

# TAI ORTHOLINGUISTICS: A CASE STUDY OF ຢ AND ຫ~ຍ IN LAO ມ~ນຸ AND ຢ IN LANNA SCRIPT

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## 1. Introduction

The study of the relation between the scripts or the writing system and phonological system of some particular language is regarded as the methodological study of the language called Ortholinguistics. It is a scientific study of the relation between the orthography and linguistics. The first linguist who introduced this study was William J. Gedney in 1972. He had introduced the types of Thai letters, i.e., high, middle, and low class letters into the tone test diagram together with a check list of 64 test words developed several years during the course of his fieldwork on over many Tai dialects. His diagram consists of 20 boxes, each box contains three to five test words which illustrate each of the four Proto-Tai tones and each of the four consonant classes or letter classes, i.e., (1) voiceless friction sounds or high class letters (2) voiceless unaspirated stops *p t c k* or middle class letters (๑, ๓, ๔, ๖) (3) Glottal stop and glottalized sounds ʔ- ʔb- ʔd- ʔy- or middle class letters (๒, ๗, ๘, ๙) and (4) voiced sounds or all low class letters in Thai.

Nowadays the linguists or field-workers on Tai dialects have found that his tone test diagram will save a lot of time to discover the tone system of a Tai Dialects by using Gedney 's tone test diagram as the following tone test diagram (Gedney, 1972).

	Proto-Tai Tones				
	Smooth			Checked	
	A	B	C	DL	DS
1) Voiceless friction sounds, *s *h <sup>rm</sup> *ph etc.	1	5	9	13	17
2) Voiceless unaspirated stop *p *t *c *k	2	6	10	14	18
3) Glottal and pre-glottalized sound *ʔ *ʔb *ʔd *ʔy	3	7	11	15	19
4) Voiced sounds *m *l etc.	4	8	12	16	20

Gedney’s tone test diagram (1972).

The term ortholinguistics was introduced by myself in Thai Linguistics (1998) To study the ortholinguistics one must know the orthography of the particular language. In which the study some phonemes and tonemes which related to the letters of the language.

In studying Tai dialects many problems are found difficulty when the phonemes or tonemes are pronounced similarly to each other such as the palatal nasal /ɲ/ and the palatal continuant /y/ in Lao or the Northeastern Thai, the Northern Thai and the Southern Thai Dialects in which they are mostly pronounced in nasalized sound in these dialects. Therefore in the study of ‘ຢ ທຢ’ and ‘ຢ’ in Lao script and of ‘ຍ ທຢ’ and ‘ຢ’ in Lanna Thai scripts will contribute some solution for the study of the writing system and sound system of the Lao language as well as the Northeastern Thai and the Lanna Thai Dialect.

## 2. The phonemes and the letters

The consonant phonemes in Lao and Thai Lanna or Kham Mueng have 20 in both the dialects but the letters of them may be different in some phonemes and letters as follows:

## 2.1 Lao phonemes and letters

Phonemes	class of letters		
	High	Mid	Low
1) /p/	-	ປ	-
2) /ph/	ຜ	-	ພ
3) /t/	-	ຕ	-
4) /th/	ຖ	-	ທ
5) /k/	-	ກ	-
6) /kh/	ຂ	-	ຄ
7) /c/	-	ຈ	-
8) /ʔ/	-	ອ	-
9) /b/	-	ບ	-
10) /d/	-	ດ	-
11) /f/	ຝ	-	ຟ
12) /s/	ສ	-	ຊ/ຜູ້
13) /h/	ຫ	-	ຮ
14) /m/	ໝ	-	ມ
15) /n/	ໜ	-	ນ
16) /ɲ/	ຫຍ-	-	ຍ
17) /ŋ/	ຫງ	-	ງ
18) /l/	ຫຼ/ ຫລ	-	ລ
19) /w/	ຫວ-	-	ວ
20) /y/		ຢ	(-ຍ)

2.2 Thai Lanna Phonemes and Letters

Phonemes	class of letters		
	High	Mid	Low
1) /p/	ປ	ຈ	ຕ
2) /ph/	ຮ	-	ງ
3) /t/	ຕ	-	ຊ
4) /th/	ດ	-	ວ
5) /k/	ຄ	-	ອ
6) /kh/	ຊ	-	ຮ
7) /c/	ອ	-	ຮ
8) /ʔ/	-	ຮ	-
9) /b/	-	ບ	-
10) /d/	-	ຊ	-
11) /f/	ຮ	-	ຮ
12) /s/	ຮ	-	ຮ
13) /h/	ຮ	-	ຮ ມູ
14) /m/	ຮ	-	ຮ
15) /n/	ຮ	-	ຮ
16) /ɲ/	ຮ	-	ຮ
17) /ŋ/	ຮ	-	-
18) /l/	ຮ	-	ຮ
19) /w/	ຮ	-	ອ
20) /y/	-	ຝ	(-j)