

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Final particles are not given much attention in traditional grammars because they usually occur in the spoken language and sometimes are not grammatically necessary. For this reason, many scholars have researched final particles to find their meanings and functions in conversation.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the research already done on the topic of 'final particles'. The first section discusses the research on final particles in Lao, and the second section discusses the research on final particles in other Tai languages.

#### 2.1 Final particles in Lao used in the Lao PDR

##### 2.1.1 Arthur G. Crisfield and Lao final particles

Arthur G. Crisfield (1974) was the first scholar to research Lao final particles. He analyzed them based on the speech of Vientiane. In defining Lao final particles, he says:

They are one-syllable words which usually occur utterance finally but some may occur alone and a few combinations occur quite often. They seem to function in three ways: as question words, imperative words, or words of special emphasis. They may indicate something about the speaker's feelings or attitude or something about the relationship between two speakers. (1974: 41)

He mentions that most Lao final particles have variants with different tone and vowel length. There is a short, high variant contrasting with a long, high, rising-falling variant. And he said that in general, the long variant is sweeter and softer.

Crisfield explains how to use 25 one-syllable final particles in everyday speech. He does not divide them into the three groups mentioned above; rather, he just placed them in alphabetical order from /bɔː<sup>2</sup>/ to /wəj<sup>5</sup>/. He also does not discuss the meaning of particle clusters.

Although Crisfield does not explain all of the Vientiane final particles, his article has been very helpful to this thesis in being a good example of particle analysis. He gave the author inspiration to delve deeper into the function and meaning of final particles.

### 2.1.2 Pamela Sue Wright and Lao final particles

The other work that discusses Lao final particles is *A Lao grammar for language learners* by Pamela Sue Wright (1994). She defines particles as the last element in the sentence. They can make a sentence into a command or a question, or express the speaker's attitude. She divides 41 Lao particles into three groups: imperative particles, question particles and speaker attitude particles, as follows:

1. **Imperative particles** are placed at the end of a sentence to create a command. There are 9 entries for imperative particles.
2. **Question particles** are used to make the sentence a question. The question can be either a real question or a rhetorical one. There are 16 entries for question particles.
3. **Speaker attitude particles** express how the speaker feels about the situation. There are 16 entries for speaker attitude particles.

From her final particle classification, I notice that some particles may be a member of more than one class. For example, /dɛː<sup>2</sup>/ is an imperative and question particle. I disagree with her in that she classified /tɕaw<sup>5</sup>/ as a final particle. She puts /tɕaw<sup>5</sup>/ in the speaker attitude particle type. In daily life, people in Vientiane never use this word for a final particle, they use it only to answer when they are called by somebody and it means 'yes' in English. But it is a status particle (indicating politeness, non-intimate,

female speaker) for Chiang Mai (Thailand) people. Furthermore, Wright does not examine particle clusters.

*A Lao grammar for language learners* has nevertheless been very useful to the thesis. Even though Wright did not describe each particle in detail, the function and meaning of particles that she presented in her work have been used as a base for the present work.

## 2.2 Final particles in other Tai languages

### 2.2.1 Amara Bhamoraput and Thai final particles

Amara Bhamoraput (1972) gives a definition of Thai final particles and describes their position in sentences in her M.A thesis in the following quote:

1. They are sentence-ending words, which function as sentence-modifiers—their significance contributes to the meaning of the sentence or predication as a whole.
2. They occur after both major and minor clauses and usually before a pause.
3. They may indicate mood, as interrogative, imperative.
4. They may imply the sex and/or social status of the speaker and the addressee.
5. They may also suggest the attitude of the speaker, as surprise, doubt, certainty, intimacy, deference, assertiveness, etc. (1972: 2)

She divides Thai final particles into seven groups based on syntactic and semantic criteria:

1. **Intensifying particles:** These particles make the sentence sound firmer. They occur first when they combine with other particles.
2. **Emphasizing particles:** These particles are not differentiated from intensifying particles. They occur after intensifying particles.

3. **Hortative particles:** These particles are used to command, entreat, persuade or force. They are also used to show emphasis or acceptance of a fact on the speaker's part. They occur after emphasizing particles.
4. **Definite particles:** These particles indicate definiteness or distinctiveness. They occur after hortative particles.
5. **Question particles:** These particles are used to change a statement into a yes-no question.
6. **Post-question particle /lâw/:** This usually occurs after question particles. It expresses a mild question or mildly entreative force. This particle often becomes /lâ/ or /la/ when Thai people speak.
7. **Status particles:** These particles include polite and impolite particles. They are used to show the gender and social status of the speaker and the addressee.

Some final particles in the intensifying particle group and the emphasizing particle group that Amara introduces in her thesis look more like adverbs than final particles. However her work gave the present author further information on how to analyze final particles. Most of Thai final particles that are presented in her thesis are comparable to Lao final particles.

### 2.2.2 Patcharin Peyasantiwong and Thai final particles

Patcharin Peyasantiwong (1981) attempts to demonstrate the usage of Thai final particles in her dissertation. She does not give a precise definition of final particles, but she says that most of them occur in spoken language. They do not have a literal meaning. They do not fit any traditional grammar category, and they are not grammatically necessary. She explains that the meanings of all particles are based on

native speaker intuition. The pragmatic features and the sociolinguistic points of view are illustrated in her explanations.

She divides Thai final particles into 3 main groups: status particles, question particles, and mood particles. The status particles consist of polite and impolite particles. The question particles include the yes-no question particles /rǔu/ and /mǎy/. These may co-occur with /chay/ (positive), /mây chây/ (negative) and /plàaw/ (negative) corresponding to the positive particle /chây mây/, and the negative particles /rǔu plàaw/ and /mây chây rǔu/. She also discusses the combination /rǔu mây/, /rǔu yan/ and combinations of question particles and interrogative pronouns. The mood particles, according to phonological reduction, are divided into 2 groups: the “a group” and the “non -a group”. The “a group” include particles that share a phonological reduction of initial and final consonants, vowels and tones. Some of these particles’ vowels reduce to the sound /a/ with or without a final glottal stop and with a mid tone such as /láʔ/ (from /léɛw/), /làʔ/ (from /lâw/), /nâʔ/ (from /nâa/ or /nân/ ). The “non -a group” consist of particles whose vowels cannot be reduced to the sound /a/. They have different variants and some changes in initial consonants, vowels and tones. They include /náʔ/, /thàʔ/, /sí/, /sî/, /sǎa/, /lœəj/, /chiaw/, /nîi/, /máj/.

Patcharin presents a very clear description of the usage and meaning of Thai particles. It helped the author of this thesis explain the meaning of Lao final particles. The author agrees with her criticism of Amara’s work, which seems to examine particles independent of context,

In fact, one cannot identify a specific meaning independent of a context; each particle often has more than one possible implication, and can be used in different situations. (Patcharin 1981: 15)

This comment motivated the author to consider the usage of each final particle in Vientiane Lao and how to classify them.

### 2.2.3 Nawawan Bandhumeda and Thai final particles

Nawawan Bandhumeda (1983) mentions in her book *Thai grammar* that final particles are words which are added in the sentence to emphasize the speaker's intent in order to describe, request, ask or tell the status between the speaker and the addressee. They are divided into three types: mood particles, question particles, and status particles (1983: 72).

The mood particles are often used in spoken language to make speech pleasant and not too curt. They emphasize the intention of the speaker to express a question, command, threat, request, etc.

The question particles are words that make statements become questions. They consist of /rǔu/ and /mǎj/. She said that question particles actually can be mood particles because a question is a kind of mood also, and question particles, like mood particles, have many variants. When they change their form or sound, their meaning still remains; only the speaker's attitude changes. But question particles have special features that are different from mood particles. In sentences where question particles and mood particles co-occur, question particles always precede mood particles. In addition, the occurrence of question particles can change informative sentences to interrogative sentences, but mood particles do not make sentences become informative, imperative, or interrogative sentences; in this cases additional other words are needed.

The status particles are used to indicate gender, age of the speaker, status of the addressee, and attitude of the speaker to the addressee.

Besides the final particles that Nawawan mentions in her grammar book, she also classifies Thai sentences into three types, based on speaker intention: informative sentence, interrogative sentence, and imperative sentence. In each sentence type final particles may occur.

*Thai grammar* has a lot of information about Thai final particles which I used to compare with Lao final particles. In addition, the book gives some ideas on how to group final particles based on sentence type, which, in turn, is based on speaker intention.

#### **2.2.4 Joseph R. Cooke and Thai sentence particles**

In his work *Thai sentence particles and other topics*, Joseph R. Cooke (1989) uses the term 'sentence particles' for final particles. He defines sentence particles as postpositional forms that modify the whole sentence and have functions of linguistic or situational context. They usually occur at the end of the sentence, but they may also occur in the middle of the sentence. It is not so easy to specify the meaning or function of some particles, as he mentions:

The exact meaning or function of some of these particles is almost impossible to discover; for neither reference materials nor native speakers are able to shed much light on the matter (1989: 2)

Thus in his study, he emphasizes the linguistic and situational contexts that sentence particles are found in, and their variants, in order to find their correct meaning.

On the basis of their semantic and contextual functions, he divides final particles into four types: "those signalling speaker-addressee relationships; those calling for a response from the addressee; those signalling the speaker's response to the verbal or

situational context; and those signalling the contextual orientation of the utterance in question.” (1989:5)

Cooke studies the particles only in isolation (he does not examine particle clusters), but each entry is very clear and his work is very useful to this thesis in finding out the meaning and usage of final particles. Although most of Thai and Lao final particles do not have the same form, they can be compared to each other in terms of function and meaning.

### **2.2.5 Khanitha Wansorn and Sisaket dialect final particles**

Khanitha Wansorn (1987), who researched final particles in Sisaket dialect of Isan (Lao), presents three criteria for judging final particles: they occur at the end of a statement or noun phrase, their meaning relates to the whole clause, and their prosodic characteristics, such as quality of tone, always change. They are divided into three groups: status particles, question particles, and mood particles. The status particles consist of polite and non-polite particles that are the same as the status particles in Standard Thai. The question particles are particles that occur at the end of a yes/no question or a content question. The mood particles are those which show the feeling or attitude of the speaker, or express the relation between the speaker and the addressee. In addition, she discusses clusters of final particles, and phonological changes of the variant forms, including tonal changes, vowel lengthening, and the dropping of the final glottal stop.

Most of the Sisaket Lao particles that Khanitha analyzed in her thesis are the same as Vientiane Lao particles, except for the polite status particles that are an influence from Standard Thai, and a few other particles. The description of Sisaket particles effects the present thesis' efforts to find another way to widen explanations of the function and meaning of final particles.



### **2.2.6 Rung-Arun Teekhachunhatean and Wilaiwan Somsobhon and Khon Kaen dialect final particles**

Rung-Arun Teekhachunhatean and Wilaiwan Somsobhon (1988) studied final particles in the Khon Kaen dialect of Isan (Lao) in terms of the relation between the prosodic and the semantic characteristics of these particles.

In the study of the prosodic characteristics, the final particles were considered in terms of the intonation system, the quantity (vowel length) system, and the terminal (glottalization) system.

In the study of the semantic characteristics, the final particles are examined in relation to presupposition, assertion, syntax and the semantic relationship between the speaker and the addressee. From these semantic features, the final particles can be divided into seven types which signal question, contrast, persuasion (request), command (warning), guessing, giving information and expressing politeness.

The study of the relation between the prosodic and the semantic characteristics of the final particles is that these two characteristics have a close relation to each final particle's meaning: the semantic feature implies the major meaning, while the prosodic feature implies the minor meaning and clarifies the differences between each particle.

Rung-Arun and Wilaiwan's research report was helpful to this thesis in defining three kinds of criteria (syntax, phonology, and semantics) for considering words as final particles. In addition, most of the Khon Kaen final particles that are shown in the report are similar to Vientiane Lao final particles. As such the meaning particles in these two dialects are comparable.

### **2.2.7 Udom Pramakhang and Khon Kaen dialect final particles**

Udom Pramakhang (1989) studied final particles in the Khon Kaen dialect of Isan (Lao) based on the occurrence of final particles in six types of sentences: affirmative

informative sentences, negative informative sentences, affirmative imperative sentences, negative imperative sentences, affirmative interrogative sentences, and negative interrogative sentences. From the study results, he divides the final particles into two main groups: final particles expressing intention and final particles expressing status. The particles expressing intention can be subdivided into twelve groups: information, contradiction, guess, blame, question, command, request, consent, persuasion, consolation, defiance, and doubt. He finds that a limited number of final particles can co-occur in a sentence and they have a fixed position when they co-occur. The use of co-occurring final particles in a sentence is stipulated by the preceding particle, and the cluster's meaning is derived from the meaning of each particle.

Udom's thesis analyzes Khon Kaen final particles in a different way from Rung-Arun and Wilaiwan. He describes more Khon Kaen final particles in his work than Rung-Arun and Wilaiwan's work, and his analysis based on sentence type influenced the present thesis.

### **2.2.8 Amnuayporn Chowyong and Tai Lue final particles**

Amnuayporn Chowyong (1996) in her M.A thesis *A study of final particles in conversational Tai Lue at Donchai village, Pua district, Nan province* defines final particles as follows:

FPs [final particles] are single or co-occurring morphemes which appear in the last position of clauses or sentences. They may be followed by other phrases, clauses or sentences which may not contain final particles. They do not fit any typical category in grammar for instance verb, adverb, adjective, noun etc. Their function is not that of modifier. They can rarely be used in isolation because they relate to the entire clause. Some of them play a significant syntactic role in a clause such as that of interrogative indicator. Others have primarily a pragmatic role functioning in smoothing over abruptness, and expressing attitudes, relationships, and the emotional interplay between speaker and audience (1996: 27)

She considers three criteria for judging final particles: their occurrence at the end of phrases, clauses, or sentences; their variations in tone, vowel, initial consonant, or glottalization / non-glottalization; and their not have meaning in isolation but only when occurring in a sentence. All final particles are divided into three types: status particles, question particles and mood particles. She finds that status particles indicate familiarity and intimacy; question particles make a statement into a question; and mood particles show an interactive feeling between the speaker and the addressee. She also surveys co-occurring final particles, including the co-occurrence of two and three final particles. She finds that the combination of the same type of particles which have the same function strengthen each another; while the combination of different types of particles perform independent functions.

When we compare Tai Lue final particles with Lao, the author noticed that Lao which is used in Laos does not have status particles. However Lao which used in Northeast of Thailand has this particle type, because Lao in this part which we call 'Phasa Isan' was influenced from Standard Thai. The particles /k<sup>h</sup>ráp/, /k<sup>h</sup>â/ occur in Isan Lao, but do not occur in Tai Lue in Donchai village, because they have their own status particles such as /ca<sup>3</sup>/, /i<sup>2</sup>/, and /ba<sup>2</sup>/. There are only a few similar words between these two languages such as the question particles /hu<sup>5</sup>/, /wa<sup>2</sup>/, and the mood particles /na<sup>2</sup>/, /nə<sup>5</sup>/, /nɔ<sup>2</sup>/, /la<sup>2</sup>/.

Amnuayporn's work is helpful to this thesis in setting up the pattern of examples and yielding insight in how to analyze the co-occurrence of two and three final particles.