

SAEK REVISITED

WILAIWAN KHANITTANAN

This article is intended to complement Professor Gedney's 1970 article on 'The Saek Language of Nakhon Phanom Province', in which he describes the phonological structure of Saek. In this paper I will discuss some word classes such as personal pronouns, sentence particles, question words and classifiers.

I. PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Like other Thai dialects, Saek has different words to mean 'I', 'you' and the third person. Also like most Thai dialects spoken in the provinces of Thailand, Saek has a less elaborate system of personal pronouns than Standard Thai. This is certainly due to or related to the social structure of the community and the use of personal pronouns reflects this structure. In selecting the suitable personal pronoun in Saek, one has to consider "age" and "type of relation" of the speaker, the hearer, and the third person. Unlike Standard Thai, any personal pronoun in Saek can be used by both male and female speakers. Saek has the following personal pronouns:

<i>First Person</i>	<i>Second Person</i>	<i>Third Person</i>
1. hoy ⁵	1. caw ³	1. vua ⁵
2. phaen ¹	2. ?ay ³	2. raw ⁶
3. hiin ⁵	3. ?ay ³	3. man ⁶
4. kuu ⁶	4. min ⁶	
5. ruu ⁴	5. ?ay ³	

Table I

[hɔy⁵] 'I' indicates politeness. It is used when the speaker wants to show respect and politeness toward the hearer who, normally, is older or unacquainted.

[phaan¹] 'I' is used when the hearer is about the same age as the speaker.

[hiŋ⁵] 'I' is used among people of the same age to show intimacy.

[ruu⁴] 'I' has the same usage as [hiŋ⁵].

[kuu⁶] 'I' indicates intimacy. It is used when the speaker is older or about the same age as the hearer.

[caw³] 'you' indicates politeness. It is used when the hearer is older than the speaker or when the hearer is a stranger.

[ʔay³] 'you' is used when the speaker and the hearer are about the same age. They can be friends or strangers.

[mɪŋ⁶] 'you' indicates intimacy. It is used when the hearer is younger or about the same age as the speaker.

[vua⁵] 'he, she' is used to refer to a respected or older third person.

[raw⁶] 'he, she' refers to third person in general.

[man⁶] 'he, she, it' refers to a younger third person.

[phaan¹], [hiŋ⁵] and [ruu⁴] may be used interchangeably. They have no difference in meaning.

Each Saek personal pronoun refers to only one person, that is, plurality is not expressed in this class of words. When there is a need to indicate plurality, either [muu²] 'group' or [phuak⁵] 'group' is added in front of each personal pronoun, for example, [muu² ruu⁴] 'we', [phuak⁵ ruu⁵] 'they'. Or the word [kin⁶] 'each other' follows the verb to indicate that there is more than person performing the action of the verb, for example, [man⁶ mok⁴ kin⁶] 'They beat each other'.

The first and the second person pronouns go in pairs as indicated by the numerical order in Table I above. That is, the selection of one form of 'I' determines the choice for the form of 'you'. It would sound peculiar if the expected partner of the pair were not used.

[raw⁶] which is used as a first and second person in many other dialects is used as a third person pronoun in this dialect. Is it possible that [raw] was once used as a first, second, and third person, which is like present usage of kinship terms and personal names?

II. NAMES, KIN TERMS, AND TITLES

Personal names and kinship terms can also be used as personal pronouns, but they have a wider usage. That is, they can be used either as a first person, a second person or a third person. Person names in Saek are not different from those in Standard Thai or other Thai dialects but what is conspicuous is that Saek person names are considered old-fashioned by the speakers of Standard Thai whose names are created daily based on Sanskrit. The following are kinship terms in Saek:

- [yaa³ - thuat³] *paternal great-grandmother*
 [puu² - thuat³]
 [ʔaay⁴ - thuat³]
 [oon⁴ - thuat³]
 [phoo⁵] *father* [mee⁵] *mother*
 [ʔoon⁵] *grandfather* [taa⁶] *maternal grandfather*
 [yaa³] *maternal grandmother* [ʔaay⁴] *maternal grandmother*
 [puu²] *paternal grandfather* [yaa³] *paternal grandfather*
 [luŋ⁴] *mother's or father's older brother*
 [paa³] *mother's or father's older sister*
 [ʔaaw³] *father's younger brother*
 [ʔoo³] *father's younger sister*
 [ʔæŋ¹] *eldest son*
 [cii³] *eldest daughter*
 [phii⁵] *older sibling*
 [nuan³] *younger sibling*
 [lik³] *offspring*
 [laan²] *grandchild*
 [leen¹] *great-grandchild*
 [loot²] *great-great-grandchild*

The last six kinship terms may take the suffix [baaw⁴] 'male' or [saaw⁴] 'female' to indicate gender; for example, [lik³-baaw⁴] 'son' and [laan²-saaw⁴] 'granddaughter'. They can also take the suffix [khwooy⁴] 'male-in-law' and [khwæ³] 'female-in-law' to indicate relationship by marriage; for example, [lik³-khwooy⁴] 'son-in-law', and [laan²-khwæ³] 'wife of a grandson'. Saek has different titles for old people, young people, and children. [thaw³] which means 'old' is used in front of old people's names to show politeness or respect; for example, [thaw³-maa⁶] 'Mr Maa' or [thaw³-sii¹] 'Mrs See'. [threem³] is used in front of younger people's names. Like [thaw³], [threem³] may be used either before a male or a female name. Boys and girls get different titles: [ʔæŋ³] is used preceding a boy's name and [naan⁴] before a

girl's name. What is noticeable here is that Saek children have separate titles but as they grow up they share the same titles.

III. SENTENCE PARTICLES

Marvin Brown describes *sentence particles*, the label often applied to short words which are added at the end of sentences, functioning in a way comparable to English intonation. Those particles never occur alone to convey meaning. They may be used to indicate an urge, a command, or to form questions.

There are two question particles in Saek, [haa³] and [he?⁴-boo²]. These two words turn statements into questions when added at the end of the sentence.

These two words can be used interchangeably, for example:

[mee³ yuu² raan⁴ he?⁴-boo²]
mother to be home question particle
Is mother home?

[mee³ yuu² raan⁴ haa³]
mother to be home question particle
Is mother home?

[mak⁴ he?⁴-boo²]
to like question particle
Do you like it?

[mak⁴ haa³]
to like question particle
Do you like it?

[yuu⁴ nam⁴ phan³ haa³]
to swim to be able question particle
Do you swim?

[si²-hit² he?⁴-boo²]
will do question particle
Are you going to do it?

The following are some other final particles in Saek.

[na⁶-khay⁴] is added at the end of a positive command to make it sound stronger and show the urge of the speaker.

[riik⁵ ræŋ⁴ ræŋ⁴ na⁶-khay⁴]
to call loud loud particle
Call him loudly!