

Chapter 3

Methodology

The methodology selected for use in this survey project is based on tools proven by other sociolinguistic researchers to aid in the estimation of language vitality, as has been discussed in the literature review. The questionnaire has been used in conjunction with social network analysis and participant observation of the Thai speech community, as well as recorded conversation analysis and the use of a sentence repetition test.

3.1 Boundaries of community

There are a variety of sampling methods used by sociolinguistic researchers which are either random or non-random in nature. Usually researchers aim for a random and representative sample so that estimations may be made without bias. The sample design chosen for this project is based on the social networks which individuals move in. The survey was conducted along the lines of respondents' social contacts who consider themselves Thai. In this way a representation of the Thai King-county community was sampled. This methodology is especially appropriate because one of the goals is to see if a Thai language community in these counties with strong social ties exists.

3.1.1 Thai Buddhist temples within King County, WA, USA

Because the researcher would be located in Pierce County of Washington State in the United States of America for two years, the decision to look at Thai immigrants in that vicinity was made. Having a background in the Thai language and culture from living in Thailand for 22 years gave the researcher a keen interest to make immigrants in her current location the object of a sociolinguistic study.

Initially the researcher decided to begin a social network survey of the Thai immigrant population beginning with those associated with Thai restaurants in Seattle, King County, WA. Some initial survey work was conducted as a pilot test in Puyallup, Pierce County, WA, with this in mind, similar to a pilot test that was conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Upon further review, however, it was decided that a better beginning pool to survey than Thai restaurants could be found in that of Thai temples due to their being a

religious, social and cultural place of assembly for Thai immigrants in this area. Thai restaurants were found to be less conducive to data collection for several reasons. Firstly, some restaurant owners saw data collection in their restaurants as a disturbance of work. Secondly, Thai people generally enjoy eating self-prepared Thai food rather than Thai food to be had at a restaurant in North America and so are less available at this venue. Lastly, some Thais associated with the restaurants were uneasy about being interviewed.

As well, a key contact was made during the Puyallup Thai Restaurant Pilot Survey in the person of Niphon¹. His suggestion was that restaurants were difficult locations from which to conduct survey work in that 1) it made proprietors concerned about the resulting loss of business, and 2) it was difficult to find interested contacts to interview as people associated with the restaurants were also all very busy. He suggested instead that Buddhist temples would be a better resource for the researcher's work. As has been mentioned previously, this suggestion was incorporated into the researcher's methodology.

Niphon introduced himself as the key helper of abbots and priests in both the Thai Buddhist temples in the area: the Washington Buddhavanaram Temple² (Washington Temple) in Auburn and the Atammayatarama Buddhist Monastery³ (Attama Temple⁴) in Woodinville, both in King County. (The latter temple, due to construction constraints, also meets at the American Legion Hall⁵ in Shoreline, WA.) He indicated that other than these two Thai Buddhist temples, there was only one other in Washington State, in Olympia, Thurston County: the Olympia Mahayana Buddhist Center⁶. This information was verified upon meeting the head abbots of the temples in King County who concurred that parishioners often visited between Washington and Attama temples. After searching the internet herself, the researcher found that although there are numerous other Japanese and Cambodian Buddhist temples in the region, there seem to be only these three Thai temples in Washington State.

Although three Thai Buddhist temples were found to be located in the State of Washington, the researcher chose to only survey Thai immigrants based in those of King

¹ Sir name not given.

² Washington Buddhavanaram, 4401 South 360th Street, Auburn, WA USA 98001

³ Atammayatarama Buddhist Monastery, 19301 176th Avenue Northeast, Woodinville, WA USA 98072

⁴ Henceforth, Atammayatarama Buddhist Monastery will be referred to as Attama Temple in this thesis for the sake of brevity.

⁵ American Legion Hall, 14521 17th Avenue Northeast, Shoreline, WA USA 98155

⁶ Olympia Mahayana Buddhist Center, 211 Legion Way Southwest, Olympia, WA USA 98501

County due to their common association with the large city of Seattle. Although the city of Olympia is the state capital of WA, it has only 6.5% Asian residents in a population of 46,100 (as of a 2009 census) (Onboard Informatics 2011). This is compared to Seattle, WA, with an Asian residency of 13% in a population of 612,000 (as of the 2010 census) (City of Seattle 2011). As well, Seattle city is considered one of 10 most populous cities in its state. King County, where Seattle is located, also is considered a large metro county within the state, with a minority population exceeding 25%.

The Washington Temple is 26 miles south of Seattle and the Attama Temple is located 23 miles northeast of Seattle, its alternative place of meeting in Shoreline being 10 miles north of Seattle. The Olympia temple, on the other hand, is 42 miles from Washington Temple in Auburn, 75 miles from Attama Temple in Woodinville, and 70 miles from the Legion Hall in Shoreline. The following figure shows the locations of these key cities.

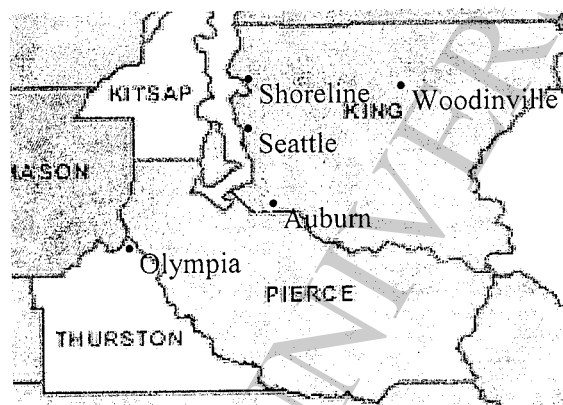


Figure 4 King and Thurston Counties, WA, USA

3.1.2 Social networks

In visiting with the head abbots of both temples, Sunday was discovered to be the day on which most Thais participated in the temple ceremony, although everyday had people visiting to offer alms. Seeing as this was the case, Sunday was chosen as the day on which the initial surveys would be made.

Informants were chosen who matched the following criteria: 1) are of Thai descent, 2) are citizens of the USA, and 3) are a contact made through one of the designated temples. It should be noted here that the researcher designated that eligible respondents would be 'citizens' (as opposed to other categories of immigrants) as a way of observing immigrants who had reached a point of establishing their families within the US context so that possible second and third generations could also be observed. As contacts were

made thereafter, appointments were made with these according to their convenience so that the best opportunities would be taken to sample all who were willing to volunteer. These parameters will be discussed more fully in the following sections under Section 3.2.1.

3.2 Survey

Temple survey work began with an interview with the head abbot of each temple. Once permission was granted for the researcher to conduct her data collection by way of social networks of interested parishioners and ensuing contacts, she was able to apply the prepared research tools to interested informants. The use of questionnaires, interviews and observation went hand-in-hand and were at times simultaneously conducted. When the researcher was invited to join ceremonies, participant observation was afforded to her as a tool. She was also able to use RCA and SRTs where permission was granted on site.

3.2.1 Subject selection

Demographic goals for this study include a sample of four age groups as well as a sample of both respondents who were born in the US and those who were born in Thailand, as follows:

- 1) a minimum of 40 respondents,
- 2) made up of at least 10 respondents from each of the following 4 age group strata:
 - a) young to age 12
 - b) ages 13 – 17
 - c) ages 18 – 29
 - d) and ages 30 to elderly, and
- 3) at least 25 of whom have
 - a) either grown up in Thailand or
 - b) ones who have left Thailand before the age of 5.

Sociolinguistic questions in the VSQ which helped answer these criteria were:

Q3 How old are you?

Q10 Where were you born?

Q11 How old were you when you immigrated to the USA?

The researcher asked about the participants' visitation to Thailand within the year of their immigration as casual conversation during the VSQ process but formally during the SRT process.

As indicated in the above outline, two important stratification questions are asked on the Vitality Survey Questionnaire. One is whether the respondent was born in the USA or in Thailand; the second is whether he or she moved to the USA at age 5 or younger. These two questions were used to group respondents so that the core research hypothesis could be addressed:

- A) If a respondent grew up in Thailand (at least until after the age of 5), he will prove strong in Thai language vitality, and
- B) If a respondent immigrated to the USA by the age of 5, his Thai language vitality will prove less strong than respondent 'A'.

Respondents were asked how old they were when they immigrated to the USA (Q11). Their answer was compared to answers relating to language attitude and vitality, and was assessed in conjunction with the SRT and RCA.

A minimum of 40 respondents was suggested by Blair (1990: 37), in order to provide a statistically valid sample for analysis. Specifically, at least 5 respondents would be required per cell or stratification. Stratification by age group was suggested by Radloff (1991: 16) to provide a contrasting picture of language vitality. This will demonstrate intergenerationally how immigrants may have more or less exposure to their HL. The age at which they are removed from immersion in their HL affects their grasp of the language, and at the same time affects how well they adopt the LWC. Therefore, each of the levels spelled out in this methodological process plays a part in portraying where the speech community is at in their language vitality. Results are analyzed by way of Fishman's GIDS and UNESCO's Intergenerational Language Transmission Scale. This analysis can be found in Chapters 4 and 5. The researcher's survey results and analysis of her data is more fully discussed in Chapter 4.

Due to a limited interest and availability of participants, the final number surveyed from the temple network sample was 37 individuals, with an actual 28 answering VSQ questions. The former number includes 9 children under 12 years of age who were eager to participate in the VSQ but who were not able to answer the questions sufficiently due to its lengthiness and time requirements. They are included at appropriate places in the overall analysis because the researcher was able to make observational notes on their language usage and attitudes as they interacted together as a group, and because some basic information asked in the VSQ was shared. Subject demographics, due to a number of reasons described more fully in Chapter 5, are as the following table outlines.

Table 3 Subject demographics of survey: Thai-King County community, WA, USA

| AGE GROUPINGS | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS | | PARTICIPANTS BY NAME |
|---------------|------------------------|---|---|
| -12 | 9 | Male: 5 Thai-born: 0 US-born: 5 | John, Brice, Wilfred, Brandon, Matthew |
| | | Female: 4 Thai-born: 2 US-born: 2 | Aleea, Ice Chada, Claire |
| 13-17 | 4 | Male: 2 Thai-born: 0 US-born: 2 | Pow, Brian |
| | | Female: 2 Thai-born: 0 US-born: 2 | Riana, Brenda |
| 18-29 | 8 | Male: 4 Thai-born: 0 US-born: 4 | Bobby, Steven, Andrew, Travis, |
| | | Female: 4 Thai-born: 1 US-born: 3 | NamTan Mee, Paulin, Ganda |
| 30- | 16 | Male: 5 Thai-born: 5 US-born: 0 | Niphon, Bunliang, Jim, Chanudom, Tik |
| | | Female: 11 Thai-born: 11 US-born: 0 | See, Wanna, Penny, PaTom, Ronnie, Phon, Somruk, Penny, Tina, Sophon, PaToi |

As this table indicates, only 2 of the children were born in Thailand, none of the teenagers were born in Thailand, only 1 of the young adults was born there, and all of those over 30 were born in Thailand. Therefore, 19 of 37 VSQ participants are Thai-born. The following chart demonstrates this in percentages.

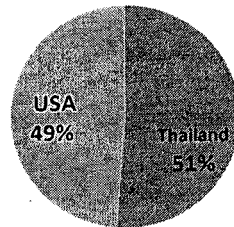


Figure 5 Locations of birth

Important to the discussion of Thai language vitality is whether Thai-born respondents left Thailand before the period of acquisition of age 5. Of the 19 who were born in Thailand, 2 left before this age; both are children under 12 at the time of research, as can be seen in Figure 6 below.

Years in Thailand before immigration

■ <5 ■ >5

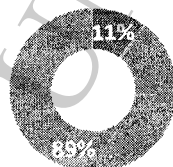


Figure 6 Years in Thailand before immigration

Note: The symbol '<' refers to 'less than the given age', the symbol '>' refers to 'more than the given age'.

3.2.2 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was compiled, referred to as the Vitality Survey Questionnaire (VSQ), which was based on previously successfully used questionnaires (Duan Lei 2004 and

Chamberlain 2010), and also on the results of a pilot test conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This questionnaire was constructed to allow investigation of the participant's demographics, reported domains of language usage, vitality of their language, and attitudes towards the Thai language. It was translated into Thai and used bi-lingually during data collection.

Eligibility for participation in the updated VSQ is the same as that which defines the survey boundaries, specifically, that the participants are of Thai ancestry, that they are citizens of the USA, and that they are a temple-made contact. Casual pre-screening was conducted by the researcher in conversation with potential participants before requesting involvement in the VSQ which would ensure eligibility in these three areas.

The questionnaire was designed for participants all the way from new arrivals in the English speaking context of the USA to those who may have lived in the US awhile already, and could be administered bilingually in Thai and English. It was self-administered as well as administered by the researcher, depending on the preference and ability of the respondent. After the VSQ was administered, the respondent had the opportunity of taking the SRT.

Attention was given to three areas in the making of the questionnaire. The first is in regards to external conditions which have an effect on the respondents' answers, included a guarantee of confidentiality, an emphasis on the importance of accuracy, minimizing the need for detailed answers, and having a user-friendly design (Fowler 1995: 29). In response to these potential influences on accuracy, special consideration was given in the making of the questionnaire.

The second area of importance in making the VSQ was in how the questions were designed, as per Frazer and Lawley's suggestions (2000: 19-34). Questions were designed keeping in mind who the target respondents were, their knowledge base concerning subject matter being addressed, and what facts they would be comfortable divulging accurately. The VSQ was designed with Fowler's further suggestions in mind: to avoid hypothetical questions, to avoid request for solutions to complex problems, to avoid questions with hidden contingencies, and to avoid ambiguous questions (1995: 8-45).

The third area of attention given in the making of the questionnaire was based on factors specified by Landweer (1991) (see Section 2.5.1). For example, finding out to what extent the speech community can resist the dominant urban culture and in which

domains the language is being used aids in determining ethnolinguistic vitality in the community. The researcher attempted to incorporate these concepts into the VSQ in order to elicit data in this regards. Further discussion in this area was made in Section 2.5.1.

3.2.2.1 VSQ and the research questions and objectives

The following table lists the VSQ questions pertinent to each of the thesis' research questions and objectives. Also objectives relating to SNA, PO, RCA and SRT are given to provide an overview of how all the different methodologies can contribute to this research.

Table 4 VSQ and the research questions and objectives

| RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVE | PERTINENT VSQ QUESTION |
|---|---|
| <p>Does a Thai speech community exist within the King County of Washington State?</p> <p><i>Does lack of links between Thais affect their sense of Thai identity and language vitality?</i></p> <p>Do language usage and attitudes support the preservation of their Thai language abilities?</p> <p><i>Does exposure to Thailand provide stronger language vitality for them?</i></p> <p>Does strong language vitality define immigrant identity here?</p> <p><i>Assess whether language attitudes and usage supports the preservation of Thai as an immigrant language or if there is indication of language endangerment for this speech community</i></p> | Q40 language use with partner? |
| | Q42 language use around town? |
| | Q51 Do you have Thai neighbors? |
| | Q53 Do you have friends who are Thai? |
| | Q68 associated with Thai club, etc? |
| | Q70 you shop or eat at Thai businesses? |
| | Q74 does WA organizes Thai events for you? |
| | Q82 do you celebrate the King of Thailand's birthday? |
| | Q46 how often Thai with Mother? |
| | Q47 how often Thai with Father? |
| | Q48 how often Thai with grandparents? |
| | Q49 how often Thai with grandchildren? |
| | Q50 how often Thai with children? |
| | Q52 how often Thai with neighbors? |
| Q54 how often Thai with friends? | |
| <p>Does the Thai speech community have strong, innovative ties with multiple relations?</p> | Q83 What makes a Thai person Thai? |
| | Q86 Do you think of yourself as Thai...? |
| | Q87 is Thai necessary to your life and relationships? |
| | Q57 Can you read Thai? |
| | Q58 Can you write Thai? |
| | Q64 do Thai teens in WA mostly speak Thai? |
| | Q76 can Thai children in WA explain family relationships in Thai? |
| This question was addressed by SNA and PO. | |
| Discover if the Thai language of the immigrant community here is vitally strong or not | This objective was addressed by SNA, PO, RCA and SRT |
| Discover the extent to which the Thai immigrant community has strong, innovative ties with multiple relations | This objective was addressed by SNA. |

The VSQ researches when and where respondents use their Thai, as well as if Thai is a core value to them and a positive aspect to their identity as Thai-Americans. Answers given in the VSQ were compared and cross-compared in order to reveal relevant data of interest to this survey. The results of the VSQ are given under Chapters 4 and 5.

3.2.2.2 Pilot tests

Pilot tests were conducted in two locations, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and in Puyallup, WA, USA. In Chiang Mai two different pilot tests were conducted, one being for the Restaurant Survey Questionnaire (RSQ) (see Appendix A) and the other for the original Vitality Survey Questionnaire (VSQ) (see Appendix B for the updated VSQ).

The original VSQ was tested on five local residents or students around the researcher's university campus in Chiang Mai. The results of this test were that certain questions were vague, and thus in need for either more precise wording or a more precise Thai translation. These corrections were made to the original VSQ and presented to two different volunteers with positive results.

In Puyallup, WA, individuals involved in the original VSQ pilot test were a server of the Bangkok Thai Restaurant⁷ and an owner from the Chili Thai Restaurant⁸. Results of the original VSQ in this context were positive.

Changes were made to the original VSQ upon decision to switch from restaurant samples to temple samples. Henceforth, only the revised VSQ was used being adapted to target temple contacts in the WA state vicinity.

3.2.3 The sentence repetition test

The Sentence Repetition Test (SRT) is a supportive tool in the analysis of bilingual competence, looking at the participants' ability in Thai given their exposure to Thailand, or the lack thereof. Important questions used as a backdrop to these results are those regarding whether participants were born in the USA or in Thailand, if they left Thailand before the age of 5 or if they had some education in Thailand, and how often and how long visits to Thailand where for.

Analysis of these answers together with the Reported Proficiency Evaluation (RPE) (see Figure 13, Section 4.3) of the SRTs will allow the researcher a look at how immigrants

⁷ Bangkok Thai Restaurant, 520 39th Avenue Southwest, Puyallup, WA USA 98373

⁸ Chili Thai Restaurant, 3712 9th Street, Puyallup, WA USA 98373

at different immigrant ages and birth places compare in language ability (Fallis 1983: 35). These will include:

- 1) Number of Thai-born respondents,
- 2) Percentage of these who got an RPE of 2 or above on their SRT, and
- 3) Frequency of visits back to Thailand.

Participants who proved both willing and available were given a test of their ability in the Thai language by way of audio recordings which they listened to and repeated to the best of their ability.

The researcher used the SRT in conjunction with the VSQ whenever volunteers agreed to participate in it. However, this was limited to face-to-face opportunities where the volunteer was able to listen to the SRT recording being monitored by the researcher.

3.2.4 Background to the SRT used in this survey

The Thai SRT which is used for the purposes of this survey was prepared by Santi Sangtong in accordance with Carla Radloff's specifications for studies in bilingualism (Radloff 1991: 42-55).

He confirmed that:

- 1) He made a recording of 40 – 50 Thai sentences which he said were 'well-formed and natural, representing a wide range of difficulty, from simple to very difficult' as Radloff specified in her book.
- 2) Two or three other native Thai speakers examined these sentences for appropriateness, and discarded any which were too long, after first taking the stage-1 SRT themselves.
- 3) Sentences were ordered from shortest to longest and recorded again by a native speaker of Thai. An elaborate transcription was made of each according to Radloff's comments. It was also shortened to 15 sentences in sequence of difficulty.

To the best of Sangtong's recollection, step one in Radloff's process of making an SRT was as far as he got in preparing his SRT. Steps in the process which seem to be missing are:

- 1) To rate subjects or participants (Radloff 1991: 47),
- 2) To test the SRT on 50 people, rated at varying levels of proficiency, as Radloff suggested (1991: 49) in preparation for calibrating the test, and
- 3) To calibrate the SRT. This SRT had never been used in an actual research project prior to the researcher's use in her research.

Although Sangtong's SRT had not been completely prepared up to the point of calibration, it was deemed a suitable exploratory tool to contribute towards the purposes of this survey, providing a rough linguistic picture of a participant's Thai language ability.

Areas of interest in the SRT are these five language skills: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Based on how the individual performs in each of these areas, a Reported Proficiency Evaluation (RPE) can be made (Radloff 1991: 151-153). When the score of the SRT has been ascertained, it is then possible to correlate the RPE level. RPE level descriptions are presented in Table 5 below to assist in the interpretation and reporting of the results of the RPE evaluations, but are not used as part of the evaluation process. These guidelines are adapted from Radloff's work (1991: 152-153).

Table 5 RPE parameters of language proficiency

| RPE LEVEL | DESCRIPTION | NOTES |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--|
| 0+ | very minimal proficiency | |
| 1 | minimal, limited proficiency | :heavy accent, more mistakes in grammar than correct usage, slow speech, vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas |
| 1+ | limited, basic proficiency | |
| 2 | adequate, basic proficiency | :uncontrolled grammatical rules, a vocabulary broad enough for daily topics but limited to common domains, by incomplete sentences |
| 2+ | good, basic proficiency | |
| 3 | good, general proficiency | :marked foreign accent with occasional mispronunciations but which does not interfere with understanding; occasional halting of speech due to imperfect control of some grammatical patterns |
| 3+ | very good, general proficiency | |
| 4 | excellent proficiency | :very slight accent, no mispronounced words, no patterns of grammatical error remain, vocabulary is broad, precise and adequate for technical, social and practical situations :slight difference in speed and evenness of speech from that of native speaker |
| 4+ | approaching native proficiency | |

Each sentence is worth up to 3 points. Each mistake in accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension was noted by the researcher per sentence as a volunteer took the SRT, being counted against the total worth of the sentence. The remaining cumulative worth of the sentences after mistakes were subtracted is compared to the RPE level on the score sheet. The following table details how a total SRT score shows a level of reported proficiency.

Table 6 SRT scores and their corresponding levels of reported proficiency.

| SRT | RPE |
|-------|-----|
| 0-4 | 0+ |
| 4-7 | 1 |
| 7-11 | 1+ |
| 11-15 | 2 |
| 15-19 | 2+ |
| 19-24 | 3 |
| 24-28 | 3+ |
| 28-32 | 4 |
| 32-35 | 4+ |
| 35-45 | 5 |

The volunteers' RPE was then noted in conjunction with answers they gave in the VSQ and in casual interviews. Results of the analysis of these tools are given in Chapters 4 and 5.

The SRTs gave data on individual ability in Thai and hence a picture of language vitality. The Recorded Conversation Analysis (RCA) did also, as it pertained to the bigger picture of the Thai speech community. The following section explains how RCA is a tool providing a sample picture of language vitality.

3.2.5 The recorded conversation analysis

Evaluating natural conversations is a means of discovering an individual and group ability in a language. The subjects are using the language in a context natural to them. This allows for them to operate in the language in an instinctive manner.

By taking a two minute sample of conversation, the researcher was able to count the frequency of which English vocabulary was used in the context of Thai speech, as well as how much of the Thai language used was: 1) natural in vocabulary and structure, 2) Native-like in rate of speech, and 3) native-like in tone. The two minutes chosen for analysis were within 8 – 15 minute contexts, allowing the researcher to consider what languages were being used as a backdrop to the selected text. Recordings of natural Thai conversations included loan words and borrowings from a context of the participants' social contexts. Determining the degree of language shift based on the number of English words which occur in the course of the two minute recording was important, as the researcher was aware that some of these may have been simply due to the need to refer to the names of English places and items.

The researcher used an MP3 recorder set strategically between or among willing Thais who were already interacting with each other. Prior to beginning the recording, permission was requested, and the researcher asked 3 basic questions in Thai of the participants: 1) are you an American citizen? 2) did you return to Thailand within the first year of immigration? and 3) which generation are you in your immigrant Thai family here in USA?

These questions are relevant to the RCA in that, firstly, the purpose of the researcher's work is in regards to immigrated Thais, and therefore citizens of the USA. Secondly, exposure to Thailand within the first year of immigration may solidify the speaker's HL despite the immigrant's context of immersion into an LWC (in this context, English).

Thirdly, each generation away from daily use of Thai in Thailand, immersed in English, creates greater opportunity for weaker language vitality, as can be seen in Gonzo and Saltarelli's Evolutionary Stages of Emigrant Languages (Schaufeli 1992: 17) (see Table 7 below).

Some individuals were willing for the MP3 to be placed near them but did not want to answer any questions. In such situations, recordings were still taken, notation made as to the fact that comments were not forthcoming. Only interactions by those who were US citizens were used for the purposes of the RCA.

Locations that were used included the two temples and a New Year's Party at the Naabana Thai Restaurant in Bellevue, WA. These were the arenas in which opportunity was afforded the researcher to make recorded conversations. They were not optimal settings as background noise with the mingling of many tens of people made recordings unclear. For this reason, the MP3 was left recording conversations from 2 – 8 minutes. Two minute sections of conversation within these recordings which were most distinct were chosen as the segments to study.

The researcher listened to each recording of Thai conversation for the following:

- 1) Use of English vocabulary,
- 2) Switch between English and Thai phrases in attempts to communicate concepts, and
- 3) Rate of natural/unnatural Thai speech.

Each instance of the above were numbered by conversation and tallied. Answers to questions given prior to the recordings were compared to the results, allowing the researcher to observe generational language ability and language exposure data. This data was compared to the following table of Gonzo and Saltarelli's evolutionary stages of emigrant languages (Schaufeli 1992).

Table 7 Gonzo and Saltarelli's evolutionary stages of emigrant languages

| STAGE OF EMIGRANT LANGUAGE | DESCRIPTION OF STAGE |
|----------------------------|--|
| Stage 0 | Standard: generation 1 of HL maintains full HL |
| Stage I | Fading: generation 1 of HL emigrant shows loss in HL |
| Stage II | Pidgin: generation 2 of HL emigrant shows restrictive use in HL |
| Stage III | Fragment: generation 3 of LWC emigrant shows selective use in HL |

Results of these comparisons were then compared to the bigger picture of the language vitality of the speech community by way of Fishman's GIDS (see Table 1, Section 2.4) and UNESCO's table of intergenerational language transmission (see Table 2, Section 2.4).

3.2.6 Statistical analysis

Basic statistical analysis is applied to data collected from the VSQ and SRTs. In both of these tools, frequency of reoccurring data of interest is recorded. Comparisons are then made to correlations existing between immigrants' language exposure, usage, attitude and age analyzed by a simple percentage preceded by how many participants fell into each given category.

Although the data resulting from this research is less than what the researcher had planned for, resulting in several stratification data cells to be less than 5 per cell, the researcher presents the data in percentages of the whole. This is for the sake of observing how the data relates among itself. Because of limited data the results of analysis is also given in units as in:

the number of participants who answer A or B out of the number of participants involved in the VSQ or SRT are # out of # at X%.

This allows analysis to be understood in relation to the small data set available. Results of statistical analysis, as well as analysis of the entire research, is not inferred and projected upon the Thai immigrant population in King County, WA for the above mentioned reason, beyond a generalization. The results are suggestive of tendencies that would need to be confirmed by more extensive future research.

3.2.7 Social network analysis

Sampling through social networks allows examination of how dense the Thai social network may be in King County, WA (see Section 2.5.4.1). Observations are made as to whether the networks of individuals link between temples, stay within their own temple sphere, extend beyond the temples, or even extend beyond the Thai speech community altogether. As discussed in Section 3.2, it was hoped that a social network of Thai speakers could be found and entered through Thai restaurants. However, upon advice of a local Thai contact entering into the Thai social network via the temples was determined the better way to proceed.

As a researcher, the writer herself entered the network as a temple contact. She was invited to access both temples in which Niphon assisted. Through formal invitations by Head Abbot Bunliang⁹ of Washington Temple and Head Abbot Ritthi Thirajitto¹⁰ of Attama Temple, she was invited to contact parishioners to be a part of her work. Her role resembled that of one of the many visitors who attended the Sunday services and various temple celebrations.

Identifying the boundaries of the speech community for survey and analysis was done by simply following the social networks offered by Thai individuals interested in assisting the research project. These informants, however, representing the Thai speech community of WA, were found beginning at the Thai Buddhist temples located in King County.

3.2.7.1 Step-by-step process of survey through social networks

Beginning with an interested Thai volunteer in one of the temples, the researcher used the Vitality Survey Questionnaire (VSQ) developed for this research. When this volunteer was able to introduce the researcher as a friend of his to other Thais whom he knew, the researcher was able to continue the survey process, interviewing each new contact with the VSQ. The following figure represents this process.

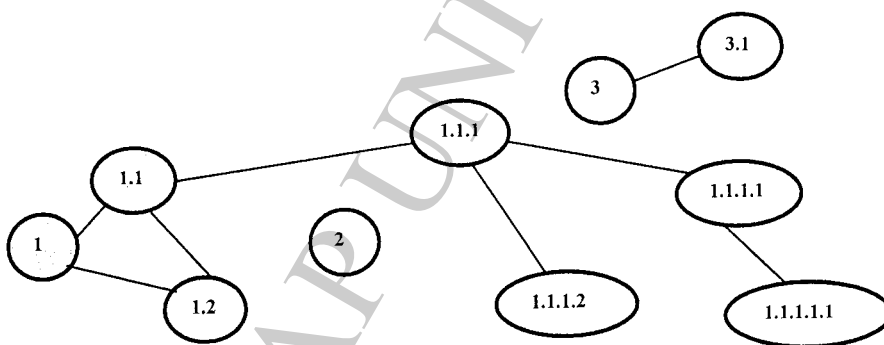


Figure 7 Example of sampling through social networks

When some contacts in the given social network were unable to introduce the researcher to further Thais, the researcher found another willing Thai subject from within one of

⁹ Respectfully entitled in Thai as phrá?khru: (พระครู) but for the purposes of this thesis will be referred to as Head Abbot, or Bunliang, for the sake of brevity. No last name was given.

¹⁰ Respectfully entitled in Thai as phrá?khru: (พระครู) but for the purposes of this thesis will be referred to as Head Abbot, or Ritthi, for the sake of brevity.

the temples. The research method is to proceed through given social networks until the researcher has found the data meeting the criteria discussed earlier in Section 2.5.4.2 under Tools of Analysis, or until time allotted for data collection has been used up.

3.2.7.2 Questionnaires: a complimentary tool with SNA

Important questions posed in the context of a questionnaire contribute background information toward understanding what the informant brings to his social network. This includes whether he has children, what language is used in his home, and how many Thai friends he has with whom he speaks Thai. How an informant answers the questionnaire suggests how he may impact his network through the values, attitudes and decisions he makes in regard to the Thai language, or how he is being impacted by others, and to what extent.

Questions of the VSQ designed to contribute to the researcher's SNA in these ways are as follows:

Q4 Are you married?

Q5 How many children do you have?

Q51 Do you have Thai neighbors?

Q53 Do you have friends who are Thai?

Q62 Have you ever attended Thai religious events?

Q65 Have you ever attended Thai cultural events?

Q68 Have you ever been a part of a Thai club, society or association here in WA?

Q70 Do you choose to shop and eat out at restaurants run by Thais?

Q74 Are there community events in WA specifically geared for Thai-Americans?

Q82 Do you celebrate the King of Thailand's birthday with other Thais?

Q84 Do you think it important that Thais marry other Thai people?

In this way, the use of the VSQ in conjunction with SNA adds a dimension to the picture of language vitality. Interviews are very similar to the VSQ except that they are generally unstructured, for the most part casual, and allow for information to be offered naturally during the process of interaction.

3.2.7.3 Interviews: a complimentary tool with SNA

Impromptu interviews as well as scheduled interviews offered the researcher opportunity to glean opinions which Thai immigrants held towards other Thais, the decisions they made in regards to language usage, and their own observations of the

Thai language vitality amongst the Thai immigrant speech community. Attitudes connected with sensitive issues became apparent to the researcher as she gave contacts time to express themselves on various subjects as they came up in the course of natural conversations. Data received in this way clarified the picture of the language situation in this speech community. Interview data was recorded immediately following the data collection period.

3.2.7.4 Participant observation: a complimentary tool with SNA

Participant Observation was a key method of looking at the informants' social networks. It allowed for the identification of actors and their relationships to the informants, offering opportunity to note the transfer of 'materials' between them, the degree of reciprocity and what the respondents' ties to other actors may be. Participant Observation offered itself as supportive tool to SNA in this way.

3.2.8 The participant observation

Participant Observation (PO) was used supportively in conjunction with the previously mentioned methods of survey. PO is the researcher's method of both observing and being part of the Thai speech community.

Observations of all survey experiences were noted in a tool called FieldWorks¹¹ under FieldNotes. Field notes were taken, recording the environment in which Thai was used, indicating language attitudes, core values of the Thai community, and their language maintenance and vitality. These observations included ones the researcher made of both how the research process proceeded as well as what she gathered through her seven 'senses': sight, smell, hearing, touch, taste, and intuitive memory and emotive feelings. The latter sense was deemed by the researcher as important to the research process as they offered her contrastive data from which to compare her current perceptions. This contrastive data refers to that which the researcher has retained from her 22 cumulative years in Thailand, beginning from birth through the age of 37 years. It should be noted, however, that what is termed intuitive memory here is tentative since the researcher is not herself a native Thai.

The researcher also noted in her FieldNotes what she overheard and witnessed as Thais in the target speech community interacted with each other. She also joined the speech

¹¹ Copyright 2001-2011, SIL International Inc.

community in a variety of their functions, participating in their community for direct observation of how Thai language and culture was being exchanged within each context.

When analysis of the VSQ, the SRT, and the RCA were completed, the researcher brought to bear what she had observed while in contact with Thais from the target speech community. This allowed her to observe both what her volunteer participants perceived towards the Thai language, and also what is being demonstrated within the community and by individuals.

PAYAP UNIVERSITY