



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

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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 mā: mûə̀rə̀j [wá]
Noi come when FP
‘When did Noi come?’ (/wa/ = ‘unrestrained’)

b. nó:j mā: mûə̀yēn [wâ]
Noi come in-the-evening FP
‘Noi came in the evening.’ (/wa/ = ‘unrestrained’)

Some particles contradict this generalization.

a. ró:n máj [lâ]
hot FP FP
‘It’s hot, isn’t it?’ (/lâ/ = ‘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. piək ca cʰ:p sàj sũə̀-cṑrakʰê: máj [nâ] [kʰá]
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. piək ca cʰ:p sàj sũə̀-cṑrakʰê: máj [lâ] [kʰá]
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. sôm-tām ʔarə̀j [ná]
papaya-salad delicious FP
‘Listen, the papaya salad is delicious.’

b. sôm-tām ʔarə̀j [nâ]
papaya-salad delicious FP
‘As a matter of fact, the papaya salad is delicious.’

Tonal particles: Specified for lexical tone

Tonally “stable”

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

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

Evidence from phonology

Co-occurrence restriction

a. sôm-tām ʔarə̀j [kʰá]
papaya-salad delicious FP
‘The papaya salad is delicious.’ (polite, female speaking)

b. *sôm-tām ʔarə̀j [khá]
papaya-salad delicious FP

c. sôm-tām ʔarə̀j máj [khá]
papaya-salad delicious INT FP
‘Is the papaya salad delicious?’

d. *sôm-tām ʔarə̀j máj [khâ]
papaya-salad delicious INT FP

“falling tone” - declarative vs. “high tone” - interrogative

Toneless particle; Neutral tone

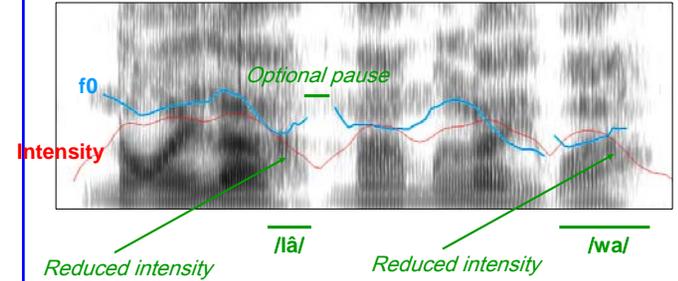
Tonal particle; Lexically-contrastive tone

Final particles as intonational clitics

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

and Noi FP come when FP
lě:w nó:j lâ mā: mûə̀rə̀j wa

Intonational phrase Intonational phrases



Lexical tones and boundary tones

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

Tonal particles do not allow boundary tones to surface

a. pú? cʰ:p sǐ:ná:mtā: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. pú? cʰ:p sǐ:ná:mtā:n na kʰa-L%
Pooh like brown FP FP
‘As a matter of fact, Pooh likes brown (polite, female).’

c. pú? cʰ:p sǐ:ná:mtā: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. *pú? cʰ:p sǐ:ná:mtā:n na-L% kʰa
e. *pú? cʰ:p sǐ:ná:mtā: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.