?araj jàaŋ nii (อะไรอย่างนี้):
The grammatical functions and social categories as a new final particle in Thai language

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Abstract

This paper aims to study and to make a contribution to the description of *?araj jàaŋ nii* as final particle in Thai by looking at its grammatical functions as well as its social categories. The data are collected by recordings and conversations of 80 Bangkok Thai speakers aged 6-80. These data are analyzed by using the syntactic notion of dependency and co-occurrence in sentence. This paper challenges the current analysis of final particle as the small words or phrases which do not have any syntactic relationship to the sentence or utterance and are usually added to the end of colloquial speeches. This paper argues that *?araj jàaŋ nii* is being grammaticalized and lexicalized from noun phrase to word as final particle. There are many its variable forms, such as *?a raj jàaŋ ŋii*, *?a raj jàaŋ ŋia, ?a raj ŋia*, *raj ŋia* and so on.

The account of *?araj jàaŋ nii* as social categories is based on Bakhtin's notion of Heteroglossia as it is integrated within the systems of modality and evidentiality. Thai speakers use final particle *?araj jàaŋ nii* as a discourse connective and interpersonal marker. A comparison of speakers divided into

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eight generational groups. The quantitative analysis found that *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* is highly used in the ages of 21-30, 11-20, 31-40 and 41-50 in order of frequency. Meanwhile, it is not found in speakers of 71-80 years old, nor in speakers of 6-7 years olds. These different uses can be discussed from the heteroglossia function. Young Thai people interpret *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* in an adult-like fashion to become more adult on the one hand, Thai adults fashionably use *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* to perform their modern style and express the youthfulness in the other.

This paper also argues that Thai particles not only associate to pragmatic use of expressing speakers' attitudes, but also relate to discourse context of speakers to identify their situated identity by using and designing the different form of particles.

1. Introduction

The word 'particle' in Thai language is frequently described as pragmatically use of words in an utterance that convey emotions, feelings and expressing attitudes of speakers. It often appears at the end of a sentence or an utterance, so-called final particle. The notion 'particle' is rather blurred in Thai grammar. It is usually categorized to be modal word as the subclass of adverb (Bhandhumedha, 2006) as well as interjection (Uppakitsilapasarn, 1990), which mostly concern written standard Thai. Particles, therefore, are neglected on the reference grammar of Thai. Some particles, which popular used by Thai speakers such as *di* (ดิ (or *de?*(เด่ะ) , are left out from the description of Thai grammar because of their non-standard. However, because of the popular and various uses among Thai speakers, particles have necessarily been studied. There are many researches to classify Thai particles.

On the basis of syntactic and semantic criteria, the previous studies such as Bhamoraput (1972), Thikashunhatian (1984), classify Thai final particle into various groups. None of the studies concern socio-pragmatic use of it. Apparently, Thai particles, particularly final particle, are very active and dynamic in daily-life language. This paper aims to study Thai final particle in sociolinguistic view and to make a contribution to the description of a new final particle *?araj jaaŋ̀ nií* in Thai language. The purpose of this study is to show how *?araj jaaŋ̀ nií* is grammaticalized as final particle and how its sociolinguistic distribution is varied among Thai age group of speakers. This paper, also, discusses its pragmatic functions and its meaning in utterances as well as its social categories marker. Considerably, this study would be effect more fulfillment but most challenging to Thai grammar.

2. Overview of Thai final particles

Thai language, unlike inflectional language, is an isolated language. The meaning of a word or a sentence is determined by word position and word order. Particle is very unique as its position and its syntactic relationship are different from other parts of speech. It is rather problematic to be a unitary class, among other major categories such as noun, verb, adverb, and so on. The sentence or utterance that marked by particle is typically short and a pause is to exist between particles and the word following. This leads to the conjecture of sentence or utterance boundary. On the basis of syntactic notion of occurrence and distribution as following Lexicase Grammar (Starosta, 1988), particle in Thai can belong to a syntactic category or word class which can be defined (more or less) as words which are added into the sentence without any

syntactic relationship with other words. Words that occur at the initial part of the sentence are considered as initial particles (Prasithratasint, 2009), or so-called interjections. Words that occur medially or are added at the beginning of the declarative sentence, or added into the utterance, are so-called 'filler' (Angkapanichkit, 2009), and the words that added at the end of a sentence are so-called final particle. Almost of Thai particle is final particle.

Final particles and other particles are only used in informal language which is everyday speech. Although particles will be omitted completely in formal style of use, they are a special category which is very active in interaction. They usually contribute extra meaning to the meaning of the whole sentence or utterance. The function and meaning of Thai final particles is strongly associated with speech acts and discourse context. They can signal both speaker-addressee relationships and speaker's response to the situational context.

(1)	a:	pə̀t	pra tuu	ná	
		open	the door	PART	'Open the door'
	b:	pə̀t	pra tuu	si	
		open	the door	PART	'I request you to open the door.'
	c:	pə̀t	pra tuu	di	
		open	the door	PART	'I request you to open the door.'
	d:	pə̀t	pra tuu	thə̀	
		open	the door	PART	'I suggest you to open the door'

In (1a-d), the sentence, *pə̀t pra tuu* 'open the door' is invariant. The final particles are varied both semantically optional as they affect the meaning of the whole sentence and communicative function as they express the speaker response to the situation as well as the relationship between speaker and addressee. For instance, in (1a) performs the imperative speech act, in (1d) performs speech act of suggestion, whereas in (1b-c) performs the same request speech act but a mere different relationship of speaker and addressee. In (1c) shows the closer relationship of speaker-addressee than in (1b), therefore, in (1c) is more informal. This demonstrates that these final particles perform rather discourse-pragmatic than syntactical function.

Generally, the previous study shows that type of particles in Thai is varied in terms of different criteria. On the basis of syntactic and semantic perspective, Bhamoraput (1972, p. 16) classified final particle into seven groups: intensifying particles, emphasizing particles, hortative particles, definite particles, question particles, post-question particles, and status particles. According to Peyasantiwong (1981, p. 28) looking at their similarity, divided Thai final particles into three main groups: question particles, status particles, and mood particles. And Cooke (1989, 1992) roughly divided final particles into four types on the basis of their semantic and pragmatic context: speaker-addressee relationships, or status particles, calling for response from the addressee, or question particles, speaker's response to the situation, and contextual orientation, or mood particles. He pointed out that one of the unique characteristics of final particles is variation of forms. They may involve phonological variation such as vowel shortening, initial or final consonants

deletion, changes of pitch or length, or intonational variability. These variations may also relate to the shade of their meanings.

In this paper, *?a raj jaaŋ̀ nií* is claimed to be final particle by using both syntactical and discourse-pragmatic perspective as stating above to challenge the study of final particle in Thai language.

3. Data and methods of analysis

The data of this study is a corpus of narratives and conversations of 80 Bangkok speakers aged 6-80. Among the large corpus of these participants, it roughly divided into eight groups with 10 year range of speakers in each group, except the first group that begins with 6 years old. According to the previous study in child language acquisition in Thai school (Phisarnpanumart, 2529; Benjatanasompatti, 2546), the 6-year-old child is in the first grade of school system and has closely acquired standard grammar much alike adult speaker.

The recordings were ranging from about 10 to 30 minutes in length. Narratives and conversations were transcribed from recordings and edited slightly.

The analysis of the data consisted primarily of looking at each occurrence of *?araj jaaŋ̀ nií* and its variable forms in its natural discourse context within this corpus. None of data here is based on elicitation or speaker intuitions.

4. Analysis

4.1 Grammatical functions of *?araj jàaŋ níi*

Normally, ?araj jàaŋ níi (อะไรอย่างนี้) in Thai speech can occur at the end of sentence or utterance with multiple grammatical functions. Syntactically, ?araj jàaŋ níi as noun phrase is in construction of head noun ?araj (อะไร) 'something or what' followed by a noun phrase modifier which consists of a classifier jàaŋ (อย่าง) 'kind' as head noun and níi (นี้) 'this' as its determiner. It can be shown as model below:

(1) NP [*?araj* [jàaŋ níi]]

something kind this

N. Class. Det.

In most cases, noun phrase *?araj jàaŋ níi* has some syntactic characteristics and grammatical functions as verb complement and noun modifier. In some constructions, *?araj jàaŋ níi* can not be deleted in the sentence as is illustrated by (2)

(2) mâj khít wâa khǎw ca ram thâa ?araj jàaŋ níi dâj

NEG. think COMP. he will dance N:the act what kind this

MOD V.

'(I) don't think that he could dance like this.'

In this example, noun phrase *?a raj jàaŋ níi* functions as a modifier of a head noun *thâa* 'the act' embedding in a subordinate clause which has *wâa* as a complementizer.

In some cases, the head noun can be deleted but *?a raj jaaŋ nii* still exists, as in example (3).

(3) khaw maj chaj (khrɨaŋ) ?araj jaaŋ nii lɛɛw
PRON. NEG. use N:(machine) what kind this MOD.
'No one has used what kind like this anymore.'

Also, *?a raj jaaŋ nii* occurs after verb, it functions as verb complement when following intransitive verb as illustrated in (4), and functions as object when following transitive verb as illustrated in (5).

(4) khon jə́ mâak maj jaak paj ?araj jaaŋ nii
people many very NEG. want go what kind this
'It's very crowded, (I) don't want to go like this.'

(5) raw maj jaak tham ?araj jaaŋ nii na
we NEG. want do what kind this PART.
'We don't want to do what kind like this.'

All of examples above shows that noun phrase *?araj jaaŋ nii* can perform these grammatical functions as noun modifier as well as verb complement and object when occurs after noun and verb in the sentence. It can not be deleted since it indicates some intention of speakers. It is noted that Thai speakers use *?araj jaaŋ nii* to refer to the specific things or events which are shared-knowledge of speakers and hearers. *?araj jaaŋ nii* contains the content that presupposes speakers' negative feelings or attitudes towards those things or events.

4.2 From noun phrase to final particle of *?araj jàaŋ nîi*

The analysis found that *?araj jàaŋ nîi* has been lexicalized to word. It is not a single word but a compound word. The formation of compound word in Thai is very common. In most cases, compound word can be derived from noun phrase. When noun phrase has become compound word, there is a close knit relation within it, that is, it can not be moved or inserted any words in it.

Phonetically, there are variable forms of *?araj jàaŋ nîi* such as *?araj jàaŋ ŋíi* as there is some sound assimilation of nasal sound from [n] to [ŋ]. Mostly, *?araj jàaŋ nîi* can be followed by another assertive particle *ná*, and then derives into one word with dipthong. Thus, *?araj jàaŋ nîi ná* changes the form to *?araj jàaŋ nía* or *?araj jàaŋ ŋía*. There are, then, the shorten form as *?araj ŋía* or *raj ŋía*.

When *?araj jàaŋ nîi* is lexicalized to word, it always occurs at the end of sentence or utterance. Its syntactic characteristics are very much like final particle. These are: it does not have any syntactic relationship and dependency with any words in a sentence or utterance; it always occurs at the end of utterance; and it can be deleted or replaced by other final particles in a group of assertive or expressions, such as ná.

These can be seen in (6) below.

(6) (a) tua nîi sŭaj ná
shirt this lovely PART.

(b) ?aw máj **?a raj jàaŋ nii**
take it QUES. PART.

(c) man sŭaj thùuk dûaj **?a raj ŋ́ia**

it lovely cheap too PART.

(d) kɔ̂ lə̀j sɨ́ɨ̀ lə̀j **raj ŋ́ia**

so, bought MOD. PART.

'This shirt is lovely, do you want it? she said. It was lovely and it was cheap too, I think. So, I bought it.'

This example is a connected speech of a 16-year-old girl telling her story about shopping and reporting that the seller was attempting to buy her a shirt. There are four utterances in this speech and final particles of telling story, *ná* and *?a raj jàaŋ́ nií* appear in every utterances. Notice that there is a difference of these two particles. Final particle *ná* in (6a) is in direct speech. That means *ná* is of the seller speech to affirm how good quality of the shirt the girl was looking. In (6b) *?a raj jàaŋ́ nií* is of the girl speech to show the end of quotation. Whereas in (6c-d) with the variable forms, *?a raj jàaŋ́ nií* marks her own speech to express her decision to the audience.

All the forms which illustrated above shows the grammaticalized form of *?araj jàaŋ́ nií* from noun phrase to final particle. *?araj jàaŋ́ nií* has developed the specialized usage, with different grammatical and syntactic behaviors. It moves from syntactically fixed as noun modifier and verb complement to syntactically free as final particle.

4.3 Discourse function and social category of final particle *?araj jàaŋ́ nií*

?araj jàaŋ́ nií as final particle, it has specific meaning and function which is concerning to discourse and pragmatic aspect rather than

grammatical aspect. Meaning and function of *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* in this view can be pointing the social categories to the speaker. This paper uses Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia to describe *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* function. It presupposes the positioning of speakers and texts within the heterogeneity of world view and social interaction. It is integrated within the system of modality and evidentiality. *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii,* therefore, has a socio-pragmatic function in interpersonal communication. Thai speakers use *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* as a discourse connective and pragmatic marker to indicate speaker's stance towards the information or content as well as the connection between utterances.

In example (7) illustrates *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* as discourse connective and its meaning is very much like 'such as' or 'for example'.

(7) thîi paj kɔ̂ mii mŭaj, lék, tèk **?araj ŋ́ia**

(people) REL PRON. go REL. have PRON. PART.

'People who went there together were Muay, Lek, Tek and so on.

In this example, Speaker use *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* to connect details or examples in utterance and to show evidences to addressee by stating the people proper name which addressee might know.

Moreover, *?araj jaà ŋ́ nii* can be hedging or fuzziness when speaker can not describe the exact details, or speaker may lack of full information. It is probably used to blur speaker's intent as illustrated by example (8).

(8) hěn khǎw níi paj thaaŋ hŭa hĭn thɛ̌w bɔ̀ɔ faaj **?araj jàaŋ nía** saw him ran go way PROP-HuaHin area PROP-Bor Fai PART.

'(I) saw him ran away to Hua Hin, somewhere around Bor Fai area.'

In this example, the 35-year-old woman talked about a guy who was her neighbor had done some bad thing and had been chased by another neighbor. Being asked as the witness, she used final particle *?araj jàaŋ nií* to blur her speech but she used *hěn*, 'to see'. as her evidential. This can be assumed that she may not know the exact information or she may try to hedge what she knew but she does not want to clearly say for some reasons.

These two examples above show how discourse function of *?araj jàaŋ nií* does. Speakers report those events and information with this form of final particle. This can say that final particle *?araj jàaŋ nií* indicates the information being reported was obtained through evidentials.

5. Variation in usage by speaker at different ages

Interestingly, the usage of *?araj jàaŋ nií* among age groups is very distinctive. This sociolinguistic distribution shows how Thai speakers use this final particle. From quantitative analysis, all final particles appeared in data were counted. When comparing the frequency of the overall usage of final particles, like *na* and *?a*, it found that *?araj jàaŋ nií* is highest use in the age of

11-20. Table 1 shows that *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* exemplifies the usage by different age groups of speakers when comparing to other two final particle, *na* and *?a*.

Table 1 The use of final particle *?a, na* and *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* among age groups.

Particles / Age	6-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80
?a	36.69	17.85	23.1	21.06	13.57	20.34	17.42	17.39
na	3.04	5.42	10.52	28.53	49.71	35.27	35.06	35.49
?araj jaaŋ́ nii	2.47	30.08	27.26	20.99	5.13	3.79	2.01	0

Using final particles by age difference here is very interesting. The analysis shows that *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* is highest used in the speaker at age group of 11-20 with 30.08 percent of the overall final particles used in corpus of the same age group. The age of 21-30, 31-40, and 41-50 is in order of frequency. Meanwhile, it appears zero in the speaker of 71-80 years old, and 6-7 years old. Concerning the token of data, *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* firstly found the usage in the speaker of 9 years old. It is noted that final particle *na* is highly used in the age of 41 up to 80 and *?a* is the highest used at the age of 6-10.

This variation of using final particle, particularly *?a raj jaaŋ́ nii*, demonstrating above can be the marker of indicating language change in Thai society. Using Labov's notion of change in progress, it can be assumed that *?araj jaaŋ́ nii* might be the main final particle of assertion and demonstrating instead of *na*. The picture of final particle change in progress can be clearer illustrated by Chart 1 below.

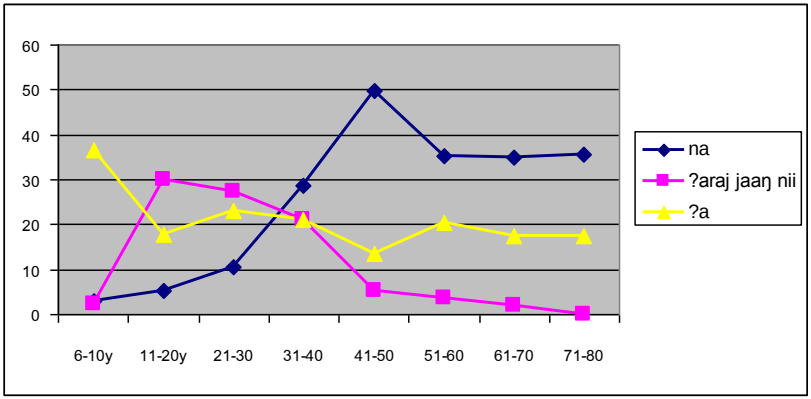


Figure 1 Change in progress of Thai final particle *na, ?a* and *?araj jaaŋ nii*

6. Conclusion

This paper argues that *?araj jaaŋ nii* is a new final particle in Thai language. It is grammaticalized from noun phrase to final particle. As final particle, *?araj jaaŋ nii* has more widely been used by Thai speakers in terms of discourse-pragmatic function. It is used as discourse connective and pragmatic marker. *?araj jaaŋ nii* can be a marker of language of young speakers as it found the highest use in the age of 11-20. These different usages of *?araj jaaŋ nii* as final particle among Thai speakers at different ages can be discussed from the heteroglossia function and the sociolinguistic variation perspective. Young Thai people at age of 11-20 interpret *?araj jaaŋ nii* in an adult-like fashion since *?araj jaaŋ nii* is a final particle of assertion and demonstrating. They popularly use it to describe and illustrate their speech and their opinion or stance very much like adult people do. On the other hand, since *?araj jaaŋ nii* has been fashionably used by the younger, Thai adults use it to perform their modern style and to express their youthfulness. This tendency of

final particle usage show the change in progress as Labov (1972) points out to Thai language.

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