

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Summary of overall findings

This thesis studied final particles in Vientiane Lao by considering their meaning and function in the sentence. The analysis resulted in a description of four groups of final particles: nineteen declarative particles, thirteen interrogative particles, fifteen imperative particles, and three exclamative particles.

The declarative particles are particles that occur in statements. They are divided into four categories: information, contradiction, supposition, and criticism. Information particles include /kɔ³/~/kɔ:⁷/, /de³/~/de:⁷/, /dɛ³/~/dɛ:⁷/, /daj³/, /bu³/, /p^hun⁵/, /ju:²/, /la²/, /lɛ:³/, /lɛ²/, /lɛ:w⁶/, and /wəj⁵/~/wə:⁵/. Contradiction particles include /dɔk²/~/dɔ:k⁶/, /tua²/~/tu:a⁷/, and /na²/~/na:⁷/. There is only one supposition particle /ti³/~/ti:⁷/. Criticism particles include /ka²da:^j/, /tɕɔ:^j/, and /sam⁵/.

Interrogative particles occur in questions. There are four categories of interrogative particles: yes-no questions, content questions, rhetorical questions, and follow-on questions. The yes-no question category, which requests a yes-no response from the addressee includes /ti³/~/ti:⁷/, /tua²/~/tu:a⁷/, /na³/, /nɔ³/~/nɔ:³/, /bɔ²/~/bɔ:⁴/~/bɔ:²/, and /wa³/~/wa:⁴/. The content question category, which requests a response from the addressee, includes particles occurring after question words: /kɔ²/, /san⁵/, /de³/~/de:⁷/, /dɛ:²/, /nɔ:⁷/, /la³/~/la²/, /wa²/~/wa:⁷/, /wəj⁵/~/wə:⁵/, and /hu³/. The rhetorical question category, which does not require

any response from the addressee includes /nɔʔ³/~/nɔ³/, and /bɔʔ²/~/bɔ:ʔ⁷/. The follow-on question category has only one particle: /de:³/~/de:⁴/~/de:⁷/.

The imperative particles are particles that occur in commands. They are divided into ten categories: order, request, persuasion, invitation, warning, permissive, urging, encouragement, suggestion, and blessing. The category of order includes /du³/, /de:²/, /də³/~/də:⁷/, /paʃ³/, /mɛ³/~/mɛ:⁷/, and /jə:⁷/~/jə:⁷/. The category of request includes /sa:⁷/, /du:⁷/, /de:²/, /tʰɔʔ²/, /tʰɔ:n⁷/, /na:⁷/, and /jə:⁷/~/jə:⁷/. The category of persuasion includes /tʰɔʔ²/, /na:⁷/, and /pa³/. The category of invitation includes /də³/~/də:⁷/, /ti³/, and /mɛ³/~/mɛ:⁷/. The category of warning includes /də³/~/də:⁷/, and /daʃ³/. The category of permissive includes /sa³/, /mɛ³/~/mɛ:⁷/, and /lo:t⁵/. The category of urging includes /daʃ³/, /ti:⁷/, /na:⁷/, /mɛ³/~/mɛ:⁷/, /lə:j³/, and /lo:t⁵/. The category of encouragement includes /də³/~/də:⁷/, /lə:j³/, and /lo:t⁵/. The category of suggestion includes /sa³/, /də³/~/də:⁷/, /ti:⁷/, and /mɛ³/~/mɛ:⁷/. The category of blessing has only one particle, /tʰə:t⁶/~/tʰə:n⁶/.

Exclamative particles occur in exclamations. Three exclamative particles are found in this study: /de:⁷/, /nɔ:⁷/, and /wəj⁵/~/wə:j⁵/.

Some of the particles mentioned above occur only in one type of sentence. However, some particles with their variant forms can occur in two or three types of sentences. Thus, their meaning and function in each type of sentence can vary, as shown below:

1. /kɔʔ²/~/kɔ³/~/kɔ:⁷/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express information. When it occurs in questions, it is as a content question particle.

2. /de³/~/de:⁴/~/de:⁷/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express information. When it occurs in questions, it is used in a follow-on question or a content question. When it occurs in exclamations, it is used to amplify the speaker's feeling.
3. /dɛ³/~/dɛ:⁷/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express information. When it occurs in commands, it is used to express an order, encouragement, warning, invitation, or a suggestion.
4. /dɛ:²/: When it occurs in questions, it is used to emphasize a content question. When it occurs in commands, it is used to express an order or a request.
5. /daj³/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express information. When it occurs in commands, it is used to express a warning, or show urging.
6. /ti³/~/ti:⁷/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express a supposition. When it occurs in questions, it is used as a yes-no question. When it occurs in commands, it is used to show invitation, suggestion or urging.
7. /tua²/~/tu:a⁷/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express a contradiction. When it occurs in questions, it is used as a yes-no question word.
8. /na²/~/na:⁷/~/na?³/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express a contradiction. When it occurs in questions, it is used as a yes-no question word. When it occurs in commands, it is used to express request or urging.
9. /nɔ?³/~/nɔ³/~/nɔ:⁷/: When it occurs in questions, it is used as a yes-no question particle, content question particle, or a rhetorical question particle. When it occurs in exclamations, it is used to express the speaker's astonishment.

10. /laʔ³/~/la²/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to show information. When it occurs in questions, it is used as a content question particle.

11. /lə:j³/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to express information. When it occurs in commands, it is used to express encouragement or urging.

12. /wəj⁵/~/wə:j⁵/: When it occurs in statements, it is used to show intimate information. When it occurs in questions, it is used as an intimate content question particle. When it occurs in exclamations, it is used to show the speaker's exuberance.

These twelve final particles have multiple functions. We can distinguish whether it is a declarative particle, interrogative particle, imperative particle or exclamative particle depending on the context or sentence in which occurs.

Some final particles in Vientiane Lao can occur in groups of two or three particles that are called co-occurring particle doublets and triplets, respectively. These include declarative co-occurring particles, interrogative co-occurring particles, imperative co-occurring particles, and exclamative co-occurring particles. The components of declarative co-occurring particle doublets can be a declarative particle with a declarative particle, or a declarative particle with an interrogative particle. The components of interrogative co-occurring particle doublets can be a declarative particle with an interrogative particle, an interrogative particle with a declarative particle, or an interrogative particle with an interrogative particle. The components of imperative co-occurring particle doublets can be a declarative particle with an imperative particle, an imperative particle with a declarative particle, or an imperative particle with an imperative particle. The components of exclamative co-occurring particle doublets can only be an exclamative particle with an exclamative particle.

There are three particles that never co-occur with other particles: /ka²da:j¹/, /tɕɔ:j⁵/, and /t^hə:t⁶/.

As for co-occurring particle triplets, they consist of declarative co-occurring particles triplets, interrogative co-occurring particles triplets, and imperative co-occurring particles triplets. The components of declarative co-occurring particle triplets can be an interrogative particle with two declarative particles. The components of interrogative co-occurring particle triplets can be a declarative particle with two interrogative particles, or two interrogative particles with a declarative particle. The components of imperative co-occurring particle triplets can be two imperative particle with a declarative particle, or three imperative particles.

The co-occurrence of the same type of particle in a doublet or triplet results in intensification. Most particles retain their individual meanings in doublets or triplets, with several notable exceptions.

The phonological features of final particles are different from those of other words in Lao grammar. Only a few particles do not have variants. Most of them have variants involving tone and vowel length changes. A short vowel with high tone variant usually shows impoliteness, urging or dissatisfaction, but a long vowel with high, rising, or rising-falling usually shows gentleness, softness or imploring. Some variants indicate strengthening, while others can actually carry an opposite meaning from the primary particle.

5.1 Implications of findings

It is hoped that this description of Vientiane Lao final particle usage in terms of the four sentence types will be useful for the linguistic study of Lao, and encourage readers to do further research in Lao. It is also hoped that the findings of this thesis

will be helpful for the instructors of Lao to foreigners, as well as anybody who is learning Lao and wishes to speak Lao naturally.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

This thesis focuses only on the Vientiane Lao final particles. It is hoped that the other Lao dialects such as Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, and Pakse will be studied in future research. It would be interesting to compare the final particles in Vientiane Lao with other Lao dialects, especially with the Luang Prabang dialect.

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