

FORMS AND MEANINGS OF THE THAI PARTICLE *sí*

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0. SUMMARY OF ARTICLE

The Thai form *sí* is a discourse particle having various pronunciations and used in a wide variety of ways. The variant pronunciations include /si/, /sii/, /sî/, /sü/, /sí/, and (for some speakers) /sü/; and the varying usages include action-inducement utterances (commands, suggestions, invitations, requests), responses to questions and to question-raising statements, inferential comments, and statements noting new information. All these forms and usages have one meaning in common – that of signalling a logical, necessary, or expectable response. And then the variations in form signal further distinctions as follows: /si/ or /sii/ for non-involvement, /sî/ for definiteness, /sü/ for persuasion, /sí/ for personal need or wish, and /sü/ for personal wish plus persuasion. Under certain circumstances these variants may be neutralised to /si/; and the forms /sü/ and /sü/ may be raised to signal intensification of meaning. The above phenomena are exemplified in this paper through the presentation of a wide range of data; and the data are then accounted for by means of relevant explanations and generalisations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *sí* AND THE CLASS OF DISCOURSE PARTICLES

The form *sí*, with its various pronunciations and meanings, comprises one of a class of forms in Thai sometimes designated as sentence-final particles but perhaps more appropriately identified as discourse particles. These particles usually but not always occur at the ends of sentences, and they generally signal various types of commands, questions, responses, statements, etc. They also constitute links of various kinds with the linguistic and non-linguistic context of the discourse or linguistic interchange within which they occur.

1.2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Some of these particles prove extraordinarily resistant to definition, analysis, or explanation. For one thing, some occur with a variety of pronunciations the precise significance of which is extremely difficult to determine. And certain particles are used in such a variety of ways that one is hard put to it

to discover what function they could possibly have. Then again the line between what is acceptable or grammatical and what is not sometimes seems so tortuous and arbitrary that one wonders how a native speaker ever learns to use the forms correctly or to understand the usage of other speakers.

This paper constitutes an attempt to make sense out of the bewildering ins and outs of the forms and meanings of just one of these particles – the form *si*. I have selected this particular form for consideration because it has been, for me, the most bewildering and complex of the lot. Also, I am hopeful that light shed in this area may lead to a more insightful exploration of a wider range of phenomena relating to the whole class of discourse particles.

In preparing this paper, I have, of course, had access to a body of published material (see bibliography); but most of the information contained herein has been obtained from several years of intermittent bedeviling of a number of very patient and helpful native speakers. The following have all assisted me by spending considerable amounts of time sharing their knowledge and understanding with me: Dr Prapin Manomaivibool, Ms Nisa Udomphol (now Ms Sakdechayont), Ms Peansiri Eknaiyom, Mr Chare Vathanaprida, Ms Subhaphorn Vathanaprida, Ms Pimpun Suwanamalik (now Ms Fitzpatrick), Ms Niphapharn Chutrakul, Dr Navavan Bandhamedha, and Ms Arada Kiranand. I have also leaned very heavily upon an unpublished paper prepared for me by Ms Udomphol, entitled 'Semantic Functions of the Thai Particle /Si/'. A number of examples cited below have been taken from her work.

In general, the data and explanations which follow are presented in terms of the usage of my most recent informant, Ms Kiranand. Other speakers will certainly differ from Ms Kiranand in their use of *si*, and some of these differences have been recorded in my notes; but many other differences assuredly have not, for some of my data were gathered at a time when my perceptions and understanding were more limited than now. Also, unfortunately, I no longer have access to my original sources of information, so I cannot check my data in the light of more recent insights. In any case, my presentation is structured around Ms Kiranand's speech patterns. Significant variations from those patterns will be pointed out where relevant.

1.3 FORMS AND MEANINGS OF *si* AND THE TREATMENT OF THEM HERE PROPOSED

Now to an examination of the particle *si*. And in order to lay a foundation for our discussion, I must explain that *si* occurs with the following forms: /si/, /sî/, /sí/, /sii/, /sîi/, and for some speakers, /sü/.¹ All of these forms seem to possess some element of meaning which they hold in common; yet each can, for the most part, be differentiated from the others by some distinct and consistent meaning that it possesses. I shall attempt in this paper to identify the basic meaning common to all forms, and to isolate the meanings that distinguish each variant from the others. As I do this, it will soon become evident that the bulk of the paper is concerned with semantic problems; and my approach in dealing with these is first to present data, then to formulate hypotheses, and then in certain cases to show how these hypotheses apply. The paper then concludes with a summary of my conclusions and a couple of suggestions concerning possible future research.

2. THE BASIC MEANING OF *si* AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE VARIANT /sî/

Let us first take up the matter of the basic meaning that is characteristic (as I suggest) of *si* in all its varied forms and occurrences. And, in order to bring the wealth of data down to manageable proportions, let me present a number of examples of just one of the variant forms, namely /sî/. I

choose this particular form because it happens to occur in a rather wide range of situations; and, once such occurrences are explained, we will find we have a convenient basis for going on to account for the other variants.

2.1 EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF OCCURRENCE OF /sî/

The following examples are arranged according to varied categories of occurrence or usage: commands, suggestions, invitations, requests, responses to questions and to question-raising statements, inferential statements, and utterances noting new information. These categories should not, however, be taken too seriously, for they merely provide a convenient means for setting forth the data. When a given example fits into one category or another is not a matter of crucial importance. The point is that /sî/ occurs in each of the varied contexts, and we must find some account of its meaning that is consonant with this wide variety of occurrences.

Square brackets, below, mark information as to possible situations in which the utterance in question might occur.

2.1.1 ACTION-INDUCEMENT UTTERANCES

These comprise various kinds of utterances in which the speaker is prompting the addressee to some particular action. They include commands (see examples 1 and 2 below), suggestions (3-7), invitations (8, 9), and requests (10-12).

- (1) /pàət pratuu sî/
 1 2
 ‘Open the door.’
 1 2
 [It's time for the store to open, and it is the addressee's responsibility to perform this duty. Or: a third party's hands are full, and he can't open the door himself, but the addressee is there handy to help him. Or: the addressee appears to be uncomfortable sitting in a stuffy, closed room.]
- (2) /yàa khàp rew !sî/
 1 2 3
 ‘Don't drive so fast.’
 1 2 3
 [The speaker thinks the addressee is driving too fast.]
 (The exclamation symbol here, and in example 18 below, indicates an emphatic raising of the pitch of /sî/.)
- (3) /faŋ sî, phró? dii/
 1 2
 ‘Listen! (That's) beautiful.’
 1 2
 [The speaker hears some beautiful music and calls it to the attention of the addressee.]

- (4) /khǎn hây dii sî, léew ca dâay raanwan/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 'Write nicely now, and (you)'ll get a reward.'
 1 2,3 4 5 6 7
 [A mother wants her child to write to his grandfather, and she offers him a reward if he writes a nice, neat letter.]
- (5) /sǎu sâa tua nán sî, sǎay dii/
 1 2 3 4 5 6
 '(Why don't you) buy that shirt? It's nice and pretty.'
 1 3,4 2 6 5
- (6) /kháw hây kô ?aw sî/
 1 2 3 4
 'He's giving (it to you), so take (it).'
 1 2 3 4
 [The speaker is encouraging the addressee to accept the offer being extended to him.]
- (7) /kô yàa nân sî/
 1 2 3
 'Well then don't sit (there).'
 1 2 3
 [The addressee has just indicated verbally that he is reluctant to seat himself. Perhaps he is afraid the chair won't take his weight, or he has noticed something spilled on it.]
- (8) khâw maa sî/
 1 2
 '(Do) come in.'
 2 1
 [The speaker is welcoming someone at the door.]
- (9) /kin khâaw kòon sî, léew khôy pay/
 1 2 3 4 5 6
 'Eat first, then (you can) go.' (gradually)
 1,2 3 4 6 5
 [The addressee is about to leave; but it is almost time to eat, so the speaker urges him to stay for the meal.]
- (10) /yìp dǐnsǎo hây nòy sǐ/
 1 2 3 4
 'Hand me the pencil, (would you?)' (grasp pencil for (me) a little)
 1 2 3 4
 [The pencil is within easy reach of the addressee, and the speaker cannot conveniently reach it for himself.]

S2 /klàp sî. thammay ca mây klàp/
 7 8 9 10 11
 'Sure I am. Why wouldn't (I)?' (return)
 7 8 9 10 11

(16) S1 /thəə ca pay hǎa kh-ray/
 1 2 3 4 5
 'Who are you going to go see?'
 5 1 2 3 4

S2 /kô ?aacaan nǎ sî/
 6
 'The teacher, of course.'
 6

[The two speakers have been puzzling over an assignment, and the second speaker has just previously indicated that he is going to inquire about it.]

(17) S1 /ʔaw kii bàat/
 1 2 3
 'How much do you want? (want how many baht)'
 1 2 3

S2 /kô sǐp bàat nǎ sî/
 4 5
 'Well ten baht.'
 4 5

[The second speaker feels the answer is obvious. Perhaps the price is marked in plain view, or perhaps he has just quoted the price shortly before.]

2.1.3 RESPONSES TO QUESTION-RAISING STATEMENTS

These are responses somewhat like answers to questions, but here the addressee has not actually asked a question. Rather, he has made a statement that raises or calls to mind a question of fact or understanding that the speaker feels requires comment. So he responds with some appropriate confirmation, correction, or explanation. Note that in certain types of such responses the particle /sǐ/ does not occur at the end of the sentence but after a noun phrase or subordinate clause which functions as the focus of the predication (see 20-22).

(18) S1 /chǎn wǎa wannǐ fǎn thǎa ca mây tòk/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 'I don't think it'll rain today.'
 (I think today rain apparently will not fall.)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

S2 /tòk !sǐ/
 7
 'Sure it will.'

- (19) S1 /duu sǐ, kháw kamləŋ láəŋ chaam/

1 2 3 4 5
 'Look, he's washing the dishes.'

- S2 /təŋŋaan kan léew kô tɔŋ chûay kan tham ŋaan sǐ/

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 'Well, they're married, and so they've got to help each other do the work.'

6,7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

- (20) khon nán sǐ sǔay/

1 2 3
 'That's the one that's pretty.' (person that is pretty)

1 2 3

[The addressee has just expressed his opinion that some other person than the one here referred to is pretty, so the speaker here refocuses the addressee's attention on the one to whom he feels the description more fully applies.]

- (21) /fǒn yàəŋ nǐ sǐ tham hây nám thûam dâay ŋâyŋây/

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 'This is the kind of rain that can easily cause floods.'

(rain kind this cause water to overflow can easily)

1 2 3 4,5 6 7 8 9

[The addressee has just remarked about how serious the rain storm is. Or: he has just made light of the storm's importance.]

- (22) pen dèk sǐ dii/

1 2 3
 'Being a child is wonderful.' 'It's when you're a child that you're really well off.'

1 2 3

[The addressee has just indicated what a wretched life children lead. Or: he has just been talking about what fun he had as a child.]

2.1.4 INFERENTIAL STATEMENTS

These are utterances in which the speaker draws some kind of inference from something he hears or observes.

- (23) /khun khít wâa chán tòk ləŋ sǐ/

1 2 3 4 5 6
 'You must think I agree.'

1 2,3 4 5,6

[The speaker has just learned from the addressee that the latter, without consultation, has gone ahead with plans for a party to be held at the speaker's house.]

- (24) /khâpnôok thanôn toon nĩ rôt tít ʔiik sî/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 'I gather there's another traffic jam outside now.'
 (outside streets now cars jammed again)
 1 2 3,4 5 6 7
 [The addressee has just come in at 5:00 p.m., complaining about the difficult
 time he has had getting through town in his car.]
- (25) /fõn tòk léew sî/
 1 2 3
 'So it's raining now.' (rain falls now)
 1 2 3
 [The speaker doesn't have first-hand knowledge of the weather outside, but he
 sees the addressee come in, soaked from head to foot.]

2.1.5 STATEMENTS NOTING NEW INFORMATION

These are statements made in response to some new development or fact that has just come to the attention of the speaker, or that is being brought to the attention of the addressee for the first time. Statements of this kind always have the form /léew/ 'now' as a part of the predication.

- (26) /fõn tòk léew sî/
 1 2 3
 'Hey, it's raining!' (We'd better get our umbrellas) Or: 'Aw shucks, it's raining!'
 1,2,3
 (We can't go on our outing after all.)
 [Note that this utterance, as it stands, is ambiguous. The presence or absence of
 disappointment will have to be determined by the speaker's tone of voice, or by
 his general deportment. Furthermore, only a knowledge of the situation will make
 clear whether the statement is a response to a new development, as here, or whether
 the speaker is making an inference, as in 25, above.]
- (27) /phleej rêəm léew sî/
 1 2 3
 'There, the music is getting started.' (song begins now)
 1 2 3
 [The speaker and the addressee are at a concert and have been waiting for the
 music to begin, so the speaker conveys the sense that they should now stop
 talking and listen.]
- (28) khun bunmii ca tẽngaan léew sî/
 1 2 3 4 5
 'Well, I see Mr Boonmii is getting married.' (Mr Boonmii will marry now)
 1 2 3 4 5
 [The speaker sees an article in the paper and discovers for the first time that
 Boonmii is getting married. This means he will now have to get busy and buy
 a wedding present.]

- (29) /khun bunmii ca tɛŋŋaan léew nĩ sǐ/
 'But Mr Boonmii is getting married now.'
 (The form *nĩ* signals new information contrary to the expectations or understanding of the addressee.)
 [The addressee has just proposed the name of Boonmii as an officer in a singles group.]

2.2 ACCOUNTING FOR THE GENERAL MEANING OF /sǐ/ (AND *si*)

The above examples should suffice to reveal something of the range of occurrences of the form /sǐ/. But what does the particle mean? Can there in fact be a single meaning that covers such a diversity of uses? This is the problem to which I shall now address myself.

2.2.1 THE MEANING OF /sǐ/ (OR *si*) AS PRESENTED IN THE LITERATURE

The most commonly proposed explanations for the meaning of *si* involve the idea of emphasis. So McFarland 1954:863; Thai-Thai Dictionary 1976:911; Manitcharoen 1964:1356; Haas 1964:539; Bhamoraput 1972:24. Two of these sources, McFarland and the Thai-Thai Dictionary, indicate further that /sǐ/ is used to express the imperative; and Bhamoraput, in a similar vein, states that *si* indicates an exhortation. Then Brown (1969:3.35) provides the more explicit information that /sǐ/ is used when 'speaker urges hearer to do something that should obviously be done'. So here again something of the idea of the imperative is conveyed.

Noss (1964:210), for his part, gives us a definition that includes both the idea (approximately) of the imperative and of emphasis. He suggests that *si* conveys the idea that 'this is the correct behaviour or belief (change yourself if necessary)'. Then he goes on to explain that *si* 'is used most commonly to urge action on the part of someone who is not acting, or to change the course of action of someone who is A second use ... is in emphatic statements, where it either expresses or urges agreement.'

Actually, none of the above explanations quite suffices to fit all the contexts in which *si* occurs.³ The idea of emphasis seems plausible enough in some contexts, but it doesn't seem to be too relevant in the case of invitations or requests (examples 8-12 above), or in the case of inferential statements (23-25), or of statements noting new information (26-29). Similarly, the idea of the imperative appears relevant in some cases; for *si* certainly can be used with commands. In fact if we were to broaden the term 'imperative' to cover all the inducement-to-action utterances above (examples 1-12), we could considerably widen the applicability of this definition. However, there are other ways of giving commands that make no use of *si* (e.g. utterances occurring with the particles /ná/ and /thàʔ/ and occasionally utterances with no particle at all); and there are any number of other things that can be said in order to get people to do things. And then, when all is said and done, we are still left with occurrences of *si* that convey neither the idea of the imperative nor the idea of emphasis.

Noss, I believe, comes close to the mark when he proposes the idea of 'correct behaviour or belief'. In fact, one might have difficulty demonstrating conclusively that this explanation falls short. However, I do think it is possible to improve on Noss's proposal; so, rather than argue the point, I should like to suggest a definition that I feel comes a little closer to accounting for the meaning and usage of this particle.

2.2.2 THE MEANING OF /sî/ (OR *sî*) AS HERE PROPOSED

I suggest, then, that the particle *si* conveys the idea that something – i.e. the thing being commanded, requested, suggested, stated, affirmed, inferred, pointed out – is a response that in the speaker's opinion naturally, logically, expectably, assuredly follows from the situation in question. In other words, *si* signals the fact that a given response is obvious, expectable, or certain under the circumstances.

2.2.3 HOW THE NOTION OF 'EXPECTABILITY' APPLIES IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

This idea of expectable response will serve, I believe, to explain the various types of usage to which *si* is subject. But, what constitutes an expectable response? And how does this idea of expectable response apply to the different kinds of utterances exemplified above?

In order to answer these questions, it is helpful to divide the various types of utterances where *si* occurs into two groups. The first group consists of those utterances which call for some appropriate or reasonable response on the part of the addressee (see the action-inducement utterances, as in examples 1-12). The second group consists of those which signal an expectable or assured response on the part of the speaker (as in examples 13-29).

2.2.3.1 'EXPECTABILITY' IN ACTION-INDUCEMENT UTTERANCES

The first group of utterances, then, signal that something is to be done by the addressee; and the something, whatever it is, must be something that is expectable within the verbal or situational context within which the given *si* utterance occurs. Now this expectability will in some cases be self-evident, both to the speaker and to the addressee, in the light of the situation as it stands. For example, it may be understood that it is time for the addressee to open the store; so then the situation naturally calls for the addressee to open it (see item 1 above). Or the speaker may be extending the addressee an invitation to come into his house (example 8), or to be seated; and the natural, expectable response is for the addressee to accept. In cases such as these, the situation plus the stimulus utterance in themselves provide all the grounds necessary for expecting the given response. The response is expectable without any further comment or explanation.

In other cases, the expectability of the action in question is not self-evident unless the speaker provides some explanation or points to some consideration that reinforces the expectability of the response in a given instance. For example, a speaker might see a shirt that he thinks the addressee should buy, but he cannot simply out of the blue urge the latter to buy it, using the word *si*. However, if the speaker explains that the shirt is pretty, then that explanation provides reason enough for the speaker to feel the addressee's response is expectable, and so he can appropriately use *si* in calling forth that response (example 5).

In short, a speaker may tack *si* on to an action-inducement utterance when there is something about the situation that in and of itself naturally calls for the action in question. But if the occasion doesn't speak for itself, the speaker will verbally supply information or suggest some consideration that explains why he feels the response in question is called for.

2.2.3.1.1 'EXPECTABILITY' THAT IS SELF-EXPLANATORY

Situations that speak for themselves, or those in which the expectability of the called for response is self-explanatory, include those in which anyone might be expected to act in the way indicated. For example, an employee may be expected to fulfil responsibilities assigned to him (like opening the store door every morning, or sweeping every evening). A child may be expected to eat when food is set before him. A person may be expected to listen to the music at a concert, or to open a door for a friend whose hands are full, or to enter a house when he is welcomed at the door by his host, or to take steps to get warm when he is cold. All of these are things a person might be urged, told, asked, invited to do, using the particle *si*, with no further explanation. The explanation may be provided if the speaker wishes, but it need not be.

Some types of utterance in which the situation normally can be considered as self-explanatory are worthy of note here:

(1) Corrective commands. These (as opposed to preventive commands, to be discussed below) are commands directed toward the addressee to get him to do something he is not doing but in the speaker's opinion should do, or to stop doing something that is contrary to the speaker's wishes or expectations. For example, a mother tells her child who is toying with his food to get busy and eat; or a passenger tells a driver not to drive so fast (item 2). Note that in situations of this sort, the addressee is not necessarily expected to already know without being told (though he *may* know) what action is called for or why. The command itself informs him that his present behaviour is undesirable, and that he should therefore either stop what he is doing, or start acting in a different way. In other words, the command itself reveals what the expectable response is; and the speaker, in using *si* is expressing his opinion of what is expectable.

(2) Requests or invitations arising out of some present and immediate need or wish. For example, the speaker needs a pencil that is out of convenient reach, so he asks the addressee to pass it to him (item 10); or someone wants to join a group of friends, so he asks their permission to do so (11); or the addressee is standing at the door, and the host invites him in (8); or the host invites his guest to be seated. Here again, the expressed wish or invitation of the speaker provides all the information necessary for the addressee to know and understand that a given response is to be expected. So, in using *si* in such circumstances, the speaker is signalling the fact that the called-for response is the normal, expectable thing.

(3) Utterances urging response to some noteworthy sensual stimulus. For example, a speaker urges the addressee to look at a pretty girl, or to listen to an odd sound, or to feel the texture of a luxurious piece of cloth. In situations of this sort, the addressee knows what is expectable as soon as the speaker has expressed himself. Why it is expectable he will learn as soon as he has done what he is being urged to do. In any case, the speaker need make no explanation (unless he wishes) to justify the action he is calling for. The situation speaks for itself.

2.2.3.1.2 'EXPECTABILITY' THAT REQUIRES EXPLANATION OR JUSTIFICATION

In contrast to the above situations, there are other cases where the expectability of a given response is not self-evident from the command or suggestion as it stands. In such cases the speaker must provide some explanation or suggest some consideration that clarifies why the given action is called for in this particular instance.

Explanations and clarifications of this sort are many and varied. They may comprise offers of reward (example 4), or comments about some desirable consequence of the action in question. Or they may take the form of threats or of warnings about undesirable consequences.

They may also point to some new fact or event in the immediate environment (such as the time of day, the weather, or the ringing of the doorbell) that may not have been noticed by the addressee, but that gives rise to a call for the action in question. Then again they may point back to old information as an inducement to the action. For example, the addressee has been offered a gift (so he should accept it; see item 6 above); or he has just indicated that he wants to go to the party (so he should go); or he has just noticed how rickety a chair is (so he shouldn't sit on it; item 7).

Commands and suggestions of this latter type (i.e. those referring back to old information) differ from the others in that the reason for the called-for action, being old information to the addressee, need not be explicitly stated as a part of the action-inducement utterance. But that reason will usually be acknowledged or signalled as a part of the command by means of the addition of the preverbal particle /kô .../ 'then, well then ...'. (Compare examples 6 and 7.) The mandatory presence of /kô/ is here taken, then, to mark such utterances as falling into the category of commands or suggestions of the type whose expectability is not self-evident but must be explained or justified in some way.

Among the most common of the situations calling for explanations or clarifications of the kind mentioned above are those in which the addressee seems to be unaware of or heedless of some crucial fact or consideration that the speaker feels should govern his actions. For example, the addressee doesn't seem to realise how good the prices are at a particular store; or he evidently didn't hear the doorbell; or he is unaware of the time; or he is not sufficiently heedful of the significance of the fact that a gift is being offered to him. He therefore needs these considerations brought to his attention if he is to be urged (using the particle *sí*) to shop at that store, to answer that doorbell, to hurry and get dressed for that scheduled event, or to accept that gift offered to him. Once these considerations are pointed out in some way, the action in question then becomes the obvious, expectable thing to do, at least in the speaker's eyes.

A particular subgroup of situations of the above sort consists of those situations which give rise to *preventive* suggestions or commands. These are situations in which the addressee seems to be about to do something uncalled for, evidently unaware of some crucial consideration that would otherwise prevent him from acting as intended. For example, a child is about to touch the stove, unaware that he might get burned; or a friend is about to shop at a particular store without realising how dishonest the establishment is; or a guest seems to feel obligated to sit in a rickety chair ignoring or suppressing his own doubts about its serviceability. So the speaker, using the particle *sí*, urges the addressee not to perform the given action, and at the same time provides the explanation or points to the consideration that makes the addressee's response expectable.

Preventive negative commands of this kind thus contrast with corrective negatives (in which the speaker tells the addressee not to do something he is already doing) in that the former require some justification for the prohibition (if not an explicit reason, then at least the form /kô .../ 'well then ...') whereas the latter do not. They also contrast with preventive commands using the particle /ná/, where the speaker is simply expressing his wishes or demands, and therefore needs append no explanation or justification.

2.2.3.2 'EXPECTABILITY' IN SPEAKER-RESPONSE UTTERANCES

Up to this point, we have been dealing with the matter of expectable response as it relates to action-inducement utterances, or utterances that call for an expectable or obvious response on the part of the addressee. Let us now look at responses on the part of the speaker. Here we find two new aspects to the problem of obviousness or expectability. First is the fact that the expectability need not always be clear (or made clear) to the addressee, for it is the speaker's own response that is being judged expectable, not that of the addressee. Thus in example 13 above, the addressee has no idea whether the third party is coming or not. But the speaker knows; and when the speaker answers /maa sî/ 'Sure he's coming', he conveys the idea that he has what he considers sufficient reason for his response; but he need not explain the reasons for his assurance to the addressee. He *can* explain the basis for his assurance if he wishes, but even if he does not, he can still signal his assurance by the use of /sî/; and the addressee will know that the response is based on what the speaker feels to be good grounds.

The second aspect to the problem of expectability or obviousness is the fact that in many instances, including the above example, the speaker is basically conveying the idea that he is sure, or has reason to believe, that something is the case. In other words, /sî/ here carries the idea, not strictly of expectability or even obviousness, but of assurance, certainty, and behind that of the presence of a reason for that assurance or certainty.

Let us now look at the various types of speaker-response occurrences of /sî/.

2.2.3.2.1 ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

As we have seen (examples 13-17), /sî/ may occur with answers to questions. But the characteristics of usage will vary depending upon whether those questions are yes-no questions (i.e. questions which call for a yes or no answer) or content questions (i.e. questions asking who, what, when, how many, why, etc.).

The chief difference between yes-no questions and content questions, with respect to the use of /sî/, is the fact that the particle never occurs in answers to content questions unless the information in the answer is something that is known or ought to be known to the addressee; and then /sî/ always occurs as a part of the expression /kô ... nâ sî/ 'well ...'. (See examples 16-17.) But in the case of yes-no questions, /sî/ may occur not only in contexts of this sort, but also in situations where the facts of the matter are known only to the speaker; so /sî/ may occur either with or without /kô ... nâ/, depending on the context. (See examples 13-15.) I must confess that I do not know why the difference between yes-no questions and content questions should give rise to this difference in the use of /sî/; but I suspect that the problem has something to do with some unique semantic characteristic inherent in content questions that so far has eluded me.

There is also a particular limitation upon the use of /sî/ in answers to yes-no questions of the type where the questioner has some expectations about the response. This includes yes-no questions signalled by /lăə/ or /chây máy/; for example

/kháw rúu lăə/

1 2 3

'He knows, huh?'

1 2 3

- or /kháw mây rúu lǎə/
 1 2 3 4
 'Doesn't he know?'
 3 1 2 4
- or /kháw rúu chây máy/
 1 2 3 4
 'He knows, doesn't he?'
 1 2 3 4

In negative answers to questions of this sort, the speaker will ordinarily use /sǐ/ only if he at the same time signals in some way the reason for his response. This he may do by actually stating the reason, or (if he feels the reason ought to have been already clear to the addressee) by means of the expression /kô ... nâ sǐ/ 'well ...'. If on the other hand the speaker makes no reference to the reason for his response, he will ordinarily use the particle /ròk/ (signalling a contradictory or occasionally a confirming negative response), but never /sǐ/.

2.2.3.2.2 RESPONSES TO QUESTION-RAISING STATEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, these are responses not to questions asked by the addressee, but to statements which for the speaker raise a question of fact or perception; and these statements then evoke some kind of confirming, contradictory, or explanatory response from the speaker.

The possibilities of and restrictions upon the occurrence of /sǐ/ in such responses may be illustrated by the following examples of possible and impossible responses to item 30 below. Items a, c, d, e, g, h, represent possible responses to the sentence; but items b and f, marked by an asterisk, are unacceptable:

- (30) /phǒm khít wǎa ʔaacaan ca sǔu rótyon/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 'I think that the professor will buy a car.'
- a. /sǔu sǐ/
 1
 'He certainly will.' (buy)
 1
- b. */mây sǔu sǐ/
 1 2
 'No he won't.' (not buy)
 1 2
- c. /mây sǔu sǐ, kháw mây mii ɣən phəə/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 'No he won't, he doesn't have enough money!'
 1,2 3 4 5 7 6

- d. /khuan tɔŋ pen mɔɔtəsay sî/
 1 2 3 4
 'It'll surely have to be a motor cycle.'
- e. /phîi 'aacaan sî ca sǔu/
 1 2 3 4
 'It's the professor's brother that's going to buy (one).'
- f. */'aacaan sî ca sǔu/
 1 2 3
 'It's the professor that's going to buy (one).'
- g. /khon yàaŋ 'aacaan sî tɔŋ sǔu nêe/
 1 2 3 4 5 6
 'A person like him has got to buy (one) for sure.'
- h. /thāa mii thǔa' māk yàaŋ nán kô tɔŋ mii rôt sǔan tua sî/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 'If (you) have a lot of business like that, (then you) have to have (your) own car.'

The first thing to be noted from the above examples is the fact that in responses to question-raising statements, as in answers to questions, the reason for the expectable response need not be clear to the addressee; and in most instances the speaker will not make it clear. In other words, when the speaker uses /sî/ in such responses, the addressee knows that the former has good reason for his response, but he need not know, and perhaps will not even be told what those reasons are. So, here again (as with answers to questions), the particle /sî/ may convey assurance, certainty on the part of the speaker, based on private reasons which seem to him to be adequate.

Also to be noted is the fact that responses to question-raising statements include some responses that address themselves to the truth or falsehood of the addressee's utterance (see 18, and 30 a,c), and others that are concerned with the question of who, what, why etc. (see 20, 21, 22, 30d, e, g, h). Clearly the former are rather like answers to yes-no questions in this respect, and the latter are comparable to answers to content questions. The who-what type of response here, however, does not (as in the case of answers to questions) require the occurrence of /kô ... na sî/ 'well ...'. In fact either type of response can occur with /sî/ by itself; and either can occur with /kô ... na sî/ in situations where the speaker feels the addressee should or could have known the facts of the matter.

Still another matter to be noted is this: that responses of the type under consideration may be contradictory, confirmatory, or simply explanatory. Contradictory responses (for example 18, 20, 30c, d, e, and potentially h) are those in which the speaker feels called upon to contradict or correct something the addressee has said or implied. Such occurrences may occur freely with /sî/, except that negative responses of the yes-no type, whether contradictory or not, must ordinarily be accompanied by some kind of explanation or signal pointing to the reason for the negative response. If such reference to the reason is missing, then the speaker will usually use /ròk/ (contradictory or confirming negative) rather than /sî/. Thus example 30c is permissible, but not 30b. Example 30b would, however, be an acceptable response if it were marked by the particle /ròk/ rather than /sî/.

Confirmatory responses (e.g. 30a, g, h, and potentially 21, 22) are those which agree in essence with what the addressee has just said. Positive confirmatory responses of the yes-no type of response can occur freely, no elaboration or explanation being necessary. However, a confirmatory who-what type of response can only occur if the speaker somehow enlarges upon what the addressee has just said. This enlargement can take the form of a generalisation (21, 22, 30g), or it can provide an explanation of some sort (19, 30h). But confirmatory responses of the type exemplified in 30f cannot occur, presumably because they involve an inappropriate topicalisation of the discourse subject.

Explanatory responses explain why or how some fact or state of affairs alluded to by the addressee is or should be as noted. Such responses are usually marked by the occurrence of the preverb particle /kô/ (see 19, 30h).

One last thing to be noted is the fact that in some responses the particle /sî/ occurs in the middle of the sentence (see 20, 21, 22, 30e, g). All such cases turn out to be what I call topic-focus sentences, that is who-what sentences in which the subject or topic of the sentence forms the focus of the sentence predication. So they all convey the idea that it's the subject of the sentence about which something can properly be affirmed; i.e. it's *that person* that's pretty (20); it's *this kind of rain* that causes floods (21), it's *being a child* that's pleasant (22), etc. We can therefore make the general statement that /sî/ always immediately follows the focal or central predication of the sentence. In most types of sentences, the particle therefore appears at the end of the sentence, but not so in the case of subject-centred predications of the type exemplified above. Strictly speaking, then, /sî/ is not a sentence-final particle at all, but a predication marker of some sort.⁴

2.2.3.2.3 INFERENCE STATEMENTS

These comprise utterances in which the speaker responds to certain facts or clues that have come to his attention, by drawing some inference or stating some conclusion that he arrives at on the basis of those clues. For example, the addressee starts elaborating his plans for a party at the speaker's house, and this provides the latter with the clue that leads to the conclusion that the addressee must be expecting the speaker to participate – a conclusion that had not previously been stated explicitly; so the speaker makes the appropriate inference (see 23). Or again, the addressee's problems with 5:00 p.m. traffic lead the speaker to infer that there must be a typical rush-hour traffic jam (see 24). Or still again, the speaker sees the addressee coming in with a dripping umbrella and raincoat, and infers that it must be raining outside (see 25).

Note, however, that these utterances must be inferences, not first-hand observations of fact. If the addressee in the first example above has specifically stated his expectations, or if the speaker is actually observing the traffic jam, he will not use the particle /sî/ (unless he is noting the information for the first time, and then he may respond as in the statements noting new information to be discussed below). Also, for some speakers, the inference or conclusion to be drawn must be a fairly clear one. If it is somewhat doubtful or tenuous, such speakers would ordinarily use the mid-tone form /si/ (see later discussion).

2.2.3.2.4 STATEMENTS NOTING NEW INFORMATION

As stated above, these comprise responses to some new development or fact that has just come to the attention of the speaker, or that is being brought to the attention of the addressee for the first time.

And such statements always have the form /léew/ 'now, already' as a part of the predication. The idea of reasonable, necessary, or expectable response is a little more obscure in utterances of this type, but it is, I believe, nevertheless present. The implication of /sî/ here, is that the new fact brought to light must now – reasonably, expectably, necessarily – be noted, adjusted to, reckoned with, responded to. So, behind the utterance there is, as it were, a veiled command or suggestion to the speaker or addressee or both to see, hear, take note, consider, adjust, respond, or whatever. This is the expectable, necessary, appropriate thing to do.

3. FORMS AND MEANINGS OF OTHER VARIANTS OF *si*

So far we have been considering only the phonetic form /sî/ and the variety of contexts in which it occurs and the basic meaning which it has in all those contexts. Now we are in a position to consider other phonological forms of this same particle: /si/ or /sii/, /sîi/, /sí/, and /sîi/. These forms, along with /sî/ are all variants of the particle *si*; and each of these variants retains the basic meaning of the particle, but each also has a further semantic value that distinguishes it from all the rest.

3.1 SPECIAL PHONETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIANTS

The phonetic values of the above-mentioned variants, as it turns out, differ in a number of ways from the values of other comparable non-particle forms in the language. For one thing, the vowels of the various forms of *si* are often pronounced lower and more lax than other non-particle forms ending in /-i/ or /-ii/. Also, the short vowel forms /si/, /sî/, and /sí/ never under any circumstances are pronounced with a terminal glottal stop, whereas other comparable forms in the language usually are when they occur in terminal or stressed position. Then the falling-tone forms /sî/ and /sîi/ (unless particularly stressed or emphasised) drop from the mid-tone level or even lower, whereas other falling-tone forms usually drop from the high-tone level or even higher. The form /sî/, in particular, when unstressed, can drop from the mid level to a little below mid, or to low, or to any point between; or it can drop from lower mid or even low. Incidentally, other discourse particles (though not all of them) share many of the unusual characteristics described above.

All these peculiarities of *si*, added to the elusiveness of semantic distinctions and the variability of vowel-length under conditions of stress variation (a common enough phenomenon in the language), give rise to considerable difficulty in differentiating the variants of the particle or in determining which variant is present in a given utterance. In this regard, the distinction between /sî/, /si/, and a hypothetical /sî/ has presented the most difficulty. As it happens, not all speakers distinguish consistently between /sî/ and /si/ (unless the former occurs particularly stressed or emphasised); and, so far as I can tell, /sî/ and /sî/ never clearly contrast; so the latter could probably be considered a freely varying allomorph of /sî/.

3.2 EXAMPLES OF USAGE OF CONTRASTING FORMS

We are left, then, with the forms /sî/, /si/ or /sii/,⁵ /sîi/, /sí/, and /sîi/ as variants which are distinguished from each other both in form and meaning. The semantic similarities and differences between them may be illustrated by showing what happens to the sentence

/pəət pratuu/

1 2

'Open the door.'

1 2

when it is accompanied by each of the variants:

- (31) /pəət pratuu sī/
'Open the door.'
[It's time for the addressee to open the store door.]
- (32) / ... si/ or / ... sii/
'Hey, how about opening the door!'
[The addressee should be opening the door, but he is hanging back or woolgathering.]
- (33) / ... sīi/
'Come on, do open it!'
[The addressee is refusing to open the door; or he has ignored one or more previous requests.]
- (34) / ... sī/
'Open the door, would you!'
[The speaker wants to be able to look inside the room or closet, or he wants to put something away, and he needs the addressee to open the door for him.]
- (35) / ... sīi/
'**Ple-ease** open the door!'
[The speaker is a child who desperately wants to get into the bathroom, and his older brother is teasing him or refusing to let him in. Some speakers would simply use /sīi/ here, with raised pitch to indicate emphasis, insistence, urgency.]

3.3 CONTRASTING MEANINGS OF VARIANTS

Concerning the similarities between the above sentences, it is sufficient for the present to say that each conveys the idea that the opening of the door is the obvious, reasonable, expectable thing for the addressee to do under the circumstances. In other words, *si* in all its phonologically variant forms, as exemplified above, still retains this meaning of obvious or expectable response. But what semantic differences are signalled by these variations in form? This is the question to which I shall now address myself.

3.3.1 CONTRASTING MEANINGS AS HANDLED IN THE LITERATURE

Unfortunately, most sources in the literature provide rather little help at this point. Thus several authorities simply list two or three phonological variants without specifying what the differences in pronunciation mean – which conveys the impression, perhaps unintentionally, that the different forms vary freely with no particular significance to be assigned to each variant. See McFarland (1954), Thai-Thai Dictionary (1976), Manitcharoen (1964), Haas (1964), Noss (1964), Bhamoraput (1972).

Henderson (1949), on the other hand, attempts to explain the phonological forms of all the sentence-final particles by describing various prosodic features of length and pitch, and listing possible combinations of these features, and then assigning general meanings to each combination. For example, she suggests (p.207) that a short falling-pitch combination conveys 'assertion, or assent, or command', while a short high pitch conveys 'interrogation, invitation', and so forth. But as it turns out, almost all her generalisations have exceptions, and besides they are too general to provide much help for understanding the variations in form and meaning of particular particles.

Chuenkongchoo (1956) carries the matter a little further, giving examples of utterances where each variant of each particle occurs, and going into a little more detail than Henderson about general meanings of the various prosodic combinations. But again his generalisations provide only limited help for understanding the varying forms and meanings of particular particles. One comment of his, however (1956:70), does seem to be at least partially applicable to the forms /sīi/ and /sī/: "Length," he says, "is often used to add 'intensity' or extra weight to utterances in which in other contexts a short particle might be used. Situations involving 'insistence' or 'exasperation' frequently call for complexes in which length is a feature."

Rudaravanija (1965), like Henderson and Chuenkongchoo, proposes generalised meanings for different phonological characteristics of final particles. But she carries the matter further by suggesting meanings for varying pitches of a few individual particles. For example (p.95), she informs us that *na* with rising terminal contour has a 'mild emphatic' meaning; and with falling contour it is 'strong emphatic'. However, her semantic generalisations about final particles focus upon the feature of pitch or final contour, and not upon other features such as length or terminal glottal closure. And, unfortunately for our purposes, she omits *si* from her discussion; so we are left without the benefit of her judgement in this particular case.

The clearest and most specific help, in my opinion, comes to us from Brown (1969:3.20) in his definitions of /sī/ and /sī/. According to him, /sī/ is 'a particle used to request an action when the result of the action, not the action itself, is the point of the request'; and /sī/ is 'a particle used to request or urge an action when the action itself is the point of the request'. And that's about all the really helpful information I have been able to find in the literature.

3.3.2 EXAMPLES AND SUGGESTED MEANINGS OF EACH VARIANT

Let me now turn to some further examples of each of the variant forms, and then some definitions and explanations. As before, the following examples, for the most part, reflect the speech of Ms Kiranand. No doubt many speakers will differ from her at one point or another. For example, one speaker, Ms Bandhmedha, with whom I have worked extensively, makes no distinction as below between /sī/ and /si/ or /sīi/; and other speakers make use of the form /sīi/, while Ms Kiranand does not. However, I believe Ms Kiranand's usage is not particularly idiosyncratic, and it will serve as a convenient basis for presenting the data.

3.3.2.1 THE FORM /sī/ OR /sīi/

- (36) /khǎn hây dii sīi, léew ca dâay raanwan/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 'Write nicely now, and (you)'ll get a reward.'
 1 2,3 4 5 6 7

(cf. example 4, above.)

[The mother holds out a reward to her child as an inducement for writing a nice letter, and then she withdraws it as the child reaches for it, thus conveying the idea that the reward will not be his until the letter is written to her satisfaction.]

- (37) /kháw hây kô ?aw sii/

1 2 3 4

'He's giving it to you, so take it.'

1 2 3 4

(cf. example 6.)

[The speaker is baffled, and perhaps a little annoyed that the addressee is hesitating. Or: the addressee has asked the speaker what to do, and the latter doesn't want to be bothered with the problem.]

- (38) /khâw maa sii/

1 2

'Come in.'

2 1

(cf. example 8.)

[The speaker is not really too eager to have the addressee come in. Or: the speaker knows that the addressee has come to see someone else, so the speaker is not involved in the business or pleasure for which the addressee has come.]

- (39) S1 /khun ca mây klàp bâan lǎə/

1 2 3 4 5 6

'Aren't you going to go home?'

3 1 2 4 5

- S2 /klàp sii/

'Sure I am.'

(cf. example 15.)

[The second speaker feels the first shouldn't have had to ask. Or: the second speaker doesn't want to be bothered with the problem.]

- (40) khun khít wâa chán tòk loŋ sii/

1 2 3 4 5 6

'You seem to think I agree.'

1 2,3 4 5,6

(cf. example 23.)

[The speaker gathers from the addressee's manner or behaviour that the latter expects him to agree to having a party at his house. The inference drawn by the speaker here is more doubtful or tentative than that in the comparable example for /sî/, item 20. Thus inferential statements with /sii/ have the general flavour of English utterances accompanied by phrases such as 'I guess', 'I suppose', 'it seems as if'. They also have a slight hint of questioning about them, though not to the point of requiring any response from the addressee.]

The meaning conveyed by /si/ or /sii/, as in the above examples, is that of uninvolvedness, indifference, emotional neutrality. And this uninvolvedness may be simple and straightforward, or it may be an assumed indifference that both masks and expresses anything from mild to strong

coldness, withdrawal, rejection, hostility. The simple kind of uninvolvedness is exemplified in one of the possible situations where example 38 might occur. Here the speaker is in fact not involved (and is not expected to be) in the invitation extended to the guest. It is also exemplified in utterances such as 40, where the speaker is making a tentative inference on the basis of clues he thinks he has picked up. In other words, he is not jumping to a definite conclusion – as he would be if he were using the form /sī/. Thus /sii/ renders the inference much more indefinite and non-committal.

The other examples above illustrate the use of /sii/ to express the more emotionally-loaded kind of non-involvement. Thus, in example 36, the mother is in effect withdrawing emotionally from her child, and she expresses this fact both by the use of /sii/, and by her withdrawal of the promised reward from the child's outreached hand. And in the other examples the speaker is expressing a non-involvement that both conceals and reveals his impatience and hostility: why *doesn't* the addressee open the door as expected (example 32), or take the gift that's being offered (example 37)? Or why does the speaker have to be bothered with the question (example 39)? But note that the impatience or hostility is that of emotional coldness, withdrawal, or uninvolvedness, not that of emotional heat or aggression. The latter would be expressed by /sī/, with falling tone, and raised above normal pitch.

If we consider the situations in which it is possible to use the form /sī/ or /sii/, and thus convey non-involvement or emotional neutrality, we find that most of the situations that allow /sī/ also allow these mid-tone forms. In other words, in most situations exemplified and discussed above (see examples 1-29), there can be a formal and semantic contrast between /sī/ on the one hand, and /sī/ or /sii/ on the other. Exceptions are as follows: negative commands (as in 2) and also topic-focus statements (see 20, 21, 22, 30e, g) only occur with /sī/, never with /sii/. Also I have not been able to elicit a /sii/ counterpart for example 18. On the other hand, statements noting new information (see 26-29) may occur with either /sī/ or /sii/, with no difference in meaning between the two. Similarly, all utterances accompanied by /kô ... na sī/ (see 14, 16, 17) may occur with /kô ... nâ sī/, again with no differentiation in meaning between the two. I cannot adequately account for the exceptions listed above.

3.3.2.2 THE FORM /sii/

- (41) /yàa khàp rew sīi/
 1 2 3
 'Ple-ease don't drive so fast.' 'Do slow down, for goodness sake!'
 1 2 3
 (cf. item 2.)
- (42) /yìp dīnsǎo hǎy nǒy sīi/
 1 2 3 4
 'Aw, come on, please reach (me) the pencil.'
 4 1,3 2
 (cf. item 10.)
 [The speaker has asked for the pencil before, but the addressee was too lazy to get up, or he is teasing the speaker.]
- (43) S1 /kháw ca maa cīŋ cīŋ lǎə/
 1 2 3 4 5
 'Will he really come?'
 2 1 4 3 5

- S2 /maa sîi/
 'Su-ure he will.' 'Why certainly he will.'
- (44) S1 /chán wâa wannî fõn thâa ca mây tòk/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 4 8
 'I think it probably won't rain today.'
 1 2 5,6 7 4 3
- S2 /tòk sîi/
 'Aw come on now, sure it will.'
 [The second speaker has previously given his reasons for thinking it will rain,
 but the first speaker evidently still won't see reason.]

The meaning conveyed by /sîi/ is the idea of persuasion, exerting pressure. Usually this form will occur in situations where the addressee has been unnecessarily slow in complying with the speaker's expectations, either in action or belief. It would therefore be very natural to use /sîi/ in an interchange such as the following:

- (45) S1 /yìp dînsõõ hây nõy sí/
 1 2 3 4
 'Hand me the pencil would you.' (reach pencil for (me) a little)
 1 2 3 4
- S2 (ignores the request)
- S1 /yìp !sí/
 'Hand it to me!'
 (The exclamation point here indicates raised pitch.)
- S2 /chán khîiklat yìp/
 1 2
 'I am (too lazy) to bother.'
 1 2
- S1 /yìp hây nõy sîi/
 'Come on now, do hand it to me!'

The form /sîi/ occurs only in action-inducement utterances (positive or negative), and in responses to questions or statements. It does not usually, however, occur with topic focus statements (see 20-22, 30e, g), or in /kô ... na .../ utterances (see 14, 16, 17).

3.3.2.3 THE FORM /sí/

- (46) /yìp dînsõõ hây nõy sí/
 1 2
 'Reach me the pencil, would you.'
 1 2
 [The speaker needs the pencil and avails himself of the addressee's help to
 meet his needs.]

- (47) /faŋ sí/
 1
 ‘Listen!’ ‘Listen, would you.’
 1
 [The speaker can't quite hear someone who is talking, and he wants the addressee to listen and see if he can catch what's being said. Or: the speaker can't identify some sound and he wants the addressee to help him out.]
- (48) /ʔâa pàak sí/
 1 2
 ‘Open your mouth.’
 1 2
 [A dentist is speaking to his patient. Or: a mother wants to see what her child has in his mouth. Or: a Thai language teacher wants to test the vocabulary command of a non-native pupil.]

The form /sí/, as in the above examples, conveys the idea that the action called for from the addressee is needed or desired by the speaker for some purpose of his own. This need or desire may be a matter of personal comfort, curiosity, or even whim; or it may involve something the speaker needs to have done so that he can in turn do something else that he (or the addressee, or someone else) wishes to have done. This form is used only with action-inducement utterances, and then only in the positive. That is, it never occurs with /yàa .../ ‘do not ...’.

3.3.2.4 THE FORM /sí/

- (49) /yìp hây nòy sí/
 1 2 3
 ‘Reach (it) for (me), ple-e-ease!’
 1 2 3
 [A child is getting very impatient and insistent to an older sibling who is ignoring him or teasing him by not reaching for something the child needs and can't reach for himself.]

The form /sí/ conveys both the idea of the speaker's need or wish, and also the idea of persuasion, pressure, insistence, and sometimes even urgency. Like /sí/ it is used only in positive action-inducement utterances. Furthermore, it is chiefly used by children, and to a lesser extent by women. I should point out, however, that not all speakers accept this form. In fact it is the one variant that does not occur in Ms Kiranand's speech. Possibly all occurrences of /sí/ should be interpreted as occurrences of /sii/ which have been raised extra high. (For discussion of the phenomenon of raising, see section 4, below.)

This brings us to the end of our discussion of what may be considered the basic variants of *si*. There now remain two further types of form and/or meaning variation that require our consideration: the phenomena of raising and of neutralisation.

4. THE PHENOMENON OF RAISING

Raising may be defined here as the process in which the pitch of a falling-tone particle (in this case /sî/ or /sîi/)⁷ is elevated above the normal level in order to convey emphasis or increased emotional intensity. Thus the particle /sî/ in the utterance /pə̀ət pratuu sî/ 'Open the door.' might undergo raising if the speaker were particularly annoyed, or if he had to repeat the suggestion or command a second time. Such raising would then be indicated in the transcription by means of an exclamation symbol immediately preceding the raised form: /pə̀ət pratuu !sî/. (See also examples 2, 18, 45, above.)

Raising, as described above, should be distinguished from two other types of raising that occur in the language. In one of these a syllable of any tone is changed from its normal pitch to an extra high and slightly rising pitch, thus expressing a particular kind of emphasis (see Haas 1964:xii-xiii). In the other type the pitch of the whole sentence is raised above the normal level (see Haas 1964:xiii). By way of contrast, the type of raising that here concerns us has its effect exclusively upon falling-tone particles or particle variants. Such particles, when raised, are pitched above their normal range, but they still retain their falling contour.

Now, as has been noted above (3.1), the normal, unraised pitch of /sî/ and /sîi/ (and also, incidentally, of other falling-tone particles) is lower than that of falling-tone non-particle forms in the language. Thus, when unraised, these particle forms will start off from a point at or below the normal mid-tone level, and then drop on down from there. So they can drop from mid to lower mid or to low, or from lower mid to low, or even from low to a little lower still. But, when raised, these forms fall from a starting point above the mid-tone level. And the raising, furthermore, is variable. That is, the pitch may be raised just a little, or it can be raised a great deal; but the higher the raising, the greater the degree of emphasis or intensity conveyed. There is, however, a clear dividing line between raised and unraised forms. Thus if the pitch falls from the mid-tone level or lower, the form is unraised; but if it falls from a starting point above the mid-tone level, then it is raised; and such raising therefore conveys the concomitant semantic value accordingly.

Any use of /sî/ or /sîi/ which is clearly assertive, contradictory, rebuking, etc. will be raised. Thus the particle /sî/ in examples 2 and 18, above, is of necessity raised. This is so in the former case because the sentence in question is a flat, negative command; and, like all negative /sî/ commands, it necessarily implies rebuke for some undesirable action. Then in the latter example (18), the sentence is a flat contradiction. So both are examples of the kind of assertiveness that calls for raising above the normal pitch of the particle variant /sî/.

Of the various types of occurrence of /sî/ exemplified in 2.1 above, raising may occur with action-inducement utterances (cf. examples 1-12), and with responses to questions (cf. 13-17), and to question-raising statements (cf. 18-22). But raising cannot occur with inferential statements (see 23-25) or with statements noting new information (26-29).

Incidentally, in the case of topic-focus utterances (see examples 20-22), /sî/ can be raised only if the sentence in question constitutes a contradictory or assertive statement insisting that 'subject A' (not 'subject B') is the one of whom some predication may properly be made. In view of this requirement, examples 21 and 22 cannot, as they now stand, be raised in any of the given illustrative contexts; but contexts could be framed such that raising might indeed occur. Thus, for example, the speaker in utterance 21 might have been arguing with the addressee about what kind of rain causes floods; and if he is annoyed with the other's obtuseness concerning the obvious danger of *this* kind of

rain (as opposed to some other kind the addressee insists on stressing), he then can use a raised /!sĭ/ to make his point.

An interesting demonstration of the importance of the distinction between raised and unraised forms appears in the speech of one of my language assistants. Ordinarily this speaker makes no distinction between /sĭ/ (straightforward meaning) and /sĭi/ (expressing non-involvement), and she perceives all occurrences of these in her own speech as having mid tone. In other words, most of the examples listed in items 1-29 and 36-40 are so perceived. And this is true regardless of the fact that in her own speech these occurrences may be variously pronounced with mid pitch, or low, or mid falling to lower-mid or to low, or lower-mid falling to low. But if she pronounces the particle in raised fashion, that is with a pitch starting above the mid level and then dropping on down, she immediately identifies it as having falling tone. And such forms then convey emphasis or intensified emotion – with the expectable corollary that none of the non-involvement utterances (see 36-40) can occur with falling tone. In other words, her mid-tone /sĭ/ (often pronounced with falling pitch) corresponds to other speakers' falling-tone /sĭ/ and to their /sĭ/ or /sĭi/; and her falling tone /sĭ/ corresponds to their raised falling tone /!sĭ/. Furthermore, her /sĭ/ is perceived as having mid tone even when it drops, provided it doesn't drop from a point higher than mid tone. If it does drop from a higher point (i.e. the point which divides raised from non-raised forms for other speakers), it will be perceived as having falling tone. Strangest of all is the fact that other falling-tone particles, such as /khâ/ (female deference) and /nâ/ (old information), are perceived as having falling tone despite the fact they may be pronounced in ways exactly parallel to her non-raised pronunciation of /sĭ/, or /sĭ/. My guess is that these perceptions are a product of the Thai writing system complicated by some kind of interference from intonational phenomena. In any case, these special perceptions are not a reflection of any inability on her part to hear the phonetic facts, for she recognises these when they are pointed out to her. It seems to be tied in with intuitive perceptions of some kind.

5. THE PHENOMENON OF NEUTRALISATION

The second phenomenon (besides raising) that requires consideration is that of neutralisation. This term refers to a process in which the potential variability of *sĭ*, both with respect to form and meaning, is neutralised or blocked, leaving /sĭ/ as the only permissible alternative. Such neutralisation takes place whenever *sĭ* is immediately followed in the sentence by another particle – usually one of the status-intimacy particles such as /cá/, /khá/, etc. And for most speakers oddly enough, it is always the question form of these status-intimacy particles that occurs, never the statement form.⁸

To explain further, if the different sentences cited in examples 31-35 were to be altered by the addition of /khá/, only the form /sĭ/ would be permissible in each case. Furthermore, all semantic differentiation would be lost, so that the resulting sentences would convey a rather neutral sense of what is expectable. Then the added /khá/ would further convey the sense of politeness or deference.

As already mentioned, when *sĭ* is followed by another particle, thus producing neutralisation, the following particle will usually be one of the status-intimacy forms such as /cá/, /khá/, etc.; but the particle *na* can also occur:

- (50) /nĭi khon ʔiik láay wan sĭ ná kwàa ca sèt/
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 'But it'll surely be several more days before it's finished, won't it?'
 1 2 4 3 5 7,8 9 6

6. POSSIBILITIES AND RESTRICTIONS WITH RESPECT TO USAGE

And now, before closing my discussion of *sí*, I should say a few words about usage, for there are certain possibilities and restrictions in this area that require comment. In general, these may be summed up by the following two statements:

- (1) If a speaker wishes to express deference or formality, he is restricted to using the variant /*si*/, almost always followed by the deferential particle /*khá*/ (woman speaking) or /*kháp*/ (man speaking).
- (2) There are several kinds of usage of *si* that could be termed assertive, including those that express demandingness, hostility, opposition, rebuke, correction, and the like. Such usage is ideally restricted to speech with intimates or inferiors; and the stronger the assertive element the tighter the restriction.

From the first statement, above, we may draw the inference that all variants of *si* except /*si*/ suggest a certain amount of informality or familiarity. And this is not surprising, for formal or deferential situations are ones in which we would expect Thai culture to prescribe a certain amount of distance or non-involvement. And informal or familiar situations are ones in which we would expect a speaker to feel free to express things like definiteness, need or desire, persuasion, and the like – things that are conveyed by the use of the formally developed forms of the particle.

The second statement above presents a problem in that most variants of *si* can be either more or less assertive, depending on the situation. Situations or usages implying little or no assertiveness include invitations, suggestions, simple requests, straightforward responses to questions and question-raising statements, most instances of statements noting new information, and probably all inferential statements. In such situations the form in question may be used rather freely in speaking to almost anyone with whom particular deference is not required. Such usage need presuppose no very close intimacy in use to equals; and it may occasionally occur in speech to intimates slightly superior to the speaker, provided the relationship is a free and easy one.

On the other hand, certain other usages do imply a certain amount of assertiveness. These include the following:

- (1) All occurrences of /*sî*/ and /*sîi*/ (i.e. raised /*sî*/ and /*sîi*/), and also /*sîi*/. It is my impression that, of these forms, /*sî*/ tends to be more assertive than the others; for the element of persuasion in the other forms softens the element of flat rebuke, contradiction, or hostility that tends to be present in comparable utterances where /*sî*/ occurs.
- (2) Any occurrence of /*sii*/ which expresses the hostile type of non-involvement. (See examples 36-39 and subsequent discussion under 3.3.2.1.)
- (3) Any occurrence of /*sí*/ in which the speaker makes socially excessive demands upon the addressee. Now all uses of /*sí*/ express some demand that is made of the addressee; for the form by definition involves some wish or need that the speaker calls for the addressee to meet. The crucial question here is whether the demand is excessive or not; and this in turn depends upon the speaker's relative superiority-inferiority and/or intimacy with respect to the addressee, and also upon the nature of the request made. Thus, for example, a superior can use /*sí*/ in asking an inferior to run an errand for him – even one involving considerable effort and inconvenience – without necessarily coming across as overly demanding. But in speaking to an intimate equal, a speaker must make rather lesser demands if he does not want to provoke a negative reaction. Thus he can ask the addressee to reach something on a shelf too high for him (the speaker), or to close a window close by the addressee, or to perform some simple service that the latter can perform more readily than the speaker can. And

when the speaker uses /*sí*/ in such circumstances, his request will come across as a natural thing between intimates – even in certain cases where the addressee may be the superior. On the other hand, if the request involves real inconvenience to the addressee or calls for a service that the speaker could just as easily perform for himself, then the use of /*sí*/ will probably be taken as overly demanding and assertive, even in speech to intimate equals. And, of course, the likelihood of being so taken will be even stronger if the relationship is not an intimate one.

Given the status-formality restrictions upon the use of variants of *si*, we can readily see that polite words like /*chəən*/ ‘please’, or /*karunaa*/ ‘be gracious (enough to)’, will not be expected to co-occur with assertively used forms of *si*, and seldom with any of the developed forms of the particle. They may, however, occur with /*si* *khá*/ or /*si* *kh ráp*/.

7. CONCLUSION

I have now carried my treatment of *si* just about as far as I wish to carry it in this paper. In conclusion, however, let me present a summary of the facts that I have set forth above; and then I shall suggest a couple of matters that will eventually demand consideration if we are to achieve a reasonably complete understanding of phenomena relating to *si* and other particles.

7.1 SUMMARY OF PHENOMENA PRESENTED ABOVE

The data and conclusions set forth above may be summarised in terms of the following generalisations:

(1) There is a particle *si* which, in all its variations of form and meaning, conveys the basic idea of a given response being the logical, necessary, expectable, or appropriate one under the circumstances. This form, with its basic meaning as stated, may occur in action-inducement utterances (commands, suggestions, requests, invitations), in responses to questions and to question-raising statements, and in statements that make an inference or call attention to something.

(2) Modifications of length and pitch give rise to the following variant forms with their concomitant semantic values or implications, these values or implications being added then to the basic semantic value of *si* as stated above:

/*si*/ the speaker is not personally or emotionally involved in the response in question, but he is not particularly trying to call attention to that fact. This is also the neutralised form which occurs whenever *si* is immediately followed in the utterance by another particle.

/*sî*/ the speaker is definitely, though unemphatically, involved in the response, there being no ambiguity, doubt, diffidence, in his utterance.

/*si*/ the speaker wants or needs the addressee to do something.

/*si i*/ the speaker is not personally or emotionally involved in the given response, and he is making a point of conveying this non-involvement, either as a simple matter of fact or as an expression of withdrawal or hostility.

/*sî i*/ the speaker is persuading the addressee to act or to accept the speaker's response.

/*sî i*/ the speaker urgently wants or needs the addressee to do something and is applying pressure, persuasion.

(3) The forms /sî/ and /sîi/ can be 'raised' (i.e. raised in pitch so that the falling tone begins above the mid-tone pitch level) to express greater emphasis, definiteness, intensity.

(4) The form *si* is subject to neutralisation when followed immediately by another particle. That is, all potential variants are short-circuited so that only the form /si/ may occur.

The above information can be summarised formulaically as follows:

(1) Differentiation Rule:

$$si <exp> \rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{ll} /si/ <exp. + non-in. > & (+ length <int.>) \\ /sî/ <exp. + def.> & (+ length <per.>) (+ raising <emp.>) \\ /sî/ <exp. + s.w.> & (+ length <per.>) \end{array} \right]$$

(2) Neutralisation Rule:

$$si \rightarrow /si/ \quad - \text{Particle}$$

In the above formulae, pointed brackets < > indicate semantic values (exp. for expectable response, non-in. for non-involvement, int. for intentionality, def. for definite, per. for persuasion, emp. for emphasis, s.w. for speaker's wish); parentheses () indicate optional elements; and square brackets surrounding vertical listings indicate that either one or other of the vertically listed alternatives will occur.

7.2 FURTHER AND WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

The above summaries, both as presented in prose and formulaically, imply certain analytical and even theoretical conclusions which I have made no attempt to justify, apart from such justification as may be involved in accommodating my analysis to the facts as I perceive them. Nor do I intend to present such justification here, for to do so would involve a consideration of matters that go far beyond the scope of this paper. But, as I mentioned, I do wish to call attention to a couple of matters related to *si* which involve much more general phenomena in the language. These will eventually have to be considered in depth before anyone can claim to have accounted reasonably adequately for the behaviour of *si*, and before my analysis above can be justified.

Note for example, the following facts, some of which have already been referred to above:

(1) There are certain phonological characteristics which *si* shares with some of the other discourse particles, but not with other forms in the language. These include the lower-than-normal pitch of falling-tone forms and their potential for raising under conditions of emphasis, the absence of terminal glottal stop in short-vowel forms, and the tendency toward a more than normal fuzziness in certain phonemic distinctions.

(2) The variants of *si* as described throughout this paper seem to signal semantic distinctions that in some respects appear much more like intonational distinctions than anything else. That is, we can vary pitch and vowel length (within certain limits) and still come up with alternate forms that mean more or less the same thing. Obviously one cannot do this with other forms in the language (such as /thii/ 'occasion', or /mf-/ 'not'). But one *can* do this (again within certain limits) with some of the other particles.

(3) In comparing *si* with other discourse particles, particularly in the light of the phenomena just mentioned above, we find that one of them (the particle *na*, speaker's question, wish, or demand) is very like *si* in many ways. A number of others (the status-intimacy particles /khá/-/khâ/, /cá/-/câ/,

etc.) form a group that are somewhat like *si* in terms of formal variability and other phonetic characteristics, but less so than *na*. And others are hardly like *si* at all.

If phenomena such as the above are to be explained, it would be desirable to do a careful study of all the discourse particles, both individually and as a class – individually to pinpoint and explain variations in form and meaning for each particle, and as a class to see what parallels may exist between the various particles, and to find out what general statements may be made about the class as a whole or about subgroupings within the class.⁹

Then it would be helpful, further, to examine general phenomena relating to tone, vowel length, stress, and intonation, to see if some new perceptions and correlations can be brought to bear to explain the special characteristics of *si* and other particles.

These two tasks – a general study of particles and a consideration of tone, stress, intonations, etc. – I intend to pursue as I am able. Meantime I here offer my current findings on the forms and meanings of *si*. I hope they will serve both as useful information in their own right and as a starting point for further studies on it and other particles.

NOTES

1. Throughout this paper, the representation *si* is used whenever I wish to refer to the particle in general, irrespective of the particular phonological value it may have in a particular instance. Forms cited between slashes are phenemic representations transcribed in accordance with the system of phonemicisation used by Marvin Brown (1967, et al). This system is in turn an adaptation of that developed by Mary Haas (1964, et al). For a comprehensive and very helpful summary of the various transcription systems currently in use, see Palmer 1974:xvii-xxi.

The values of the transcription symbols used in this paper may be summarised briefly as follows:

Consonants: /p, t, c, k/ are voiceless, unaspirated stops, the /c/ being also affricated; /ph, th, ch, kh/ are their voiceless, aspirated counterparts; /b, d/ are voiced stops; /f, s, h/ are voiceless spirants; /m, n, ŋ/ are voiced nasals; /w, y/ are voiced semivowels; /l/ is a voiced lateral; /r/ is a trilled or flapped, voiced retroflex; and /ʔ/ is a glottal stop.

Vowel combinations: /i, e, ε/ are front, unrounded vowels, high, mid, and low, respectively; /u, ə, a/ are central, unrounded vowels, high, mid, and low; /u, o, ɔ/ are back, rounded vowels, high, mid, and low. All nine vowels may be either short or long – the latter being represented by geminate symbols (/ii/, /ee/, etc.). Diphthong combinations comprise the following: /ia, ua, ua/, /iw, ew, eew, ew, eew, aw, aaw, iaw/, and /uy, ooy, oy, ooy, ay, aay, əəy, uay, uay/.

Tones are: mid (no symbol), low /ˊ/, falling /ˋ/, high /ˊˊ/, rising /ˊˊ/. On a scale numbered from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest pitch level, and 5 the highest), the approximate pitch values of the five tones are 33, 22, 42, 44, and 24, respectively.

2. At the time this article was first published, I was not yet able to properly identify the tones of the sequence /nâ sî/. Sometimes it seemed to me that a speaker was pronouncing the sequence as /na sî/, sometimes as /nâ si/, and occasionally as /nâ sî/. Since that time, I have concluded that the sequence /nâ sî/ properly reflects the underlying phonemic value of the forms in question. For an explanation of the processes involved, see my discussion of the phenomenon of tonal coalescence (1989:52).

3. It is only fair to note, however, that Brown, in his definition, is only seeking to account for a particular usage of /sî/, not for the whole range of occurrences. His definition does adequately account for the facts he is dealing with.

4. The same is probably true of most, perhaps all so-called sentence-final particles. See for example, the particles /nâ/ (particles marking old information) and /lǎə/ (confirmation particle marking a yes-no question) in the following:

/ʔaacaan nâ lǎə kròot/

1 2

'You mean the **professor** (of all people) got angry?'

1 2

5. Ms Kiranand informs me that there is no difference in meaning between /si/ and /sii/. However, I am fairly sure that when a speaker really wants to convey unambiguously the meaning implied by the use of either variant, he will choose /sii/, partly because it is easier for the hearer to identify, and partly because /si/ might be taken as a semantically non-differentiated or neutralised form. The phenomenon of neutralisation will be discussed below.

6. See note 5.

7. High tone forms might appear to undergo raising, but actually when /sí/ or /sí/ are raised, the whole utterance must be raised. For example in the utterance /láan sí/ 'Wash it, would you?', the /sí/ cannot be raised significantly higher than /láan/.

8. Noss, however, (1964:210), indicates that the statement form /câ/, /khâ/, etc. is possible. I have been unsuccessful in eliciting such an occurrence; but one of my assistants has informed me that some speakers of an older generation might use statement forms of these particles following /si/. I am unable to account for the fact that it is the question form of these particles that usually occurs; for *si* in none of its occurrences really signals a question.

9. As a matter of fact, Henderson (1949), Chuenkongchoo (1956), and others, have already attempted to make statements about particles in general; but in my opinion these statements have proved comparatively unrevealing because they are based on insufficient data concerning individual particles. For example, Chuenkongchoo makes statements about what certain prosodic combinations (such as short vowel with high tone, or long vowel with falling tone) mean when they occur in particles. He also gives examples of such combinations for each particle. But he never tells the reader what each variant of a given particle means; and, as it turns out, a number of his generalisations do not work in particular cases.

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