

# ALLATIVE PREPOSITION IN THAI

Kiyoko Takahashi  
Kanda University of International Studies  
*kiyoko@kanda.kuis.ac.jp*

## 1. Introduction

ALLATIVE case expresses motion *to* or *toward* the referent of the noun phrase it marks, which is a ‘schematic vector’ of the path of motion (cf. Talmy 2000: 53-57). The concept ALLATIVE roughly refers to a dynamic spatial relation where a moving entity moves to a reference point. This concept of ALLATIVE entails the whole kinetic PATH schema consisting of SOURCE, PATH and GOAL (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 32-34). A language may have a number of ALLATIVE markers with different nuances. For example, the English language has several ALLATIVE prepositions: **toward** (GOAL noun phrase), **to** (GOAL noun phrase), **onto** (GOAL noun phrase), and **into** (GOAL noun phrase).

- |     |                                     |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| (1) | He walked <b>toward</b> the shop.   | (PATH-oriented, unbounded path)         |
| (2) | He walked <b>to</b> the shop.       | (GOAL-oriented, bounded path)           |
| (3) | He put the files <b>onto</b> a CD.  | (GOAL-specific, affected target entity) |
| (4) | He put the files <b>into</b> a box. | (GOAL-specific, enclosed goal space)    |

The preposition **toward** in (1) represents directional or PATH-oriented ALLATIVE implying an unbounded path. The preposition **to** in (2) represents GOAL-oriented ALLATIVE implying a bounded path. The preposition **onto** in (3) represents GOAL-specific ALLATIVE implying an affected target entity. And the preposition **into** in (4) represents GOAL-specific ALLATIVE or ILLATIVE implying an enclosed goal space. Likewise, the Japanese language has two main ALLATIVE particles: (GOAL noun phrase)-**e** and (GOAL noun phrase)-**ni**.

- |     |                                     |       |         |                 |           |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| (5) | kare                                | wa    | arui-te | mise- <b>e</b>  | mukat-ta. |
|     | PRONOUN                             | TOPIC | walk-TE | shop-toward     | go-PAST   |
|     | ‘He went toward the shop, walking.’ |       |         |                 |           |
|     | (PATH-oriented)                     |       |         |                 |           |
| (6) | kare                                | wa    | arui-te | mise- <b>ni</b> | mukat-ta. |
|     | PRONOUN                             | TOPIC | walk-TE | shop-to         | go-PAST   |
|     | ‘He went to the shop, walking.’     |       |         |                 |           |
|     | (GOAL-oriented)                     |       |         |                 |           |

The particle **-e** in (5) represents directional or PATH-oriented ALLATIVE and the particle **-ni** in (6) represents GOAL-oriented ALLATIVE.

By contrast, the Thai language, I claim, has only one ALLATIVE preposition proper, namely **yaŋ**. This preposition is derived from a verb meaning ‘maintain,’ ‘sustain,’ ‘exist,’ or ‘bring about.’ In modern Thai the lexical item **yaŋ** expresses two grammatical concepts, namely CONTINUOUS aspect and ALLATIVE case. When it precedes a verb phrase, as in (7), it represents CONTINUOUS aspect, that is, to



2.2. *Specific ALLATIVE marker*

The ALLATIVE preposition **yaŋ** indicates the endpoint of an ‘axial motion’ which is forward motion of an entity along an axial path, as exemplified in (8) above. The prepositional phrase beginning with **thǔŋ** can indicate the endpoint of an axial motion as well, as in (11).

- (11) kháw            dǎen    pay    càak    bān    **thǔŋ**    rooŋ    rian  
 PRONOUN    walk    go    from    house    to    school  
 ‘He walked from his house to the school.’  
 (Axial motion)

The endpoint of a ‘horizontal or vertical motion’ which is the shift of the head of a line extending from a fixed point along a horizontal or vertical path, on the other hand, is marked by **hǎa**, as in (12), and **caròt**, **còt** or **thǔŋ**, as in (13).

- (12) kháw            hǎn    nāa    khāw    **hǎa**    dèk  
 PRONOUN    turn    face    enter    to    child  
 ‘He turned his face to the child.’  
 (Horizontal motion)

- (13) mɔɔŋ    kháw                    càak/    tân    tɛɛ    hǔa    **caròt/ còt/ thǔŋ**    tháw  
 look    PRONOUN    from                    head    to                                    foot  
 ‘(She) looked at him from head to toe.’  
 (Vertical motion)

At any rate, these lexical items (or ARRIVAL verbs) are not prepositions ‘proper’ but verbs that are capable of serving as prepositions in certain contexts. We shall return to this point in Section 3.4.

2.3. *Fully grammaticalized ALLATIVE marker*

The grammatical concept ALLATIVE expressed by **yaŋ** is distinct from the verbal concept ARRIVAL expressed by a variety of ARRIVAL verbs (e.g. **thǔŋ** ‘arrive,’ **khāw** ‘enter,’ **sày** ‘put in,’ **pathá?** ‘collide,’ **yùt** ‘halt,’ **thāap** ‘lay flat against,’ **sùu** ‘arrive and share/stay,’ etc.). Consider a contrastive pair of examples in (14) and (15).

- (14) a. kháw            dǎen    khūn    pay    **thǔŋ**    yôot    khǎw  
 PRONOUN    walk    ascend    go    arrive    mountaintop  
 ‘He walked up and arrived at the mountaintop.’  
 (Complex event)

- b. kháw            dǎen    khūn    pay    (yaŋ)    yôot    khǎw  
 PRONOUN    walk    ascend    go    (to)    mountaintop  
 ‘He walked up to the mountaintop.’  
 (Simplex event)

(15) a. maa **yùt** th̄ii ráan  
 come halt at shop  
 ‘(He) came and stopped at the shop.’  
 (Complex event)

b. maa (yaŋ) th̄ii ráan  
 come (to) at shop  
 ‘(He) came to the location of the shop.’  
 (Simplex event)

(14a) and (15a) include an ARRIVAL verb (**thũŋ** ‘arrive,’ **yùt** ‘halt’) while (14b) and (15b) do not. The former expressions have a complex event structure consisting of a motion and an arrival as a result, which I call ‘ARRIVAL event’ (cf. Takahashi, to appear), while the latter expressions have a simplex event structure consisting of a single motion to an endpoint. In this study the concept ARRIVAL is defined as an event of a moving entity’s reaching an endpoint as a result of its prior motion along a path toward the endpoint. The concept ARRIVAL may involve the characteristic of a goal entity and/or the type of effect resulting from the arrival. Whereas the concept ALLATIVE is highly schematic and purely directional, the concept ARRIVAL is fairly rich in the content of event. In other words, the former is grammatical and semantically bleached; the latter is lexical and contentful.

### 3. ALLATIVE preposition *yaŋ* vs. ARRIVAL verb *sùu*

To clarify the grammatical status of **yaŋ** as ALLATIVE preposition proper, in this study I will compare **yaŋ** with **sùu** as a representative of ARRIVAL verbs. The meaning of **sùu** is somewhat complex, namely ‘arrive and share/stay,’ as exemplified in (16).

(16) kháw kèp maŋkhút pay **sùu** phũan bâan  
 PRONOUN gather mangosteen go arrive and share/stay neighbours  
 ‘He harvested mangosteens and went to share them with his neighbors.’ (Tomita 1990: 1835)

In (17) **sùu** follows a series of locomotion verbs. In such a context, **sùu** is often considered as an ALLATIVE preposition.

(17) lèn n̄ii khâw pay **sùu** ?aaraam phrá?phútthacâw  
 run flee enter go arrive and share/stay temple  
 ‘(He) ran away and got to the temple and stayed in.’  
 > ‘(He) ran away into the temple.’

Indeed, **sùu** can function as a preposition. However, as will be discussed later, it is the case with some marked contexts such as when being in combination with another particular preposition (e.g. *càak krungthêep sùu manilaa* ‘from Bangkok to Manila’) or when used in more abstract domains than the spatial domain (e.g. *sùu ?aanaakhót* ‘into the future’).

Based on my examination of corpus data including many tokens of **yaŋ** and **sùu**, I argue that **yaŋ** has undergone the process of grammaticalization much further than **sùu**.