

## IN MEMORIAM: AMARA PRASITHRATHSINT (1946-2023)

This is a tribute to Professor Dr. Amara Prasithrathsint, long-time faculty member at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. The Department of Linguistics at Chulalongkorn University was officially established in 1977 with Dr. Vichin Panupong as the head and four other ajarns as the departmental members, one of whom was Amara Prasithrathsint. Her MA thesis (*Final Particles in Thai* (1972)) and Ph.D. dissertation (*Change in the Passive Constructions in Written Thai during the Bangkok Period* (1985)) both demonstrate that Amara's expertise was in syntax. However, she was assigned to take charge of ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics. She served in this position almost single-handedly, until her retirement and even years after. She proved herself a renowned linguist in these two fields, not only in Thailand but internationally as well. A number of research papers in ethnolinguistics were written by her and her graduate students and have since become works of reference. Color terms in Zhuang as well as in other Tai languages as well as the linguistic landscape in several ASEAN countries are examples of her research topics. During the last fifteen years, Amara was awarded research grants from the Thailand Research Fund, which enabled her to lead major research projects in sociolinguistics in Thailand and other ASEAN countries. As the director of these projects, Amara not only contributed greatly to the field in this region but also trained and mentored a sizable batch of young Thai linguists.

Throughout her career, her love of "passive constructions in Thai", the topic of her dissertation, did not die down. Papers on various aspects of passivization, such as adversative passive constructions and neutral passive constructions, were published in various journals and presented at conferences. Not only passive constructions but other controversial syntactic aspects in Thai, such as complement clauses, serial verb constructions, and nominalization, were studied by Amara, often providing alternative analyses to these issues. Several of her publications are remarkably influential to linguists and Thai learners of next generations. Her dozens of publications (see "Select Publications" below) began in the 1970s and continued to the current decade. Amara published many articles as a sole author, but also many as a co-author, and in both English and Thai.

One of her prominent works devoted to the Thai language and society is the outcome of the Pan-dialectal Grammar of Thai Language Research Project which comprises descriptive grammars of various Thai dialects: Northern Thai, Northeastern Thai, Central Thai, Southern Thai as well as the Grammar of standard Thai and Grammars of speakers with various sociolinguistic backgrounds: ages, genders, occupations, and ethnicities. Moreover, the manuscript of Grammar of Standard Thai which has offered an alternative analysis to the traditional Thai reference grammar has been widely studied. The final book is to appear.

Despite the time-consuming work as a researcher and a teacher, Amara still found time to serve in important administrative positions at Chulalongkorn. The third Pan-Asiatic linguistic conference in 1992 was chaired by her. She served as an editor-in-chief of *Manusya*, a journal of humanities, for more than 10 years, during which time she was also the head of the Department of Linguistics. In addition, for the past several years, she also served on the Editorial Advisory Committee of the Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society and helped with the review of many articles.

It is truly a great loss for Thailand, especially for the Chulalongkorn Linguistics Department. For the field of sociolinguistics in this region, no more contributions will come from Amara, a determined and a dedicated researcher. It is truly hard to accept the passing away of an active, determined, and dedicated linguist and teacher, Amara Prasithrathsint.

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