

**SPEAKING LIKE A LOVE ENTREPRENEUR: LANGUAGE CHOICES AND
IDEOLOGIES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG DAUGHTERS OF PEASANTS
IN THAILAND'S TOURIST SITES**

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Abstract

This article addresses an important set of issues: how language choices between dominant, standard and international codes are conditioned by increasingly globalized industries and social models that accompany them and are created by them. Particularly it examines how gender ideologies related to languages and social actions shape love industry workers' orientations toward foreign/second language learning and societal language uses. All of these aforementioned issues and data have the potential to make a contribution to the literature (published research materials) on language, discourse and society.

This article examines the social meanings of language choices, shifts and the ideologies of differentiation that emerged from the migration of young peasant women and men from Isaan to central Thailand, where they were engaged in the love industry, whose loci were the seaside city of Pattaya and the metropolis of Bangkok. Attention in this article is thus paid to language uses and code choices in Thailand's love industry discourse, through a young Isaan women's bar-based counter-public subculture, in addition to an analysis of the social meanings of their language choices and linguistic shifts.

Keywords: Language Choice, Language Shift, Gender and Language, Isaan, Thai Love Industry, Thailand

"As a child growing up in an Isaan village, my mom always reminded me that it was my responsibility to provide financial support for her, my dad, my grandpa, my grandma, and my brothers and sisters. By this she meant, or she believed that I understood what she meant, that, as the first-born daughter in my family, I was the source of income for my whole family even at the expense of my own life."

"Being a second-class citizen in an Isaan village due to my gender by birth and a third-class citizen since discriminated against by the rest of my country due to the Northeastern region of my origin brought distinct burdens."

[These two verbalized vignettes are derived from a set of interviews in which Isaan bargirls orally narrated their life stories to the author in 2012]

1. Introduction

This article investigates the lesser-studied bar multilingualism. It deals with linguistic code choices and language shifts amongst love industry workers in Thailand's tourist sites. This includes an analysis of the correlation between sociological variables and linguistic strategies (language choices and linguistic shifts) used by young Thai men and women employed in the Thai love industry. Findings show that, on the one hand, English, the informal official language of the love industry, is seen as the language of social upward mobility for both Isaan and non-Isaan young women. On the other hand, Isaan Thai, the language of the majority of the bargirls, is viewed as the language of socializing for non-Isaan young women engaged in this domain of work. This study confirms previous research by suggesting that young women's choices and shifts vis-à-vis language can be best understood in the context of the strategies they adopt in regard to life chances and life style choices.

Bar multilingualism, or the use of a number of languages or dialects, in addition to choosing one medium of linguistic exchange over another, and the common shifting from one linguistic means of expression to another, are veiled expressions of aspiration by these Thai love industry workers and emblematic of their desire for upward social and economic mobility. As such, this phenomenon also provides the ways whereby these workers associate willy-nilly with a cosmopolitan counter public, showing resistance to traditional Isaan family values, particularly regarding appropriate gender roles and the subculture of young Isaan women.

Viewed from the sociolinguistic aspects of mobility, the migration of daughters of peasant families from Northeastern rural Thailand or Isaan to urban-cosmopolitan tourist sites in Central Thailand is explored within the context of potential social and economic opportunities, and the new Thai entrepreneur class, which particularly appeals to young Isaan women. The aim of this article is also to address the question of how language choice – the choice to speak English by Isaan young woman and other young women in the love industry – is both perceived as a mechanism whereby poverty is reduced, and is complementary to the phenomenon of converging ethnolects (non-Isaan young women working in the love industry speak Isaan Thai to their compatriots); How language shifts (away from the habitual change from Thai to English) is employed as a mean of upgrading one's life style. The researcher is next concerned with showing how changes in linguistic indexical systems are correlated with community boundary configurations, and to non-Isaan young women's participation in the discursive practices and convergent speech styles when speaking with older Isaan women. The researcher also focuses attention on gendered discrepancies in linguistic strategies: the role the love industry plays in men's and women's disparate progress towards being able to converse in the English language is taken into consideration.

No other modern ethno linguistic minority and young women's subculture in Thailand receives as much media attention, and produces as much mainstream anxiety, as does the young women known as Isaan bargirls. For many years, young females, from the Northeastern region of Thailand in particular, have strategically engaged in foreign language learning and language shift as a mean of socio-economic upward mobility. In light of this phenomenon, the researcher is concerned to address the question of the precise nature of the social meaning of language choices and shifts by the members of young Isaan women's speech communities in the discourse used by these women, who are involved in Thailand's love industry. The researcher also examines the disparity between Isaan and non-Isaan women's speech, and between men's and women's speech, as used by love industry workers in Thailand.

Albeit the social science literature has well documented both the love industry in Thailand (Brown, 2000; Manzanares & Kent, 2006; Lee, 2013) and the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan Thai vis-à-vis language choice among members of the Isaan speech community (Draper, 2010), the connections between these superficially desperate phenomena have not been examined at length; Little is understood of this significant socio-linguistic phenomenon. For this reason, the researcher further investigates the effects of the love industry on young Isaan women's strategic linguistic behaviors as contrasted to non-Isaan women and men engaged in the same activity. Accordingly, the lacunae in the literature warrant the contribution

that can be made by this study. In this contribution, the researcher attempts to integrate the approaches of linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists by examining the following three groups of love industry workers: Isaan women, non-Isaan women and Thai men. A particular focus is made on social factors leading to disparities in language choices and shifts.

It is a commonplace in sociolinguistics, in sociology of language, in linguistic anthropology and in dialectology, that social factors, or sociological variables, play a major role in foreign and second language learning, bi- and multilingual development, language maintenance and shifts. The question of what influences one's linguistic behavior has enormous social relevance and, at the same time, there is little doubt that previous studies about the relationship between language and social variables (e.g., class, gender, and social network) are plentiful. In the past few decades, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have attempted to establish a set of sociolinguistic norms that could adequately account for the obvious fact that social phenomena are reflected in individual and group linguistic behaviors (Fishman, 1964, 1965, 1989, and 1991; Gal, 1978, and 1979; Gumperz, 1964; Labov, 1966, 1972, and 1980; Lee, 2013). There is little doubt that their well-grounded findings are applicable and relevant to complementary studies carried out in disparate contexts.

Initially, sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists and dialectologists have surveyed language contacts, choices, maintenance and shifts in relatively isolated and immobile communities (e.g., generational immigrant communities and long-established ethno linguistic communities). Nowadays, the researchers in the same fields that use conventional sociolinguistic norms to account for the practices of their target research populations (such as the one studied by the author of this article) encounter difficulties. Thus, linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists need to examine individuals and groups who are unprecedentedly mobile at geographic, social and occupational levels. As an example, my principal interest for the present study lies in surveying the language choices of love industry workers/migrants from rural Isaan to the urban metropolis and tourist areas of Thailand in their interactions with tourists/interlocutors on a global scale. An exploration of the dynamics of socially patterned linguistic behaviors among love industry workers may produce fresh perspectives through illuminating new mechanisms to account for multifaceted human-sociolinguistic behaviors in regard to this understudied sociolinguistic phenomenon.

The two following sections review the background, the literature and the context, first, in regard to the Thai love entrepreneur class and, second, in respect to the linguistic and communicative repertoire in Thailand. Accordingly, this study should shed light on the linguistic hierarchy in Thailand vis-à-vis the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan oral

communication. Then, the researcher is concerned to illuminate the concepts of language choice and shift insofar as they bear upon closely related inquiries in the areas of language and gender, of ethnolect convergence, and of discursive practice.

2. Setting the Scene: Thailand's Love Industry

This section presents the macro-level context of the love industry as the creation of a new entrepreneur class, admittance to which appeals to young peasant women from Thailand's impoverished Isaan area. In respect to technical terms used in the study of the love industry in Thailand (albeit these terms do, however, raise issues of their own), the author of the present article uses the terms "love industry workers" or "love entrepreneurs" as catch-all phrases, which are convenient umbrella terms and mutually exchangeable. Workers in the love industry, or so-called "love entrepreneurs", are defined as freelancers, who sell their companionship (and more) to foreign tourists in entertainment venues. Some, who are between the ages of thirteen and thirty, are referred to as bar girls (i.e., those who wait in bars to meet foreign male tourists) and "go-go" girls (i.e., dancers or strippers in clubs, or in discos), (see more detailed treatment of these terms in Manzanares & Kent, 2006). Others are tour guides for foreign male tourists. Being qualified as a female love industry worker means that the relationships with foreign male tourists are a career: these relationships are a primary source of income to support herself and her family (Nicks, 2010: 187). Female love industry workers' career is short-term (e.g., weekend) or long-term (e.g., being a girlfriend). Conversely, Thai male "love industry workers" are referred to as beach boys (*dek goh* in the Thai language) and are often around the age of thirty (Nicks, 2010; For a discussion of the language of sex in Thailand, see Boonmongkon & Jackson, 2012).

It should be noted that neither all love industry workers bar girls, nor all the other love industry workers, are involved in the commercial sex trade. Moreover, it should be clear that the love industry in Thailand (in Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and the red-light districts in Bangkok) is far from being a true representation of Thailand's culture as a whole.

Tired of the degrading, harsh, and humiliating poverty of rural Isaan or of working as laborers in the construction of buildings (approximately 150 baht/5 USD per day) and of electronics manufacturing plants (approximately 200 Baht/6 USD per day), other social and economical possibilities promised in urban areas are appealing to these young peasant women. Contrasted to relatively low income earned by Thai men working in the love industry, Thai bar

girls earn their reputation as "love entrepreneurs". Some top earners receive monthly allowances from disparate foreign boyfriends. Table 1 presents the monthly allowance received by a young Thai bar girl from her clients.

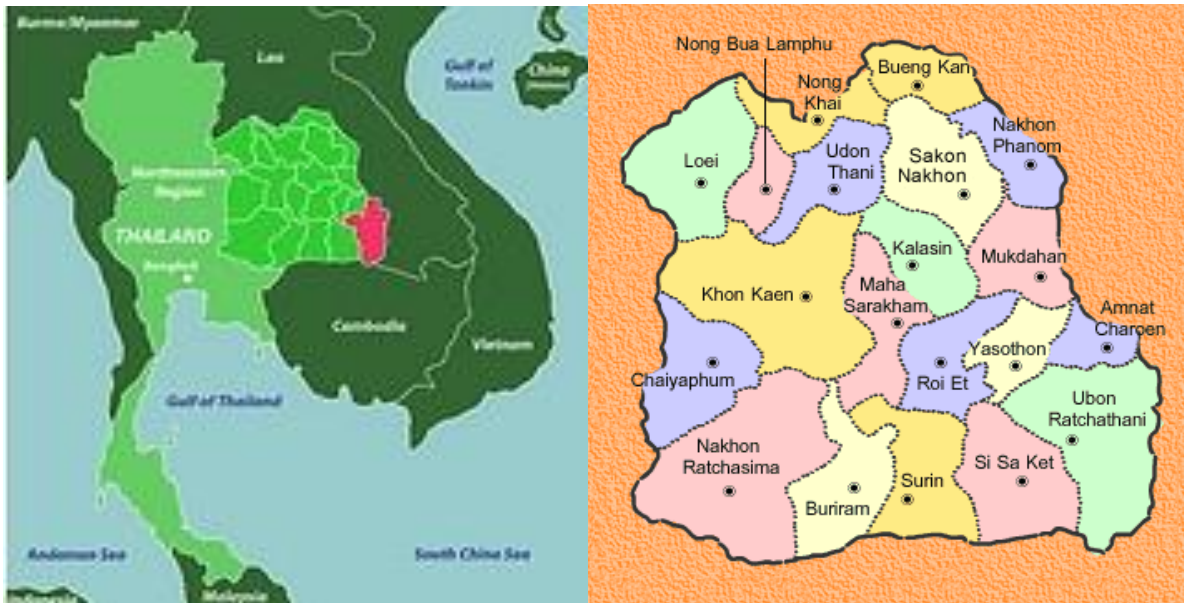
Table 1: A Young Thai Bar Girl's Monthly Allowance

<i>Countries of origin for disparate boyfriends</i>	<i>Amount/month (Thai Baht)</i>
Sweden	50,000
U.K. (boyfriend 1)	40,000
Venezuela	35,000
U.K. (boyfriend 2)	30,000
Germany	20,000
Total	175,000 THB/month = 5,000 USD/month

Source: Ken Klein's book, *Building a House in Thailand*, cited by Nicks, 2010.

Moving from the definitions of terms and returning to the main thread, the present and later sub-sections provide a selective review of the market of the love industry in Thailand, focusing on the commodities and the customers. The commodities in the Thailand love industry are known as bargirls and freelancers of many kinds: "The love industry [in Thailand] is a multi-billion dollar economy" (Nicks, 2010). These include younger and older Northeastern Isaan women, Northern Thai women, Thai men, Burmese, Cambodian/Khmer, Laotian, and Yunnan/Chinese women, and others, from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Among Thai women from disparate ethnic backgrounds, the Northeast Isaan region (e.g., Buri Ram, Korat, Udon, Ubon, Si Saket and Roi Et) supplies nearly 80 percent of female workers in the sex industry (Manzanares & Kent, 2006; The Isaan region and its provinces are presented in Figure 1). The reasons why Northeastern Thailand is the biggest supplier of women engaged in the love industry is rooted in several principal factors. The reasons for this phenomenon are manifold.

Figure 1: Northeastern Isaan Region of Thailand (the region and its provinces)



Sources:

Left Photograph: Map of Isaan in Thailand. Source: <<http://siam-longings.com/wp-content/uploads/map%20of%20thailand%20isaan.jpg>> with permission.

Right Photograph: Provinces of Isaan. Source: <<http://thethailandlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/isaan-map-.gif>> with permission.

First, poverty is largely responsible for Isaan women's engagement in the love industry: "Isaan girls are poor; tourists are rich; I bridged the gap!" (Comment by a former Isaan love entrepreneur, cited in Manzanares & Kent, 2006). Some Isaan people live under desperately impoverished conditions. Within their relatively primitive villages, insufficient schooling systems produce uneducated and unskilled Isaan youth (Manzanares & Kent, 2006).

Second, investment in face-making (not losing face/saving the face and investment in the reputation) instead of a better standard of living is a key factor accounting for Isaan women selling their companionship (and more) to foreign male tourists. In some Isaan villages, face-making for Isaan parents is far more important than the welfare of their daughters and their sense of wellbeing. How much money an Isaan daughter sends to her parents determines the status of her face and her family's status, albeit at the extreme expense of her involvement in the love industry. It is not uncommon that some Isaan mothers' biggest dream is to bear and raise a daughter who can constantly send money home to make face by allowing to buy cars and electronic appliances (e.g., televisions and air conditioners) that can be exhibited to fellow villagers by employing the technique of invidious comparison (Manzanares & Kent, 2006).

Third, a principal cause of the phenomenon also lies in gender ideologies stemming from traditional Isaan family values: "My [Isaan] culture holds all women to be not only

inferior but expendable" (comment made by Lon, a former love industry worker in Thailand, cited in Manzanares & Kent, 2006). In some Isaan villages, "daughters are cast in the role of caretakers of the family" instead of sons (Brown, 2000). These family values are grounded in Isaan religious beliefs. In Theravada Buddhism, sons earn merit for their parents by simply becoming a monk and staying in a temple for three months to fulfill family duty. However, daughters, particularly first-born daughters, are expected to become the primary income earners and must take care of the needs and of the welfare of the whole family (Manzanares & Kent, 2006). Therefore, a strong sense of care obligation for parents is essential to caring members of an Isaan community. Nevertheless, for some Isaan families, at times driven by poverty and at other times driven by greed, there is no limit to the perceived duty of daughters to their parents. Table 2 presents some quotations illustrating gender ideologies faced by Isaan women. In the Northeastern regions of Thailand, the love industry and the sex trade have been so well established, that Isaan parents may well expect their young daughters to become prostitutes (Brown, 2000).

Table 2: Selected Quotations regarding Gender Ideologies vis-à-vis Isaan Women

<i>Selected quotations</i>	<i>Sources</i>
<i>"Women are pawns in times of need."</i>	Thai Proverb
<i>"Men are gold; women are cloth. Men look like gold; when gold falls in the mud, we can clean it. Women look like white clothes; when they fall in the mud, we can never clean them so that they will be white again."</i>	Khmer Proverb (cited in Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 45)
<i>"A family owed money to a dirty and repulsive beggar. In lieu of repaying the debt, the parents sent their daughters to live with the beggar to share his bed until the debt was repaid."</i>	Isaan Moral Story (cited in Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 45)

Fourth, although this view is widely contested, numerous Western tourists and participants in love industry sectors in Thailand insist that the dark complexioned Isaan women are more attractive than light complexioned women (e.g., their Chinese-Thai counterparts) to male Western tourists (Bangkok Diaries, 2009). It is not less obvious that the love industry sectors have difficulties to provide light complexioned female workers to Eastern tourists, while they are also concerned to provide dark complexioned Isaan girls to Western tourists. It should be acknowledged that the dark complexioned belief is widely debated,

In sum, gender discrimination against Isaan women in addition to rural poverty, a limited educational background (they are mainly uneducated), few job opportunities in Isaan (they are unskilled), and their dark complexion as a commodity all these elements give rise to correlations between the workings of the love industry and Isaan women: the love industry is one of the fast-track ways to earn money by young Isaan women.

In combination with the present discussion of the commodity bought and sold in the love industry in Thailand, the customer partly accounts for the sustainability of this industry. Throughout its modern history, Thailand has been receiving tourists from the East (e.g., Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, and Middle Eastern countries), the West (e.g., France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S.A., and the U.K.), Africa and most of the rest of the world. After the U.S.A. pulled out of Vietnam, tourists soon replaced American military personnel as customers in Thailand's love industry as planned in an unofficial partnership by the love industry and the tourism industry (Brown, 2000). Western tourists, as opposed to Eastern tourists, are particularly attracted to younger, pretty, sexy, and, most importantly, submissive Thai women. At the same time, Thai love entrepreneurs advertise and cater to "meet[ing] the unfulfilled needs" of Western men who want "better treatment than [what they receive from] their aggressive, demanding and unfeminine Western women" (Brown, 2000). As it turns out, every year millions of Western and Eastern male tourists (along with smaller number of foreign women) visit Thailand in "seeking for fulfillment" (Nicks, 2010). "Many are survivors of traumatic marital break-ups and believe that Thailand is a good place to make a new start" (Nicks, 2010). Table 3 illustrates some expectations regarding Western male tourists matching with Isaan women.

Table 3: Selected Quotations in respect to the Match between Western Male Tourists and Isaan Women

<i>Selected quotations</i>	<i>Sources</i>
<i>"In the year of 2004, my hometown in America registered 49 marriages and 32 divorces. Is the modern relationship of the Western world on the deathbed? An owner of a Bangkok matchmaking agency claims that oriental-style marriages have a much higher success rate than conventional Western legal marriages."..... "For me, being the provider [financial contributor to Thai wife's family] is a far better option than constant fights with a 'liberated' [Western] woman. And long-term, it's a cheaper option too."</i>	Thaivisa.com Web Site (cited in Nicks, 2010: 14)
<i>"Many of these men come to Thailand because their wives have left them; they do not communicate with their families; or they cannot find a girlfriend back home. Sometimes they are here for company or 'companionship' which may not even be sexual that they can't find in their own countries."</i>	(Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 96)
<i>"One girl from Patpong [a major red light district in Bangkok] marries a foreigner every week."</i>	(Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 29)

After a selective review focusing on the commodity and the customer in Thailand's love industry, an analysis of the linguistic and communicative repertoire in Thailand and social factors leading to disparities in language choice is needed to provide a framework of the descriptive data for the present article.

3. Thailand's Linguistic Repertoire

A comparatively small number of studies have explored the interplay of socially engendered dialects – constitutive of the multifaceted diglossia, regimes of language, styles of speaking – and the complex linguistic and communicative repertoire in Thailand. In such a high stakes setting of linguistic contact, Thailand is a locus wherein the issue of language maintenance and shift is inescapably prominent (e.g., Draper (2010) for Isaan Thai speakers'

language maintenance and shift in Northeastern Thailand; Howard (2010) for Muang speakers' language maintenance and shift in Northern Thailand; Lee (2011a, 2011b, and 2012) for language related issues vis-à-vis minorities such as urban refugees and orphans with disabilities in Thailand), included among minorities (e.g., Isaan Thai in Northeastern Thailand, Khmer in Eastern Thailand, Karen in Northern and Western Thailand, and Malay in Southern Thailand (LePoer, 1987)).

Thailand is simultaneously subject to convergence and divergence, both linguistically and culturally. To better understand the relationship between love industry workers and their language choices in Thailand, it is imperative to start with the effects of urbanization and globalization on the civil society of Thailand. On the one hand, previous research reveal that one of the effects attributed to urbanization is language contact, shift, and loss (e.g., Batibo (2009) for the effects of urbanization on language maintenance and shift; Smith-Hefner, (2009) for the effects of urbanization on language shift in Indonesia; Cheshire et al., (2011), for "multicultural London English" in London). Internal diversity is a salient feature of the ethno linguistic and cultural landscape of the Kingdom of Thailand, particularly with respect to the massive cross-regional migration from rural villages to the urban areas of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Pattaya. For instance, there is a huge flow of rural Isaan peasant women to Bangkok and Pattaya, one of the two urban centers of Thailand, for the sake of better social and economic opportunities. On the other hand, some of the many effects attributed to globalization, in this case, global tourism, is language contact, linguistic convergence, and code-switching.

Multilingual communities in Thailand's tourist sites provide a salient case allowing the examination of linguistic heterogeneity, societal multilingualism, and indexicality and the sociolinguistics of mobility. In urban Thailand's tourist sites, varieties of language contacts, code-switching/mixing and alternating, multidialects, language maintenance and shift have been emerging, notwithstanding the fact that the English language has exerted a dominating presence and influence on all the other languages. Describing the linguistic alternatives/repertoire available to each speaker in these communities lies into three main distinguishable speech patterns: Isaan Thai, Standard Thai, and English. Others languages might be used, but they are less salient: Western languages (e.g., German, Russian, Polish, Serbian, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Spanish, Italian and French), East Asian languages (Mandarin, Mongolian, Japanese and Korean), Middle East languages (they include Iranian, Hebrew and Arabic), West Asian language (they include Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali), West African languages (especially several distinct Nigerian languages), and

even Central Asian languages (e.g., Uzbek). So, mainly, it is observed that the regional Laotian vernacular spoken in Northeastern Thailand, known as Thai Isaan, intermingles with the official, national and standard variety of the Thai language, termed Standard Thai, and is intertwined with more global oriented languages (especially, English).

A perspective that is useful in the analysis of Thailand's diglossia and linguistic repertoire and, at the same time, that frames this study stems from "ethno linguistic vitality" theory (formulated by Giles et al., 1977). It is defined as what "makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 32). In this vein, the political status of languages recognized by the State (e.g., institutional support), demographics (the number of speakers), economic considerations (e.g., medium of communication in commerce) and cultural capital, are means of "objectively" measuring the continued linguistic existence of an ethnic group's mother tongues, native languages and inherited languages within a linguistically heterogeneous society. By contrast, members of an ethnic group are asked to subjectively rate and predict the present and inferred future vitality of their languages as "subjective" measures to account for the degree of ethno linguistic vitality of their languages (e.g., Draper (2010) for an assessment of the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan Thai).

In a similar vein, it is desirable to examine more closely Thailand's diglossia and speech varieties in a perceived ranked order, inasmuch as linguistic hierarchy can be seen as a measure accounting for ethno linguistic vitality. By means of linguistic normalization (defined as a process through which normative views and acts vis-à-vis a language, or a dialect, are established; Vallverdú, 1985: 90) and, at the same time, when the use of language at disparate social levels becomes differentially extended, languages and dialects accordingly become stratified and ranked in a linguistic hierarchy. In Thailand, the theoretical and empirical studies of language attitudes, language ideology and ethno linguistic vitality underline that Standard Thai is seen as the most "prestigious variant" and accent (ranked No. 1), followed by Northern Thai (ranked No. 2) and Southern [variants and] accents (ranked No. 3), and then Northeastern Isaan (ranked No. 4) (Chanyam, 2002; Draper, 2010: 135-136; see Table 4). This ranking, or linguistic hierarchy, is in agreement with the typical sociolinguistic explanation that languages spoken by dominant groups are perceived as more prestigious than languages spoken by minority groups (Labov (1972), cited by Draper, 2010: 136).

Amongst less powerful Thai varieties, the regional vernacular termed Isaan is a branch of the Tai-Kadai language family (Lee, 2011c); it is linguistically close to the Laotian language. Isaan Thai is spoken in nearly the entire Northeastern region of Thailand. Isaan Thai

is also the ethnic name of the largest minority group of Thailand (Draper, 2010: 135). In 1983, it was estimated that there were approximately 15-23 million Isaan Thai speakers in Thailand: this includes the 88 percent (of people of the Northeastern region of Thailand) who converse in Isaan Thai with family members at home, the 11 percent (of people of the Northeastern region of Thailand) communicating in code-mixing discourse combining Isaan Thai and Standard Thai, and the 1 percent (of people of the Northeastern region of Thailand) speaking exclusively in Standard Thai (Lewis (2009), cited by Draper, 2010: 135).

Nonetheless, a more recent examination of the Isaan vernacular has reported an ongoing intergenerational shift away from a stable bilingualism combining Isaan and Standard Thai towards the exclusive use of the Standard Thai variety, due largely to the influence of mass media (e.g., newspapers, television, and radio) and of schooling systems: at school, and according to their parents, Isaan children underwent rapid language shift so that they spoke the Standard Thai variety (reported by Draper (2004 and 2010)). Consequently, Isaan language suffers the loss of some Isaan lexical items, or lexis (Jantao (2002), cited in Draper, 2010: 136), e.g., some Isaan person references have been replaced and mixed with the Standard Thai variety. This appears to be consistent with the stages of language shift toward language death identified by Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (1964 and 1991) to the field of language maintenance and shift (Draper, 2010: 136).

Table 4: Perceived Language Hierarchy and Prestige in Thailand

<i>Ethno-national Languages and Varieties of Spoken Languages</i>	<i>Ranking</i>
EN	1
EU	2
EA	2
ST	3
NT	4
SHT	4
NET	5

No. of categorization of languages compared = 7

Note.

EN=English language variants (e.g., American and British)	ST=Standard (Central) Thai variants and accents
EU=European languages (e.g., French and German)	NT= Northern Thai variants and accents
EA= Eastern-Asian languages (e.g., Japanese, Mandarin-Chinese, and Korean)	SHT= Southern Thai variants and accents
	NET=Northeastern Thai (Isaan)

Source: Chanyam (2002).

Echoing the language shift away from the Isaan variety toward the Standard Thailand variety, Isaan people are often discriminated against in their workplaces (e.g., jobs in urban areas as being only maids, construction workers, gardeners, and taxi drivers; see Draper (2010: 140)). A comprehensive treatment of the language maintenance and shift of the Isaan Thai language can be found in Draper (2004 and 2010).

4. Theorizing the Sociolinguistics of the Mobility of Young Women in Thailand's Love Industry

In view of the panoramic review addressing the love industry and the linguistic repertoire in Thailand just outlined in the preceding sections, understanding the nexus between sociological factors and language choices in respect to love industry workers in Thailand is a major challenge. Social factors leading to discrepancies between language choices and shifts have been a central preoccupation and is well documented in the literature of sociolinguistics as broadly defined (e.g., Fishman, 1964, 1989, and 1991; Giles et al., 1977), as well as

developing sociolinguistic norms that account for the extent of language use, choice, maintenance and shift.

Attempts to define the terms "language choice" and "maintenance and shift" have been shaped by, or in turn have shaped, well-known sociolinguists in our time (e.g., Gal, 1978, and 1979; Fishman, 1991). In the light of a variety of perspectives, the author of this article presents definitions used in the present article as follows. First, as extrapolated from the concept of "linguistic competence" as evinced by an ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous speech community the notion of "linguistic repertoire" can be formulated, in which a speaker of a language has at his or her disposal a wide range of linguistic variants and develops a register of speech sufficient to undertake a wide range of communicative tasks (Chomsky, 1965). Furthermore, Hymes (1974) developed the notion of "communicative competence", and initiated research in the fields of the "ethnography of communication" and "interactional sociolinguistics". In Hymes' framework, language choice is referred to as a speaker's linguistic and communicative competence enabling the choice of style and variants with a speaker thereby drawing on his or her linguistic and communicative repertoire as suiting a particular purpose or function. The choice of a speech variety, nonetheless, is by no means a random phenomenon. Rather, the code choice made has to be deliberately selected by the speaker in the light of his or her social and interactional perspective so as to reach a level of satisfactory accommodation to the perceived linguistic situation in the language domain in which current discourse is being undertaken.

A second approach, or perspective, that guides this article is the distinction between languages in themselves (objective assessment) and what individuals hold in respect to languages (subjective assessment, i.e. attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and social implications). Drawing on this distinction in order to frame this research largely stems from the fact that in a class-conscious society, Thais, to a varying degree, are hypersensitive to the socio-economical implications of accents, varieties (standard versus non-standard), dialects and speech styles as a mean of symbolizing the stratification of classes, the status and the prestige. In this vein, we must take into account the following dictum: "our language embraces us long before we are defined by any other medium of identity" (Delpit et al., 2002: xvii). Thus, to a degree, language choice becomes a matter of ideology. The concept of "language ideologies" is defined as beliefs concerning languages held "by their users as a rationalization, or justification, of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979: 193). In this light, the notion of "language ideologies" is useful in accounting for why minority languages are maintained when their users are oppressed by users of dominant and hegemonic languages (see Woolard (1985)

for Catalan speakers in Spain; For a crucial introduction to the field of language ideology, see Woolard (1998)).

Regarding the discussion of language choices, "language shift" is another key concept. Gal describes "language shift" as a process through which "the habitual use of one language is being replaced by the habitual use of another" at disparate times (Gal, 1978 and 1979: 1).

In addition to approaching language choice largely by drawing on the aforementioned concepts, the researcher is concerned to examine the intertwined roles of gender, language choices and shifts in the light of works conducted in anthropological linguistics, in sociolinguistics and in a number of other fields. It must be acknowledged that the interconnection between gender and language choices has long been recognized and has reached a high level of understanding (Gal, 1978; Mukherjee, 2003; Smith-Hefner, 2009; Lee, 2013). Thus, there is abundant evidence to show that language choices are often gendered.

On the one hand, a number of previous studies have shown that women were more likely to have no or limited proficiency in majority languages in view of a lesser access to resources and power (e.g., education) than men in an agricultural (or working class) community. The socioeconomically disadvantaged situation of indigenous women in Latin America has been illustrated by Hill (1987). In these cases in Latin America, women had less access to education and so spoke limited Spanish in contrast to the situation of men; well, a good command of Spanish was essential for these indigenous women in order to be able to access educational and employment opportunities, and would thus enable them to participate in the paid labor force. In a similar example, the male elite of the Nugunu or Cameroon villagers in Ombessa, Africa, exhibited greater competence in the French language and achieved higher levels of educational attainments than did their female counterparts (Robinson, 1996: 212-213).

On the other hand, previous studies also found that women were constantly searching for a medium that would grant them access to valuable economic and social benefits, opportunities, resources, prestige and symbolic capitals. For instance, in Gal's pioneering work on the Hungarian-German bilingual town of Oberwart in Austria (Gal, 1978), a shift away from Hungarian speech to the use of the German language was found to be occurring among peasant women in view of the symbolic linkage between German speech and industrial work that was available to both Hungarian speaking men and women, albeit being more appealing to the latter than to the former: It appeared that German speaking factory jobs represented socio-economic advancement, whereas Hungarian speaking agricultural work was linked to hard work, low income, rural, and peasant life (For a fuller treatment of gender and sociolinguistics, see Eckert (1997) in Coates (1997), and Coates (2004)).

An area of related interest to this strand of research on young women's social and economical opportunities is studying the effects of urbanization on gendered language choices. Urban centers, by and large, draw poverty-stricken populations from rural areas, due largely to social and economic inducements, such as more job opportunities, better basic infrastructure, and a modern lifestyle (Batibo, 2009: 26). In developing countries, it is estimated that 70 million migrants flow annually from rural areas into cities in the search for a better life (Seabrook, 2007). Language shift is one of the many effects attributed to urbanization. In her well-regarded article, Smith-Hefner discussed the phenomenon of language shift from the Javanese (indigenous) language toward the national language of Indonesian emerging in Javanese youth in the nation-state of Indonesia (Smith-Hefner, 2009). She went on to argue that in contrast to young men, young women were more likely to shift from Javanese toward the use of Indonesian, which was seen as a mean of acquiring the symbolic capital necessary to accommodate their roles in forming part of the new working class.

In connection with this exploration of language choice by young Thai women vis-à-vis relevant concepts, it is to be observed that sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists refer to the distinctive language usages and uses by speakers of an ethnic group as "ethnolects" (see definitions of ethnolects in Clyne (2000); see problems with ethnolects in Jaspers (2008)). An ethnolect approach can better account for the fact that some non-group or out-group members adopt elements of another group's ethnolect in an attempt to bond with members of a different ethnic group, thereby forming cross-ethnic and multi-ethnic friendship groups. In view of what we know of language contact, it would be only expected that speakers from different ethnic groups would "converge" in speech by virtue of borrowing linguistic forms typical of members of another ethnic group (see Coronel-Molina and Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2012) for examples of linguistic convergence in Andes). It can also be argued that the phenomenon of linguistic "convergence" involves attempts to be understood by others through "symbolic references" to an extent adequate for undertaking communicative acts through utterances and speech acts (e.g., Clark (1996), cited in Enfield (2009: 91)). At the same time, this phenomenon is "micro-political" and "coalitional" since designed to ensure that desirable interpersonal relationships are fostered by means of common or shared experiences, including code-switching/mixing with the speech and adopting linguistic features of the discourse of interlocutors from another ethnic group (Enfield, 2009: 91).

To continue in this vein, discursive practice (Young, 2009; Hall, 2011: 255-273) with respect to the study of language choice and shift is another key perspective and approach to the women's speech communities studied by the researcher. An approach through discursive

practice is useful in accounting for face-to-face language use, or language-in-interaction, inasmuch as it captures the social and interactional realities of speech events and recurring communicative episodes. Such a practice is "conventionalized" (Hall, 2011: 256), whereby participants develop their competence by means of "repeated experiences" "with more experienced participants" (Hall, 2011: 256; Vygotsky, 1978). The discursive practice of communication between Isaan and non-Isaan women at work (in this case, in bars) can be better understood as the practice of being socialized into elder sibling-junior sibling relationship, or as extending "family relations" into a "social hierarchy" (for discussion of elder sibling-junior sibling relation in Thailand, see Howard (2007: 206-208). These aforementioned concepts are taken as the point of departure and account for patterns of language choices and shifts among the studied target populations.

5. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher borrows techniques from ethnographical studies of communication (Hymes, 1974) and combines these techniques with approaches involving case studies, questionnaires, exploratory interviews, and field observations in order to conduct a survey research investigation. The data collection and the analysis are undertaken simultaneously. The researcher takes an eclectic approach and asks the research question of what sociological factors (social meanings) enable the emergence of bar multilingualism, i.e. language choices and shifts in this particular context.

Data were primarily collected on the basis of an exploratory questionnaire, which was going through the following topics: demographic characteristics, estimates of the participation in love industry activities, assessments of the respondents' daily uses of languages, and assessments of the language-use patterns and perceptions (language ideology) of the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan. The later were measured using a 9 points Likert scale (from 0 i.e. "strongly disagree" to 8 i.e. "strongly agree"). Then semi-structured interviews were realized to probe explanations from informants. On the overall basis, a shorthand observation list was developed; it was used for both participative and non-participative observations of naturalistically occurring speech acts. The questionnaire, the interview protocol and the observation list employed were tailored to suit the research setting. As it turns out, the triangulation among questionnaire responses, interview data, and observation data yields

significant data. The findings are validated by questionnaire data, interview data and the extant literature.

The macro-concepts of language choice, language ideology, language shift, ethnolect convergence and discursive practice provide the theoretical and analytical concepts used to analyze the data. The analysis consists of disassembling and reassembling the elements of these data of in order to identify theme to answer to the research question by transforming them into findings that can be investigated by statistics, theoretical descriptions and interpretive explanations.

5.1. Sites and Samples: The Place of Bangkok and Pattaya in Thailand’s Multilingual Tourist Sites and Societal Multilingualism

The three target populations (Isaan women’s, non-Isaan women’s and Thai men’s speech communities) and the two survey sites (Bangkok and Pattaya, see Figure 2) investigated are unique, similar to and differ from previous studies in numerous respects. The researcher chooses to underline six key features among the several existing respects

Figure 2: Two Survey Sites: Bangkok Metropolis and Pattaya Coastal Town in Thailand



Sources:

Left Photograph: Map of Thailand. Taken from <www.wordtravels.com>, with permission.

Right Photograph: Map of Pattaya. Taken from >www.thailandmapxl.com/pattaya-map.html<, with permission.

First, one of the most vigorous arenas of previous studies in language maintenance and shift is found within cross-bordered and transnational immigrant communities (see Mukherjee (2003) for migrant Indian brides and their role in the language maintenance of the Bengali community in Malaysia; see Kim & Starks (2010) for the bilingualism among Korean immigrants in New Zealand) and regarding the segregation of disparate ethnic communities (see Labov (1972) for a classical Philadelphia study of the black and white ethnic communities). This article still arguably presents a clear-cut case of a domestically trans-local and cross-regional migrant community, consisting of the majority of Isaan girls who have moved from Northeastern Thailand to resettle in the seaside resort city (Pattaya) and the capital city (Bangkok) of Central Thailand. Compared to the relatively smaller number of Lanna speaking women (from Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand) and of Bangkokians/Standard Thai speaking women, Isaan women constitute the majority of workers in the love industry. Pattaya became the largest Isaan speech community location outside Northeastern Thailand: overall, approximately 100,000s Isaan women participate in the love industry in Pattaya (<pattaya-funtown.com> online). This accounts for the nickname of Pattaya as "Little Isaan"; then Phuket represents the second largest Isaan speech community outside Northeastern Thailand, followed by the red-light districts in Bangkok. The Isaan women studied are largely responsible for language maintenance and shift among love industry workers in the seaside tourist site of Pattaya, largely due to the role they play in this community; this point will be commented in the results section.

Second, 50 bars out of approximately 500 were surveyed in the two survey sites. It is problematic to ascertain a definite total number of bars in Pattaya and in Bangkok, because the total number is growing. Moreover, there are several alternative sites that could be investigated: meeting places in malls, massage parlors, karaoke restaurants, night clubs (e.g., go go bars), and other entertainment venues. Finally, some bar-owners in Bangkok tend to hire bargirls who are Khmer or Lao-Khmer, thus the lingua franca in these bars, albeit code-mixed with Khmer and Laotian/Isaan vocabulary, phrases and syntax, is Standard Thai instead of Isaan. In the present article, which is narrowly focused on the discrepancy between Isaan and non-Isaan speech communities, the consideration of other bars, particularly in respect to those located in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area which mainly employ Standard Thai speaking bargirls, are beyond the scope of this inquiry. Overall, through the 50 surveyed bars, 200 love industry workers were considered for this research (Table 5). All of them gave consent to participate in this study; all of them answered regarding their ethnicity, their educational attainment, and their employment status (Table 6).

Table 5: Cross-Tabulation of Multi-Ethnicity and Genders of Participants

<i>Isaan woman sample</i>	<i>Non-Isaan woman sample</i>	<i>Thai men sample</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>n=100</i>	<i>n=50</i>	<i>n=50</i>	<i>N=200</i>

Third, besides the multi-sited approach, other characteristics were paid attention in order to constitute de sample. Whatever the gender of the participant, the researcher focused on freelancers. It is imperative that participants cannot be in debt bondage to traffickers: this entails that their job description is to willingly sell their companionship (or more) to foreign tourists in a variety of ways (e.g., pay-as-you-go love). On the basis that "a general consensus appears to be that at any time there are between 300,000 and one million women" participating in the love industry in Thailand (Leather, 2005: 14), the sample for this research represents approximately 1 percent of the total target population. It must also be acknowledged that this total target population (i.e., Thais, regardless of whether Isaan or non-Isaan, engaging in the love industry) is fluctuating, largely due to the fact they are geographically dispersed and mobile by means of a loose-knit and, relatively speaking, weakly-tied Isaan community in this beach resort and in the urban metropolis, concomitant with maintaining stronger ties with their home villages. Moreover, it is no less obvious that the Isaan ethnic group likely forms numerous close-knit networks by means of their workplaces (e.g., bars, shopping malls, and so forth), while at the same time it develops different levels of resistance and integration into cosmopolitan, modern and non-Isaan domains of urban life styles. For a more detailed treatment with respect to the profiles of the sample, please refer to Table 6.

Table 6: Characteristics of the Participants

<i>Love Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Number of observations</i>	<i>Percentage of the sample</i>
Gender		
Female	150	75
Male	50	25
Ethnicity		
Isaan	100	50
Non-Isaan	100	50
Educational Attainment		
Kindergarten to grade 6	160	80
Middle School	40	20
High School	0	0
Undergraduate	0	0
Employment Status		
Freelancers	200	100
Age (in years) (the mean for the overall sample)	<i>mean=27</i>	<i>Standard Deviation=6</i>

Fourth, within the multiple-sited research setting, the distinction between a majority group and a minority group, as well as a higher-status language and a lower-status vernacular, or dialect, assessed by normative sociolinguistic measures, turns out to be invalid and reversed when compared to urban centers outside the survey sites. This is consistent with the notion of an alternative linguistic market (Woolard, 1985) in which the investigated sites are primarily bars in this coastal town (Pattaya) and the urban metropolis (Bangkok), thereby excluding a few places (e.g., Phuket and some districts in Bangkok) in the metropolitan areas of Thailand wherein Isaan enjoys lingua franca status, while at the same time Standard Thai is more dominant than Isaan outside of these bars. As such, young Isaan women are the most active and visible members and constitute core groups in the communities studied. Non-Isaan women participating in the love industry find it more difficult to take on an active role, largely as a result of the fact that the Isaan language dominates in the social networks of bars; it is the marker of in-group and out-group members employed in the bars (The author comments further on this later in the results section).

Fifth, these two survey sites are subject to considerable language contact with Western and Eastern tourists due largely to the constant influx of foreign tourists. In 2008, it was estimated that nearly 5.8 million foreign tourists paid a visit to Pattaya (<pattaya-funtown.com> online).

6. Summary of Analysis of the Social Meanings of Language Choices and Shifts

Previous studies of the use of language by women often showed that their language choices and shifts were notably associated with a potential improvement of the life conditions and of the life chances, such as poverty reduction, social and economic mobility (from the margins of society to the new middle class; Gal, 1978; Smith-Hefner, 2009; Lee, 2013), resistance against public ideologies (Gagné, 2008), and improved lifestyles. The present findings extend the results of these previous investigations by indicating that women of disparate ethnic groups (Isaan and non-Isaan) engaged in the same activity in the same industry have different degrees of association with the same languages (in this case, English and Isaan), while discrepancies in associations led to different social and economical outcomes.

The analysis suggests that correlations between language-use patterns and several social factors are small but statistically significant for the women and men studied here. Findings indicate that differences in the roles (e.g., majority-minority, dominant-subordinate, and empowered-disempowered) played by these social actors in the love industry are reflected in linguistic behaviors. First, social factors leading to the maintenance of Isaan speech in the work domains of the two sites and Isaan women's shift away from Isaan speech toward English speech is explored. Second, social factors leading to non-Isaan women's progressive shift toward the Isaan vernacular and ethnolect convergence with Isaan is examined. Thirdly, the researcher comments on social factors linked with the love industry leading to relatively monolingual the Thai men examined being relatively monolingual (less striking shift).

6.1 Isaan Women's Speech Community: Language Choice as a Means of Poverty Reduction and Social and Economic Mobility, and Language Shift as a Means of Resistance against Gender Ideologies and Lifestyle Enhancement

First, the love industry has created the largest Isaan speech community outside home villages in Northeastern Thailand. Consistent with Woolard's observation of an alternative

linguistic market that challenges a single linguistic hierarchy (Woolard, 1985), it is argued that while the Isaan vernacular in its home region suffers language shift away from the Isaan variety toward Standard Thai speech (Draper, 2004 and 2010), the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan is relatively strong and symbolically opposes the dominant and legitimized Standard Thai code in the seaside town (Pattaya) and work domains (bars) in the Bangkok Metropolis, largely due to the fact that Isaan women constitute the vast majority of bargirls. By the same token, while the Isaan young women’s speech communities studied are not only subject to the constant loss of population (e.g., some married Western tourists and others moved or returned to Isaan villages to invest in small business), they are still also subject to the constant influx of novice Isaan women coming to work in the love industry, as well as to an increasing number of non-Isaan co-workers who adopt Isaan ethnolects (The researcher further comments on this at length).

Table 7: A Minimal Evaluation of the Ethno Linguistic Vitality of the Isaan Speech in Home Villages versus Love Industry Work Domains

<i>EV of Isaan</i>	<i>Home Villages (Northeastern Thailand)</i>	<i>Work Domains (Bars)</i>
	Getting Weaker (Gradual shift to Standard Thai use in the younger generations)	Getting Stronger (Maintained)

Note: EV=Ethno linguistic Vitality.

Second, numerous avenues of investigation converge on the fact that the maintenance and the ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan vernacular is relatively strong in the two tourist sites studied. Among these are the linguistic normalization theory (Vallverdú, 1985), the ethno linguistic vitality theory (Giles et al., 1977), the ethnolect theory (Clyne, 2000) and the discursive practice theory (Hall, 2009; Young, 2009). By means of the establishment of normative usages and uses in work domains and elsewhere, along with the extension of its multifaceted utility in socio-economical and socio-cultural life, the notion of linguistic normalization propounded by Vallverdú (1985) largely accounts for the fact that Isaan vernacular has been continually gaining ground in the battle with the Standard Thai variety and English speech for fuller normalization in the seaside resort of Pattaya and work domains (bars) in the Bangkok Metropolis studied by the researcher. In the same vein, the formation of demographic (given the vast majority of love industry workers are Isaan) and economical (the language adopted in

commercial activities on streets and in the love industry) capital (Giles et al., 1977) largely account for the strong ethno linguistic vitality of Isaan vernacular in this seaside town. The Isaan vernacular, albeit discriminated against, oppressed, stigmatized and stereotyped in official domains (e.g., workplaces, educational institutions and the mass media; Draper, 2010: 135), is warmly welcomed and embraced in the seaside town of Pattaya, given that locals and tourism-oriented business sectors rely heavily on Isaan women to attract foreign male tourists (Table 8). This confirms Mandanares and Kent’s observation that since Isaan is the lingua franca in bars, non-Isaan women see a need to learn the Isaan vernacular to understand what the majority of Isaan women in the bars are discussing at any time (Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 46). Moreover, for some non-Isaan women, implementing a shift in language choice and use away from Northern, Central and Standard Thai varieties to the adoption of Isaan ethnolects belongs to their choice of becoming love industry workers. Illuminating in this connection is the fact that novice non-Isaan intakes were instructed by their seniors with respect to acquirable skills and manners (e.g., Western-style make-up) deemed to attract male Western tourists. In the light of the discursive practice approach pursued by Young (2009) and Hall (2011), the researcher also addresses how members of the non-Isaan women’s groups learn and develop the competences needed in the love industry, while honing their newly acquired linguistic and behavioral capacities under the guidance of more experienced Isaan participants in the love industry (Vygotsky, 1978) through being socialized into an Isaan-style elder sibling/younger sibling hierarchy (Howard, 2007: 206-208).

Table 8: Ethnolect Convergence among Isaan and non-Isaan Women Studied

<i>Media</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Interlocutors</i>	<i>Domains</i>	<i>Sites</i>	<i>Convergence</i>
Speaking	Isaan	Co-workers and	Work	B	ST/E
		Customers		P	E
		Others	Non-Work	B	ST
	Non-Isaan	Co-workers and	Work	B	I/ST/E
		Customers		P	I/E
		Others	Non-Work	B	ST
				P	I/E

Note. B=Bangkok, P=Pattaya, E=English, ST=Standard (Central) Thai Variety, I=Isaan Thai Variety

Third, amongst the three groups studied (Table 5), the Isaan women's group as a whole exhibits higher English skills. Although the Isaan variety is maintained in the work domains of the two sites studied, the Isaan women's group is more likely to embrace English speech, thereby explaining the fact that a relatively big number of Isaan women shift toward English speech away from Isaan speech (Table 8). However, at the same time, the non-Isaan women's group as a whole exhibits a habitual use of the Isaan vernacular in their work domains, accounting for their slow but steady shift toward Isaan speech away from their Thai varieties. In addition, the Isaan women's group markedly exhibits a gradual shift in progress toward English speech. The same progress, nevertheless, does not appear to occur among most members of the non-Isaan women's group and almost never does it occur in the Thai men's group (the researcher comments further on this with fuller treatment in the following subsections).

In the view of some of the Isaan women studied, their shift away from the Isaan vernacular to the habitual use of English speech is a mean of coping with class struggle (without referring to the Marxist notion), gendered discrimination and impoverishment. Indeed, they are considered third class citizens by the rest of Thailand, due largely to the region of their birth, and they are second class citizens in their villages, due largely to their gender by birth. Thus, the shift is inextricably connected with enhancing face and life chances: the capability of conversing in English with Western tourists is a way to increase their income.

Thus far, this study confirms the findings of numerous previous studies. Notably, it is consistent with Smith-Hefner's findings, where Indonesian women's shift away from the indigenous-Javanese speech to the national language of Indonesian is seen as contesting conventional gendered roles imposed to them (Smith-Hefner, 2009: 72); in this study, some Isaan women's gradual shift away from the Isaan vernacular to the habitual use of the English speech is a mean whereby the gender ideology stemming from traditional Isaan family values can be resisted. Furthermore, young women in Java were particularly drawn into urban centers, like Yogyakarta for example, because of enhanced possibilities for social mobility (id.). Their shift away from the formal styles of Javanese to the less formal Indonesian, the national language, was linked to their newly acquired middle-class status (ibid.). It is argued that there are similar dynamics at work vis-à-vis the target population studied in this article. Possibilities of social mobility (from rural lower-class backgrounds to urban middle-class "entrepreneurs") draw young Isaan peasant women to urban centers. Their shift away from the Isaan vernacular to English speech is linked to their socio-economic mobility, given English is the medium of communication used in their concomitant shift to love entrepreneurship.

The analysis of the data also suggest that a gradual shift toward English speech is seen as a strategic plan pertaining to possibilities of lifestyle enhancement (e.g., "secret dreams of moving to Europe [or North America or Australia], having a prosperous new life" by marrying one of the Western male tourists was revealed by Lon, a former love entrepreneur in Thailand, cited in Manzanares & Kent, 2006: 105). This result is consistent with Gal's classic study undertaken in Oberwart, Austria, in 1978, where "women's speech choices must be explained within the context of their social position, their strategic life choices" (Gal, 1978: 15).

Besides, the view that women tend to have more to gain than men in the love industry in Thailand is also suggested by the data analysis. Amongst the informants, Isaan women, contrasted to non-Isaan women, are the single greatest group of beneficiaries in the love industry in Thailand. The Isaan women studied choose to learn English, to meet with male Western tourists and to become love entrepreneurs to financially support themselves and their families. For some, they want a better quality of life and a brighter future after having saved enough money to invest in a small business in their home villages. At the same time, being fluent in English also means that they might be able to move to America, to Europe or to another Western or first-world countries for an enhanced lifestyle.

6.2 Non-Isaan Women's Speech Community: Ethnolect Convergence and Language Choice as a Means of Participation in Discursive Practice

As shown by the empirical data, certain changes in progress in the non-Isaan women's group do not exist in the Thai men's group: for the later, there is neither convergence with Isaan speech styles nor shifts away from the native speech to the habitual use of the Isaan vernacular. It is striking to see that the non-Isaan women's group studied as a whole demonstrates a greater use of the Isaan vernacular. This is a surprising result, given the ranking among Thailand linguistic repertoire.

6.3 Talking Like a Beach Boy: Men's Speech in Thailand's Love Industry

The role Thai men's role in the love industry is less favored contrasted the one of the women engaged in the same activity. Their monolingual Thai speech and their lower English proficiency largely account for this observation.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Albeit the aforementioned contributions to the literature of language, discourse and society, there are several under addressed issues in the present article. First, it is insufficiently contextualized regarding the literature on language and on globalization, particularly in relation to language choices and to globalized industries. A few references about language choices, language shifts and genders need to be brought up to date. The author of the present article will undertake another research to address the aforementioned issues.

7.2 Concluding Remarks

Overall, this article examines the essential components constitutive of a love entrepreneur, linguistically and communicatively, by discussing and analyzing how language choices, linguistics shifts, ideologies and gender influence the language use of love industry workers in the Bangkok Metropolis and in the seaside resort town of Pattaya. It draws upon arguments used to conceptualize the relationship between young women's linguistic strategies (language choices and shifts) and their life strategies (social upward mobility). One crucial feature that emerged in this study regarding the association between women's language use and concomitant social and economical mobility is that women's language choices and shifts belong to an enterprising activity and to make able strategic life choices. Two results from this linkage may have important pedagogical implications. One is the finding suggesting that English is the language of upward social mobility for both Isaan and Non-Isaan women. The other is the result indicating that Isaan is the language of sociability for non-Isaan women in their work domains: this is a relatively new linguistic convergence in the young non-Isaan women's speech community; it started forty years ago. If this is the case, it may be imperative to provide human resource development opportunities to these women and men engaged in the love industry activities with training that can foster their learning of English speech and the Isaan vernacular.

The present investigation focuses only on the social meanings that emerged from a small sample size regarding the three speech communities studies: 100 Isaan women, 50 non-Isaan women and 50 Thai men. In this study, social meanings that account for the language choices and shifts investigated only represent some aspects of the possible sociological variables/factors that contribute to women's linguistic strategies. Future studies should examine a more comprehensive population selection and explore a wider range of social, economic,

political and other correlations that may exist between women's language choices and shifts and their life choices and possibilities. The current study might be used as the foundation of future studies to examine the associations with other speech communities in highly mobile, contact, and multi-ethnolect settings. In carrying out future investigations, it would be of quite some interest and considerable theoretical importance to determine whether the use of the English language and of the Isaan speech in the communities studied in this article continue to thrive or to decline at different intervals in the future, perhaps up to a quarter century from the present time. As such, a longitudinal investigation ranging to-and-fro along a temporal continuum may even provide a mean whereby predictive extrapolations could be framed if suitable independent variables could be isolated and projected.

This article has highlighted that young women do not merely simply choose, or shift to or from, a language out of their linguistic and communicative repertoires; their linguistic strategies are better understood by taking into consideration their life strategies and their possible life chances (Gal, 1978: 15; Smith-Hefner, 2009; Lee, 2013). This article demonstrates that the choices and shifts of languages have a much widespread attraction for young Isaan and non-Isaan women than for Thai men engaged in the love industry activities, as they seek to become members of a new entrepreneur class in urban centers in contradistinction to their former stigmatized peasant status in rural areas. Further, Isaan women take fuller advantage of these new social and economic opportunities than non-Isaan women or Thai men involved in the same industry. The researcher hopes that this article will be useful in countering the ignorant and pernicious stereotyping and stigmatization of love industry workers. In addition, the researcher is concerned to indicate how engaging in meaningful language choices and linguistic shifts can be a mean whereby hope and a sense of future possibilities can be engendered in the young women involved in this unfairly maligned industry. It is also argued that the changes in orders of indexicalities pertaining to the continued reconfiguration of community boundaries (the work domains, i.e. bars, as well as the neighborhoods of bars, in the two urban centers of Bangkok and Pattaya) reflect a restructuring of sociolinguistic and ideological hierarchy. Such a process in its core is one that engenders the formation of new varieties of speech, as well as stimulating social change, within the rapidly growing and incessantly changing nation of Thailand.

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