



Prosody of Final Particles in Thai: Interaction between Lexical Tones and Boundary Tones

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International Workshop on “Intonation Phonology: Understudied or Fieldwork Languages”—Saarbrücken, Germany-- August 5, 2007

What are final particles?

Final particles are grammatical morphemes that occur at the end of phrases and may convey grammatical, discourse, or sociolinguistic information.

Final particles and intonation

Some particles have “falling tone” in statements and “high tone” in the questions.

a. nó:j mǎ: múə̀rǎj [wǎ́]
 Noi come when FP
 ‘When did Noi come?’ (/wa/ = ‘unrestrained’)

b. nó:j mǎ: múə̀yēn [wǎ́]
 Noi come in-the-evening FP
 ‘Noi came in the evening.’ (/wa/ = ‘unrestrained’)

Some particles contradict this generalization.

a. ró:n máj [lǎ́]
 hot FP FP
 ‘It’s hot, isn’t it?’ (/lǎ/ = ‘shift of focus’)

b. ró:n [kʰáp]
 hot FP
 ‘Yes, it’s hot.’ (/kʰáp/ = ‘polite, male speaking’)

Proposal

- Two types of particles: tonal and toneless
- Boundary tones are linked to the rightmost syllable of intonational phrases.
- Lexical tones override boundary tones.

What do final particles tell us about the nature of the interaction between lexical tones and intonation?

Particles stacking

a. piék ca cʰ:p sǎj sǔə̀-cṑrakʰê: máj [nǎ́] [kʰáp]
 Piak MOD like wear Crocodile-brand shirt INT FP FP
 “Would Piak like to wear Crocodile-brand shirts, do you know? (polite, female speaking)”

b. piék ca cʰ:p sǎj sǔə̀-cṑrakʰê: máj [lǎ́] [kʰáp]
 Piak MOD like wear Crocodile-brand shirt INT FP FP
 “Would Piak like to wear Crocodile-brand shirts then? (polite, female speaking)”

Toneless vs. Tonal particles

Toneless particles: Unspecified for lexical tone

Show “tonal variation”

a. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [nǎ́]
 papaya-salad delicious FP
 ‘Listen, the papaya salad is delicious.’

b. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [nǎ́]
 papaya-salad delicious FP
 ‘As a matter of fact, the papaya salad is delicious.’

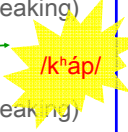


Tonal particles: Specified for lexical tone

Tonally “stable”

a. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [kʰáp]
 papaya-salad delicious FP
 ‘The papaya salad is delicious.’ (polite, male speaking)

b. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [máj] [kʰáp]
 papaya-salad delicious INT FP
 ‘Is the papaya salad delicious?’ (polite, male speaking)



Evidence from phonology

Co-occurrence restriction

a. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [kʰáp]
 papaya-salad delicious FP
 ‘The papaya salad is delicious.’ (polite, female speaking)

b. *sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj [khá]
 papaya-salad delicious FP

c. sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj máj [khá]
 papaya-salad delicious INT FP
 ‘Is the papaya salad delicious?’

d. *sǔm̄tǎm ʔarǔj máj [khá]
 papaya-salad delicious INT FP



Toneless particle; Neutral tone

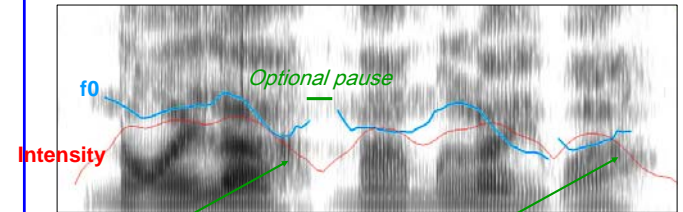
Tonal particle; Lexically-contrastive tone

Final particles as intonational clitics

‘As for Noi, when did he come?’ (unrestrained)

and Noi FP come when FP
 lé:w nó:j lǎ́ mǎ: múə̀rǎj wa

Intonational phrase Intonational phrases



Optional pause
 Reduced intensity lǎ́ Reduced intensity lwa

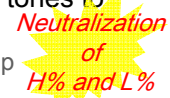
Lexical tones and boundary tones

H% ‘hearer-oriented’ L% ‘speaker-oriented’

Tonal particles do not allow boundary tones to surface

a. púʔ cʰ:p sí:nǎ:mtǎ:n na kʰáp
 Pooh like brown FP FP
 ‘As a matter of fact, Pooh likes brown.’ (polite, male)

OR ‘Listen, Pooh likes brown.’ (polite, male)



Toneless particles serve as docking sites for boundary tones.

b. púʔ cʰ:p sí:nǎ:mtǎ:n na kʰa-L%
 Pooh like brown FP FP
 ‘As a matter of fact, Pooh likes brown (polite, female).’

c. púʔ cʰ:p sí:nǎ:mtǎ:n na kʰa-H%
 Pooh like brown FP FP
 ‘Listen, Pooh likes brown.’ (polite, female)

Boundary tones occur at the right edge of intonational phrases only.

d. *púʔ cʰ:p sí:nǎ:mtǎ:n na-L% kʰa
 e. *púʔ cʰ:p sí:nǎ:mtǎ:n na-H% kʰa-L%

The different behaviors between tonal and toneless particles show that lexical tones and boundary tones in Thai are in competition such that only one can be realized.