traced to *cij rɔ̀ɔ* ‘true or’, *cij pàaw* ‘true (or) not’, and *cij rɔ̀ɔ pàaw* ‘true or not’. While these DMs may occur at either left-periphery or right-periphery, a survey of their occurrence patterns in the reference corpora shows distributional asymmetry with strong preference for the right-periphery.⁵ Solicitation of confirmation, judged from the context, is based on the genuine question ‘(is it) true or not?’ or ‘do you agree?’, but it may also carry a skeptical overtone when the speaker is uncertain about the veracity of the interlocutor’s statement, e.g., ‘is that really true?’, as in the following excerpt.

- (4) Duean comes to meet her ex-boyfriend Songchai at work. She throws herself into his arms in a very amorous way. She is in fact not interested in him anymore but feigns intimacy in order to win his favor to solve her problem with his help.

Duean: [Songchai.]

Songchai: [Hey, Duean.]

Duean: [I missed you so badly. I wanted to see you.]

Songchai: *cij.rú.pàaw nùk wàa thamñaan phlæ̀n con luum chán sá-ìik*
 DM think that work enjoy till forget I PTCL
léew thîi bɔ̀ɔk wâa mii thúra dùan nâ rúan àray
 then that tell that have business urgent PTCL subject what

⁵ As Reijirou Shibasaki (p.c.) kindly points out, the left/right distinction is problematic with the languages with right-to-left writing conventions, e.g., Arabic, Hebrew, and some traditional styles of writing in East Asian languages. Following the spirit of the researchers who pioneered the notions of left- and right-periphery, the left-periphery can be equated with ‘before’ the clause and the right-periphery with ‘after’ the clause.

‘**DM (Really?)** I thought you enjoyed your work and forgot me (completely). You said you had an urgent issue to talk with me. What is it?’

Itti: [Umm...the coming issue of *Real Man* has to be finished today. But Mr. Wa has not approved the final draft yet.]

Songchai: [Oh (stressed face)... Where is he now?]

(2005 Drama, *Song Sa-ne-ha* Episode #7)

Ciη-DMs can indicate confirmation request, skepticism, disbelief, or even challenge, in which cases they may be translated as ‘what are you talking about?’, ‘get real!’, or ‘I can’t follow your reasoning, etc.’ This type of usage is well illustrated in the following excerpt:

(5) Three students from poor families, Boem, Sao, and Eak, are discussing finding a part-time job to earn money to pay for their study.

Boem: [Hey, this one! Premium Sport Club, the club for high-society people. They are recruiting workers! Well-paid! If you are interested, let’s go to apply for a job together this evening.]

Sao: [What? Let me see. What kind of work can we do?]

Boem: [Of course, we will apply for a supervisor position.]

Eak: *hōo!* *ciη.rǔǔ*

INTJ DM

‘Oh, **DM (= What are you talking about?)**’

Boem: [I don’t want to be a laborer, of course! Alas, (why are you questioning it?)]

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

4.2.3. Emphasis

Another function of *ciη*-DMs is to add emphasis to an ensuing statement. Considering the source semantics of *ciη*-DMs, such a functional extension seems well-motivated, and is widely reported across various languages (cf. the intensifier functions of ‘reality, fact’ lexemes, Kim 2003, Yaguchi et al. 2010, Gray 2012, Ricca & Visconti 2014, Rhee 2016, 2021, among many others). The *ciη*-DM for this function is *khwaam ciη* ‘truth,’ in which *khwaam* is a nominalizing prefix (cf. *khwaam-sùk* [NOMZ-happy] ‘happiness’). This development is analogous to the English emphasis markers used at the left-periphery *fact* and *the fact*, which are the truncated forms of *the fact is that* (Kim 2003). As *khwaam ciη* typically occurs at the left-periphery, its reference is cataphoric, serving as a preface to noteworthy information that is about to be presented, effectively saying, ‘let me tell you this’ or ‘this is important’. This usage is exemplified in the following excerpt:

(6) Pawi (= Wi) and Nit got married through an arrangement. Pawi’s lover Phiangphen (= Phen) is jealous and does not like Nit. She and her close friend, Bencharat (= Ben), are quarreling with Nit.

Nit: [You spinsters! I think you and Phiangphen might not find any good men to be your husbands.]

Bencharat: [You, b****!]

- Nit: [Hey, don't go to Singapore. Go to Cannes because you are going to be an old maid in Cannes*.]
 (later... Phiangphen is calling her lover Pawi to tell him about the quarrel she and her friend had with his wife Nit.)
- Phiangphen: *phanrayaa phũ Wi nĩa ráaykàat mâak ləəy ná-khá*
 wife brother [name](= you) DM evil very really PTCL
khwaam.cij *Phen kôə mây yàakcà thoo maa rópkuən*
 DM [name](=I)also not want call come disturb
phũ Wi léew lâ-khá tɛɛ-kôə ət sŏŋsáan phũ Ben máyđáy.
 brother [name] then PTCL but avoid pity sister [name] cannot
thùuk man dàa sá sàat-sĩa-thee-sĩa ləəy nâ-khá
 PASS 3SG:PEJ scold like severely really PTCL
 'Your wife is so mean. **DM (= This is very important)**, I didn't want to call to disturb you. But poor Ben (I can't help pitying her)! She got verbally attacked very severely by her (your miserable wife Nit).
 [Hey! You don't want to say anything?]
- Pawi: [I... I have no comment. That's all? I have things to finish.]
- Phiangphen: [Yes. That's all.]
 (talks to herself) [He is not jealous about her chasing men. It means that he does not love her. (That's good.)]
 (2006 Drama, *Khing Ko Ra Kha Ko Raeng* Episode #9)
 (*Cannes is a homophone of 'house-beam', where men cannot find any woman if she is sitting on it.)

4.2.4. Surprise

The next function of *cij*-DMs is that of marking surprise. Lexemes denoting 'real, true' developing into mirative DMs have been reported by Maschler and Estlein (2008) for Hebrew *be'emet* 'in truth'. Thai *cij*-DMs are similar in that respect. The *cij*-DM with the function is *taay cij*, in which *taay* denotes 'die'. Recruiting 'die' for formation of a DM seems to be similar to the English *dead* used as an intensifier, as in *dead sure*, *dead right*, *dead in time* (cf. Blanco-Suárez 2014, Rhee 2016). This usage is illustrated in the following:

- (7) Phatthra is talking on the phone when her sister Pharani comes into the room and overhears some part of the conversation.
- Phatthra: *àray ná khá taay.cij pen àray mâak rú-pàaw khá*
 what PTCL F:PTCL DM be what severe Q F:PTCL
ǝ ... khə̀əpkhun mâak khá
 DM thank.you very F:PTCL
 'What? **DM (=Oh my God!)** Is she in a grave condition? Oh... Thank you very much.'
- Pharani: [What happened, Phat?]
 Phatthra: [Nit got clipped by a motorbike last night. But she is alright.]
 Pharani: [Oh my God!] (She is shocked and sinks into a sofa.)
 (2006 Drama, *Khing Ko Ra Kha Ko Raeng* Episode #9)

Since surprise may be of variable strengths and either desirable or undesirable in nature, *taay ciŋ* can mark various kinds of surprise. From a data survey, however, *taay ciŋ* tends to mark a ‘happy’ surprise, typically occurring in a monologue, unlike the instance illustrated in (7) above. When it is uttered, the prosody includes a soft tone and elongated intonation at the end, e.g., *taay ci~ŋ*.

4.2.5. Sudden realization/remembrance

Another function closely related to the ‘surprise’ function described above is that of marking sudden realization or remembrance. It has been shown in some studies that certain REAL/TRUE-DMs are used in signaling ‘remembering’ (e.g., English *that’s right*, Heritage 1998, Korean *cham*, Rhee 2021). Since sudden remembrance/realization also involves an element of surprise, the two functions are similar. The difference between them is that the sudden realization/remembrance involves the speaker’s memory lapse or inability to perceive something encountered earlier, whereas the surprise function usually involves something the speaker is encountering for the first time. Since sudden realization/remembrance often involves a lapse of memory and thus delinquency, the usage is typically associated with the speaker’s feelings of guilt, implying ‘It’s a shame that only now I remember/realize it.’ If the situation involves the speaker’s infringement on the interlocutor, the DM carries an apologetic tone, implying ‘I’m sorry’. Furthermore, unlike *taay ciŋ* in the surprise function, it tends to be directed to the interlocutor (rather than monologal), spoken fast (rather than slow and elongated) with an excited tone (rather than a soft tone), and apologetic (rather than happy) in the sudden realization/remembrance function. This is exemplified in the following two excerpts:

- (8) Sitrang is in front of her daughter’s bedroom door. Wondering if her daughter is already asleep, she speaks softly at the door.

Sitrang: [Ong-In, my sweetheart, are you sleeping?]

Ong-In: [I’m sleeping now.]

Sitrang: *õo taay.ciŋ taay.ciŋ mêe læy maa rópkuən kaan-nəən*

Oh DM DM mother(=I)DM come disturb sleep

khǝŋ lúuk læy châymäy khá

of kid(=you) DM Q F:PTCL

‘Oh! DM (I’m sorry)! DM (I’m sorry)! Did I disturb your sleep?’

Ong-In: [Oh yep. Oops! Nope. You are not disturbing me. But how come you haven’t gone to bed this late tonight? Be careful. When you wake up tomorrow, you may not look beautiful (because of lack of sleep).]

Sitrang: [I could not sleep because I’m worried about you.]

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

- (9) Praphot calls Pen, his wife. She forgot to call her brother-in-law Yak to make an arrangement to visit her father-in-law who has been hospitalized. She has been busy working and completely forgot about her promise to call Yak.

Praphot: [Are you OK? Brother Yak said no one called him. (in worried voice)]

Pen: *taay.ciŋ luum sĭa sanĭt*

DM forget PST completely

‘DM (Oh dear!) (I) completely forgot.’

(She is disconcerted unable to speak further, and then continues.)

[I still don’t feel well. (I) don’t want to spread germs.]

(2009, Fiction, *Phu Ru Phu Tuen Phu Tromtrom*, TNC)

Another type of sudden realization is marked by the periphrastic DM *tĕe thĭi ciŋ lĕew nĭa* consisting of *tĕe* ‘but’, *thĭi* ‘at’, *ciŋ* ‘true’, *lĕew* PTCL, and *nĭa* ‘this:PTCL’. Despite the compositional complexity, this construction is fully univerted as a single expression which Thai speakers perceive naturally and intuitively rather than analytically. The expression is a unitized DM commonly used to offer an alternative suggestion, translatable as ‘Wait, why don’t you...?’ or ‘Oh, I hit upon an idea!’ This function closely resembles that of the English REAL/TRUE-DM *actually*, which is used to signal ‘I suddenly thought of something better’ (cf. Aijmer 2016), as illustrated in the following:

- (10) Ong-In wants to go out to work at the university with friends during the weekend. Her mother (Sitrang) tries to convince her to stay home and invite her friends instead, since she is afraid that her daughter will see Sao, the poor man that she does not like.

Ong-In: [Mom, have you seen my sports car key?]

Sitrang: [Where are you going?]

Ong-In: [I have an appointment with friends to work at the university.]

Sitrang: [Friends?]

Ong-In: [Yep. Nuan and Motdaeng... (finds the key) ahh.. I’ve got it! Thanks, Mom.]

Sitrang: *tĕe.thĭi.ciŋ.lĕew.nĭa thammay nĭu mây chuan yay Nuan kàp*
 DM why kid(=you) not invite [title] [name] and
Mótdeej maa nānlĕn thĭi bâan lĕew dĭaw mĕe hĭy Aranchara
 [name] come relax at home then later mother(=I) ask [name]
sĭt khanōm arōy arōy khāwmaa nĭj thaan kan dĭikwàa aw mǎy
 buy snack tasty tasty come sit eat together better take Q
 ‘DM (Wait, I’ve got an idea!), (why don’t) you invite Nuan and
 Motdaeng to come here. I’ll ask Aranchara to buy good snack for you guys.
 (How’s that?)’

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

Still another DM of sudden realization/remembrance is *ciŋ sĭ*, consisting of *ciŋ* ‘true’ and *sĭ* PTCL. Its function is nearly identical with the DM *tĕe thĭi ciŋ lĕew nĭa* described above, signaling ‘I’ve got an idea’ or ‘I just remembered’. This function is shown in the following:

- (11) At a filming studio, Mr. Daeng, a drama director, is very angry with Philatlak (= Phi) because she forgot to bring the costumes that they need today in shooting. Their assistants, Koen and Chit, are also trying to find solutions.

Koen: [Err... Chit Chit, didn't Lucy say we could use her costumes?]

Chit: [Ah... Lucy said there are no costumes left in her shop because the magazine *Real Man* took them all to shoot their ads.]

Director: [Errrr... This is so disappointing! Cancel everything! No more shooting!]

Koen: [Hey hey hey! Uncle Daeng! Please wait wait wait...]

əə əə **ciŋ.sì** nócŋ Phi nan̩sɯ̄t RealMan nîà pen khócŋ khun Wathit
hey hey DM sister [name] book [name] DM be of Mr [name]
chây-máy raw nâacà khuy kàp kháw dâay ná əə ... tề
Q we may talk with him can PTCL er but
nócŋ Phi à yan̩khon mâydây fócŋ rúan̩ bòtsâmphâat an nán ná
sister [name] PTCL still not listen story interview CLF that PTCL
'Hey hey! **DM (= I've got an idea.)** Phi! The *Real Man* magazine
belongs to Wathit? We might talk with him. Er... but you haven't listened
to that interview yet, (right?).'

Philatlak: [Not yet. But I don't get involved with him (her ex-boyfriend) anymore. You can fine me. I'm OK. Or you can deduct it from my pay. Please...please.]

(2005 Drama, *Song Sa-ne-ha* Episode #7)

4.2.6. Elaboration

Among the most commonly used *ciŋ*-DMs in Thai is *ciŋ ciŋ léew*, consisting of *ciŋ* 'true' *ciŋ* 'true', and *léew* PTCL. The final *léew* is an intensifying particle to mark emphasis, one also used for completion of an event or state, comparable to the English past tense. The DM *ciŋ ciŋ léew* signals that an elaboration is to follow, conveying the message 'let me tell you more'. This function also closely resembles that of the English DM *actually*, which signals elaboration, addition, justification, clarification, etc. (Aijmer 2016), as illustrated in the following:

- (12) Ong-In (= In) and Sao attend the same university. They like each other but their economic statuses are very different. Ong-In comes from a rich family while Sao is from a poor one. He works part-time at a golf resort, where Ong-In is a VIP member.

Sao: [The world of rich people includes only golf courses and beautiful grass. But in the world of countryside people, plants and soil are their life. That's not a place for high-class girls to hang out in. The volunteer camp in the countryside might not be suitable for you.]

Ong-In: [High-class girls... I really hate that word!]

Sao: **ciŋ.ciŋ.léew** nócŋ In mây khuancà maa dâən yùu thîinîi
DM sister [name] not should come walk at here
dûaysám nócŋ In khuancà pay tii-kócŋ yùu thîi nûun léew
even sister [name] should go play.golf at place that then
phîi kócŋ khuancà pen khon kèp lûuk-kócŋ hây nócŋ In
brother(=I) also should be person collect golf.ball to sister [name]

‘**DM (Let me tell you)**, you shouldn’t be here (the workers’ zone). You should go and play golf over there. And I should be the person who collects golf balls for you.’

[If someone sees a VIP customer like you walking with me, it might not be good.]

Ong-In: [By saying this... do you mean that I should get out of here?]

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

4.2.7. Perspective shift

The last functional category of *ciη*-DMs is perspective shift, signaled by the reduplicated *ciη ciη* ‘true true’ and *ciη ciη à*, where *à* is a particle. With these DMs, the speaker signals that they are shifting their perspective from the current one to a new one, whereby they reinstate the crux of the state of affairs, disregarding all peripheral issues, either presented or imagined. It is paraphrasable as ‘putting aside all other issues’, and may also signal that the speaker is returning to the main issue after digression. Since shift can be highly contrastive on the part of the interlocutor, who is still in the ongoing perspective, this DM is perceived as a signal of forthcoming disalignment. The development of *ciη ciη* and *ciη ciη à* is unique in that, in Thai, the general effect of reduplication is intensification rather than disalignment. This function also resembles that of the English DM *actually*, whose core meaning is ‘contrast or opposition’ (Aijmer 2016) or ‘correct[ing] a prior utterance or an implication and emphasiz[ing] divergence’ (Haselow 2013). Also notable is that these reduplicative DMs *ciη ciη* and *ciη ciη à* carry the function of prefacing not only the shift of the speaker’s perspective but also disalignment from the previous speaker, thus often challenging the veracity of the previous speaker’s claim or statement. The following excerpts illustrate the functions of perspective shift: one for reinstating the crux of the state of affairs and the other for assuming a new, completely different perspective.

(13) Nuan-Prang invited her friends to a volunteer camp in a rural area because she wanted to see a man there with whom she fell in love. However, she keeps changing her mind as to whether to go or not, and her friends are annoyed.

Ong-In: [What? I just told my dad that we won’t go to the camp. Now you want us to register again? Hey! How come you are so capricious?]

Motdaeng: [You keep changing your mind! I’m confused!]

Nuan-Prang: [I am sorry. So, then... I won’t go, OK? (feeling guilty)]

Ong-In: *háy dīawkòon dīawkòon khuu chǎn wāa ciη.ciη man kòo*
 hey wait wait DM I think DM it also
léewtèe thəə ná thāa thəə yàak samàk kòo samàk
 depend you PTCL if you want apply DM apply
sì aw ləy dīaw chǎn pay samàk penphūan kòodāay
 PTCL take PTCL then I go apply together all.right
 ‘Hey! Wait wait! Well, I think **DM (= putting aside all peripheral issues)** it’s you who can make a decision. If you want to register to join the camp, do so. Go ahead! I’ll go with you.’

(2007 Drama, *Aphi Mahuema Maha Setthi* Episode #3)

(14) Duean asked Waeo out to settle their conflict.

Duean: [Hey! Are you still angry with me? I asked you to come here today because I wanted to apologize to you for what I did to you.]

(While talking she takes out a brown envelope from her pocket and puts it on the table.)

Waeo: [What is it?]

Duean: [It's... a small present.]

Waeo: [Ah... you rub me on the back after having smacked me on the head.]

Duean: [I don't mean it. I just want us to be friends like before.]

Waeo: (Waeo hurriedly puts the envelop in her bag.)

thîi.cij.à Duean kàp phîi à kôw thamjaan kan maa
DM [name] and sister(=I) PTCL also work together come
naan à-ná man kôw tôj mii bâaŋ à-ná áy kràthópkràthâŋ
long PTCL it also must have some PTCL the conflict
kan nà tõe khráŋ nía man reeŋ pay nòy ná
each.other PTCL but time this it severe go little PTCL

'DM (Come to think of it), you and me, we have worked together for a long time. Conflict is possible. But this time, it was quite severe.'

Duean: [I promise that this won't happen again. I have felt guilty all the time. Especially, (bad) things that I did to Phi (your close friend)... I feel ashamed.]

(2005 Drama, *Song Sa-ne-ha* Episode #7)

5. Discussion

5.1. Grammaticalization

A number of grammaticalization mechanisms and principles have been proposed in current research, notably by Lehmann (2015[1982]), Heine et al. (1991), Hopper (1991), and Kuteva et al. (2019). This discussion will consider Thai *cij*-DMs in the light of the four parameters proposed in Kuteva et al. (2019), i.e., desemanticization, extension, decategorialization, and erosion. In addition, a brief discussion on (inter)subjectivity will be presented.

5.1.1. Desemanticization

Desemanticization refers to loss of meaning, and is commonly known by its figurative label 'semantic bleaching'. This phenomenon can be observed in some functions of the Thai *cij*-DMs having transformed from the core meaning of *cij* 'true, real, right', to other functions such as sudden realization/remembrance, perspective shift, elaboration, surprise, etc. These functions, however, are not completely devoid of the 'true, real, right' meaning. For instance, the sudden realization/remembrance function is based on the perception that what has been realized or remembered is a truth and thus merits mention. The notion that something is truthful and thus noteworthy also exists in one form or another in the development of the functions of perspective shift, elaboration, and surprise. Despite being related to the original semantics, the named functions are the result of

sufficient semantic bleaching, which has made the relationship largely opaque to contemporary speakers of Thai.

While some functions have undergone substantive desemanticization, some Thai *ciη*-DMs still retain much of the source meaning of ‘true, real, right’, such as those used for agreement (in the form of a statement), disagreement (with a negation marker), emphasis, and confirmation/agreement solicitation (with a question marker). When the source of meaning is retained, it is known as ‘persistence’ (Hopper 1991), and is common in grammaticalization, suggesting that semantic bleaching is gradual and gradient, and that different functions of the DMs with shared origin may exhibit very different degrees of desemanticization.

5.1.2. Extension

Extension as a grammaticalization parameter refers to expansion of usage context. Usage contexts largely depend on the word class of the lexeme in question. The source lexeme *ciη* is mostly used as an adjective and adverb whose primary categorial function is modification of a noun (e.g., *khǎw ciη ciη* ‘true article’), an adjective (e.g., *sanùk ciη* ‘very fun’), or a verb (e.g., *phûut ciη* ‘talk seriously’). As an adjective, *ciη* may occur as a subject complement (e.g., *Man ciη* ‘It’s true’ or *Man ciη rǎu mây ciη?* ‘Is it true or not true?’) or independently in the contexts of ellipsis (e.g. *Ciη* ‘True’).

The usage contexts of the *ciη*-DMs are not restricted to the modifier or complement position. In fact, in line with the properties of DMs discussed in 5.2 below, most instances of *ciη*-DMs occur as stand-alone forms. For instance, all excerpts in the foregoing exposition (excluding [13], in which the DM *ciη ciη* occurs clause-internally, between the main clause and the complement clause [i.e., the medial position]) involve *ciη*-DMs either standing alone or at a non-modifying, left-periphery position. Examples such as these make it obvious that *ciη* has undergone extension in its development into more various DMs.

5.1.3. Decategorialization

Decategorialization as a grammaticalization parameter refers to the loss of primary category features. The source lexeme *ciη* belongs to the main categories adjective and adverb, which notably, belong to the third tier (nouns and verbs being in the first and second tiers, respectively; Heine & Kuteva 2007: 111) in the hierarchical structure of language evolution. Several categorial properties are associated with adjectives and adverbs. In their meticulous description of the parameter, Heine and Kuteva (2007: 40) list salient properties of decategorialization as: (a) loss of ability to be inflected, (b) loss of ability to take on derivational morphology, (c) loss of ability to take modifiers, (d) loss of independence as an autonomous form, increasing dependence on some other form, (e) loss of syntactic freedom, e.g., loss of the ability to be moved around in a sentence in ways that are characteristic of the non-grammaticalized source item, (f) loss of ability to be

referred to anaphorically, and (g) loss of members belonging to the same grammatical paradigm.

Due to the typological features of Thai, which is an isolating and analytic language, only a few of these properties apply, such as (c) the ability to take modifiers, and (e) syntactic freedom. In terms of modifiability, the source lexeme *ciŋ* ‘true, real’ as a primary category member (adjective, adverb) was once able to take a modifier, typically an adverb (*ciŋ maak* ‘very true, very real’), but this ability has been lost with *ciŋ*-DMs. In terms of syntactic freedom, the source lexeme *ciŋ*, as an adjective, was formerly able to be placed in a pre-nominal position, i.e., as a noun modifier, but the *ciŋ*-DMs that may still be classifiable in form as adjectivals can no longer modify a noun. It is noteworthy, however, that the reduplicative *ciŋ ciŋ* is still used as a modifier, but it functions as an intensifying modifier, different from the heterosemous DM *ciŋ ciŋ*.

5.1.4. Erosion

Erosion refers to the loss of phonetic volume. In line with the typological characteristics of an isolating language that is characteristically resistant to formal change, Thai *ciŋ*-DMs evince a minimal level of erosion. Documentation of Thai historical data is limited and thus there is no diachronic grounds for ordering the *ciŋ*-DMs and their functions according to their emergence. In this situation, possible examples of erosion include a set of *ciŋ*-DMs for confirmation solicitation, i.e., *ciŋ rɔ̌w pàaw*, *ciŋ pàaw*, and *ciŋ rɔ̌w*, if the last two are phonetically eroded from the first, and a pair of the disagreement-marking *ciŋ*-DMs, *mây ciŋ rɔ̌k* and *mây ciŋ*, if the latter is an eroded form of the former. However, this possibility is highly unlikely because the directionality seems to be reversed. This is particularly true with the latter set, *mây ciŋ rɔ̌k* and *mây ciŋ*, because the first is more mitigative than the second, and the difference is due to the presence of the particle *rɔ̌k*, which has a softening effect (see 3.2.2 above). Considering this, *mây ciŋ rɔ̌k* seems to be a modified form of *mây ciŋ*, instead of *mây ciŋ* having been the reduced form of *mây ciŋ rɔ̌k*. Other studies have previously observed that the hypothesized directionality of condensation is reversed with DM developments, namely the study by Méndez-Naya (2006) for the English DM *right*.

There is a more convincing reason to believe that the groups of similar forms involve addition rather than erosion. A prominent, general characteristic of Thai *ciŋ*-DMs is that they often recruit particles and reduplication to create a form with identical, similar, or related functions. This is indeed a common lexicalization and grammaticalization strategy in Thai, called ‘polysemy strategy’; examples include ‘face’ lexicalization (Khammee & Rhee 2022), ‘small’ lexicalization (Khammee & Rhee 2024), and future markers (Rhee & Khammee 2024), among others. For this idiosyncrasy, although DMs are typically short in form across languages (cf. Brinton 2017, Heine et al. 2021), *ciŋ*-DMs and many grammaticalized forms in general, are often polylexemic in Thai. Therefore, it can be said that the parameter of erosion is not generally observed with Thai *ciŋ*-DMs.

5.1.5. (Inter)subjectification

In terms of semantic change, desemanticization is a common process observable in grammaticalization (see 5.1.1 above). However, as Heine et al. (1991) note, semantic change in grammaticalization cannot be characterized as a uniformly reductive change, because while there is loss there is gain as well, hence ‘the loss-and-gain model’ (Heine et al. 1991: 110). Many studies have shown that subjectification and intersubjectification are two noteworthy concomitants of grammaticalization, even though these are independent of grammaticalization processes (Traugott 2010). It would appear that what is gained in grammaticalization of DMs is (inter)subjective meanings.

When subjectivity is understood as the relationship to the speaker and his or her beliefs and attitudes, and intersubjectivity as the relationship to the addressee and his or her face, an interesting aspect emerges from the development of *ciη*-DMs. The semantics of *ciη* ‘true, real, right’ basically relate to the objective world, i.e., something as existing in reality or as corresponding to the real states of affairs in the world, for example, ‘a real person’ (*manút ciη*) as opposed to a fictional character, ‘a true story’ (*rúaiη ciη*) as opposed to a fictitious one, ‘a real flower’ (*dòckmáay ciη*) as opposed to an artificial flower, ‘a genuine thing’ (*khǒciη ciη*) as opposed to an imitation, etc. The notion of ‘real’ or ‘true’ seems to be highly susceptible to the extension into evaluative world, that is, the subjective world. For instance, ‘a true person’ (*khon ciη*) is likely to refer to someone who embodies virtues and desirable qualities. Even *khǒciη ciη* ‘a genuine thing’ can be used with the evaluative, subjective meaning to refer to a difficult but important event in life such as an entrance exam. Considering that the etymon of *ciη* in Middle Chinese denoted ‘true, real, factual, genuine, actual, substantial, really, truly’ as well as ‘highest sincerity one is capable of’ (see 4.1 above), it is likely that the lexeme already carried the objective and subjective meanings at the time of borrowing.

Evidently, the objective and subjective meanings have persisted in the development of some functions of *ciη*-DMs, for example, in DMs denoting agreement (confirming truthfulness or correctness), emphasis (highlighting focused, genuine qualities), surprise and sudden realization (both highlighting unexpectedness of a newly encountered real-life event or news), etc. As the development of *ciη* into *ciη*-DMs proceeded further, it acquired diverse interactional meanings, i.e., those of the intersubjective world. For instance, such functions as confirmation solicitation, elaboration, perspective shift, etc. are interactional (by virtue of involving interlocutors) and intersubjective (by virtue of considering the addressee’s social and epistemic states). Therefore, from a broad picture, the semantico-functional development of *ciη* can be characterized as occurring from objective, to subjective, and on to intersubjective meanings.

5.2. Properties of discourse markers

In their seminal work, Heine et al. (2021: 6) characterize DMs as (a) invariable expressions which are (b) semantically and syntactically independent from their

environment, (c) set off prosodically from the rest of the utterance in some way, and (d) having function that is metatextual, anchored in the situation of discourse, and serving the organization of texts, the attitudes of the speaker, and/or speaker-hearer interaction.

Thai *ciŋ*-DMs are largely invariable expressions, even though some of them contain a seemingly optional but often crucial particle as a component in their construct, e.g., *mây ciŋ* and *mây ciŋ rɔ̀ɔk*, *ciŋ ciŋ* and *ciŋ ciŋ léew*, *ciŋ ciŋ* and *ciŋ ciŋ à*, etc., thereby confirming (a). All *ciŋ*-DMs are syntactically independent, typically occurring at left-periphery or as a stand-alone, thus confirming (b). Their prosody as observed in their realization in everyday interaction, although not appearing in the referenced written corpora, is distinctive and set off from the rest of the utterance, thereby confirming (c). As for the metatextuality, Thai *ciŋ*-DMs carry the function of organizing discourse materials, facilitating communicative interaction with the interlocutor, and expressing subjective and intersubjective stances, thus confirming (d). It can be said, therefore, that Thai *ciŋ*-DMs exhibit all diagnostic characteristics of DMs.

5.3. Crosslinguistic comparison

While a full-scale, crosslinguistic comparison is beyond our immediate capacity and is not feasible for the space limitations of this paper, a brief discussion on Thai *ciŋ*-DMs from a crosslinguistic perspective is in order. A number of studies have addressed REAL/TRUE-DMs in individual languages, as briefly listed above in 4.2.1. In particular, most reported cases of REAL/TRUE-DMs carry some functions of the Thai *ciŋ*-DMs, such as agreement (or disagreement with a negation marker, or confirmation solicitation with a question marker), as in the English (*that's*) *right*, Spanish *en efecto*, *efectivamente*, German *stimmt*, Hebrew *naxon*, Korean *cengmal*, *cincca*, *maca*, etc.⁶

Languages differ with respect to the other, more elaborate functions, largely due to the high level of multifunctionality of DMs and divergent paths taken by the REAL/TRUE-lexemes in the course of their development (cf. Aijmer 1986, Jucker 2002, Aijmer et al. 2006, Defour et al. 2010, Simon-Vandenberg & Willems 2011, Ricca & Visconti 2014). It is particularly notable that when a language has multiple REAL/TRUE-DMs, their functions may diverge drastically. For instance, the English *actually*, unlike its semantic relative *right*, carries the shift function of disalignment. In other words, English *actually*, like Thai *ciŋ*, signals that there is some incompatibility between the proposition to follow and the one expressed or implied in the context (Haselow 2013, Aijmer 2016). A similar functional development has been reported in Italian with the DM *veramente*, used for a 'mitigated rebuttal' (Ricca & Visconti 2014: 142) and with the French *vraiment* in rebuttal contexts ('contextes réfutatifs', Rodríguez Somolinos 2011). In this context, the discussion of Japanese *shinni* 'truly', developed from the Chinese

⁶ Solicitation of confirmation or agreement may be marked by an 'appeal intonation contour' (Du Bois et al. 1992: 30, Maschler & Shapiro 2016) instead of a specialized question marker.

etymon ‘true’, by Higashiizumi et al. (2024) carries an important implication with respect to effects of genres and registers. The authors observe skewing of ‘truth’-related words by written and colloquial genres, suggesting that the functional divergence can be observed not only across languages but also within languages.

For our purposes, a more interesting investigation of Thai *ciŋ*-DMs is one in comparison with the development of its etymon in Chinese, the donor language. As briefly alluded to in 4.1 above, the lexical uses of the Thai *ciŋ* largely coincide with those of the etymon *cin* (or *zhen*, *tsyn*) of Middle Chinese. According to Rhee and Zhang (2024), the Chinese etymon *qing/zhen* signified ‘true’ and the Chinese lexemes comparable to Thai *ciŋ*-DMs are *zhende* (*zhēn* ‘true’ + *de* ‘of/PTCL’) and *zhenshi* (*zhēn* ‘true’ + *shi* ‘be so, be correct’). According to the authors, *zhende* occurred very infrequently until Yuan Dynasty times (1271–1368 CE), and more frequently occurred in the Ming dynasty (14th–17th centuries) and Qing dynasty (17th–1912). Its use as a DM is first attested in the 20th century for various functions, such as emphasis, preface to noteworthy information, surprise, and preface to upcoming disalignment. The DM *zhensi* has a longer history, having first occurred in the Warring States period (5th–3rd BCE). The adverbial usage with the meaning of ‘truly’ occurred in the 17th century. Its DM usage is first attested in the Qing dynasty times, and it became functionally diversified in 20th century Modern Chinese when it began to be used to express discontent, sudden remembrance, reproach, and annoyance. Although the two DMs originated from the same source, their functions diverged significantly.

A comparison of the grammaticalization scenarios of REAL/TRUE-DMs in Thai and Chinese shows that some functions are common to the two languages, such as emphasis, surprise, and remembrance/realization. Notably, certain functions found in Chinese are not found in Thai, such as preface to noteworthy information, preface to upcoming disalignment, discontent, sudden reproach, and annoyance. Conversely, certain functions found in Thai are not found in Chinese, such as agreement, disagreement, confirmation solicitation, elaboration, and perspective shift. These states of affairs suggest that developmental paths of the DMs that evolved from the same etymon may not exhibit a great degree of similarity. They may show some commonalities, possibly attributable to the common reasoning patterns from the source semantics, but the differences are greater, possibly due to taking different paths of reasoning, with selective focus on particular aspects of meaning or influence of the context. This would be consonant with some earlier observations that lexemes from the same etymon in different languages can be widely different in the development of the DMs from such lexemes to the point of being ‘false friends’ (e.g., English *actually* and French *actuellement*, Defour et al. 2010).

5.4. Conceptual-functional network

Semantic and functional changes are gradual and gradient since changes are actualized through constant semantic negotiation between interlocutors. Therefore, even large gaps between the meaning and functions in the source lexeme and the

resultant grammatical forms are often nothing more than cumulative effects of incremental changes that have occurred through inferences. This phenomenon is well captured by the Metonymic-Metaphorical Model (Heine et al. 1991) as well as the Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change Model (Traugott & Dasher 2002). The effect of the gradient nature of grammaticalization is evident in the relationship of diverse functions that arise from the same form, and the relationship creates a conceptual-functional network (cf. Narrog & Ito 2007, Narrog 2010). Networks (re-)constructed on the basis of the inventory of synchronic functions rather than functions historically ordered through diachronic trajectory are hypothetical in nature, but this approach ‘from synchrony to diachrony’ can be particularly useful in contexts where historical data are scarce (cf. Givón 1971, 2015: 1–26, among others).

The core meanings of the source lexeme *ciη* are ‘true’ and ‘real’, and from these the basic functions of ‘agreement’ and ‘emphasis’ have emerged. Diverse functions have developed from these two key concepts, together with additional devices such as particles, reduplication, prosody, and supplementary lexemes. With the help of these additional devices, the *ciη*-DMs of agreement have further developed the functions of disagreement (with negation) and confirmation solicitation (with appeal contour or question markers). The emphasis marking has developed through two divergent paths, one first towards elaboration and further towards perspective shift, and another first towards surprise and further towards sudden realization. In the path towards surprise, the addition of the lexeme *taay* ‘die, death’ seems to have played an important role. The network of paths of lexeme development is graphically presented in Figure 1.⁷

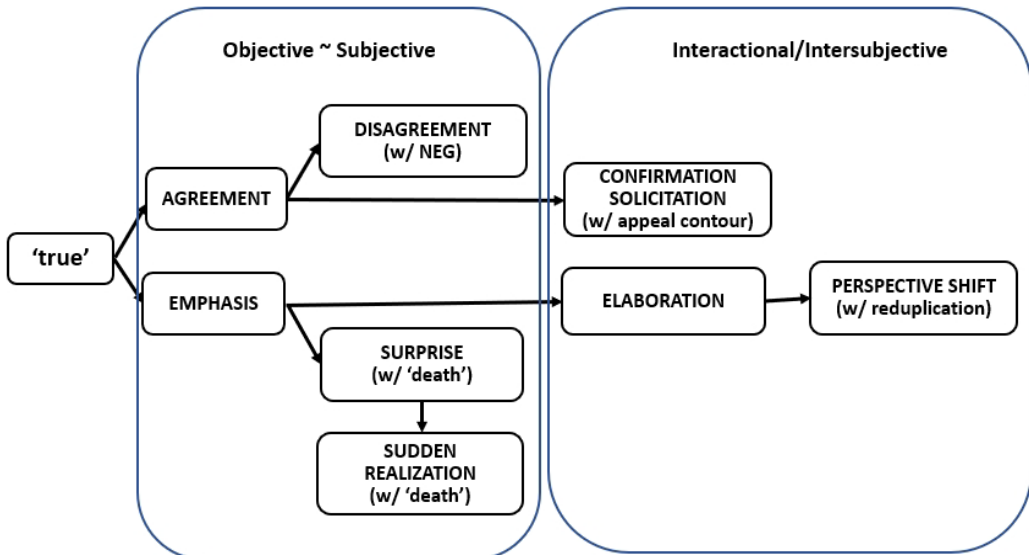


Figure 1. The conceptual-functional network of Thai *ciη*-DMs

⁷ Special thanks go to Reijirou Shibasaki (p.c.) for suggesting a refined network model.

6. Summary and conclusion

This paper aimed to identify the functions of truth-DMs in Thai, to analyze their development, to compare them with corresponding DMs in other languages. The analysis showed that the Thai truth-DMs, developed from the Sino-Thai *ciŋ*, carry the following functions: (dis)agreement response token, confirmation solicitation, emphasis, surprise, sudden realization/remembrance, elaboration, and perspective shift.

A review of *ciŋ*-DMs in light of grammaticalization parameters shows that changes characterizable as desemanticization, extension, and decategorialization are observable, whereas erosion is either not observed or, rather, its reverse is often found. Despite variable degrees of semantic bleaching, the semantic change in the direction from objective to subjective and further to intersubjective meanings, is prominent.

A brief review with other languages, especially Chinese, the donor language, reveals many similarities, supposedly due to the lexical source semantics and common cognitive operations, as well as differences, supposedly due to variation of such cognitive operations or contributions of the participating forms in the periphrastic DMs. An in-depth study comparing the REAL/TRUE-DMs from the same Chinese etymon in other languages is warranted as a future investigation.

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Abbreviations

CLF: classifier; DM: discourse marker; F: feminine; INTJ: interjection; PASS: passive; PEJ: pejorative; PST: past; PTCL: particle; Q: question; SG: singular

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