Intonation of Northern Thai Utterance-final Particles

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Abstract

This study was conducted for the primary purpose of describing intonational characteristics of Northern Thai final particles. The study was based on speech data collected from natural conversations in varied settings with 8 native speakers of Northern Thai aged between 45 and 70 who spent their childhood and most parts of their lives in Chiang Mai city area or its vicinity. To obtain relevant speech data, the researcher engaged each speaker in having a conversation and recorded and transcribed utterances containing final particles. The speech data were then analysed in terms of the meaning, function, and intonational modification of each final particle. The main findings of this study are as follows.

Northern Thai final particles serve not only pragmatic purposes, but also as intonation units. In this study, a total of 30 final particles were identified. The particles can be divided according to their functions into 8 categories. Almost all of these particles can undergo intonational modification. The forms of intonation identified in this study are pitch heightening, pitch lowering, vowel lengthening, vowel shortening, and combinations of any of these forms of pitch change and vowel modification. When a form of intonation was applied, the sense of an utterance would change to convey different attitudinal perceptions and pragmatic intents of the conversation participants, such as annoyance, impatience, surprise, request, persuasion, and command. It is recommended that further studies be conducted on the relationship between intonation and other linguistic features of the language, for example, lexical words, function words, and other particles.

Keywords: Northern Thai; intonation; utterance-final particle; pragmatic

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บทคัดย่อ

ท่วงทำนองในคำลงท้ายในภาษาไทยภาคเหนือ

งานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์หลักเพื่ออธิบายลักษณะเฉพาะของท่วงทำนองในอนุภาคท้ายในภาษาไทยภาคเหนือ. งานวิจัยครั้งนี้กระทำโดยใช้ข้อมูลการสนทนาตามธรรมชาติ ในสิ่งแวดล้อมแตกต่างกัน โดยเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้บอกภาษาที่เป็นผู้ใช้ภาษาไทยภาคเหนือเป็นภาษาแม่ จำนวน 8 คน ซึ่งมีอายุระหว่าง 45 ถึง 70 ปี และผ่านชีวิตวัยเด็ก รวมทั้งใช้ชีวิตส่วนใหญ่ ในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่หรือบริเวณใกล้เคียง. เพื่อเก็บข้อมูลที่ตรงกับวัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัย ผู้วิจัยให้ผู้บอกภาษาแต่ละคนมีส่วนในการสนทนา และผู้วิจัยได้บันทึกข้อความสนทนานั้น อันประกอบด้วยอนุภาคท้ายต่างๆ. จากนั้น ข้อมูลข้อความสนทนาถูกวิเคราะห์ในแง่ความหมายหน้าที่ และท่วงทำนองที่ถูกใช้กับอนุภาคท้ายแต่ละคำ. ผลการศึกษาเป็นดังนี้.

อนุภาคท้ายในภาษาไทยภาคเหนือมิได้มีหน้าที่ด้านวจนปฏิบัติเท่านั้น แต่ยังเป็นหน่วยรับท่วงทำนองอีกด้วย. การศึกษาครั้งนี้ระบุอนุภาคท้ายได้ 30 คำ โดยแบ่งออกเป็น 8 ประเภทตามหน้าที่. อนุภาคท้ายเกือบทั้งหมดสามารถถูกขยายความโดยท่วงทำนองได้ โดยท่วงทำนองที่ระบุออกมาได้ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้แก่ การยกระดับเสียง การลดระดับเสียง การยืดความยาวของสระ การลดความยาวของสระ และการผสมผสานลักษณะทางระดับเสียงกับลักษณะสระ. เมื่อมีการใช้ท่วงทำนอง นัยยะของคำพูดจะถูกเปลี่ยนไปเพื่อสื่อทัศนะการรับรู้และเจตนาด้านด้านวจนปฏิบัติที่แตกต่างกันของผู้มีส่วนในการสนทนานั้น เช่นความรำคาญ ความหมดความอดทน ความแปลกใจ การขอร้อง การชักชวน และการออกคำสั่ง. จากงานวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีข้อเสนอแนะคือน่าจะศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างท่วงทำนองและลักษณะอื่นๆทางภาษาศาสตร์ในภาษาไทยภาคเหนือ เช่น คำแสดงความหมาย คำแสดงหน้าที่ และอนุภาคท้ายประเภทอื่นๆ.

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาไทยภาคเหนือ; ท่วงทำนอง; อนุภาคท้าย; วจนปฏิบัติ

1. Introduction and Significance

The illocutionary effect of an utterance can be achieved by a number of devices. Choice of lexical items, like modal constructs, is usually the most obvious. The English word 'necessary', for example, suggests that there is a need for something, whereas the word 'vital' is more powerful, as it indicates an absolute need for something. Syntactic structures may also perform an illocutionary act in certain communicative contexts. An utterance like 'There is a centipede in the box' looks like a general affirmative statement, but in some situations it functions as a warning. There are also cases where two utterances made up of identical lexical items and syntactic structures could serve different illocutionary purposes. In such a case, intonation can be a common device adopted by the speaker for the purpose of distinguishing a statement that signals, for example, 'finality' from one that implies 'unfinishedness' (Roach 1991).

Intonation is a suprasegmental or prosodic quality involving pitch as its most salient feature, namely, its rising and falling contours in connected speech. Intonation interacts with other suprasegmental features like stress, length, prominence, and loudness. Such varying pitch levels could be used to convey different meanings or intents of utterances. Intonation, then, may be defined as the use of a phonetic suprasegment (mostly the pitch) to convey post-lexical or sentence-level pragmatic (e.g., illocutionary) meanings in a linguistically structured way (Ladd 2008).

The main problem related to this definition is that different languages employ pitch differently. Pitch-based taxonomic classification of languages divides languages into three groups: intonation languages, pitch-accented languages and tone languages (Cruttenden 1997: 8-12). In an intonation language, pitch may interact with both syllable stress and sentential melodies, such as in English. In a pitch-accented language, the accented or prominent mora (a vowel unit equaling the full length of a short syllable or half the length of a long syllable) is usually accompanied by relatively high pitch, like in Japanese (Cruttenden 1997). But a tone language could be a different case. In a tone language, a specific pitch level is assigned onto each syllable in a word to mark

semantic contrasts. That is, a change of meaning occurs if one pitch level is replaced by another, even though the segmental composition (i.e., consonants and vowels) remains unchanged, such as the Central Thai words **/lâw/** 'to tell' versus **/láw/** 'sty'. Thus, the pitch-intonation interaction in a tone language (e.g., Thai and several other Asian languages) is likely to be more complicated than that in an intonation language or a pitch-accented language.

To date, intonational patterns of several regional varieties of Thai, including Northern Thai, have remained unexplored. As several studies show, even in tone languages, intonation plays an essential part in conveying the speaker's attitudes, emotions, feelings and intents, as well as serving as a politeness and pragmatic device. This study of Northern Thai particles and their intonation is conducted to fill one of such gaps of knowledge.

Another important aspect of this study concerns what some of the earlier studies of final particles in Tai languages refer to as 'tone variation', which, according to Vacharaporn (1990) and Boonson (1997), results in a 'difference in meaning or submeaning'. Based on a phonological principle, any feature that causes a change or difference in meaning, or that involves a distinctive speech element, is considered to be phonemic. If tone variation leads to a difference in meaning, then such variation may in fact be a case of 'intoneme', a phonemically distinctive intonational unit. For this reason, describing the intonation of Northern Thai utterance-final particles using a phonemic approach could help deepen our understanding of the supresegmental features as imposed on this word-class.

The author's aim is to investigate the following aspects of Northern Thai utterance-final particles and their intonation. First, with most previous studies of Thai intonation concentrating on correspondence between intonational pitch and utterance types, such as declaratives and questions, the author focuses on the intonation of utterance-final particles. Second, as several studies of tone languages have described tone variation patterns of utterance-final particles, the author attempts to examine such 'variation' based on a phonemic approach. Finally, whilst most earlier studies of intonation were conducted in a formal or laboratory setting, the author, on the

other hand, chooses to collect data through conversations in natural communicative situations in order to obtain as natural speech data as possible.

2. Background to the Study

2.1 Previous Studies of Intonation

Earlier studies of intonation in tone languages were influenced by descriptions of sentential melodies in such intonation languages like English (Lieberman 1975; Pierrehumbert 1980; Roach 1991) and a variety of European languages (Gusshoven et al 2003 for Dutch; Adriaens 1991 for German and Beaugrande 1994 for French). These studies explored patterns of pitch variation and its interplay with other suprasegmental features (e.g., stress, prominence, rhythm), focusing on intonational behaviour throughout an utterance, for both grammatical (e.g., to distinguish between a statement and a question) and pragmatic (e.g., to perform a speech act) purposes. On the other hand, intonation patterns on morphological units were not included.

Amongst tone languages, on the other hand, intonational studies are not as prolific. Lindau (1986) and Inkelas and Lebel (1990) examined the intonation-tone interaction patterns of Hausa, an African language of Nigeria. According to their study, pitch declination occurs throughout a statement consisting of alternating high and low tones (i.e., H L H L H) but not in one containing a non-alternating H-L series. A question, on the other hand, does not display such declination although it contains alternating high and low tones. Ladd (2008) investigated intonational patterns of Yoruba, another language spoken mainly in Nigeria. His findings show cases of elided vowels in connected speech. Such elision results in a syllable being 'segmentally lost', but its tune or pitch still continues. A lost syllable having the same tone as the one preceding it results in the lengthening of the preceding vowel. Where the tone of the elided syllable differs from that of its preceding syllable, a pitch contour results.

Intonation patterns of Asia's tone languages have also been investigated over the past few decades. Mandarin Chinese, according to Shen (1990), displays three distinct intonational tunes:

declarative tune, yes-no question tune and WH-question tune. The tune for a declarative has the lowest overall pitch, usually with declining pitch after the initial introductory part. The tune of a Yes-No question resembles that of a declarative in terms of pitch configuration, but with a higher overall pitch. A WH-question features quite a distinct contour shape; its beginning pitch is approximately as high as that of a Yes-No question but its ending pitch is similar to that of a declarative. With tone-intonation interaction taken into account, Xu (1998) describes a tone-segment coordination pattern in Mandarin Chinese. The pitch peak at the end of a rising tone that is followed by a low or falling tone is aligned with (i.e., retained at the same level as) the end of the syllable in which that rising tone is located, a condition that may be similar to segmental anchoring (Ladd 2008).

For Thai, a tone language of Southeast Asia, the first intonational study was probably by Abramson and Svastikula (nd). Conducting their experiment in a laboratory setting, they focused on interactions between tones and intonation in simple and complex declaratives. Such interactions were analysed acoustically in terms of waveforms, overall amplitude and fundamental frequency. They reported no significant declination or drop in the tones, and that 'the tones themselves remained physically distinct in all contexts examined'.

Another major study of Thai intonation was done by Luksaneeyanawin (1983, 1998). Luksaneeyanawin identifies five different pitch behaviours superimposed on the five lexical tones in Central Thai, showing that the basic intonation groups and focalisation patterns applies to Thai as a tone language as well as to non-tone languages. She further identifies four intonation patterns and the attitudes they usually convey, namely, emphasis, agreeability, interest and belief. Building on Luksaneeyanawin's study, Tumtavitikul and Thitikannara (2006a) describe the relation of prominence to intonation in Central Thai declaratives, showing that the pitch movement in both prominence and intonation is rule-governed. Tumtavitikul and Thitikannara then confirm (2006b) that the speaking rate, average pitch and pitch range of the intonation vary according to the type of emotion involved, with a higher pitch level corresponding to anger, surprise and happiness, and a lower pitch level to sadness, as well as to the emotionally unmarked neutral speech.

Most previous studies on intonation, as can be summed up, either treated intonation as a phonological phenomenon resulting from tone sandhi (change of pitch or tone behaviour in abutting syllables) or described the pitch melodies and their paralinguistic functions that modify entire statements. Little attempt, however, has been made to investigate intonational phonology of individual lexical items.

2.2 Previous Studies of Utterance-Final Particles

Utterance-final particles in languages of the Tai-Kadai family have been widely studied. These studies describe utterance-final particles in terms of their attitudinal functions, grammatical functions, pragmatic functions, tonal and segmental variations, and a combination of these features. Wansorn (1987) describes the moods, emotions and attitudes associated with the utterance-final particles of the Srisaket variety of Northeastern Thai. Her study also reports relationships between particle choice, occasion on which a communicative act is taking place, and the speaker's status. Chowyong's (1996) study of Tai Lue, a language spoken in Nan province of Northern Thailand, reports 19 utterance-final particles used for expressing moods (i.e., attitudes), in addition to particles with such pragmatic functions as urging and requesting.

Joonlapron (1991) and Rattanaprayura (2000) explain the use of utterance-final particles as a politeness device. Joonlapron divides the utterance-final particles in the Korat variety of Northeastern Thai into three main types according to their pragmatic functions: those used with a listener whose status is equal to or lower than the speaker, those used with a listener whose status is higher than the speaker, and those used to signal politeness. These particles, as claimed by Joonlapron, are used only if there is a considerable degree of intimacy between the speaker and the listener. Rattanaprayura's study, conducted on the Nakhon Si Thammarat variety of Southern Thai, shows the relationship between the utterance-final particles and the speaker's status, the speaker's sex, need for politeness, and the degree of intimacy between the speaker and the

listener. The study explains that the choice of utterance-final particles is determined by the situation, participants' status and emotions, and purpose and content of the utterance.

Vacharaporn (1990), Panich (1993) and Boonson (1997) describe patterns of glottalisation, tone variation and vowel variation in Lao Khrang, Lao Song and Phuan, respectively. These languages possess utterance-final particles of various constructs: monosyllabic, polysyllabic and compounded. These particles serve grammatical (e.g., changing a statement into a question) and pragmatic (e.g., warning) functions and their use depends on such factors as the communication situation and context, social status of the participants, objective of a given utterance, and speaker's feeling. The findings of the studies point to the fact that when an utterance-final particle undergoes tone and vowel variation, a 'difference in meaning' (Boonson 1997) or in 'submeaning' (Vacharaporn 1990) results.

Whilst a number of studies have been conducted on utterance-final particles, almost all of them concentrated their lexical properties and pragmatic functions. In this present study, therefore, the researcher attempts to bridge the gap between intonational phonology on the one hand and lexico-morphological units on the other.

3. Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To classify and discuss the functions or meanings of Northern Thai utterance-final particles;

2. To describe the forms and functions of intonation as it is superimposed on Northern Thai utterance-final particles; and

3. To explain the phonological patterns of intonation superimposed on Northern Thai utterance-final particles.

4. Procedure and Methodology

Northern Thai, also known as Lanna Thai, is a language of the Tai-Kadai family. It is spoken as the native language by more than 6 million people in Northern Thailand and a few thousand in Northwestern Laos (Lewis 2009). Despite being officially designated as the Northern regional dialect of Thai, it differs from Central Thai2 in some of linguistic aspects, such as the phonology, morphology and lexicon. At present, Northern Thai is used only in its spoken form. Its orthographic form was discontinued when the Central Government of Siam, during the reign of King Rama V, started its education reform in 1884, requiring that Central Thai be taught in schools in place of Northern Thai (Ongsakul 1986). At present, Northern Thai scripts remain only in ancient records, palm-leaf manuscripts and religions (Buddhist) documents. Within Northern Thailand itself, Northern Thai is spoken in several local varieties, with slight mutually intelligible lexical and accentual variations. For this study, the Chiang Mai variety of Northern Thai has been chosen due to the fact that it is the only variety that has been codified and used as the basis for dictionaries and writing textbooks.

Like all the languages in the Tai-Kadai family, Northern Thai is a tone language. Its six contrastive tones are (i) the mid-level (as in **/law/** 'good-looking'), (ii) low-level (as in **/làw/** 'group'), (iii) mid-falling (as in **/lāw/** 'tell a story'), (iv) high-falling (as in **/lâw/** 'liquor'), (v) high-level (as in **/láw/** 'sty'), and (vi) low-rising (as in **/lǎw/** 'sharpen'). In this paper, the segmental and tonal transcriptions are based on the IPA and conform to the Lanna Thai-Central Thai Dictionary, the Mae Fah Luang Edition (1990). Intonation pitch is marked by a bold arrow-line (for an intoneme) or by a dotted arrow-line (for an allointone), if such differentiation is necessary.

[2] The term 'Central Thai' could refer to any of the varieties of Thai spoken in Central Thailand. Such varieties differ tonally and lexically from one another, and from the form selected for official use. Therefore, the term 'Central Thai' used in this article refers only to the variety of Thai mainly spoken in Bangkok and its neighbouring provinces, used official communication and taught in schools countrywide.

The data used in this study were collected from native Northern Thai speakers aged between 45 and 70 who spent their childhood and most parts of their lives in Chiang Mai city area or its vicinity. The reason for collecting speech data from people in this age bracket is that they are likely to have grown up, been schooled and lived during the time before the strong intense wave of commercial modernisation hit Chiang Mai city in the early 1980s (Panphae 2012). The data-collecting period spanned a little over 2 years, from January 2010 to March 2012.

The data-gathering procedure involved the following steps, during all of which the author was assisted by a native Northern Thai speaker. First, the author observed ten Northern Thai speakers' speech patterns in order to decide whether they would qualify as informants based on the criteria stated in the previous paragraph. Second, after having selected 8 qualified informants, 5 females and 3 males, the author began by engaging each of the informants in short, daily-life conversations. The purpose of this stage was to allow the author and the informants to become acquainted, a vital condition for any subsequent activities. Third, the author gradually engaged each of the informants in longer conversations, with increasing regularity. During this stage, the author used statements, questions and remarks concerning general affairs to prompt each informant to respond with statements ending with utterance-final particles. For example, if the author saw quite a clear sky, he would remark to the informant with a question like **/læːŋ nɨ́ː fǒn tʃàʔ tǒk kɔ̀ː hǎː/** ('Will it rain this evening?') Seeing that rain was unlikely, the informant might respond by saying **/bɔ̀ː tǒk kâː/** ('Probably not.'), with the utterance-final particle **/kâː/** pronounced with or without a certain form of intonation. The entire conversation between the author and each informant was tape-recorded and transcribed phonetically for analysis. This step would be repeated, over time and with different informants, until speech data become saturated, that is, until no new intonation data could be gathered. Finally, after sufficient data had been collected, the author informed each informant of the purpose of the conversations and asked for his/her permission to use the data for an academic purpose without disclosing his/her identity and any information that might be considered personal or sensitive. The language used in all of these stages was Northern Thai.

The scope of this study was limited to utterance-final particles (hereinafter 'final particles') in the Chiang Mai variety of Northern Thai. These final particles included compounded forms (e.g., /taːŋdaj/ 'where'), but not serialised (e.g., /kaː jâw/) structures. The data were collected at various times and places, and mostly in conditions unfavourable for good-quality recording (such as in a marketplace or a restaurant); as a consequence, none of the recorded utterances could be used for acoustic analysis. Because all of the utterances were recorded without the informants' prior knowledge, and because of the confidentiality agreement reached between the author and the informants after all of the utterances had been recorded, none of the recorded utterances, or parts thereof, can be disclosed to anybody other than the author and his language assistant. Where names appeared in a conversation, they were replaced by pseudonyms.

6. Analysis

The final particles were classified according to their functions and/or meanings and analysed using a phonemic approach. Each particle was first examined in terms of the basic function or meaning it had in its non-intonated form, that is, in its basic consonant-vowel-tone construct. The next step, which was to establish phonemic contrasts, involves analysis of the particles based on the phoneme-identifying procedure. In this step, the author, author's assistant and two more native Northern Thai speaking volunteers selected by the author's assistant listened to the recorded utterances. Where two or more utterances differed only in the intonation features imposed on their final particles, the assistant and the volunteers were to identify the meaning or function conveyed by each intonation feature. Finally, the assistant was asked by the author to reproduce the utterances that contained each feature of intonation on their final particles. This was performed for the purpose of recording the particles and their intonation features using the programme Speech Analyzer. The generated spectrograms were used in this study to illustrate the acoustic features of intonation as applied to final particles.

7. Results and Discussion

Northern Thai final particles may be divided into five categories, performing the interrogative (7.1), deontic (7.2), persuasive or requesting (7.3), reminding (7.4), emphatic response (7.5), agreement (7.6), epistemic (7.7), and politeness (7.8) functions. Where a particle is glossed, its function is indicated in parentheses. A sentence boundary in the phonemically transcribed Northern Thai examples is marked with a vertical line |.

7.1 Interrogative Particles

Northern Thai interrogative final particles are divided into two groups. The first group includes of particles expressing different styles of yes-no questions, whilst the second includes those used to form information questions.

A. Particles for Yes-No Questions

All of the final particles forming yes-no questions are monosyllabic. They are **/kaː/**, **/kɔ̀ː/**, **/lǣː/**, **/bɔ̌ː/**, and **/ʔíʔ/**. Each is discusses below in terms of its basic (non-intonated) and modified (intonated) meanings.

(1) **/kaː/** 'Simple yes-no question'

/kaː/ is the simplest yes-no question particle. In its basic form, it is pronounced with the mid-level tone, as in Example 1.

Example 1: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of **/kaː/**

IPA:	**ʔâj**	**sǎn**	**wannáː**	**luŋ**	**tʃǎn**	**maː**
Gloss:	brother	San	today	uncle	Jan	come

IPA: sòŋ pă:tʰu: læ:w **ka:** |

Gloss: send mackerelalready (yes/no)

English: 'Mr San, has Uncle Jan delivered the mackerel today?'

Two forms of intonation may be superimposed on the particle **/ka:/**, both when it ends an utterance and when it is spoken alone in response to a statement. Each form involves modification of the local tone to express a different feeling or attitude. The first form, the mid-rising intonation, involves lengthening of the vowel, followed by a sharp rise in pitch towards the end. This intonation form, which may also be accompanied by breathiness, signifies the speaker's surprise or disbelief. As shown in Example 2, the responder expresses her surprise at being told that a very young person is leaving Chiang Mai for Bangkok unaccompanied.

Example 2: Pronunciation of **/ka:/** with Mid-Rising Intonation (Surprise)

Opening Line:

IPA: **hú: kɔ̀: lū:k lâ: pâ: pʰian**

Gloss: know yes-no child youngest aunt Phian

IPA: **n̂i: paj ʔæ̀w kʊŋtʰēp kʰondiaw** |

Gloss: escape go travel Bangkok oneself

English: 'Don't you know Aunt Phian's youngest child has travelled to Bangkok alone?'

Response:

IPA: **paj kʊŋtʰēp kʰondiaw ka:** |

Gloss: go Bangkok oneself (yes-no)

English: 'Going to Bangkok alone, really!'

The second form modifies the local tone by superimposing high-rising pitch on the particle's tone and shortening the vowel. This form of intonation, called the high-rising intonation, indicates the speaker's reserved surprise or surprise at something contrary to his/her knowledge or expectation. This is illustrated in Example 3, which shows that the responder is very surprised by the fact that the lottery-money collector will make an unscheduled visit to collect the money.

Example 3: Pronunciation of **/kaː/** with High-Rising Intonation (Reserved Surprise)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**wanpʰūːk**	**ʔiː**	**dæːŋ**	**tʃàʔ**	**maː**	**kěp**	**kāː**	**hŭaj**	**nɜ̄ː** |
Gloss:	tomorrow	Prefix	Daeng	will	come	collect	fee	lottery	UFP

English: 'Tomorrow Miss Daeng will come to collect the lottery money.'

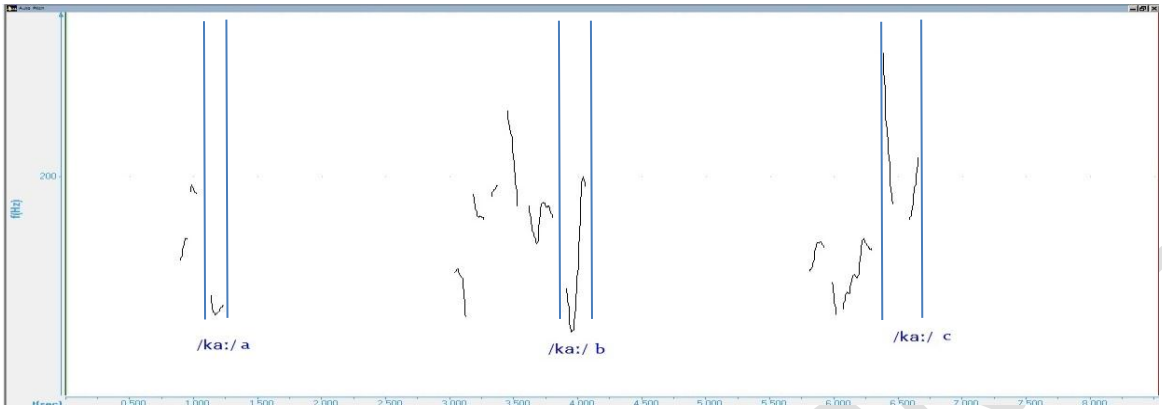
Response:

IPA:	**man**	**maː**	**wanpʰūːk**	**kaː** |
Gloss:	it	come	tomorrow	(yes-no)

English: 'She'll come tomorrow! Really (are you sure?)'

Figure 1 illustrates the pitch of the particle **/kaː/** pronounced in the three different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; (b) with the mid-rising intonation to express surprise; and (c) with the high-rising intonation to express reserved surprise.

Figure 1: **/kaː/** in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



(2) **/kɔ̀ː/** 'Whether or not'

/kɔ̀ː/ is another yes-no question final particle in Northern Thai. Unlike **/kaː/,** this particle implies a 'whether-or-not' meaning and is never used with a verb preceded by the negative particle **/bɔ̀ː/**. **/kɔ̀ː/** is pronounced with the low-level tone in its basic form. In Example 4, the speaker wonders whether or not he over-coddles his child.

Example 4: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of **/kɔ̀ː/**

IPA:	**bàː**	**tʃʰaj**	**kʰiŋ**	**wāː**	**haː**	**ʔɔmpɔ́ʔɔmpɔ̌j**
Gloss:	Prefix	Chaiyou	say	I	coddle	
IPA:	**lūːk**	**haː**	**lámpaj**	**$\overrightarrow{\text{kɔ̀ː}}$** |		
Gloss:	child	I	too much	(whether or not)		

English: 'Chai, tell me whether or not I over-coddle my child.'

The particle **/kɔ̀ː/** can be subjected to one form of intonation. This form of intonation involves lengthening of the vowel and contouring of the local tone, ending in a rising pitch, thus called the low-rising intonation. When applied to the particle **/kɔ̀ː/**, the low-rising intonation may serve two

purposes. The first purpose is to convey the speaker's mild or friendly challenge to the listener, rather than focusing on the 'whether-or-not' purpose. This is illustrated in Example 5, in which the speaker wishes to challenge a friend to sample her eel curry.

Example 5: Pronunciation of **/kɔ̀ː/** with Low-Rising Intonation (Friendly Challenge)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**læːŋ**	**níː**	**pɜ̄n**	**tʃàʔ**	**kæ̌ːŋ**	**pǎːɲìan**	|
Gloss:	evening	this	I	will	curry	eel	
IPA:	**tŭa**	**kʰāj**	**tʃim**	**pʰɔ̀ː**	**kɔ̀ː**	|	
Gloss:	you	want	taste	see	(whether or not)		

English: 'This evening I will make an eel curry. Do you want to try it?'

Response:

IPA:	**nǣːnɔːn** |	**pɜ̄n**	**kʰāj**	**tʃim**	**fiːmɨː**	**tŭa maː**	**mɜːn**	**lǽːw** |
Gloss:	sure	I	want	taste	skill	you come	long	already

English: 'Sure! I have long wanted to see how well you can cook.'

The second purpose is to convey the speaker's impatience, annoyance, or anger at the listener's hesitation or lack of compliance or obedience. As illustrated in Example 6, the mother is getting angry and impatient at her daughter's reluctance to go to school.

Example 6: Pronunciation of **/kɔ̀ː/** with Low-Rising Intonation (Impatience)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**ʔiː**	**lâː**	**bàdiaw**	**nîː**	**pɔːtʃàʔ**	**pæ̀ːt**	**moːŋ**
Gloss:	Prefix	youngest	now	here	almost	eight	hour
IPA:	**lǽːw**	**húː**	**kɔ̀ː** |	**bɔ̀ː**	**paj**	**hoːŋhian**	**kaː** |
Gloss:	already	know	(whether or not)	not	go	school	(yes-no)

English: 'Little girl, don't you know it's almost 8 o'clock now? Are you not going to school?'

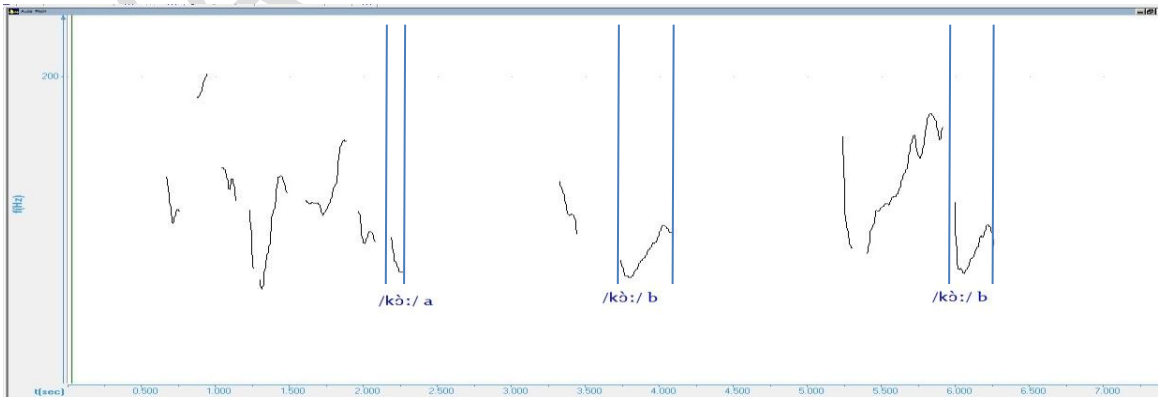
Response:

IPA:	**paj**	**kàː** |	**kamdiaw**	**bàdaːj**	**ʔiː**	**mǣː** |	
Gloss:	go	(confirming)	moment	only	Prefix	mother	

English: 'I am. Just a moment, Mom.'

Figure 2 illustrates the pitch of the particle **/kɔ̀ː/** pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the low-rising intonation to express a friendly challenge or impatience.

Figure 2: **/kɔ̀ː/** in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



(3) **/lǣː/** 'Really?'

Unlike the other yes-no question particles, **/lǣː/** is very commonly used to form a rhetorical question whose true purpose is to acknowledge or reaffirm that something 'is the case'. When used at the end of an utterance, the particle **/lǣː/** is usually not intonated in any way and is pronounced with the mid-falling tone. In Example 7, the responder uses **/lǣː/** to acknowledge the speaker's report, before stating his next course of action.

Example 7: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of **/lǣː/**

Opening Line:

IPA:	**pʰǒm**	**ʔûː**	**kǎp**	**hǔanâː**	**tàwaː**	**lǽːw** |
Gloss:	I	talk	with boss	yesterday	already	

English: 'I already talked to the boss yesterday.'

Response:

IPA:	**ʔûː**	**lǽːw**	**lǣː** |	**ʔán**	**pʰǒm**	**t̆ittɔ̀ː**	**ʔɔːbɔːtʃɔː**	**nā́ː** |
Gloss:	talk	already	(yes-no)	then	I	contact	PAO*	(affirming)

English: 'Really? Then I will contact PAO*.'

* PAO: Provincial Administration Organisation

On the other hand, **/lǣː/**, when used alone in response to a statement, could receive a form of intonation that raises its pitch considerably. This form of intonation signals a combination of acknowledgement and astonishment. Example 8 shows the responder's use of **/lǣː/** to express his astonishment as he acknowledges the news of the recent death of someone he knows personally.

Example 8: Pronunciation of /lǣː/ with High-Falling Intonation (Astonishment)

Opening Line:

IPA: ʔâːj tʃʰom tǎːj tàwaː |

Gloss: brother Chom die yesterday

English: ‘Mr Chom died yesterday.’

Response:

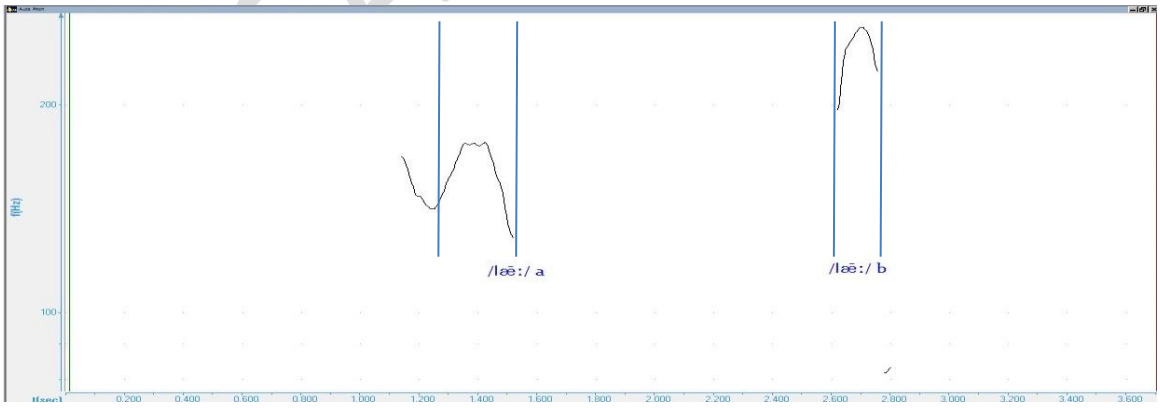
IPA: lǣː |

Gloss: (yes-no)

English: ‘Really! Is that so?’

Figure 3 illustrates the pitch of the particle /lǣː/ pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the high-falling intonation to express astonishment.

Figure 3: /lǣː/ in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



(4) /ʔiʔ/ 'Is it really so?'

The sense conveyed by /ʔiʔ/ is that which entails the speaker's astonishment by the utterance because the message mentioned in the utterance differs from his/her or general expectation. Like /lǣː/, /ʔiʔ/ is used to form a rhetorical yes-no question. In its basic form, /ʔiʔ/ is pronounced with the high-falling tone. As Example 9 illustrates, the responder is very astonished by the business appointment on Saturday instead of on Monday or any other business day, as is generally the case.

Example 9: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of /ʔiʔ/

Opening Line:

IPA: **wansǎw ʔâːj nát lūːkkáː fiː bǽŋ |**

Gloss: Saturday brother appointment client at bank

English: 'This Saturday I have an appointment with a client at the bank.'

Response:

IPA: **nát wansǎw ʔiʔ | ŋáŋǎŋ bòː pěn wantʃǎn |**

Gloss: appointment Saturday (yes-no) why not be Monday

English: 'An appointment on Saturday? Why didn't you schedule the appointment for Monday?'

The particle /ʔiʔ/ can take one form of intonation, which lowers the pitch and slightly increases the length of its vowel. Superimposed with this form, the low-falling intonation, this particle conveys the speaker's mixed feelings of astonishment and uncertainty, as well as his/her mildly disapproving tone. This is illustrated in Example 10, which shows the responder's disapproval of the speaker's idea of borrowing money from a certain person whose behaviour is questionable.

Example 10: Pronunciation of /ʔiʔ/ with Low-Falling Intonation (Uncertainty and Disapproval)

Opening Line:

IPA:	pɜ̄n	tʃàʔ	paj	ɲɨːm	sátaŋ	pâː	daːw |
Gloss:	I	will	go	borrow	money	aunt	Dao

English: 'I will go to borrow some money from Aunt Dao.'

Response:

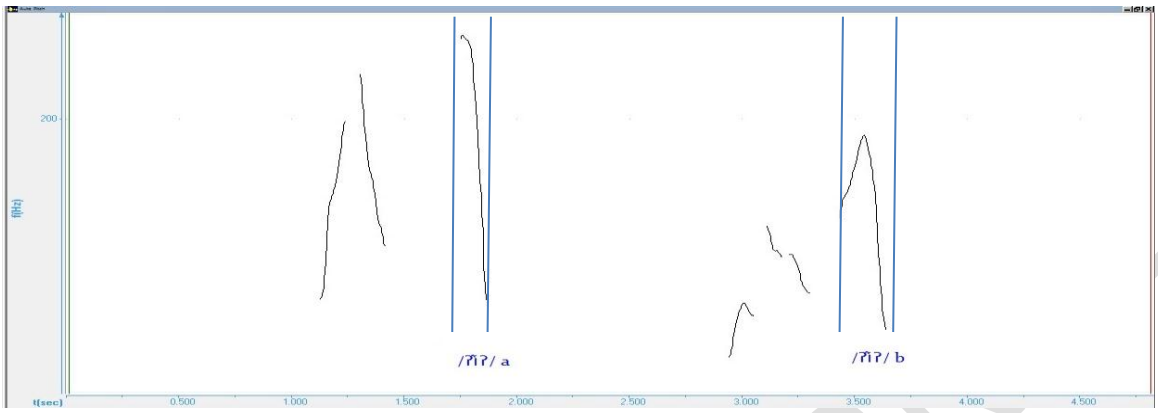
IPA:	ɲɨːm	pâː	daːw	ʔîʔ |	tŭa	bɔ̀ː	húː	kaː
Gloss:	borrow	aunt	Dao	(yes-no)	you	not	know	UFP

IPA:	man	pĕn	k^{h}on	tʃàdaj |
Gloss:	she	be	person	how

English: 'Borrow some money from Aunt Dao? Are you really going to do that? Don't you know what kind of person she is?'

Figure 4 illustrates the pitch of the particle /ʔiʔ/ pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the low-falling intonation to express uncertainty or disapproval.

Figure 4: /ʔĭiʔ/ in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



(5) **/bɔ̌ː/** 'Why not …?'

Basically, the particle **/bɔ̌ː/** asks a yes-no question, but it entails a sense of suggestion similar to the English expression 'why not …?'. In its basic form, **/bɔ̌ː/** is pronounced with the low-rising tone. In Example 11, the responder, when asked about a place to lunch, suggests an eatery that she prefers.

Example 11: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of **/bɔ̌ː/**

Opening Line:

IPA:	**mɨ̄atɔːn**	**kǐn**	**ʔàɲǎŋ**	**diː** |
Gloss:	noon	eat	what	good

English: 'What should we have for lunch?'

Response:

IPA:	**kǐn**	**lāːp**	**lǎŋ**	**wát**	**pʰásĭŋ**	**bɔ̌ː** |
Gloss:	eat	raw meat dish	behind	temple	Phra Singh	(yes-no)

English: 'Why not have a raw meat dish at the place behind Phra Singh Temple?'

The particle /bɔ̌ː/ may be pronounced with one form of superimposed intonation, which is the mid-rising pitch. /bɔ̌ː/ pronounced with the mid-rising intonation signals that the speaker is gently or politely seeking the listener's agreement with the suggested idea. This is illustrated in Example 12. In this situation, the responder, having been asked about a good place to spend a holiday, makes a suggestion using /bɔ̌ː/ in an agreement-seeking 'tune'.

Example 12: Pronunciation of /bɔ̌ː/ with Mid-Rising Intonation (Agreement Seeking)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**wanpʰūːk**	**pay**	**ʔæ̀w**	**nǎj**	**diː**	|
Gloss:	tomorrow	go	travel	where	good	

English: 'Where should we go have fun tomorrow?'

Response:

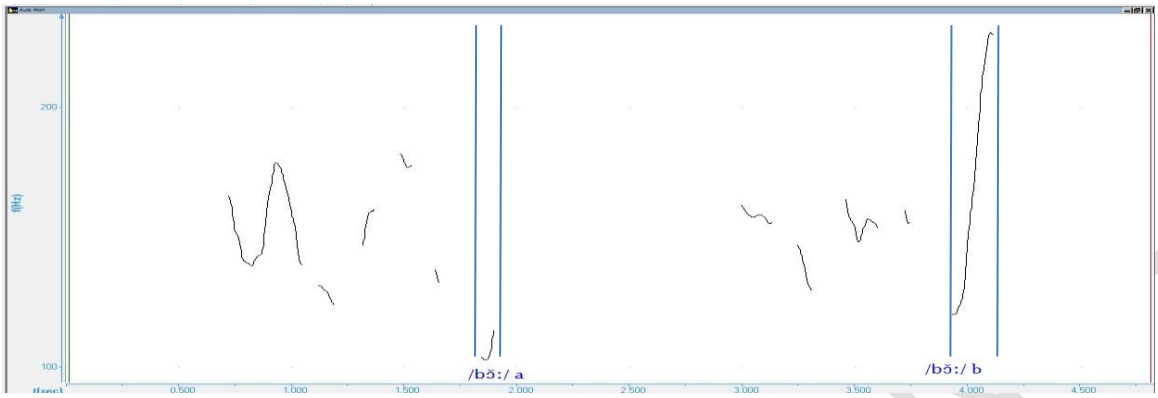
IPA:	**sǔan**	**pʰɬksàsàːt**	**sìlìkǐt**	**bɔ̌ː** |	**kʰǎw**	**wāː**	**miː**
Gloss:	park	botanic	Sirikit	(yes-no)	they say	have	

IPA:	**máj**	**dɔ̀ːk**	**nák**	**kʰànàːt** |
Gloss:	plant	flower	a lot	very

English: 'Why not Queen Sirikit Botanic Park? They say it has a large variety of flowering plants.'

Figure 5 illustrates the pitch of the particle /bɔ̌ː/ pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the mid-rising intonation to express an attempt to seek agreement.

Figure 5: **/bǒː/** in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



B. Particles for Information Questions

All of the final particles forming information questions, with the exception of **/pʰǎj/** ('whom'), are disyllabic compounds.[3] In addition to **/pʰǎj/**, these particles are **/ʔàʔɲǎŋ/**, **/mɨ̄adaj/**, **/taːŋdaj/**, **/tʃàʔdaj/**, **/ɲáʔdaj/**, **/ɲáʔɲǎŋ/**, **/tāwdaj/**, and **/mɔ̄kdaj/**. Each is discusses below in terms of its basic (non-intonated) and modified (intonated) meanings.

(1) /pʰǎj/ 'Whom', /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ 'What', and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ 'Why'

These three particles are discussed under the same topic because they share the same tone on their accented syllables (i.e., low-rising tone on **/pʰǎj/**, **/(ʔàʔ)ɲǎŋ/**, and **/(ɲáʔ)ɲǎŋ/**). **/pʰǎj/** and **/ʔàʔɲǎŋ/** function as interrogative final particles only when they represent the objects of verbs or prepositions; as the subjects, they are placed before the verbs and usually at the beginning of an

[3] Some Northern Thai wh-question particles are not always in-situ. Their positions may vary slightly according to conversational contexts and emphases; for instance, the question 'When will you come?' might be said **/mɨ̄adaj tʃàʔ maː/** or **/tʃàʔ maː mɨ̄adaj/**. For this reason, some argue against classifying wh-question words as utterance-final particles. But as these question words and real utterance-final particles share both functional and intonational behaviour similarities in Northern Thai, both word-types are included in this study.

utterance, just as any other type of subject. /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ may be used either at the beginning or at the end of an utterance.

In its basic form, /pʰǎj/ is pronounced with the low-rising tone. The particles /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ contain the low-level and high-level tones on their initial syllables, respectively, and the low-rising tone on their final syllables. The two instances of /pʰǎj/ in Example 13 illustrate its use as the object of a verb and the object of a preposition, respectively; /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ in the same example is the object of a verb.

Example 13: Non-Intonated Pronunciation of /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/

Opening Line:

IPA:	tàwaː	tŭa	pǎʔ	pʰǎj |	tŭa	dâj	ʔûː	tuaj	pʰǎj |
Gloss:	yesterday	you	see	whom	you	get	talk	with	whom

English: 'Yesterday, who did you see? Who did you talk with?'

Response:

IPA:	pǎʔ	kâː	pâː	mǎj |	nāŋ	ʔûː	pɜ̄n	kamdiaw |
Gloss:	see	only	aunt	Mai	sit	talk	she	moment

English: 'I saw only Aunt Mai. I sat and talked with her for a moment.'

Next Line:

IPA:	pâː	mǎj	kaː |	pɜ̄n	ɲáʔ	ʔàʔɲǎŋ	hān |	
Gloss:	aunt	Mai	UFP	she	do	what	then	

English: 'Aunt Mai? What does she do for a living?'

Next Response:

IPA:	pɜ̄n	tʃiː	tʃin	kʰǎːj |
Gloss:	she	grill	meat	sell

English: 'She sells grilled meat.'

The particles /pʰǎj/, /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/, and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ can each have two intonated forms. The first form does not alter the pitch, but increases the length of the vowel, that is, the only vowel in /pʰǎj/ and only the final vowel in /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/. In this form, although each of the particles still retains its function as a question word meaning 'whom' or 'what', it signals the speaker's increased impatience. This form of intonation is commonly used when a question is being repeated, as illustrated in Example 14.

Example 14: Pronunciation of /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ with Lengthened Vowel (Impatience)

Opening Line:

IPA:	tŭa	paj	pʰɔː	nǎŋ	ʔàʔɲǎŋ	lǽʔ	paj tuaj	pʰǎj |
Gloss:	you	go	watch	movie	what	and	go with	whom

English: 'What movie did you see and who did you go see the movie with?'

Repeated Opening Line:

IPA:	pɜ̄n	tʰǎːm	wāː	nǎŋ	ʔàʔɲǎŋ	lǽʔ	paj tuaj	pʰǎj |
Gloss:	I	ask	that	go	with whom			

English: 'I asked you what movie you saw and who you went to the movie with.'

The second form replaces the low-rising tone of /pʰǎj/ and of the final syllable of /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ with mid-rising pitch. When subjected to this form of intonation, each particle no longer functions as a direct information question word; instead, it serves as an expression that responds to a /pʰǎj/, /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/, or /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/ question, and signals the speaker's implication that the question need not have been asked. In Example 15, the responder uses /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ in their intonated forms to respond to the speaker's /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ questions, signalling that the question might have been unnecessary in the first place.

Example 15: Pronunciation of /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ with Mid-Rising Intonation (Previous Question Unnecessary)

Opening Line:

IPA:	tŭa	paj	pʰɔː	nǎŋ	ʔàʔɲǎŋ		læʔ	paj	tuaj	pʰǎj |
Gloss:	you	go	watch	movie	what		and	go	with	whom

English: 'Who did you go see the movie with?'

Response:

IPA:	paj	pʰɔː	nǎŋ	ʔàʔɲǎŋ		læʔ	paj	tuaj	pʰǎj |
Gloss:	go	see	movie	what		and	go	with	whom
IPA:	miː	ɬaŋ	diaw	læʔ	kʰon	diaw	tâwʔáʔ |		
Gloss:	have	story	one	and	person	one	only		

English: 'What else could I have seen and who else could I have gone with? Just one movie and with just one guy.'

Figure 6 (a), (b) and (c) illustrate the pitch of the particles /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/, 6 (a) in their basic, non-intonated forms; 6 (b) with their final vowels lengthened to express impatience, and 6 (c) with the mid-rising intonation to imply that the question previously asked was unnecessary. The particle /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/, whose final-syllable shape and tone are identical to those of /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/, undergoes the same intonational modifications.

Figure 6 (a): /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ in Their Basic Pronunciations

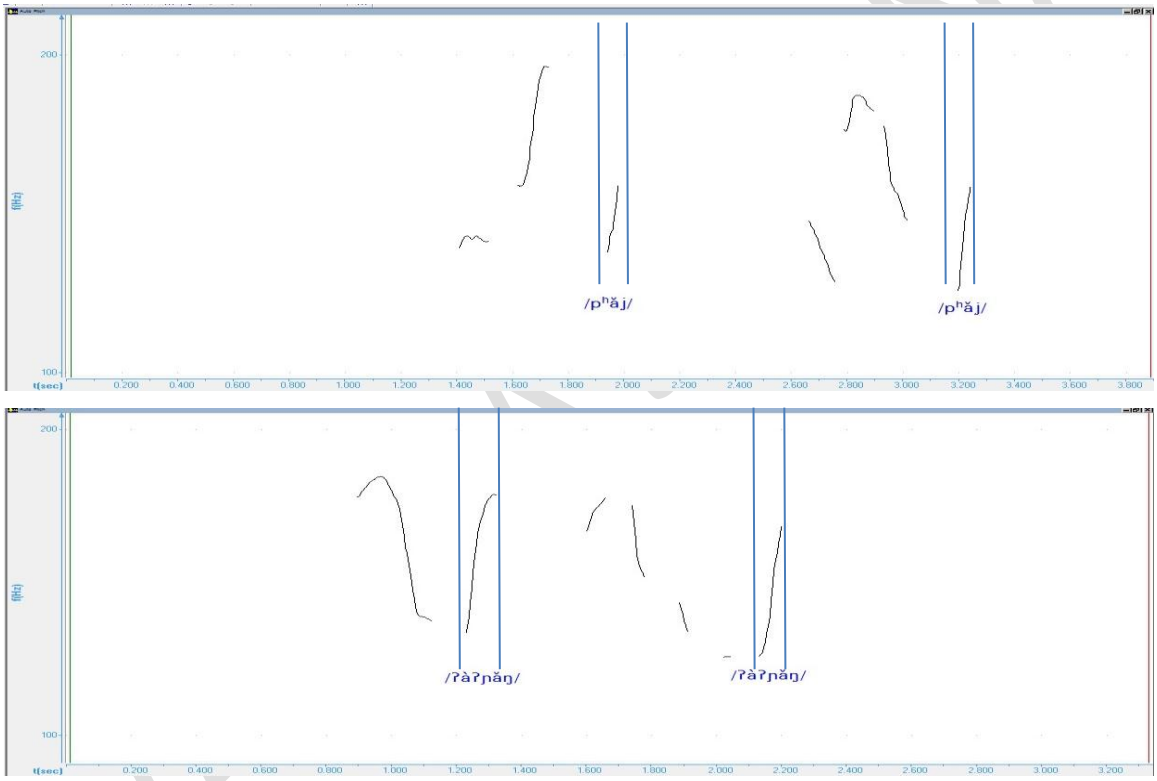


Figure 6 (b): /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ with Lengthened Final Vowels

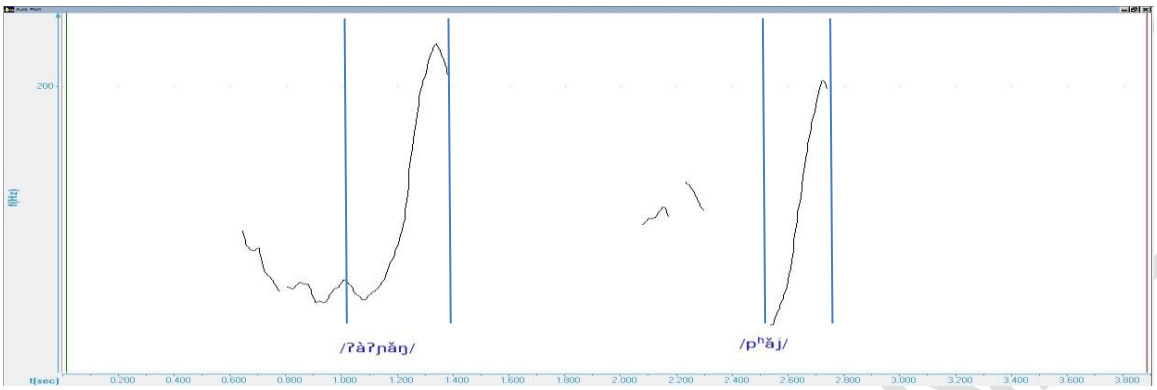
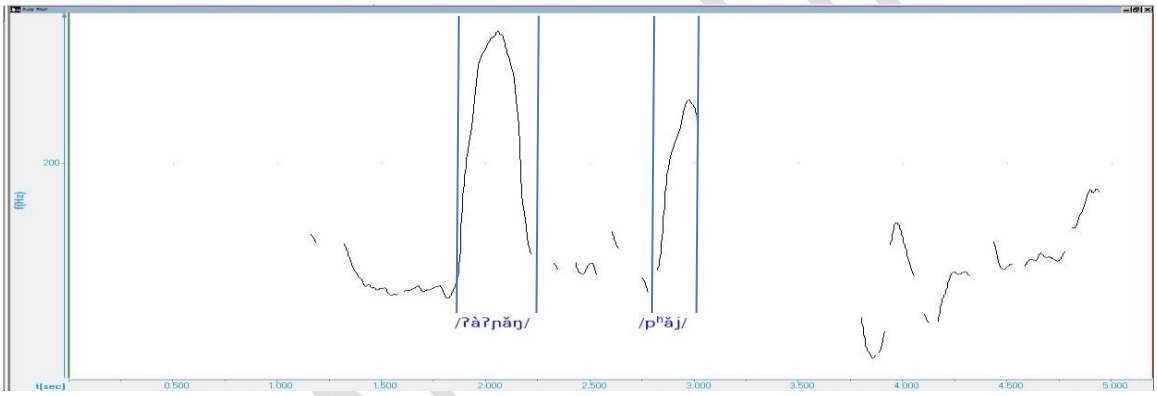


Figure 6 (c): /pʰǎj/ and /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/ with the Mid-Rising Intonation



(2) Other Disyllabic Compounded Particles

All of the other final particles in the information question group are disyllabic compounds. Each is made up of a noun or a verb and the word **/daj/**, thereby resulting in the question expressions **/mīɬadaj/** 'when', **/taːŋdaj/** 'where', **/ɲàːŋdaj/** (or **/tʃàʔdaj/**) 'how', **/ɲáʔdaj/** 'what to do', **/ɲáʔɲǎŋ/** 'why' or 'how come', **/tāwdaj/** 'how + adverb or adjective', and **/mɔ̄kdaj/** 'how + adverb or adjective'.

Each compounded particle is final-accented, meaning that the final syllable is phonetically more prominent than the initial syllable. This normally results in the shortening of the initial vowel

and assimilation of the initial tone to that of /daj/, the final syllable, which has the mid-level tone. Example 16 illustrates the basic, non-intonated pronunciations of /m̄ɬadaj/ (representing a compound with the mid-falling initial tone), /taːŋdaj/ (representing a compound with the mid-level initial tone), /tʃàʔdaj/ (representing a compound with the low-level initial tone), and /ɲáʔdaj/ (representing a compound with the high-level glottalised initial tone).

Example 16: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /m̄ɬadaj/, /taːŋdaj/, /tʃàʔdaj/, and /ɲáʔdaj/

Opening Line:

IPA:	luŋ	tʃɬn	pík	lúk	pǣː	maː	m̄ɬadaj |
Gloss:	uncle	Chuen	return	from	Phrae	come	when

English: 'When did Uncle Chuen get back from Phrae?'

Response:

IPA:	pík	maː	wantʃǎn |	tæ̀ː	bɔ̀ː	húː	paj	taːŋdaj |
Gloss:	return	come	Monday	but	not	know	go	where

English: 'He got back on Monday. But I don't know where he is?'

IPA:	tʰâː	pɜ̄n	pǎʔ	tʃǎʔ	hm̄ɬ	bɔ̀ːk	wāː	tʃàʔdaj |
Gloss:	if	I	meet	will	let	tell	that	what

English: 'If I see him, what do you want me to tell him?'

Like /pʰǎj/, /ʔàʔɲǎŋ/, and /ɲáʔɲǎŋ/, the compounded particles in this group may undergo two forms of intonational modification. One is the lengthening of the final vowel, that is, the vowel of the syllable /daj/, to signal the speaker's impatience, whilst the other, the replacement of the mid-level pitch with a mid-rising pitch, is commonly used when the speaker attempts to signal that the

previously asked question need not have been asked. Example 17 is a dialogue excerpt containing /taːŋdaj/, which represents the final particles in this group and is spoken in all these forms: basic, with the final vowel lengthened to show impatience, and with the mid-rising intonation to imply the needlessness of the previous question.

Example 17: Pronunciation of /mɨ̄adaj/, /taːŋdaj/, /tʃàʔdaj/, and /ɲáʔdaj/ with Lengthened Vowel (Impatience)

Opening Line:

IPA:	p̌it	tʰɜːm	tʃǎʔ	paj	fɨ̄kŋaːn	taːŋdaj | …
Gloss:	close	term	will	go	intern	where

English: 'Where are you going to intern during the school break?'

Repeated Opening Line:

IPA:	tʰǎːm	wāː	paj	fɨ̄kŋaːn	taːŋdaj |
Gloss:	ask	that	go	intern	where

English: 'I asked you where you would go for your internship.'

Response:

IPA:	sǔːmaː	tɜ́ʔ |	bɔ̀ː dâjɲin |	tʃǎʔ	paj	taːŋdaj |
Gloss:	sorry	UFP	not hear	will	go	where

English: 'Sorry. I did hear you. You should know where I will go.'

IPA:	kɔ̀ː	nókʔæː	hān	nāːkàː |
Gloss:	PTC	Nok Air	that	UFP

English: ‘It’s Nok Air—where else?’

Figure 7 (a), (b) and (c) illustrate the pitch of the particle **/taːŋdaj/**, 7 (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; 7 (b) with its final vowel lengthened to express impatience, and 7 (c) with the mid-rising intonation to imply that the question previously was unnecessarily asked.

Figure 7 (a): **/taːŋdaj/** in Its Basic Pronunciation

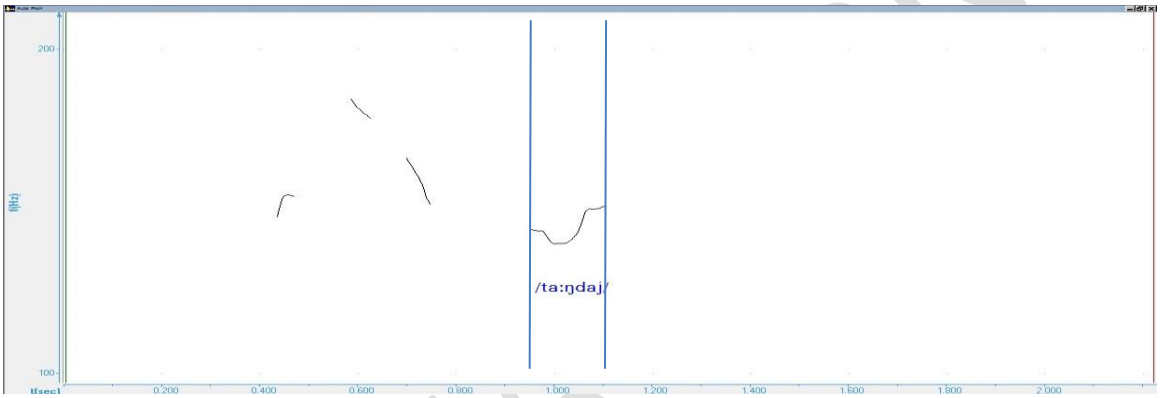


Figure 7 (b): **/taːŋdaj/** with Lengthened Final Vowel

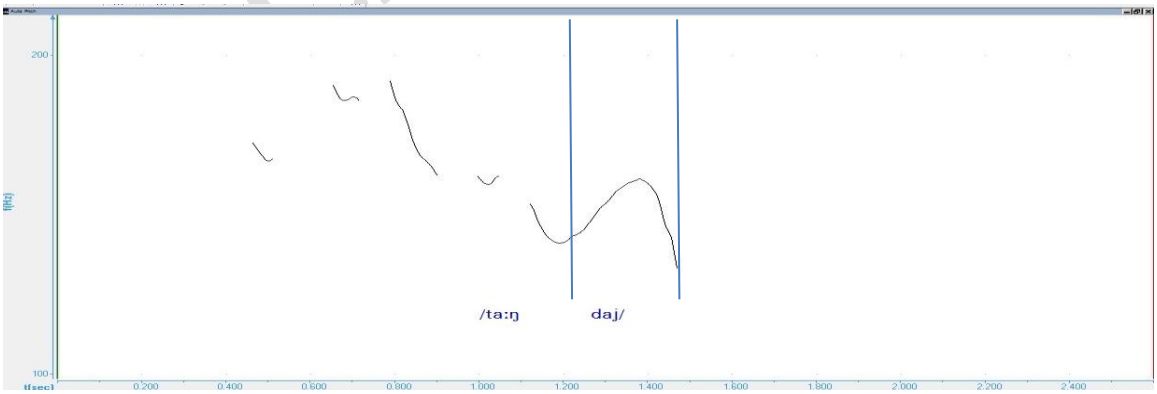
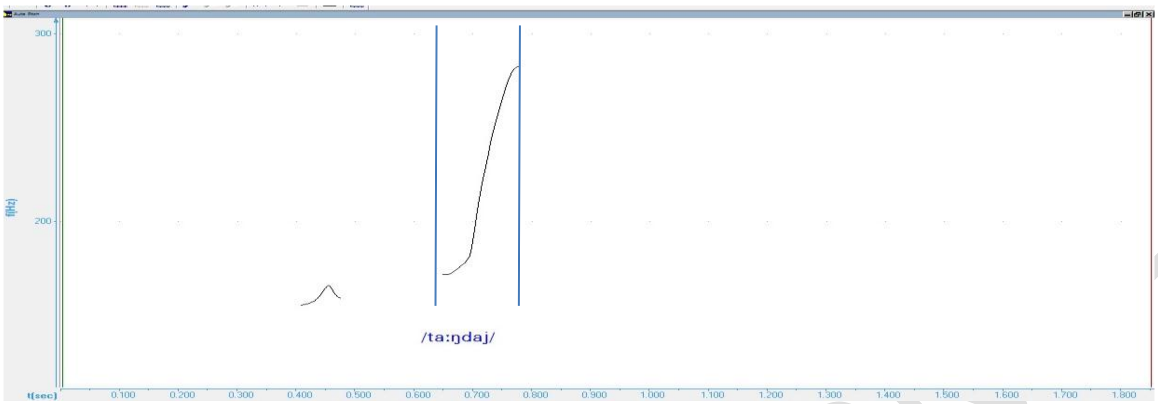


Figure 7 (c): /taːŋdaj/ with the Mid-Rising Intonation



7.2 Deontic Final Particles

The term 'deontic' is used to refer to a word or an expression showing the speaker's illocutionary intent, such as an obligation, permission, request, or prohibition. In Northern Thai, a total of twelve deontic final particles are in common use. These final particles can be divided into six types, according to their Illocutionary purposes: affirmative; persuasive or requesting; reminding; confirming; suggesting; and agreement-seeking.

7.2 Affirming Final Particle

Northern Thai has one affirming final particle, which is pronounced /nɔ̄ː/ or /dɔ̄ː/. This particle can be attached to a both affirmative and negative utterances to emphasise the speaker's intention to imply 'I am telling you this'. In its non-intonated form, /nɔ̄ː/ or /dɔ̄ː/ is pronounced with the mid-falling tone, as in Example 18.

Example 18: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /nɔ̄ː/ or /dɔ̄ː/

IPA:	haː	kʰǎːj	sǐaŋ	lǽːw |	haː	mɨa	bâːn	kɔ̀ːn	nɔ̄ː |
Gloss:	I	sell	out	already	I	return	home	before	(affirm)

English: ‘All my stuff is sold out. Let me tell you I am going home now.’

The final particle /nɜ̄ː/ or /dɜ̄ː/ may take one form of intonation, which superimposes high-falling pitch on its mid-falling tone. With this tune, the particle signals the speaker’s double implications: (i) ‘I am telling you this …’ and (ii) ‘… I am warning you’. This is illustrated in Example 19, which shows that the speaker’s use of this intonation on this particle causes the responder to feel somewhat anxious.

Example 19: Pronunciation of /nɜ̄ː/ or /dɜ̄ː/ with the High-Falling Intonation (Warning Undertone)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**pɔ̄ː**	**ʔiː**	**laj**	**man**	**sŭak**	**nɜ̄ː** |
Gloss:	father	prefix	Lai	it	hostile	(affirm)

English: ‘Lai’s father is unfriendly (I am telling you this and I am warning you).’

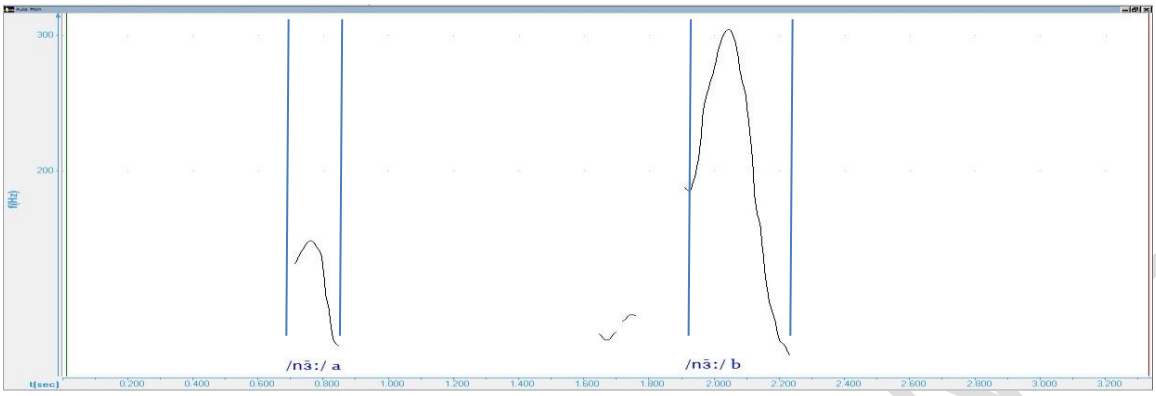
Response:

IPA:	**ʔân**	**tʃǎʔ**	**hɯ̄ː**	**haː**	**ɲáʔ**	**tʃàʔdaj** |
Gloss:	so	will	let	I	do	how

English: ‘Then what am I supposed to do?’

Figure 8 illustrates the pitch of the particle /nɜ̄ː/ or /dɜ̄ː/ pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the high-falling intonation to express the speaker’s warning undertone.

Figure 8: /nāː/ or /dāː/ in Basic and Intonated Pronunciations



7.3 Persuasive or Requesting Final Particles

There are six final particles used for persuading or requesting purposes. According to their tones, these particles are grouped as follows: /kam/ with the mid-level tone; /nɔ̄ː/, /lǣː/, and /nāː/ or /dāː/ with the mid-falling tone; /tɜ́ʔ/ with the high-level tone; and /hĭa/ with the low-rising tone.

A. /kam/ 'Please' (asking for something effortless)

The final particle /kam/ is used to state a request. It usually implies that what the speaker is requesting is an easy or effortless action. This particle, in its non-intonated form, is pronounced with a short vowel and the mid-level tone, as in Example 20.

Example 20: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /kam/

IPA:	ʔâːj	dæːŋ	maː	tʃūaj	ɲōːŋ	kʰua	kam |
Gloss:	brother	Daeng	come	help lift	thing	(request)	

English: 'Daeng, please help me lift something.'

The particle **/kam/** can undergo one form of intonational modification, which superimposes mid-rising pitch on its mid-level tone, often with lengthening of the vowel. This form of intonation is used to signal that the speaker is begging—not just asking—the hearer to perform an action. This is illustrated in Example 21.

Example 21: Pronunciation of **/kam/** with the Mid-Rising Intonation (Begging)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**păn**	**pʰɔ̀ː**	**lēːk**	**hɨ̄ː**	**kam** |	**pâː**	**bɔ̀ː**	**hăn** |
Gloss:	Pan	look	number	give	(request)	aunt	not	see

English: 'Pan, could you please look at the (lottery) numbers for me. I can't see them.'

Response:

IPA:	**dâj**	**kàː** |	**maː**	**bàdiaw nɨ́ː**	**lǽːw** |
Gloss:	can	(yes)	come	now	already

English: 'Of course. Coming now.'

Figure 9 illustrates the pitch of the particle **/kam/** pronounced in the two different ways, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; and (b) with the mid-rising intonation to express the speaker's begging intention.

Figure 9: **/kam/** in Basic (a) and Intonated (b) Pronunciations

B. /nɔ̄ː/ ‘Please’ (implying ‘let us’)

The particle **/nɔ̄ː/**, which basically also means ‘please’, implies a mild persuasive force similar to ‘let us (do something)’. This final particle is pronounced with a long vowel and the mid-falling tone, as in Example 22, and seldom undergoes any intonational modification.

Example 22: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of **/nɔ̄ː/**

IPA:	**paj**	**kàːt**	**tuajkǎn**	**nɔ̄ː**
Gloss:	go	market	together	(request)
English:	‘Let’s go to the market together.’			

C. /lǣː/ ‘Do + verb’ (emphatic)

This final particle basically means ‘please’, but it signals an emphatic request similar to the use of ‘do’ before a verb (e.g., ‘Do eat quickly’). This particle is a homonym of the interrogative final particle **/lǣː/**. In its non-intonated form, **/lǣː/** is pronounced with a long vowel and the mid-falling tone. Example 23 illustrates the use of this particle.

Example 23: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /lǣː/

IPA:	kʰàtʃǎj	ɲáʔ	k̄in	lǣː|	man	tʃàʔ	kʰām	paj t̄ikt̄ik |
Gloss:	hurry	make	eat	(request)	it	will	dark	go more
English:	'Do start cooking now! It's getting dark.'							

One form of intonation can apply to the final particle /lǣː/. This form of intonation replaces the mid-falling tone with high-falling pitch, and usually lengthens the vowel considerably. When thus intonationally modified, the particle signals the speaker's annoyance or impatience with the hearer's not doing what is supposed (by the speaker) to be done. In Example 24, the speaker is speaking with annoyance or impatience because the hearer is trying to put off doing her homework.

Example 24: Pronunciation of /lǣː/ with the High-Falling Intonation (Annoyance)

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔiː	nɔ̄ːj	miː	kǎːnbâːn	kɔ̀ː |
Gloss:	prefix	young	have	homework	(yes-no)
English:	'Young girl, do you have any homework?'				

Response:

IPA:	miː |
Gloss:	yes
English:	'Yes.'

Next Line:

IPA: lǽːw ɲáʔ lǽːw kaː |

Gloss: then do finish (yes-no)

English: ‘And have you done it yet?’

Next Response:

IPA: ɟaŋ |

Gloss: not yet

English: ‘No, not yet.’

Next Line:

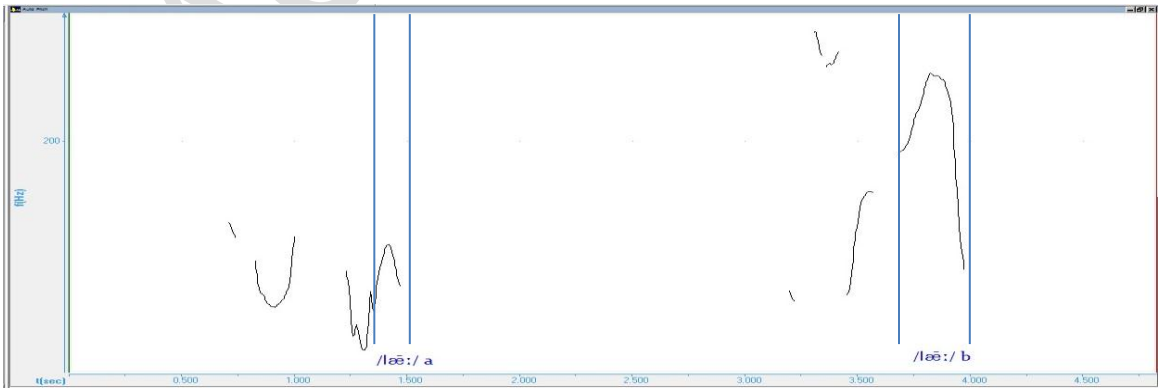
IPA: kʰàtʃǎj ɲáʔ lǣː |

Gloss: hurry do (request)

English: ‘Do start working on it now! (Why do I have to tell you this?)’

Figure 10 illustrates the final particle /lǣː/ as spoken (a) in its non-intonated form and (b) with the high-falling intonation to signal the speaker’s annoyance.

Figure 10: /lǣː/ in Basic (a) and Intonated (b) Pronunciations



D. **/nɜ̄ː/ or /dɜ̄ː/ 'Please' (mild command)**

Basically, the final particle **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** also means a request similar in meaning to 'please (do something)'. However, this particle, a homonym of the affirming final particle **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/,** signals an undertone of a mild command. Without intonation, **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** contains a long vowel and the mid-falling tone, as Example 25 shows.

Example 25: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/**

IPA:	**sɨ̂ː**	**kʰànǒm**	**maː**	**fàːk**	**tuaj**	**nɜ̄ː** |
Gloss:	buy	snack	come	give	too	(request)

English: 'Buy me some snacks.'

The final particle **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** may undergo two forms of intonational modification. The first form, like with its homonymous affirming particle, superimposes high-falling pitch on its mid-falling tone to emphasise or slightly strengthen the command, without modifying the vowel property in any way. This is shown in Example 26. The other form, which only lengthens the vowel without changing the pitch, produces an opposite effect, slightly weakening the command into a request, as in Example 27.

Example 26: Pronunciation of **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** with the High-Falling Intonation (Stronger Command)

IPA:	**tʰoː**	**hǎː**	**mɔː**	**săk**	**nɜ̄ː** |
Gloss:	phone	seek	doctor	Sak	(request)

English: 'Phone Dr Sak.'

Example 27: Pronunciation of **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** with Lengthened Vowel (Weaker Command)

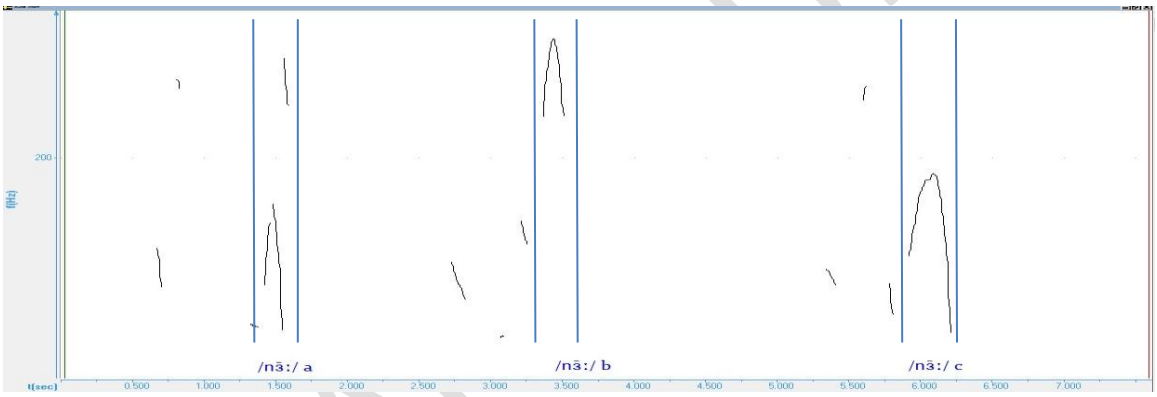
IPA: tʰoː hăː mɔː săk nɜ̄ː |

Gloss: phone seek doctor Sak (request)

English: 'Phone Dr Sak, please.'

Figure 11 illustrates the three pronunciations of the final particle **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/**, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; (b) with the high-falling intonation to strengthen the command, and (c) with vowel lengthening to weaken the command.

Figure 11: **/nɜ̄ː/** or **/dɜ̄ː/** in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the High-Falling Intonation (b), and with Vowel Lengthening (c)



E. /tɜ́ʔ/ 'Please' (encouraging)

This final particle is basically used for a persuasive purpose, but it conveys an encouraging undertone. It produces an illocutionary effect that is similar to but is more forceful than that produced by **/nɔ̄ː/**. In its basic pronunciation, **/tɜ́ʔ/** has a short glottalised vowel with the high-level tone. See Example 28 for illustration.

Example 28: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /tɜ́ʔ/

IPA: kʰām lǽːw | pʰ̄iaw kʰua kăn tɜ́ʔ

Gloss: dusk already clean thing together (request)

English: 'It's already dark. Let's clean up our stuff together.'

Two forms of intonation may be superimposed on /tɜ́ʔ/. The first, which slightly raises the tone (termed high-rising hereinafter), conveys the speaker's persuasion based on his/her agreement, support, or permission with regards to the listener's intention (Example 29). The second, which lengthens the vowel and raises the tone slightly, signals the speaker's persuasive effort by making a plea (Example 30).

Example 29: Pronunciation of /tɜ́ʔ/ with the High-Rising Intonation (Agreement or Permission)

Opening Line:

IPA: mǣː pɜntʃă̌ʔ paj kʰâw kʰāːj kă̌p hoːŋhian nɜ̄ː |

Gloss: Mother I will go enter camp with school (affirm)

English: 'Mother, I will go camping with my school.'

Response:

IPA: tʰâː miː kʰuː paj tuaj kɔ̀ː paj tɜ́ʔ |

Gloss: if have teacher go with then go (request)

English: 'If there are teachers on the camp, then do go (i.e., you may go).'

Example 30: Pronunciation of **/tɜ́ʔ/** with Vowel Lengthening (Pleading)

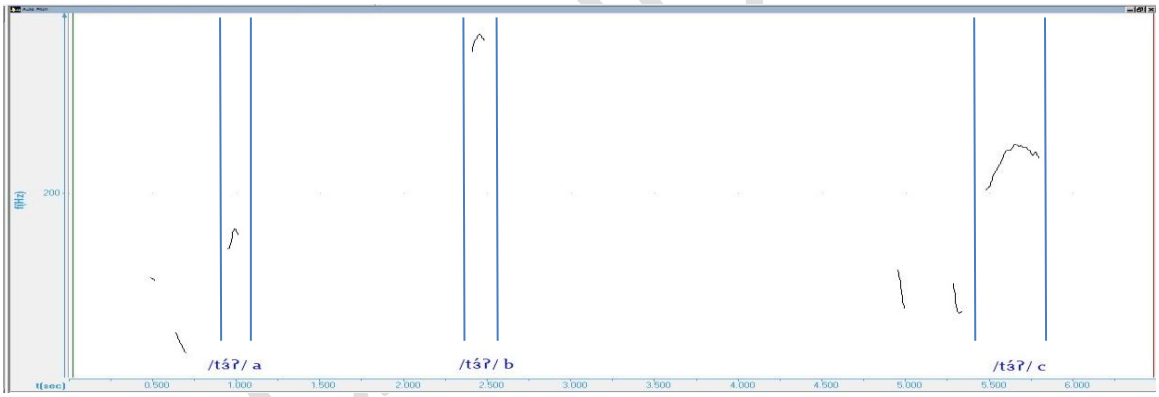
IPA: **tʃūaj sɬ̂ː kam tɜ́ʔ**

Gloss: help buy some (request)

English: 'Please buy something (begging).'

Figure 12 illustrates the three pronunciations of the final particle **/tɜ́ʔ/**, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; (b) with the high-rising intonation to imply permission, and (c) with vowel lengthening to signal a plea.

Figure 12: **/tɜ́ʔ/** in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the High-Rising Intonation (b), and with Vowel Lengthening (c)



F. /hĭa/ 'Please' (implying a mild obligation)

The final particle **/hĭa/** is used to convey the speaker's attempt to imply an obligation, a sense resembling that of the English expression 'be supposed to'. The particle's basic form is pronounced with the low-rising tone assigned to the diphthong **/ia/**. Example 31 illustrates the use of this final particle.

Example 31: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /hĭa/

IPA:	sŭːkʰăw	tʃăt	dɔ̀ːk	hĭa |	pùːtʃăːn	tʃăʔmaː	lǽːw |	
Gloss:	you	arrange	flower	(request)	diviner	will	come	already

English: 'You guys are supposed to start arranging the flowers. The diviner is on his way.'

The final particle /hĭa/ may undergo two forms of intonational modification. The first form, the superimposition of mid-rising pitch, usually combined with vowel lengthening, slightly weakens the obligatory sense of the particle in order to effect a plea, as illustrated in Example 32. The second, which involves only vowel lengthening, without pitch modification, is commonly used when the speaker wishes to sound more authoritative and urge the listener to do what is supposed to be done. This is illustrated in Example 33.

Example 32: Pronunciation of /hĭa/ with the Mid-Rising Intonation (Pleading)

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔaw	sàtaːŋ	sâːj	kʰăw	hĭa |	lăːj	wan	lǽːw |
Gloss:	get	money	repay	he	(request)	many	day	already

English: 'Please, you're supposed to pay him back. It has been several days (since you borrowed his money).'

Response:

IPA:	jâw	jâw |	
Gloss:	(polite)	(polite)	

English: 'Yes, yes, I will.'

Example 33: Pronunciation of /hĭa/ with Vowel Lengthening (Urging)

IPA: **paː ʔúj paj hoːŋɲaː hĭa** |

Gloss: take grandparent go hospital (request)

English: 'It's imperative that you take your grandparent to hospital.'

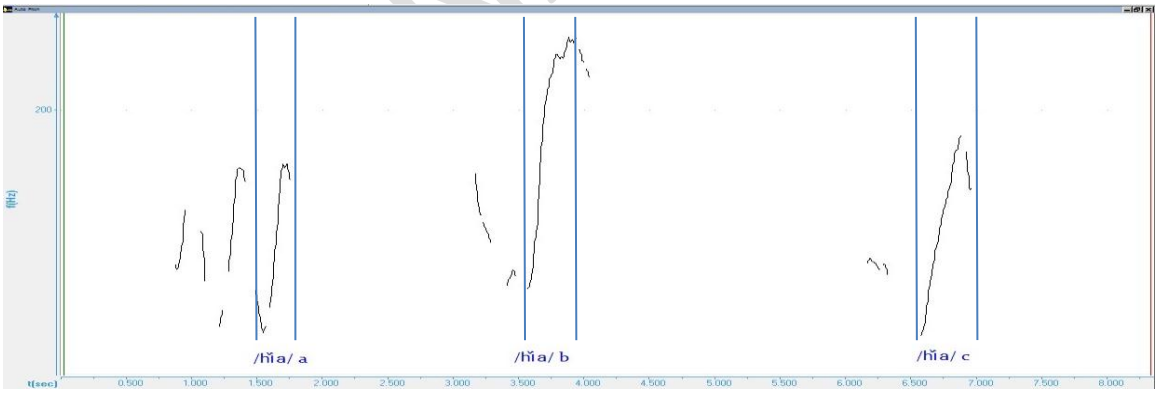
IPA: **pɜ̄n ʔɔ̀ːn kʰànàːt nǎː** |

Gloss: s/he weak very (remind)

English: 'S/he is extremely weak now.'

Figure 13 illustrates the three pronunciations of the final particle /hĭa/, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form; (b) with the mid-rising intonation for a pleading tone, and (c) with vowel lengthening to signal urgency.

Figure 13: /hĭa/ in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the Mid-Rising Intonation (b), and with Vowel Lengthening (c)



7.4 Reminding Final Particles: /nǎː/ and /hǎː/

In Northern Thai, two final particles are used for reminding and suggesting purposes, /nǎː/ and /hǎː/. The two particles are mutually exclusive. The first, /nǎː/, is used only at the end of an affirmative or imperative utterance. Its function is to signal the speaker's wish to remind the listener of the need to perform an action or of something that has or has not happened. The second, /hǎː/, is used only at the end of a question, and therefore is often placed immediately after the yes-no question particle /kaː/ or /kɔ̀ː/, an adverbial (e.g., /ɬɨːɲaŋ/ 'already, yet?') or after any of the information question particles. The particle /hǎː/ changes a basic question to a reminding question, signalling the speaker's effort to ask or remind the listener to supply an answer. These two particles, in their basic forms, are pronounced with a long vowel and the low-rising tone. See Examples 34 and 35 for illustration of /nǎː/ and /hǎː/, respectively.

Example 34: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /nǎː/

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔaw	kʰâwtɔːn	paj	sòŋ	lūːkkáː	tuaj	nǎː |
Gloss:	get	lunch	go	send	customer	also	(remind)

English: 'Deliver the lunch to the customer, too.' (Keep that in mind.)

Response:

IPA:	fāŋ	man	ɲáʔɲǎŋ |	kàlaŋ	kâw	moːŋ	bàdaːj |
Gloss:	hurry	it	why	now	nine	o'clock	only

English:

Next Line:

IPA: **lūːkkáː tʰoː maː wāː sĭp moːŋ tʃăʔ**

Gloss: customer phone come that ten o'clock will

IPA: **tʃăt tóʔ lǽːw nă̋ː** |

Gloss: arrange table already (remind)

English: 'The customer called, saying the table would be arranged at 10 o'clock.' (Keep that in mind.)

Example 35: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of **/hăː/**

IPA: **kʰiŋ ʔaw bàtɬːn paj wáj taːŋdaj hă̋ː** |

Gloss: you take santol go keep where (remind)

English: 'Where do you keep the santols?' (Please answer.)

The particle **/nă̋ː/** can undergo one form of intonational modification: vowel lengthening. This form of intonation emphasises the reminding force of the utterance, as illustrated in Example 36.

Example 36: Pronunciation of **/nă̋ː/** with Vowel Lengthening (Emphatic)

IPA: **lūːkkáː maː pʰæ̆w lǽːw nă̋ː** |

Gloss: customer come arrive already (remind)

English: 'The customer has arrived.' (Don't you know that?)

The particle **/hǎː/** also receives one form of intonational modification. This form of intonation involves both vowel lengthening and pitch modification, which replaces **/hǎː/**'s low-rising tone with mid-rising pitch. The function of this form of intonation is to signal the speaker's intent to urge or demand that the listener answer a particular question. This is illustrated in Example 37.

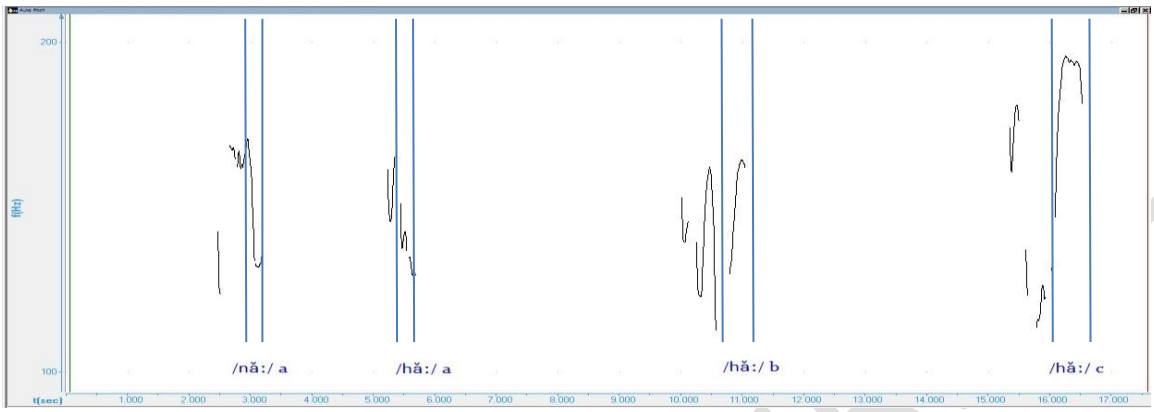
Example 37: Pronunciation of **/hǎː/** with Vowel Lengthening and the Mid-Rising Intonation (Urging or Demanding)

IPA:	**tŭa**	**bɔ̀ː**	**hiannănsɨ̌ː** |	**ɲàj**	**paj**	**tʃǎʔ**
Gloss:	you	not	study		big	go	will
IPA:	**ɲáʔkǎːn**	**ʔàʔɲăŋ**	**hǎː** |				
Gloss:	work	what	(remind)				

English: 'You are not going to school! What will you be able to do for a living?' (Do answer me.)

Figure 14 illustrates the three pronunciations of the final particles **/nǎː/** and **/hǎː/**, (a) in their basic, non-intonated forms; (b) with **/nǎː/** pronounced with vowel lengthening for greater emphasis, and (c) with **/hǎː/** pronounced with vowel lengthening and the mid-rising pitch to signal a demanding intent.

Figure 14: /nǎː/ and /hǎː/ in Their Basic Pronunciations (a), /nǎː/ with Vowel Lengthening (b), and /hǎː/ with Vowel Lengthening and the Mid-Rising Pitch Intonation (c)



7.5 Emphatic Response Final Particles: /kàː/ and /lɔː/

There are two emphatic response final particles in Northern Thai, /kàː/ and /lɔː/, which are mutually exclusive. Whereas /kàː/ is used only at the end of an affirmative, /lɔː/ is mostly used at the end of a negative; /lɔː/ after an affirmative is possible but rarely found. The particle /kàː/ is normally used in response to a yes-no question ending in /kɔ̀ː/, /bɔ̌ː/, or /ʔiʔ/, whilst the particle /lɔː/ is commonly used to respond to one ending in /kaː/ or /kɔ̀ː/. In their basic, non-intonated forms, /kàː/ has a long vowel and the low-level tone, whilst /lɔː/ has a long vowel and a mid-level tone. See Examples 38 and 39 for illustration.

Example 38: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /kàː/

Opening Line:

IPA:	tɬŋwan	nîː	kʰiŋ	kʰǎːj	kʰua	tīː	kàːt	kɔ̀ː |
Gloss:	every day	this	you	sell	thing	at	market	(yes-no)

English: ‘These days, do you sell goods at the market?’

Response:

IPA: kʰǎːj **kàː** |

Gloss: sell (emphatic response)

English: ‘I do, of course.’

Example 39: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of **/lɔː/**

Opening Line:

IPA:	kʰiŋ	tʃaŋ	ɲāː	hān	kɔ̀ː |
Gloss:	you	hate	hag	that	(yes-no)

English: ‘Do you hate that hag?’

Response:

IPA:	bɔ̀ː	tʃaŋ	**lɔː** |
Gloss:	not	hate	(emphatic response)

English: ‘I don’t—not at all.’

The particle **/kàː/** may have one form of intonation, whose purpose is to increase the force of emphasis, implying the speaker’s doubtlessness regarding the answer being given. This form of intonation involves vowel lengthening and a slight pitch rise, which substitutes the mid-falling pitch for the low-level tone. See Example 40.

The particle **/lɔː/** may have one form of intonation, which increases the force of doubtlessness of the speaker’s negation. This form of intonation replaces the particle’s mid-level tone with slightly raised and contoured pitch, hence called the mid-rising intonation. See Example 41.

Example 40: Pronunciation of /kàː/ with Vowel Lengthening and the Mid-Falling Intonation (Doubtlessness for an Affirmative)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**wannîː**	**miː**	**lŭa**	**kòː** |
Gloss:	today	have	firewood (yes-no)	

English: 'Do you have firewood today?'

Response:

IPA:	**miː**	**kàː** |	**kʰăw**	**kāː**	**maː**	**sòŋ**	**tàwaː** |
Gloss:	have	(emphatic response)	they	just come		send	yesterday

English: No doubt I do! They just brought it yesterday.'

Example 41: Pronunciation of /lɔː/ with the Mid-Rising Intonation (Doubtlessness for a Negative)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**ŋaːnlîaŋ**	**pĕn**	**tʃàdaj** |	**tŭa paj**	**mǣn**	**kòː** |
Gloss:	party	be	how	you go	right	(yes-no)

English: 'How was the party? You went there, didn't you?'

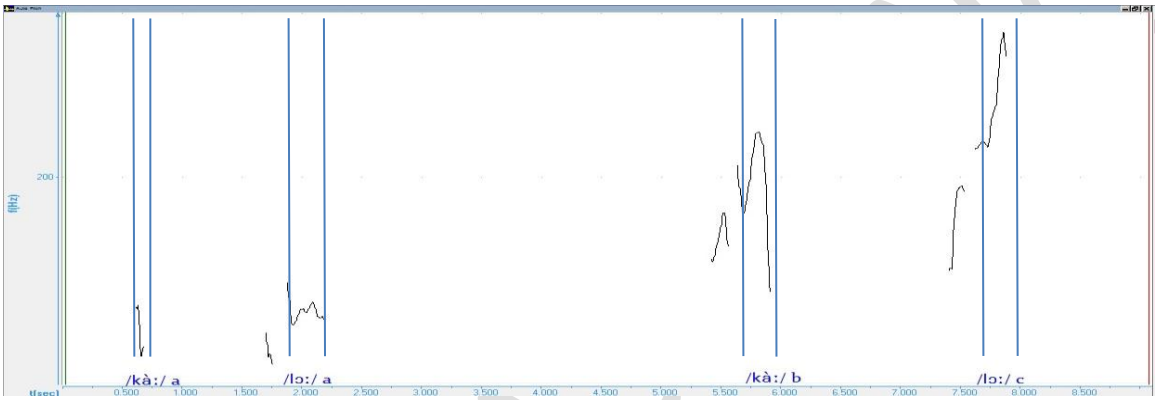
Response:

IPA:	**pɜ̄n**	**bòː**	**dâj**	**paj**	**lɔː** |
Gloss:	I	not	get	go	(emphatic response)

English: 'No, not at all. I didn't.'

Figure 15 illustrates the three pronunciations of the final particles /kàː/ and /lɔː/, (a) in their basic, non-intonated forms; (b) with /kàː/ pronounced with vowel lengthening and the mid-falling intonation to signal doubtlessness of an affirmative answer, and (c) with /lɔː/ pronounced with the mid-rising pitch to signal doubtlessness of a negative answer.

Figure 15: /kàː/ and /lɔː/ in Their Basic Pronunciations (a), /kàː/ with Vowel Lengthening and Mid-Falling Intonation (b), and /lɔː/ with the Mid-Rising Intonation (c)



7.6 Agreement Final Particles: /tāʔ/

One final particle was found which serves the purpose of showing the speaker's agreement or seeking of agreement: /tāʔ/. This particle may be used at the end of either an affirmative or a negative. In its basic form, it is pronounced with the mid-falling tone and a short vowel. See Example 42.

Example 42: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /tāʔ/

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔaːkàːt	diː	kʰànàːt	tāʔ |
Gloss:	weather	good	very	(agreement)

English: 'The weather is fabulous!' (Don't you think so?)

Response:

IPA:	mǣn	lǽːw |	pɜːŋ	diː	paj ʔæ̀w		tʰáleː	tā↗ʔ |
Gloss:	right	already	suit	good	go	travel	sea	(agreement)

English: 'It really is. It's great for a trip to the sea.' (I truly agree.)

The particle /tāʔ/ may undergo one form of intonational modification, which adds a hint of surprise to the particle's basic agreeing or agreement-seeking function. This pattern of modification superimposes the high-falling intonation on the mid-falling tone. See Example 43.

Example 43: Pronunciation of /tāʔ/ with the High-Falling Intonation (Surprise)

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔiː	nɔ́ːŋ	naːŋ	tʰùːk	hŭaj	hâː pan |
Gloss:	(prefix)	sister	Nang	win	lottery	five thousand

English: 'Nang won five thousand from the lottery.'

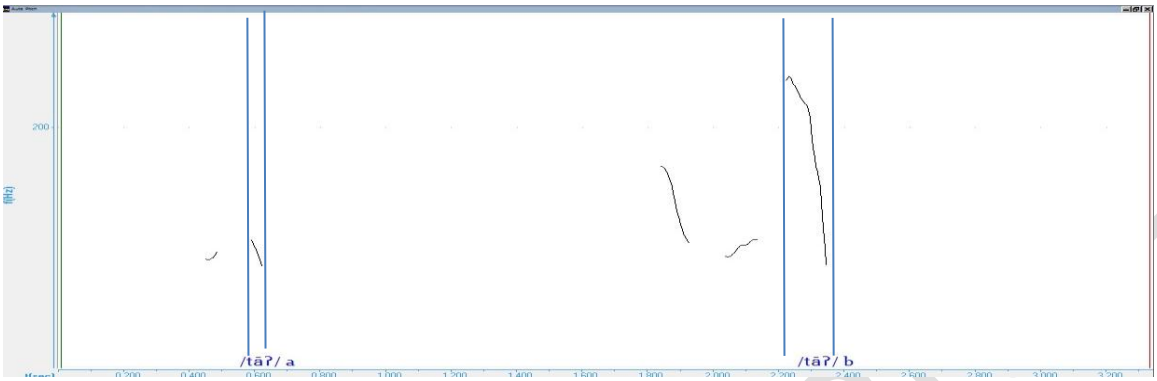
Response:

IPA:	kaː |	man	tʃōːk	diː	tā↗ʔ |
Gloss:	yes-no	she	luck	good	(agreement)

English: 'Really! How lucky she is!' (What a surprise!)

Figure 16 illustrates the two pronunciations of the final particle /tāʔ/, (a) in its basic, non-intonated form, and (b) with the high-falling intonation.

Figure 16: /tāʔ/ in Its Basic Pronunciation (a) and with the High-Falling Intonation (b)



7.7 Epistemic Final Particles

The term 'epistemic' literally means 'knowing' or 'related to knowledge'. When applied to linguistic features used to express probability (e.g., English modal verbs and, as discussed herein, Northern Thai final particles), this term actually refers to the speaker's 'lack of knowledge'. That is to say, the speaker may make an assumption or speculation about a situation or a piece of information. In Northern Thai, besides modal expressions (e.g., /nāːtʃàʔ/ or /tʰāːtʃàʔ/ 'probably'), final particles are also a common device used to signal the speaker's assumption, expectation, and counter-expectation.

A. Assumption Final Particle

One final particle, /kāː/, is commonly used in Northern Thai to show the speaker's assumption that something is probably the case. Its implied meaning is similar to 'I guess'. This particle may occur at the end of either an affirmative or a negative statement. In some contexts, it may change a statement or a question to a rhetorical question. In its basic, non-intonated form, /kāː/ is pronounced with a long vowel and the mid-falling tone. Its usage is illustrated in Example 44.

Example 44: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /kāː/

IPA: bɔn tʰaj káːn tàkʰɨːn kāː |

Gloss: ball Thai lose last night (assumption)

English: 'I guess the Thai football team lost last night.'

The particle /kāː/ may undergo one pattern of varying degrees of intonational modification. The said pattern is the rise in pitch (which I termed 'upstep'), with each step signalling an increase in the speaker's degree of certainty. Precisely how many upsteps may occur cannot be determined, as they vary according to the speaker's increasing levels of certainty. Based on the data, most of the subjects produced two levels of upstep, beyond the particle's basic pitch; on only a few occasions was a third level of upstep was detected. Because of the limited data, this third level could not be clearly determined whether it was a significant upstep or simply an idiosyncrasy. The two frequently detected levels of upstep are illustrated in Examples 45 and 46, respectively.

Example 45: Pronunciation of /kāː/ with the High-Falling Intonation (Upstep 1: Stronger Assumption)

Opening Line:

IPA: luŋ maː pʹík lǽːw ɲaŋ |

Gloss: uncle Maa return already not yet

English: 'Has Uncle Maa returned?'

Response:

IPA: ɲaŋ kāː | tàkīː kóŋ lâw ɲùː lɔː |

Gloss: not yet (assumption) while drink liquor still (emphatic response)

English: 'I believe he hasn't. A moment ago he was still having a drink.'

Example 46: Pronunciation of **/kāː/** with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (Upstep 2: Strongest Assumption)

Opening Line:

IPA:	**bua**	**man**	**tʃǎʔ**	**tæ̀ŋŋaːn**	**lǽːw**	**kaː |**
Gloss:	Bua	it	will	marry	already	(yes-no)

English: 'Is Bua getting married?'

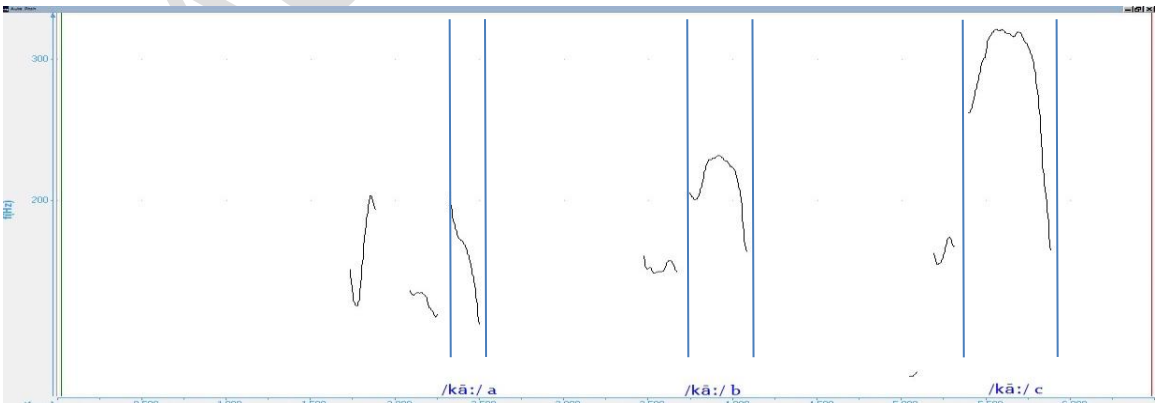
Response:

IPA:	**man**	**bɔ̀ː**	**tæ̀ŋ**	**kāː |**		**man**	**tʃǎʔ**	**hiantɔ̀ː |**
Gloss:	it	not	marry	(assumption)	it		will	study further

English: 'I'm absolutely sure she won't. She'll further her studies.'

Figure 17 illustrates **/kāː/** as it is pronounced in its basic form (a), with the high-falling intonation (upstep 1) (b), and with the raised high-falling intonation (upstep 2) (c).

Figure 17: **/kāː/** in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the High-Falling Intonation (b), and with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (c)



B. Expectation Final Particle

The only one Northern Thai final particle that implies the speaker's confirmation of his/her expectation is **/lɔ̄ː/ or /lūː/.** It conveys the speaker's attempted implication 'just as I thought' or 'just as I expected'. It can be used at the end of either an affirmative or a negative utterance. In its basic form, **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** is pronounced with a long vowel and the mid-falling tone. See Example 47.

Example 47: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/**

IPA:	**pâː**	**sǎːj**	**maː**	**lɔ̄ː** |	**pɜːŋ**		**mǎː**	**hàw**	**tǽːwāː** |
Gloss:	aunt Sai		come	(expect)	that's why		dog	bark	really

English: 'As I thought, it's Aunt Sai coming. That's why the dogs are really barking.'

Similar to the assumption particle **/kāː/**, **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** may undergo one pattern of varying degrees of intonational modification. The pattern also involves upsteps, each of which signals the speaker's increased degree of certainty that his/her expectation is correct. The exact number of upsteps may be undeterminable, as they vary according to the speaker's increasing levels of certainty. The two frequently detected levels of upstep are illustrated in Examples 48 and 49, respectively.

Example 48: Pronunciation of **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** with the High-Falling Intonation (Upstep 1: Stronger Certainty about Expectation)

IPA:	**tôn**	**maw**	**tʰolásǎp**	**màj**	**lɔ̄ː** ↓		**pɔː**	**bɔ̀ː**	**mæːn**	**nâː** |
Gloss:	Ton	crazy	phone	new	(expect)	then	not	show		face

English: ‘Ton is so crazy about his new phone that we haven’t seen him yet.’ (Just as I expected)

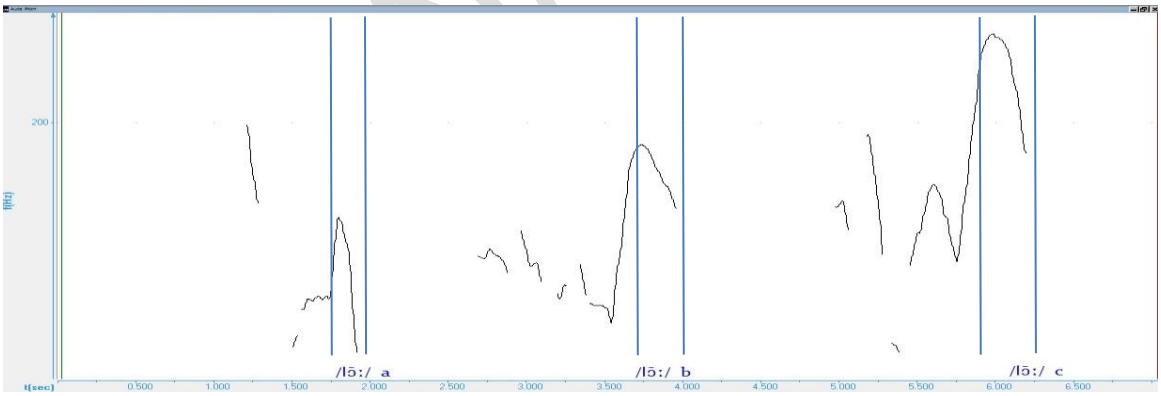
Example 49: Pronunciation of **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (Upstep 2: Strongest Certainty about Expectation)

IPA:	**messi**	**bɔ̀ː**	**dâj**	**loŋ**	**lɔ̄ː** |	**pɜːŋ**	**man**	**káːn** |
Gloss:	Messi	not	get	down	(expect)	that’s why	it	lose

English: ‘Because messi didn’t play, the team lost.’ (Exactly as I expected)

Figure 18 illustrates **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** as it is pronounced in its basic form (a), with the high-falling intonation (upstep 1) (b), and with the super-high-falling intonation (upstep 2) (c).

Figure 18: **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the High-Falling Intonation (b), and with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (c)



C. Counter-Expectation Final Particle

In contrast to **/lɔ̄ː/** or **/lūː/** is the particle **/hɔ̌ʔ/**, which signals that the speaker perceives something as being opposite to his/her expectation. This particle is pronounced with a long vowel

and the mid-falling tone, and seldom undergoes any intonational modification. Example 50 illustrates the use of /hɔ̌ʔ/.

Example 50: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /hɔ̌ʔ/

IPA:	fǒn	tǒk	hɔ̌ʔ |	káːn	wāː	tʃǎʔ	paj	taːn	nɔ̄ːk |
Gloss:	rain	fall	(not expect)	plan that	will	go	way	out	

English: 'It's raining—for goodness' sake! I'm thinking about going out.'

7.8 Politeness Final Particles: /tʃâw/ and /kháp/

There are two final particles whose main function is to express politeness: /tʃâw/ and /kháp/. The former is used by female speaker, and the latter by male speakers. These particles may occur after any kind of utterance. In their basic form, /tʃâw/ and /kháp/ both have short vowels; /tʃâw/ is pronounced with the high-falling tone and /kháp/ with the high-level tone. See Example 51 for the illustration of the use of these two particles.

Example 51: Non-Intonated Pronunciations of /tʃâw/

Opening Line:

IPA:	ʔaw	ʔàŋnǎŋ	diː	kʰáp |
Gloss:	get	what	good	(polite)

English: 'What would like to have, Madam?'

Response:

IPA:	bàkʰànát	sɔ̌ːŋ	kæ̀n	tʃâw |
Gloss:	pineapple	two	(classifier)	(polite)

English: 'Two pineapples, please.'

The particle /tʃâw/ may undergo two forms of intonational modification. The first slightly raises the tone and shortens the vowel. This form of intonation maintains politeness of the utterance but expresses an annoying undertone. The second, which lengthens the vowel and slightly raises the tone, hints a pleasing or flattering attempt. Example 52 illustrates a situation where the speaker becomes annoyed or upset at having to repeat her answer. Example 53 shows that the speaker is trying to be nice to the listener and make her happy.

Example 52: Pronunciation of /tʃâw/ with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (Annoying)

IPA:	maː	lǽːw	tʃâw	| pɜ̄n	kɔ̀ː	bɔ̀ːk	paj	kam	lǽːw	lɔː |
Gloss:	Come	already	(polite)	I	also	tell	go	once	already	(confirm)

English: 'She's arrived. My goodness, I told you that, didn't I?'

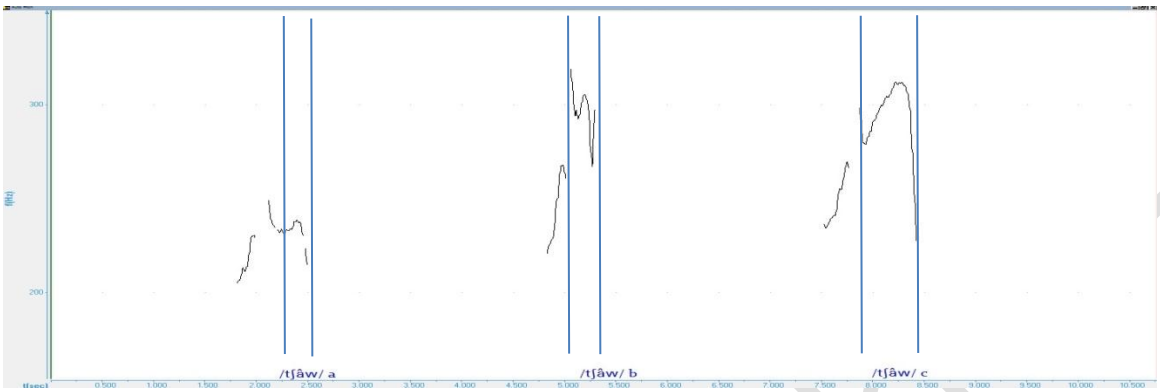
Example 53: Pronunciation of /tʃâw/ with Vowel Lengthening and the Raised High-Falling Intonation (Pleasing)

IPA:	lūːkkáː	maː	lǽːw	tʃâw |			
Gloss:	customer	come	already	(polite)			
IPA:	hm̃ː	pɜ̄n	kʰâw	maː	lɜːj	kɔ̀ː	tʃâw |
Gloss:	let	she	enter	come	now (yes-no)		(polite)

English: 'The client is already here, Madam. Would you like to let her in now?'

Figure 19 illustrates /tʃâw/ as it is pronounced in its basic form (a), with the raised high-falling intonation to imply annoyance (b), and with a combination of vowel lengthening and the raised high-falling intonation to express a pleasing tone (c).

Figure 19: /tʃâw/ in Its Basic Pronunciation (a), with the Raised High-Falling Intonation (b), and with Vowel Lengthening and Raised High-Falling Intonation (c)



8. Conclusion

Two major patterns of intonation superimposed on Northern Thai final particles have been observed, through the natural, authentic speech data. These patterns are pitch modification and vowel duration modification. The findings are partly supported by Cruttenden (1997), who explains that languages with tonal contrasts (phonemic pitch levels) may make use of superimposed intonation in four major ways: (i) rising or lowering of the pitch level of the whole utterance; (ii) downdrift in the absolute value of tones; (iii) narrowing or widening of pitch range; and (iv) modification of the final tone of the utterance in one way or another.

In almost every instance of the utterances observed, the final particle undergoes modification of its tone in the following ways. A particle with the low or low-rising tone usually undergoes pitch heightening (e.g., /kɔ̀ː/ and /bɔ̌ː/). The pitch rise may apply to the initial or the final part of the tone, depending on given particle. A particle with the mid or mid-falling tone may undergo either pitch heightening or pitch lowering, each conveying a different implication or illocutionary force (e.g., /lǣː/). A particle with the high or high-falling tone, on the other hand, usually undergoes pitch lowering (e.g., /tɜ́ʔ/).

In addition to pitch alteration, vowel duration also plays an important part in forming an intonational pattern. Both lengthening and shortening of vowels are a major element in conveying an implied message through a final particle, closely interplaying with intonational superimposition. Particles with short and long vowels may undergo vowel length modification. Vowel lengthening and vowel shortening, if applied to the same particle, communicate different implications (e.g., /tʃâw/).

All such forms of pitch and vowel length alteration result in a change in the speaker's attitude, feeling, intent, or perception towards a given message or situation. In other words, although these types of intonational modification do not alter the denotation of a particle on which they are superimposed, they do affect its 'communicated sense' in an actual communicative context—effecting significant pragmatic power, so to speak—and could lead to different communication outcomes as a consequence. For this reason, each form of intonation, as superimposed on each final particle, qualifies as a 'phonemic' unit, which I term 'intoneme', a distinctive unit or form of intonation which is capable of changing the sense or contextual meaning of an utterance.

In this present case of Northern Thai, the findings have shed some new light onto the role of intonation when it is applied to utterance-final particles. Whilst earlier attempts (e.g., Shen (1990) and Xu (1998)) have shown rather conclusive assignment of certain functions—attitudinal, pragmatic or otherwise—to each form of intonation (e.g., falling or rising pitch), this study argues that the function of one form of intonation may also be determined by the semantic and tonal properties of the very particle on which it is superimposed. What I mean by this is an intonational pitch, such as the rising pitch, may convey surprise if superimposed on one particle and disbelief if superimposed on a different one.

Although final particles have been proved to be significant intonation-bearing units in Northern Thai, several utterances made during the data gathering period also suggest that some other structures may function as intonation units. Such structures include lexical words (e.g., a verb), function words (e.g., a preposition), and particles used in other positions (e.g., initial particles). In

addition, pitch change throughout an entire utterance may also be a significant intonational device. All these areas still remain largely unexplored, and more thorough studies would lead to a more complete understanding of the suprasegmental characteristics of Northern Thai and other related languages.

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