Abstract

This article is a study to classify the epithets referring to the characters in four Thai poetic works. The study results revealed that there are two groups of epithets to be found. The first one is epithets to praise characters by referring to their valuable entities, their dignity and their beauty. The second one is epithets to inveigh against characters. These epithets focus on the characters’ ethnicity, negative characteristics, ugly physical appearance, and worthless elements. The use of epithets is the poet’s strategy to express meaning and emotion in their poetic works. Moreover, the use of epithets through various words makes the literature more colorful and enhances emotional feelings in the readers.

Introduction

One of the aims of Thai literature is to entertain readers. According to Raksamani (2007: 633), literature is a work of art created from a poet’s emotions, which allows poets to express their emotions through their works and encourages readers to share the same emotions. There are many techniques that poets employ to express their emotions or feelings through their works. One important technique which can precisely convey the poet’s emotions to the audience is an epithet, a nominal phrase used to point out the important characteristics of characters such as their physical appearance, behavior and ethnicity, or to show if the character are praising or inveighing against someone. In this article, the epithets referring to characters are analyzed to investigate the emotions and feelings of the characters, and their creators, the poets.

As far as data collection and data analysis are concerned, the selection of Thai literature for this study was based on the following characteristics: narrative discourses or folktales with two characteristics: contingent temporal succession and agent orientation (Longacre, 1983), literary works with an exact written date and time, based on History of Thai Literature (Na Nakhon, 2002), main protagonists, who can be human or nonhuman; literary masterpieces of the Early Ayutthaya Era, the Thonburi Era and the Ratanakosin Era with these mentioned characteristics. The selected Thai poetic literature with the above characteristics are as follows: Lilit Phralo (the Early Ayutthaya Era), Sumutthakhot Khamchan (the Middle Ayutthaya Era), Lilit Phetmongkut (the Thonburi Era) and Khun Chang-Khun Phaen (the Ratanakosin Era).

In accordance with Halliday and Hasan (1976), the references were classified into three types: 1) Personal References: personal pronouns, possessive determiners and possessive pronouns 2) Demonstrative References: this, that, these, those, here, there, now, there. 3) Comparative References: same, such, similar, other different else, so-, as-, equally-, more, fewer, less etc.

Based on the framework of Halliday and Hasan, this study focused on personal references which were divided into three types. The first one was the personal

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pronoun including the first person, the second person and the third person pronouns. Another type was zero terms. The last type consisted of kinship terms, occupation terms, proper terms, epithets, etc. However, the only epithets to be studied in this paper had to be obviously found; furthermore, according to Chanawassa (1986) and Burusphat (1994), the epithets had to become one of the major language forms to contribute the poets expressing the characters' emotion appropriately and two enhancing the aesthetic value of their work.

Types of Epithet Referring to Characters in the Four Thai Poetic works

There were two main types of epithet referring to characters in the four literary works. They were the epithets used to praise characters and to inveigh against them.

The epithets to praise characters

The epithets to praise characters were found in three different types, namely, epithets referring to characters' valuable qualities, dignity and beauty.

The epithets referring to the characters' valuable qualities were pronouns denoting valuable qualities both concrete and abstract items such as jewels, money, loved ones, goodness, etc., as shown in the excerpt from Lilit Phralo below. The epithets were used to introduce the two main characters, Phraphuen and Phraphaeng.

In the excerpt above, "(2) thaaw4 phian3 thaaw4 phheep1" or Phraphuen and Phraphaeng are called "(1) but2 sut2 sa1 waat2 ka1 sat2 soe6 phra?4 ?oN1" (the two beloved daughters of the king.) This pronoun implies that Phraphuen and Phraphaeng are being praised because they are very important to the King, their father.

Some examples of the epithets are found in Samutthakhot Khumchan, Lilit Phetmongkut, and Khun Chang-Khun Phaen, respectively:

In the example, "(2) luuk3 keew3 kloy1 sa1 moen5" (my beloved son), and "(1) phra?4 luuk3 keew3 ka1 sat2 trii1" (my precious jewel prince) refer to "(1) phra?4 sa1 mutz2" or Pharsamutthakhot who is the protagonist. These pronouns imply that Pharsamutthakhot's father, who is the King, praises his son as his valuable possession.

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(Lilit Phetmongkut 2001: 155-156)

In the excerpt from Lilit Phetmongkut, “(2) น้าสา ติสา สาสา” (the crown prince) and “(3) ม่น หนู ลาน ถ้าสา ติสา” (the greatest king) refer to “(1) พาท สา มุคะแนน” or Phrampetmongkut.

/pen1 laan1 yay2 kuu2 koo3 nay1 ho3 rian1
(1)thaaw1 prai1 sii5 kee4 phii3 ko3 fans raay4
ce1 klee3 tham1 naay1 sia5 pon2 pian3
kam1 tham1 phi3 leew4(2) kee4 phian3 rian1
caw3 naps wan1 leew4 ca2 lian3 pen1 pii1
pay1/
(Khun Chang-Khum Phaen 2002: 26)

In the example, “(2) kee4 phii3” (a precious diamond), and “(3) kee4 phian3 rian1,” (the valuable jewels in the house) are used to refer to “(1) thoo4 prai1 sii5” or Thongprasri when Khun Krai, Khun Phaen’s father, expressed his admiration to her because of his coming death.

The examples above obviously indicated that the language forms showing the characters’ valuable qualities are pronouns referring to both concrete and abstract things. The concrete ones mentioned are diamonds, precious stones, silver, gold, gold ornaments and beloved persons as well. The abstract ones refer to goodness, beauty and neatness.

Another type of the epithet praising the characters are those referring to the characters’ dignity. We can see some examples of them in the excerpts from Lilit Phralo, Sumutthakhot Khamchan, Lilit Phetmongkut and Khun Chan-Khum Phaen, respectively.

/saa4 raat3 khuan1 (1)thaaw4 thay4 this
raat3 phuu3 mii1 bun1...
yoo1 yot4 saa4 ?oo2 thaw4 lii1 thua3
thuk4 deen1 daaw3
(2)laai1 raat3 day3 faa1 saan5...faa1 saan5
saa4 num2 naa3
(3)com1 raat3 khuan1 khit4 ?aa3
?a1 khraw4 hua5 caa1 than3 naa1...
thaaw4 tha4 caa1 nong1 khloong1 ?aa4
khloong1 (4)com1 phii4 caw3 chan4
chii3 thae4 day1 thia1 thiap3 naa1/
(Lilit Phralo 2002: 393-394)

In the above excerpt, “(1)thaaw4 thay4 this raat3 phuu3 mii1 bun1” (the mighty king), “(3)com1 raat3” (the greatest king), and “(4)com1 phii4 caw3 chan4” (the owner of the elephants, great animals which serve as the king’s carrier) are different epithets to honor “(2) laai1 raat3” or Phralo

/?aa3 (1)thaaw4 phuu3 son1 rit4 thi1 braa1
krom3
kiat2 saay5 sa1 deen1 dee1 choo1 cha1
yaa1 sit2 thi4
sa1 yeen1 ?aa1 rin1 raat3 thuk4 phaay1...
(2) caw3 nan4 mii1 choom5 khii1 ca2 pr
a1 loom1/
(Sumutthakhot Khamchan 2007: 170)

In the excerpt, “(1)thaaw4 phuu3 son1 rit4
thi1 braa1 krom3 kiat2 saay5 sa1 deen1 dee1
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In the example, (2) “thaaw rat4 na1 ri1 beet2... pra1 phaa1 phak4” (the powerful king of this land) refer to “(1) thaaw rat4 na1 ri1 beet2... pra1 phaa1 phak4” or King Ratnarubet and King Praphaphak.

In brief, the language forms showing the characters’ dignity are pronouns meaning having dignity and fame or referring to wealth, greatness and bravery. These language forms, used as epithets referring to the characters in Thai poetic works, contribute to increasing the aesthetic value of the works.

The third type of epithet to praise the characters was those referring to the characters’ beauty. Examples of these epithets were indicated in the following excerpts from the four works of Thai poetic literature.

In the excerpt, “(2) phra4 son1 phuu3 son1 phop4 lop4 phoo1 khay1 ma1 hay5 saa1 wan5” (the greatest ruler), “(3) phra4 son1 phuu3 son1 tham1” (the righteous king) and “(4) son1 deet2 khraat1 ni1 weet3 chian1 may2 ma1 hay5 saa1 wuan5” (the powerful King of Chiang Mai) refer to “(1) phra4 caw3 chian1 may2” or The King of Chiang Mai.

In the above excerpt, “(2) dian1” (the moon) refer to “(1) dian1 raat3” or Phralo in order to praise his handsomeness.
Moreover, “(5) duan dian” (the full bright moon) refers to “(3) phra phaeun” or Phra Phaeng and “(4) phra phian” or Phra Pheun due to their beauty.

In the above example, “(2) “nut nia klian” (a very attractive woman), and “(3) caw naam ploot yoot rak khaon phlaay keew” (Phlai Keaw’s perfectly beautiful woman) refers to “(1) phim” or Phim.

In the above examples, the language forms referring to beauty are pronouns indicating both male and female characters’ good works. These epithets imply praise of the characters and enhance the literary works’ aesthetic qualities.

In the study, it was found that many epithets referring to the main characters in the four literary works were used to praise the characters because of their value, dignity and beauty and strengthened the works’ aesthetic qualities. Furthermore, another type of epithet which contributed the works’ value was those inveighing against the characters. They are shown in the following section.

**Epithets inveighing against the characters**

The second major type of epithet found in the study were epithets inveighing against the character. However, a detailed study of the four literary works indicated that
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there was no invective in Lilit Phralo, Lilit Phetmongkat and Samathakot Khamchan because all of them were about the royal court and the royal families so, any impoliteness was prohibited. As a result, only Khun Chang-Khon Phaen, which is about ordinary people’s lives in which people are able naturally to express their anger with invective, displayed many epithets inveighing against the characters. In the study of epithets inveighing against the characters, four different types were found, namely, epithets focusing on the characters’ ethnicity, their negative characteristics, their ugly physical appearance and worthless things or animals.

The characters’ ethnicity was used in epithets inveighing against the characters because some ethnicities which are presented in Khun Chang-Khon Phaen are not powerful and were not admired by other ethnic groups. We can see some examples of these epithets in the following excerpts.

/faay2 waa3 nuan1 naaŋ1 siŋ5 maa1 laa1 khiin1 nan4 nit4 thraa1 koɔ3 faŋ2 fan5 waa3 lọŋ1 saʔ2 len3 naaŋ4 sam5 raan1 khraŋ1 hens but1 sa1 baa1 dɔok2 niŋ2 duu1 phiaŋ1aa1... pluk2 oʔii maaŋ4 kee3 fan5 wan2 ?aa1 roŋ1 ?ii maaŋ4 chom1 waa3 fans khaŋ5 naaŋ1 dii1...

siŋ maa1 laa1 waa3 wɔɔy3 oʔii moom1 thɔɔy2 ?aw1 phua5 phooɔ3 maa1 phuut3 maa5 pen1 phoŋ5 niŋ3 lae1 san5 chaat3 phraŋ3 thiŋ3 nay5 mii1 sen3 phii5 nay1 miiŋ4 oʔii1 haaŋ1 can1 ray1...

phraŋ4 phi1 citɔ waa3 duu1 oʔii moom1 thɔɔy2 sakə nɔɔŋ2 ?oon1 caʔ2 laeŋ1 pen1 klaaŋ1 khiaŋ3 chaat3 oʔii moom1 naaŋ1 pen1 hens kee3 kin1 naaŋ1 kha1 miŋ3 maa1 pay1 hay3 yɔɔt2 taa1/

(Khun Chang-Khon Phaen 2002: 632, 367, 646, 654)

In the excerpt, Srimala inveighs against her servant, “(1)ʔii maaŋ4” or I-Mei, who is Mon, by addressing her as “(2)ʔii moom1 thɔɔy2” and “(3) moom1 can1 ray1” (damned Mon) and “(5)ʔii moom1 naaŋ1 pen1” (a funny faced Mon).

/(1) sɔɔy3 faa4 tua1 san2 ?uu2 nən1 nɔk4 hok2 peŋ3 tɔɔy2 kra1 thaʔ1 phiaʔ2 khawerian1 thɔɔŋ1 prai siŋ rong1 waa3 oʔii haaŋ1 laaŋ1 tham1 chaaw5 cia1ʔ1ʔii maa5 kiiŋ3 riŋpian3 the1 peŋ3 kleŋ5 haaŋ3 praiʔ laʔ1 thii1 rii1 bra1 kha1 thii1 kra1 thɔɔŋ3 tɔɔy2 khaŋ5 olaaŋ1 can1 ray1...

kee1 poe1 naa1 taaŋ1 moom1 maa1 roŋ11 waa3 pay1 tam1 raa1 ?a1 ray1 (4)ʔɔɔoŋ3 sɔɔy3 faa4 wɔɔy5 (siaaŋ1 lɔɔy1 pay1 leŋ4 wɔɔy5 ʔee3 nʊŋ1 kra1 ray1 leŋ1 pen1 nak2 naa... tham1 yaa3 waa3 meŋ2 maa1 piŋp2 prɔɔŋ1 wɔɔy5 oʔii laaŋ1 paa2 pak2 khaŋ5 maa1 nak2 nak1 kkoɔ phraŋ2 min cautious phiaŋ5 oʔii1 laaŋ1 loom1...

ʔiŋ1 taa1 kooŋ1 kkoɔ baanʔ1ʔii khaŋ5 hak2 ?ii cee2 roɔŋ4 maa5 yiaw3 biaʔ1 maa1 lias raa...
In the second example, “(2) ʔii laaw laaw” and “(3) laaw can ray1” (a damned Laotian) refer to “(1) sɔɔɔs faa (Soifa), another wife of Phra Wai) when Thongprasri, Pra Wai’s grandmother, and Srimala, his chief wife, inveigh against Soifa. Moreover, “(5) laaw1 (a Laotian), “(6)ʔii laaw1 paa,” (a Laotian from the wilds), “(7) ʔii laaw1 loon” (an extremely rude Laotian), “(8) ʔii laaw1 don1” (a Laotian from the mountains) and “ʔii laaw1 don1” (a Laotian from the wilds) is used to refer to “(4) ʔɔɔɔ sɔɔɔ faa” or Soifa.

The second type of epithet inveighing against the characters are epithets focusing on their bad characteristics including their badness, stubbornness and arrogance. Some epithets are shown in the following excerpts.

/duu1 duu5 pen1 day3 ʔii wan ʔɔɔɔ... ʔii see them ʔɔɔɔ can ray1 can ray1 that mini daa2 phet1 mini koo2 khins nay1 ʔaa1 com1 ruup3 naaam1 naam1 pho3 nɔɔɔ pay1 riie can1 may3 sii3 som2 thaw3 se2 pho3 mini nii3 thɔɔɔ yiŋ3 kwaa2 ʔɔɔɔ ʔii1 thaa4 mian1...
kuu1 ca?2 haas1 mia1 hay2 yaa2 ʔaa1 lay1 oɔɔɔ kan2 la1 kii nii1 ʔii1 pheet sa1 yaas man1 may3 naa3 chaey1 chit1 phit4 sa1 mays/ (Khun Chang-Khun Phaen 2002: 865–866)

In the excerpt, “(1)ʔii wan ʔɔɔɔ” (Wanthong) is called “(2)ʔii see them ʔɔɔɔ can ray1 can ray1 that mini” (an extremely wicked and vicious woman), “(3) ʔii thaa4 mian1” (a woman from a whorehouse), and “(4) ʔii kan2 la1 kii nii1 ʔii pheet sa1 yaas” (a whore) when King Phanwasa inveighs against her because she cannot decide if she would like to live with Khun Chang or Khun Phaen.

/ʔii1 khuns chaay4 khits waa3 mee3 yaay1 daa3 fa4 phae4 thoo4 chan1 haas day3 thee4 maa3 son2 wan1 thon1 maa1 chaay4 yuu2 yay1 sii3 prai can1 khiet cay1 ʔii1 baas kaam1...
wan1 thon1 roo41 nii1 yuu2 nay1 hoong3 khuns chaay4 khom2 heej roo43 pho3 phlaay1 keew3 oɔɔɔ baas man1 ca?2 khaa3 mian1 sia3 leew4 huus ta4 boong3 beew4 mian1 mew11 khraaw1...
ʔii1 khits thoo4 thoo5 pay1 hay3 pho1 kuun1 huus huus mian tuuk1 maa phraaw4 haaw3... maa1 phan1 wan1 thon1 daa1 khay2 pho3 kuun1 haay1 cay1 may3 ʔoɔo oɔɔɔ chip2 haay5
ʔii1 khuns chaay4 khwaay2 khwaay4 nay1 taa1 laay1 maa1 phan1 wun3 waaay1 yuu2 sin3 thii1...
In this excerpt, “(2) ʔaay3 baas3 kaam1” (a satyr), “(3) ʔaay3 haaw2” (a brutish man), “(4) ʔaay3 khaaw3 thooy2” (a man of base actions), and “(7) ʔaay3 taay1 hoong1” (a demon) refer to “(1) and (6) khun6 chaan9” (Khun Chang). These epithets are used to inveigh against Khun Chang by Wanthong and Sriprajan because he has told them that he would like to get married to Wanthong.

The characters’ ugly physical appearance also serves as the third type of epithet to inveigh against the characters in Khun Chang-Khun Phaen. Some epithets are revealed in the following excerpts.

/doot/ lɔn5 ʔhiin4 kłaan1 thiis khaan9 nay1 seer5 fay1 raan1 sa4 waa4 naa3 taa2 maan3 koon1 waa4 leew4 khlai1 khaai1 poot2 mu55 hens naa3 (ʔaaw3 wan1 thooy1/... miin1 ʔaam1 teev ruup3 cuu3 maay3 hoong5 qiʔii ʔaaw3 moom4 koon3 moo3 qiʔii khaaw3 hong5 thiip tok2 caaɔ2 tian3 khaan1 kan1 lɔn5 hay3 maan1 khoj1 chiis wit1 pay1 yai1 miin1/ (Khun Chang-Khun Phaen 2002: 294-295)

In the above excerpt, “(2) qiʔii naa3 moom4 koon3 moo3 qiʔii khaaw3 hong5” (an ugly woman with a black face and a long neck) refers to “(1) caw3 wan1 thooy1” (Wanthong). Khun Phaen uses it to call Wanthong, his wife, when he finds that Khun Chang had become her mistress.

/faaw2 kuun6 chaan9 nai3 ʔaw5 maay3 khaaw3 klay3 ron1 hay3 naa3 khaaw5 raaw1 khaaw2 phiis... ʔaay3 huaw5 phumu1 phom5 klaan9 khin6 thiaa5 pay1 thii5 luu3 thuu11 mun3 heet2 phon5 ton3 plaay1... nai3 ron1 hay3 yia1 day1 ʔaay3 chip4 haay5 ʔaay3 chaat3 chuaw5 laaw1 kai1 baan1 laay1 khon1 caʔ2 taay1 leew4 yar1 son1 bon2 nii1 thaai1... ʔaay3 chaat3 chuaw5 laaw1 pra4 caa1 kuu1... day3 len3 kai1 ʔiik2 laʔ2 maay3 laay1 laʔ4 phraʔ1 ca4 miin2 way1 waaw3 waa5 (ʔaay3 huaw5 laaw14... ʔii1 tii1 ree3 khaaw3 khaan2 ʔaiw1 khaan9 ciik2 (ʔaay3 huaw5 laaw1 ma4 ʔiik2 leew4 khaaw5 way3/ (Khun Chang-Khun Phaen 2002: 877-878)

In this excerpt, “(2) ʔaay3 huaw5 phumu1 phom5 klaan9” (a man with a big and bald head), “(3) ʔaay3 chaat3 chuaw5 laaw1 kai1 baan1 laay1” (a damned bald man with a disease of the scalp), “(4) ʔaay3 chaat3 chuaw5 laaw14” (a damned and bald man), and “(5) and (6) ʔaay3 huaw5 laaw14” (a bald man) refer to “(1) khun6 chaan9” or Khun Chang. All epithets mentioned express Khun Chang’s extremely ugly appearance, especially his baldness.

The last type of the epithet inveighing against the characters are epithets which represent worthless things or animals.
Some epithets are shown in the excerpts below.

(1) sroifa (Sroifa) is called “(2) maa caa2 kaa2 chinj1 maas koet2 mija1 pay1 taay1 sia5 taoot (aaay3 haa3 bia3) naa3 taa1 chen3 niu4 caa2 miu1 mia1 (aaay3 maa1 muan3 maas lia1) over used ciam1 cay1 mians (saa1 leen1 poon) ?aat2 ?itz waa3 rit4 suu2 caa2 kheep1 khruu5 khaan3 ?aan2 thai1 yay2 (koom3 saw3) riu5 caa2 thaw3 meen1 krai1 chinj1 hoooy3 pray1 caa2 kheep1 seens suu ri1 yon1 chaat3 chu3 taa1 dan1 (noku3 tai1 krum2) (Khun Chang-Khun Phaen 2002: 124-125)

In the excerpt, “(2) dook1 tooy1” (Tei flower, a flower devoid of beauty), “(3) aaay3 haa3 bia3” (five cents), “(4) aaay3 maa1 muan3 maas lia1” (a mango licked by a dog), “(5) maa1 leen1 poon” (a dragonfly), “(6) koom3 saw3” (a burned rock), “(7) hoooy3 pray1” (a wild firefly), and “(8) nok4 tai1 krum2” (Takrum bird, an ugly bird like a vulture) represent Khun Chang when Wanthong inveighed against him because he has paid court to her.

In conclusion, it was found that the epithets of the characters in the four literary works were classified into two groups namely epithets praising the characters and the epithets inveighing against them. Praising was indicated with epithets referring to valuable entities, the character’s dignity and their beauty. As for the invective, the epithets focused on the characters’ ethnicity, their bad characteristics, their physical appearance and the worthless things. The epithets praising the characters were obviously employed in all four of the chosen pieces of literature but the epithets inveighing against the characters were stated, remarkably, only in Khun Chang-Khun Phaen. This is possibly because the other three literary works studied are about the royal families and it was improper to include impoliteness in the works, whereas, Khun Chang-Khun Phaen is a

Conclusion

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piece about the lives of laymen reflecting the way of life, language usage and beliefs of folks in that time. When, it was common for ordinary people to express their anger verbally by inveighing against each other. Overall, the two types of epithet obviously reveal the writing ability of the poets in employing literary language to express their meaning and emotion in an appropriate manner, thus enhancing the aesthetic value of their works.

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