

HIGH AND LOW THAI: VIEWS FROM WITHIN

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INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistic complexity in Thai has attracted the attention of foreign travellers and scholars for some time, but the Thais themselves have also been keenly aware of the richness of their language in this regard.¹ The Thai language calls itself phasǎa thay (or phaasǎa thay, see (17)). The term phasǎa easily combines with qualifiers to indicate linguistic varieties quite in line with what Sapir called 'language subforms', now more generally referred to as styles or 'registers' (Halliday 1978:31-35):

(1) official register	phasǎa rǎatchakaan
legal register	phasǎa kòtmǎay
'educationalese'	phasǎa kaansǔksǎa
'market patois'	phasǎa talàat
written register	phasǎa nángsǔm
oral register (lit. <i>spoken</i>)	phasǎa phǔut
oral register (lit. <i>of the mouth</i>)	phasǎa pàak

STYLE AND CONTEXT

Thai scholars and educators frequently observe that the Thai language is differentiated according to 'contextual features' (kaanlá?theesà?, a Sanskrit compound of 'time' and 'place'; see e.g. Thichinphong 1979:164). There is clear realisation that many linguistic forms vary and must be selected with reference to social relationships holding among interlocutors. Posakritsana (1978:13) has gone so far as to point to the complex personal reference system in Thai, which is very sensitive to comparative social standing and ascribed deference, and to extol it as an improvement over the impoverished systems of English or other Western languages.

It is of particular interest that in spite of a well-codified 'doctrine of purity' introduced mainly in the early 20th century under indirect Western influence, leading Thai scholars have understood that 'too correct' a register may be inappropriate on certain occasions. Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, for years one of the leading figures in Thai language studies and an editor of the official normative dictionary, observed

- (2) Receptive understanding on the part of the listener is not simply a matter of receiving words which have been expressed by the speakers. That which is unexpressed or repressed by the speaker may be received and understood by the listener as well. In ordinary speech there is apt not to be full

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linguistic specification. Anyone who makes such full specifications will be considered scornful or 'pedantic'. For example, rather than saying, 'Do you see or not?' one might simply say 'See?'; or one might only clear one's throat; in each case the listener would understand what is meant.

(Rajadhon 1956:177; translation provided)

It is not far from this idea to the notion of 'reciprocity of perspectives' and of the 'indexical' nature of informal communication as articulated in the phenomenological sociologies of knowledge of Schütz, Garfinkel, et al. The use of the term 'scornful' (*dàtcarìt*) above is of particular significance, since it indicates that Thai scholars have been aware of complicated interconnections between register differentiation, degree of overt specification, appropriate level of intimacy or informality, and subjective emotional consequences of the various register assignments (or misassignments).²

The term *register* has been used above intentionally, since Thais' discussions of their sociolinguistic situation frequently incorporate this notion, even though the actual form *phasā* may be used. Gedney (1961:109ff) has noted that earlier foreign scholars misunderstood the nature of Thai royal vocabulary (*raachaasāp*), believing it to be a "separate language" to be used when speaking to or about royal persons. Gedney shows that this conception is inaccurate, and that, as its name in Thai indicates, it is rather a system of lexical substitutions or "highly conventionalized euphemisms" quite limited in scope (some 250 items in all, by his count). 'Register', it would seem, could subsume the royal and closely-related ecclesiastical varieties, since predictable occurrence of particular forms is again the function of contextual features (*kaanlā?theesā?*). Also, the degree to which available royal forms may be substituted in a given discourse is contextually determined in a manner again suggesting register. However here 'context' needs to be differentiated into what Ricoeur and other literary analysts have called 'inner' and 'outer' contexts. 'Palace speech', when used by commoners about royalty, is mainly determined by inner context or 'text-internal' reference (whether the 'text' is referring to a prince of such-and-such a rank). Yet there is the possibility that outer contextual features, such as discourse participant identity and speech-act factors, may enter into how many or which 'royal forms' are selected too. In some informal situations many Thais, especially less-educated ones, would react to 'overuse' of royal forms as either a playful showing-off or even as a gesture of scorn (*dàtcarìt*, as above) directed at those who had not had opportunity to learn their 'proper' use.

Whether or not the term *diglossia* is appropriate in the Thai context is an interesting related question. Greek and Arabic represented linguistic situations which Ferguson took as paradigmatic for diglossia when he introduced the term in 1959. These language communities both resemble and are different from what one finds in the Thai community. The title of this paper rather to the contrary, there is really no absolute high-low bifurcation of Thai into two discrete languages or styles (and this appears to be the case at least for Greek as well). On the other hand, virtually any native speaker of Thai can quite effortlessly classify a great range of phonological, lexical and even syntactic material in the language, including paired variants, into 'relatively higher' and 'relatively lower' categories. The Thai terms for *high* and *low* (*sūn*, *tām*) may even be used spontaneously by Thais when discussing these phenomena, and a binary emphasis of such type is frequently found in educational materials used in Thai primary and secondary schools. Yet even here it is clear that there is more to the problem than simple two-way layered classification. Apart from specialised topics like palace and ecclesiastical speech, there are archaic-poetic, technical-urban and

rural-dialectal varieties and issues, each of which adds separate dimensions. It is perhaps in the up-country regional areas that local rural and national standard bidialectalism most closely approaches the condition of classic diglossia, with two discrete and theoretically 'self-sufficient' varieties co-existing side-by-side, but used for different social purposes. In these situations the national standard is referred to as *phasāa klaaŋ* (*central language*) which appears to have both geographical and functional connotations: Central Region or *high koiné*. (Even here structured mixing may occur, with the definition of local 'urban hybrid' forms of speech; see Diller 1979.) But socially tiered local-rural/urbanised national-standard contrasts are familiar the world over, and 'diglossia' is perhaps better reserved for more restricted usage. In any event, the Thai speech community is replete with 'diglossic contrasts', and perhaps sociolinguistic variation of the type discussed here might be termed *diglossic register differentiation*, or to make use of the earlier Sapirian term, distinction of *diglossic subforms*.

One promising operational approach to diglossic analysis is in the *amount of overt attention paid to speech*. Labov (1970) has even suggested that varieties or styles can be ranked, in theory at least, in a single dimension on this basis. Would this be a plausible device for arranging Thai registers along a high-low scale? The problem is that Thai varieties which are spontaneous and unedited for certain social groups - which have in fact been naturally acquired mainly in early childhood rather than through formal education - for social 'outsiders' represent an overt learning task to which much conscious attention must be paid if the registers are to be mastered. An excellent if rather specialised example can be found in the opening chapters of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj's epic novel *Four Reigns* [*sǐi phēndin*], where we learn that in former days young girls brought up in the inner 'forbidden city' of the king's harem acquired the proper use of royal vocabulary as a matter of course, but for outsiders its acquisition was an awkward and difficult task requiring much conscious attention.³ Similarly, present-day Thai children brought up in well-educated urbanised families learn spontaneously much of what children from uneducated rural backgrounds would need to acquire through conscious or semi-conscious effort. Not that there is nothing left in terms of linguistic register for urban-elite children to learn consciously: various literary forms and styles remain to be acquired through formal education. The point is that for rural or working-class children there are additional demands on 'linguistic attention'. Labov's ranking might then apply for any given individual as a single-dimension arrangement of registers, but it would be inadequate as a means of coming to terms with register complexity in the Thai speech community as a whole.

On the other hand, it is certainly fruitful to study terms used consciously by Thais themselves in characterising various Thai registers, realising with Labov that such explicit attention will tend to single out specialised diglossic strata. In addition to terms such as those introduced in (1), the following adjectival descriptors are common in characterisations of speech or text samples under some sort of evaluative consideration:

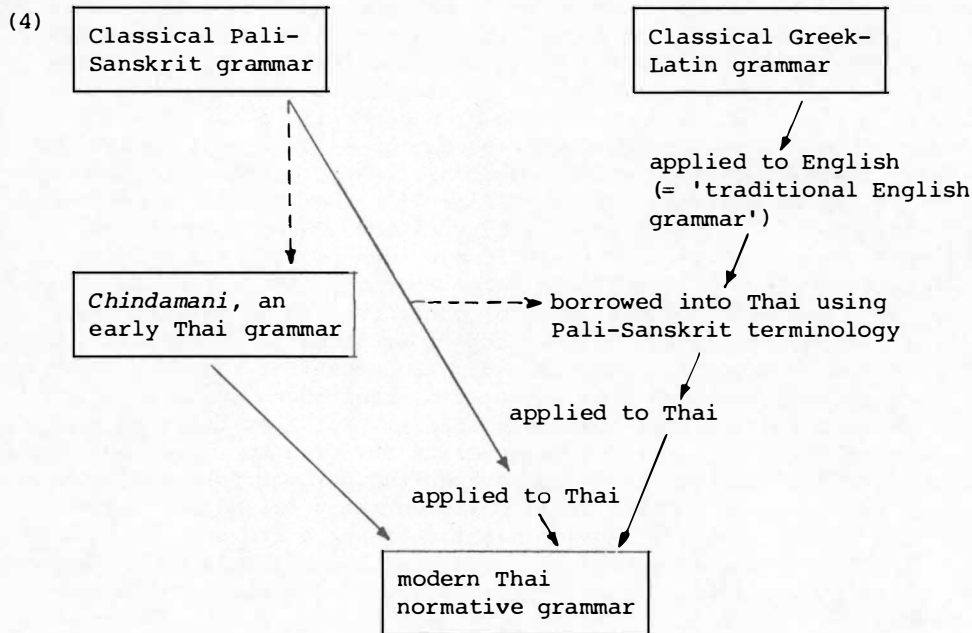
- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| (3) polite | suphâap |
| refined | pranîit |
| harmonious | phayróʔ, phróʔ |
| elaborate | salàʔ-salûay |
| clear | chât-ceen, chât |
| correct | thùuk-tŏŋ |
| grammatical | thùuk làk (phasāa) |

ungrammatical	phít lāk (phasāa)
hypercorrect, pedantic	đatcarít
rude, coarse	yāap
rustic, brogue-like	nəə
ambiguous	kamkuam
curt, too direct	huan

Most of these terms also occur in the negative.

TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

For the linguist, a clarification is in order for the terms glossed *grammatical*, *ungrammatical*.⁴ The present constitution of Thai normative-prescriptive grammar is a rather complicated series of superimpositions and syntheses which might be represented as follows:



Thus terminology pertaining to the Pāṇinian analysis of Sanskrit morphophonemics, such as terms describing phonological alternation or semantic case-role (*kāraka*) phenomena have found their way into Thai prescriptive grammar:

(5) sandhi	sŏnthí?
vṛddhi	phrútthí?
nominative case	kantùkaarók
accusative case	kammakaarók

So have additional Indic neologisms, created in the 1920s and 1930s to translate terms of English traditional grammar (in turn based on Latin and Greek):

(6) adverb	kriyaawísèet
subject	prathaan
optative mood	sàkkadì?maalaa
subordinate clause	?anuprayòok
complex sentence	sǎŋkɔɔráprayòok

The codification and culmination of this approach to 'grammar' is in the writings of Phaya Upakit Sinlapasan; these have been assembled into a single volume entitled *Principles of the Thai language* [lák phasǎa thay, 1937]. This remains the basis of 'traditional' school grammatical study, although there have been subsequent recensions and modifications by other followers. Finally, one cannot help but observe that the appropriation process continues as Thai students of linguistics study overseas, and then return home to interpret and 'apply' whatever current doctrines they have been exposed to, often conjuring up additional Indic neologisms:

(7) articulatory phonetics	sariirásàtthasàat
transformational rule	sùut-kaanpariwát
verb phrase	kriyaawalii

The resulting amalgamation of Indic and Western grammatical conceptions and terminologies is perhaps of significance as an intellectual construction, but to date it must be admitted that many predominant features of the Thai language itself remain poorly described (e.g. verb serialisation, topicalisation, anaphora, deletion, ambitransitivity, particles and their speech-acts) while others (e.g. allegedly invariant S-V-O order or the 'passive voice') are covertly framed in English terms, or there may even be ultimate connections to Latin and Greek.⁵ In practice, when a Thai educator criticises something as 'ungrammatical' (phìt lák phasǎa), this may well refer to tacitly-held internalised norms acquired from real-world sociolinguistic experience and personal imitation of models, not to deductions from abstract principles nor even, in many cases, to explicit ad hoc rules.

Before taking up specific examples of Thai diglossic register differentiation from current Thai sources, some further historical notes are in order. The evolution of the present system can be viewed in several phases. First, at the time of the earliest Sukhothai inscriptions (c. 1300 A.D.), spelling variation and the use of what is now 'vulgar' (yàap) vocabulary suggests little concern with issues nowadays taken as normative-prescriptive. Thus the presently vulgar *tiin foot*, is applied to the Buddha (Inscription VIII, 1:3, 22) and royal authors refer to themselves with the pronoun *kuu I* (I, 1:1). It should be emphasised that for *tiin* to be so used today or for the present King to refer to himself as *kuu* in public would be virtually unthinkable, although both words are in wide-spread (devalued) usage.

Khmero-Indic vocabulary, so important in subsequent register differentiation, makes its appearance early, but mainly in Buddhist religious contexts. Only later in the Palatine Laws of King Trailok (c. 1450) does it become widespread in more secular usage and begin to take on the avoidance-form characteristics of present-day royal vocabulary.⁶ During the later Ayudhya period (c. 17C.-18C.) such vocabulary also became common in court poetry.

The first Thai treatise dealing specifically with language was the *Chindamani* (cindaamanii, c. 1680), written in the reign of King Narai when the French had considerable influence and the Greek adventurer Constantine was in high favour. Although there may have been foreign influence in its conception, the *Chindamani*

was mainly concerned with teaching Thai spelling and poetic form to would-be court poets and scribes. It served as a codification of orthographic principles, and its terminology is still standard. From it dates, for example, the three-way division of Thai consonants into *high*, *mid* and *low* classes, perhaps to preserve poetic principles which were becoming archaic or apparently arbitrary through sound change.

It was not until the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), the first Thai king to study English, that normative-prescriptivist interest in linguistic usage became strong and explicit. Some examples from royal edicts:

- (8) a. *chûak*, literally *rope*, was specified as a classifier for elephants;
- b. *máa horse*, was to be used as its own classifier (rather than *tua*);
- c. *sây to put, place*, was not to be used with direct locative complements (as in *sây khúk put in jail*);
- d. *ʔuan fat*, and *phôm thin*, were not to be used, at least in the royal presence;
- e. *khəy sp. small shrimp*, was to be used in new compounds for *fish sauce* and *shrimp paste*, instead of *kapʔ*, the current Burmese-derived term for the latter, which was proscribed under penalty of monetary fine (later repealed);
- f. *sòp corpse*, was to be preferred to awkward euphemisms used by some to avoid it.

Many pronouncements on official terminology, names, titles and toponyms were also made and of particular importance is King Rama IV's expressed displeasure at newly-introduced printing-press tendencies to print common or vulgar variants (*sʔaŋ phrây-leew*) instead of elite forms (*sǎmniaŋ phûu-dii*), taken now as 'correct'. Misdemeanours in the context of these 'proto-prescriptivist' norms could bring fines or punishments like having to clean up betel nut spittle in the palace grounds. Sophawong (1971) discusses many of these matters in an entertaining and instructive manner.

Soon princes and others of the nobility were attending British schools and universities, and English doctrines of correctness current in the late 19th century and early 20th century must have seemed part and parcel of being a 'civilised' Western-style nation-state. In any event, on return home the new foreign-educated elite looked at Thai with an increasingly normative interest, and those who had studied Sanskrit as taught in England cooperated with local learned Buddhist clerics in coining neologisms such as those in (6) (see also below). In an ironic twist, the English-derived doctrine of purity was applied against many earlier English loans for which Indic neologisms were now coined (Waithayakon 1970).⁷ Also, the practice of interspersing English words in Thai sentences which had been previously acceptable (Chu'nchit 1977:56) was discouraged, although it continues to the present. The culmination of these trends, under the constraints of a public education syllabus introduced in the 1920s, was the fully prescriptivist treatment of Thai illustrated in works such as the 1918-1937 writings of Phaya Upakit Sinlapasan mentioned above, and more recently in those of Posakritsana (1978) and others.

Returning to the value-laden descriptors in (3), below we illustrate how they operate as an implicit categorisation device applied by Thais to phonology, lexicon and to some extent syntax. It must be emphasised that we are sampling an ethnotaxonomy, not reporting actual behaviour as objectively documented. What is briefly exemplified here is an array of phenomena which are salient or of particular interest in the works of such standard authorities as Phraya Anuman

Rajadhon, Phraya Upakit Sinlapasan and in modern Thai commentaries in a similar vein whose project is to instil attitudes relating to normative usage (e.g. Posakritsana 1978, perhaps the best recent example of extreme normative prescriptivism; Chitphasa 1978; Nakhonthap and Siha'amphai 1977; Rothetphai 1979; Thichinphong 1979; Thongprasoet 1975; and teacher-training manuals such as that issued by the Ayudhya Teacher's College in 1976).

PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION

In phonetics and phonology attention centres on orthography-related issues such as preservation of the r/l contrast, preservation of clusters and on other questions of lenition including assimilation and vowel shortening. Attention is also given to more strictly orthographic issues such as proper spelling and reading of Indic loans, Khmer morphophonemics as applied in Thai and also to various problems to do with the assimilation of English loans.

Thichinphong (1979:163) warns that loss of rhoticism and reduction of -r- and -l- consonant clusters will lead to semantic difficulties: "if the language user is not careful or does not know the true [sound], confusion may occur causing problems in communication". Examples are cited:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| (9) <i>to pour</i> | râat (> lâat) |
| <i>to spread</i> | lâat |
| <i>to escape</i> | phlût (> phùt) |
| <i>to bob up</i> | phùt |
| <i>to alternate</i> | phlât (> phàt) |
| <i>to fry</i> | phàt |

These losses of distinction are sometimes used in modern Thai literature to colour class conflict between the older Thai aristocracy (r- preserving) and the new Sino-Thai economic elite (r > l; cluster loss).⁸ It is interesting that another facet of fear of loss of distinction, namely *hypercorrection*, is ignored in prescriptive manuals. Thus *clock*, *o'clock* naalikaa is so routinely over-corrected to [naarikaa] in formal radio and television time-announcing that a new quasi-distinction based on the overcorrection is coming into widespread usage:

- (10) naalikaa *clock, watch*
 naarikaa *o'clock* (in time-telling)

(Similar differentiations appear to be arising in alternations like krabuan ~ khabuan *procession, movement*; classifier for trains, etc.)⁹

Less normative attention is given to other cluster reductions, such as several described by Brown (1967:xii) and documented in detail by Beebe (1975, etc.):

- (11) tr > kr ~ kl > k
 khw > f
 kw > f (with intermediates)

Nor does strictly phonetic variation come in for much explicit censure, such as the articulation of s- as [θ-], etc. (Beebe 1976) or variants of the phonemes transcribed here as c and ch (Harris 1972). Thais do in private conversation

often indicate that an 'over-rolled' *r*- is pedantically overbearing (dàtcarìt), with a single alveolar flap or tap considered the norm.

Final consonants in English loanwords are often noted as introducing new phonological possibilities into Thai, e.g.:

- (12) *golf* kóɔf
 gas kées

but it is not suggested that more Thai-ised pronunciations like kóɔp, kéet (heard among rural and lower-class urban speakers) are to be preferred. However the assignment of final -s, presumably of English origin, to native Thai words for 'flashy' emphasis - common now among urban youth - is discouraged:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| (13) | unsuffixed
base | substandard
'anglicised' |
| <i>much</i> | mâak | mâaks |
| <i>difficult</i> | yâak | yâaks |
| <i>outdated</i> | chæy | chæys |
| <i>overt</i> | sâa | sâas |
| <i>provocative</i> | sabâm | sabâms |
| <i>crazy</i> | bóŋ | bóŋs |

(See Nakkhasakun 1977:94; Thichinphong 1979:143; Ayudhya Teacher's College 1976:190.)

Consideration of vowels centres mainly on orthographic/phonological relationships in Indic loans, whose partial but not total assimilation to the Thai spelling system raises intricate issues beyond our scope here. Alternations are cited such as:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------|
| (14) | [I.] | [II.] |
| <i>case</i> | kóɔranii ~ | karanii |
| <i>refuge</i> | sóɔranná? ~ | saraná? |

with the [II.] realisations of the orthography preferred (Ayudhya Teacher's College 1976:7).

As for contractions and other lenition phenomena, there is a certain ambivalence in prescriptive attitude. Some assimilations are regularly noted and apparently tolerated as acceptable oral realisations [I. below] for corresponding unreduced written normative forms [II.]:

- | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|
| (15) | [I.] | [II.] |
| <i>how</i> | yaŋɔy | yàaŋɔy |
| <i>like that</i> | yaŋɔán | yàaŋɔán |
| <i>like this</i> | yaŋɔí | yàaŋɔí |
| <i>history</i> | prawàtsàat | prawatìsàat |
| <i>Petburi</i> | phétburii | phétcha(ra)burii |

In the last example of (15), articulating the medial (normally silent) letters in the written form would be a spelling pronunciation and would generally be considered hypercorrect.

Other contracted pronunciations are treated as decidedly substandard [I.] and discouraged:

(16)	[I.]	[II.]
<i>insect</i>	mɛɛŋ	maɛɛŋ ¹⁰
<i>university</i>	məhəwílay	mahǎawítthayaalay
<i>I (f. speaker)</i>	dían, dân	dichǎn
<i>satisfied</i>	sàcay	sǎa (kèɛ) cay

Predictable tone-shifting principles (Whittaker 1969) and pretonic vowel shortening tendencies are less frequently commented on. Spellings to reflect these pronunciations are increasingly used in cartoons and elsewhere when an oral register is to be evoked by the orthography, but such spellings are definitely substandard ([I.]):

(17)	[I.]	[II.]
<i>they, he, she</i>	khǎw (เข้)	khǎw (เขา)
<i>question particle</i>	máy (มี)	mǎy (ไม)
<i>book</i>	nǎŋsǔw	nǎŋsǔw
<i>ahead</i>	khâŋnǎa	khâŋnǎa
<i>restaurant</i>	rǎan-ʔahǎan	rǎanʔaahǎan
<i>language</i>	phasǎa	phaasǎa

Finally Posakritsana (1978:133) condemns as an unacceptable English affectation the practice some Thais now have of forming questions by rising intonation assignment [I.] rather than by the use of proper question particles [II.]:

(18)	[I.]	thəə mǎy khǎw-cǎy?
	[II.]	thəə mǎy khǎw-cay rǔw?
		<i>you not understand PARTICLE</i>
		<i>So you don't understand?</i>

LEXICAL VARIATION

Lexicon plays the major role in determining Thai diglossic register configurations as seen by Thai prescriptivists. That is, lexical selection is taken to be a paramount issue to deal with prescriptively, the assumption being that selection of diglossic register appropriate to context (kaanláʔtheesàʔ) may involve unnatural and difficult lexical selections. These latter must be learned through explicit attention and pedagogical practice.

Level-differentiated Thai vocabulary is well illustrated by categorisations like the following mainly from Haas (1964), with which Thai prescriptivists would be in general agreement:

(19)	vulgar	colloquial	common	elegant	literary
<i>to vomit</i>	râak	ʔûak	ʔûak	ʔaagian	-
<i>to urinate</i>	yíaw	yíaw	yíaw	pàtsǎawáʔ	-
<i>friend</i>	-	kləə	phûan	mít	-
<i>woman</i>	-	yǐŋ	phûuyǐŋ	sàtrii	ʔìtthǐi
<i>foot</i>	tiin	tiin	thǎaw	thǎaw	bàat
<i>abdomen</i>	-	phun	thǔwŋ	khan	-
<i>dog</i>	-	mǎa	mǎa	sunák	-
<i>pig</i>	-	mǔu	mǔu	sùkɔɔn	-
<i>toilet</i>	wét	sûam	sûam	súkhaa	-

Although Haas does not make clear exactly how her categories are to operate, it is clear they impose a ranking of sorts within lexical groups with the same referential gloss. It can also be seen clearly that the system is far more complex than a simple two-way high-low classification of synonyms, although a high-low continuum is apparently involved.

This fact is implicitly understood in the Thai sources, but more often than not lexical differentiation is in fact presented in a two-level parallel column arrangement such as the following treatment of animal terms by Phibanthaen (1972):

(20)	[I.]	[II.]
a. <i>dog</i>	măa	sunák
b. <i>buffalo</i>	khwaay	krabuu
c. <i>cow</i>	wua	khoo
d. <i>pig</i>	mŭu	sùkɔɔn
e. <i>elephant</i>	cháaŋ	khót
f. <i>leech</i>	pliŋ	chanlukà?
g. <i>turtle</i>	tàw	cìtracun
h. <i>cat</i>	mɛɛw	wílaan
i. <i>horse</i>	máa	?atsàwá?
j. <i>snake</i>	ŋuu	sàppà?
k. <i>monkey</i>	liŋ	waanarin
l. <i>rat</i>	nŭu	muusìkà?
m. <i>hare</i>	kratàay	sàsà?
n. <i>fish</i>	plaa	mátchăa
o. <i>bird</i>	nók	pàksăa
p. <i>fly</i>	mɛɛŋ wan	mákkhìkaa
q. <i>vulture</i>	?iiréɛŋ	(nók) réɛŋ
r. <i>crow</i>	(?ii)kaa	(nók) kaa
s. <i>swallow</i>	(nók) ?ii?èn	(nók) naaŋ?èn
t. <i>barking deer</i>	?iikéɛŋ	naaŋkéɛŋ
u. <i>oyster</i>	?iirom	naaŋrom
v. <i>mullet</i>	plaa chōɔn	plaa hăaŋ
w. <i>gourami</i>	plaa salìt	plaa baymáay

Phibanthaen's general purpose in (20) is to specify substitutes [II.] for ordinary animal terms [I.] which are appropriate when speaking in a royal context (raachaasáp). However Phibanthaen makes clear by labelling the two columns 'common' (săaman, [I.]) and 'polite' (suphâap, [II.]) that the latter are of more widespread distribution than other royal substitutes, such as body parts and kinship terms, which are 'royal' in a more restrictive sense. Other Thai presentations of royal vocabulary (e.g. Malakun 1972) omit lists such as (20), but state instead a principle to the effect that royal communication presupposes the avoidance of common or 'lower' terms if other 'higher' substitutes are available.

Yet this clarification still does not accurately suggest normal Thai reactions to items in (20). Even less educated rural or urban lower-class people who would usually be at ease speaking only items in [I.] could still recognise that [II.] was by no means a uniform list. Whether through mass media, cinema or public education, virtually all Thai adult native speakers would understand and treat măa and sunák as level-distinguished referential equivalents for *dog* (item a.), and the terms for *buffalo* (b.) and *cow* (c.) would enjoy similar widespread passive acceptance. *Pig* (d.) on the other hand, in its [II.] form might be somewhat less widely understood.¹¹ In a formal Thai radio or television

broadcast, for (a.) one would expect [II.], whilst for (b.)-(d.) both [I.] and [II.] would be commonly heard. But for (e.) to (w.), [I.] would be the exclusive selection for all but arcane discussions of ancient literature or, and, perhaps marginally, if reference in a royal context were necessary. The 'high' forms of *leech*, *turtle*, *cat*, *horse*, *snake*, *monkey*, etc. are simply not known by the vast majority of Thai native speakers, and even university professors might need to consult manuals to locate proper [II.] forms for such items. Also within (e.) to (w.) there is probably some difference in how well individual items would be recognised.

It would seem then that (20) is an implicit shorthand for an array similar to the Haas-derived pattern in (19), and that pairs (or triplets, etc.) of synonyms divide up a roughly linear continuum at many different points.

(20) raises some additional issues. At the high end of the scale lists such as that of Phibanthaen (1972:117ff) may include multiple forms. Thus for *dog* are listed four 'polite' (suphâap) lesser-known alternatives to well-known *sunák*, and there are similarly listed two polite ways to say *snake*, *leech* and *monkey*; three for *bird*, *fish* and *cat*; four for *horse*; and no less than 12 ways to refer to *elephants*, which are to some extent subdistinguished by sex, function, etc. In a similar way more properly royal terms for kinship, etc. are proliferated, and Phibanthaen (1972:30) suggests 14 royal terms for *to die*, differentiated partly by royal ranks, status, etc. Since many of the alternative polite and royal forms are basically confined to court poetry, one suspects that there were pressures to proliferate synonyms brought to bear by rigid poetic needs for rhyming words and the like. Most alternates represent Pali-Sanskrit couplets or epithetic circumlocutions.

Also tabu of the original Thai prefixal ?ii- and its substitution by naan- can be seen in (20), items (q.)-(u.). Wijeyewardene (1968) has analysed the Northern Thai use of this form at length, and the basic features of what he describes would apply in other Thai varieties. He shows that "derogatory feminine prefix" is an over-simplification and develops an interesting argument to generalise the range of ?ii- use and its avoidance.

Another type of tabu operates in (20), items (v.), (w.). The two animals are jocular substitutes for male and female genitalia respectively, for shape-related reasons. In polite speech it is apparently felt that any mention at all of these animals using their common [I.] names would carry sexual overtones, hence the [II.] substitutes. These are actually awkward circumlocutions which in turn have come to evoke strongly the very connotations they were presumably supposed to avoid. The same situation holds for *pestle* *sàak*-krabwa → *máay*-tíi-phrík (avoidance form); *sp. mushroom* *hèt*-khon → *hèt*-pluàk; *small drinking bowl* ?oo → *thúay*, etc.¹²

Semantic co-occurrence problems, particularly when inner-/outer-contextual issues are relevant as well, are not often sorted out in much detail in the Thai prescriptivist sources. *To eat* provides a convenient example:

(21) a. of royalty	sawǎy
b. of monks	chǎn
of commoners	
c. polite	ráp̌prathaan
d. polite	(ráp̌thaan)
e. polite	(ráp̌)
f. polite	thaan
of commoners, animals	
g. colloquial	kin
h. vulgar	dèek

There are additional variants and jocular circumlocutions which Achan Suthiwong Phongphaibun (personal communication) has numbered at above 50. As for co-occurrence restrictions, Posakritsana (1978:64) holds that for common people (for animals?) *kin to eat* - but widely among less-educated speakers also *to drink* - is used correctly with a *solid* direct object (with special *to drink* *dum* required for liquids). But also *ráp*prathan, with its reduced variants (d.), (e.) and (f.), is said to be derived originally from *ráp to receive* and *phrá-thaan that which has been royally granted* (viz. food); hence even reduced *thaan*, current in educated informal urban speech, is used correctly only with a *beneficial* direct object (e.g. rice, medicine), i.e. something a benevolent monarch might bestow. Harmful direct objects such as poison or rotten food require *kin*. For selecting the correct form of *to eat* then, variables of different types must be taken into account:

- i. the level of formality of the speech-act, social identities of interlocutors and other outer-context speech-act considerations (kaanlá?theesà?);
- ii. [*±human*] characteristics of the eating agent-subject, and if [*+human*], further status-related determinations (commoner/monk/royalty);
- iii. [*±solid*] and [*±beneficial*] characteristics of the consumed direct object.

The obvious potential for selectional conflict and quandary is reduced by implicit weighting of these criteria in different configurations. These weightings are complicated and not universally applicable across sets of similar data. Thus in (22) different solutions (lower form and higher form respectively) occur when canine zoological classification and feeding habits are to be discussed in a (constant) formal or literary context:

- (22)a. sunák kin
 dog_H eat_L
 ... *dogs eat* ...
- b. sàt sîi tháaw
 animal four foot_H
 ... *a quadruped* ...

In (22a.) if a relatively higher (_H) form for *eat* were used, the result would be unacceptable *sunák *ráp*prathan. Although superficially this seems to preserve a 'constant speech-level' (*dog_H eat_H*), in fact it violates [*+human*] selectional restrictions on the subject of the verb in question. For (22b.), sàt sîi tiin (tiin being the relatively lower form of *foot*) might be marginally acceptable, but formal and literary contexts would normally require the higher form, even if the feet involved were those of animals. Degree of lexicalisation or idiomaticity is apparently significant here however, since in set idiomatic expressions such as tiin mēw *burglar*, literally *cat-feet*, the stylistic objection is relaxed and in fact the higher alternate is unacceptable (*tháaw mēw, or tháaw wílaan in the sense of *burglar*, would be a joke).

Other common verbs such as *yàak to want* and *?aw to take, get* are considered by some to be 'low' and inappropriate in formal or literary contexts. Circumlocutions may occur instead, especially with *ráp to receive*. Others, including many modern Thai writers, are not much troubled by these verbs.¹³

PERSONAL REFERENCE

Pronominal selection and related issues in the personal reference system are very sensitive to diglossic register differentiation, as is clear from the detailed studies of Palakornkul (1975) and Cooke (1968; see also the review by Jones 1970). Some attention is given to these matters in the normative manuals, mainly in the context of proper usage in formal letter writing. It is perhaps considered 'self-evident' by many prescriptivist authorities that forms such as *khâaphacâaw* *I* are to be used in formal contexts, with other first-person pronominal forms descending in some sort of vertical configuration such as *kraphôm* (m.), *dichân* (f.), *phôm* (m.), *chân*, *khâa*, *kuu* - to state only the core system. But some Thai language scholars have explicitly noted the complexity of the Thai system (e.g. Posakritsana 1978:13, cited above). Achan Phonthip Phathornawik has gone so far as to indicate 'dangers' in the selection of proper forms:

In using [Thai] pronouns, one must be wary. For certain pronouns, even though general meanings may be the same, hidden meanings may be different

(Nakkhasakun et al. 1974:28)

She goes on (as do Palakornkul and Cooke, cited above) to exemplify ways in which sex, intimacy, degree of formality, degree of deference, etc. interact in a complex selectional system. It is worth noting that the Thai personal reference system has been evolving in recent times and normative attitudes have been shifting. Novels of the 1930s routinely refer to women (of rank, at least) with the special feminine form *lôn she*, whereas today *khâw* (*he, she, they*) is considered to be more acceptable for women than formerly and is in general use, with *lôn* somewhat unusual. In the 1940s Prime Minister Pibun Songkhram attempted to create and enforce a simplification of the personal reference system, even censoring the press of his day in that regard. There appears to have been little long-term effect, although the present-day use of *thân* as a frequent formal-respectful second-person singular pronominal form may be partly a trace of P.M. Pibun's attempts.

Apart from personal pronouns in a narrow sense, forms indicating relatives, indefinites and deictics also show level-sensitive variation.

(23)		[I.]	[II.]
a. <i>which</i> , etc. [REL]		<i>thîi</i>	<i>sûŋ</i>
b. <i>whatever</i>		<i>?aray</i>	<i>?anday</i> , CLF + <i>day</i>
c. <i>whoever</i>		<i>khay</i>	<i>phûuday</i>
d. <i>this</i> [weak topicalisation]		<i>[nîa?]</i>	<i>nîi</i> , CLF <i>nîi</i> , etc.

Once again criteria beyond strict diglossic pairing are involved. For the relative forms, *thîi/sûŋ* appear sometimes to suggest other distinctions like 'more concrete'/'more abstract' or 'simple-NP-anaphor'/'clause-length or extended-scope anaphor'; in each the latter category would be more characteristic of higher diglossic registers. For indefinite forms, in more colloquial speech there is virtual merger with corresponding interrogatives (especially *khay*, *?aray*, *yaŋŋay*, *mûarây*, *nây*). Following relatives may be optional.

(24)	[I.]	<i>khay</i>	(<i>thîi</i>)	<i>sŏncay</i>	<i>chæen</i>	<i>tittò</i> ...
	[II.]	<i>phûuday</i>	<i>sûŋ</i>	<i>sŏncay</i>	<i>chæen</i>	<i>tittò</i> ...
		<i>who(-ever)</i>	REL	<i>interested</i>	<i>invite</i>	<i>contact</i>
				<i>Anyone interested</i>	<i>is invited</i>	<i>to contact</i> ...

compare: [I.],[II.] khray sŏncay
 who interested
 Who is interested?

DEIXIS AND CLASSIFIERS

For deictic forms, in higher registers there is a marked preference for a sparse system: *níi/nán this/that*. In the lower colloquial registers the system in use is far richer, with at least: *níi, nán, nóon, núun, níi, nía?, nân, nŏon, núun* and many regional variants like *hán, hàn, dee, dóo, nân, nee*, etc. The Thai writing system does not 'recognise' and could hardly represent all such variants (*nía?, nía?, nía?* have been finding their way into cartoon captions recently). In any event, Thai school teachers may feel it necessary in some cases to correct deictics students write as falling-tone items (*níi, nân*) to high-tone counterparts (*níi, nán*) for formal registers.

Classifiers come in for extensive normative consideration under two categories. First, there is the issue of assigning a proper classifier to a given noun. This may involve a direct register alternation:

(25)		[I.]	[II.]
	CLF for eggs	lûuk ~ bay	fɔɔŋ
	CLF for fruit	lûuk ~ bay	phŏn
	CLF for common people	khon	naay (vthân?)
	CLF for elephants	tua	chûak

The question of classifiers for people is of particular interest. In Haas's first (1942) description of the system, five classifiers for humans were given in a descending arrangement:

(26)	classifier	classified taxa
	a. ʔŋ	high royalty; monks ¹⁴
	b. rûup	monks
	c. thân	lower royalty; high officials
	d. naay	individuals slightly above the common people in rank or position
	e. khon	ordinary people

This is somewhat reminiscent of the Thai semi-feudal *sakdina* system of precise social ranking, formally abolished only ten years before Haas's original article appeared. Over 20 years later, her dictionary entries (1964) for the last three items in (26) show a shift of emphasis from objective social rank towards diglossic speech-level factors. The forms *thân* and *naay* are now simply taken to be 'elegant' counterparts of *khon*, with no difference in classified taxa specified.¹⁵ But this interesting realignment is not without its problems in terms of current Thai prescriptivist attitudes. Thichinphon (1979:164, citing Achan Dusadiphorn Chanmirotsan) holds that *thân* is properly only a pronoun and should never be used as a classifier. An expression such as

(27)	(*)	rátthamontri	sŏɔŋ	thân
		<i>cabinet-minister</i>	two	(CLF?)
		<i>two cabinet ministers</i>		

is thus unacceptable to Thichinphong, whereas it would be 'elegant' in the other scheme. (It is in any event rather commonly heard and seen.) On a more macabre note, Thichinphong also specifies conditions under which *sòp corpse* may function as a classifier.

Turning to animals, we have noted above in (8) King Rama IV's personal attention to their classifiers. He specified classifiers for the cosmologically highly-placed elephant (still used in higher registers, see (25)) and for the horse. *Horse* (máa), we recall, was specified as its own classifier, i.e. was to be counted directly in the pattern *number + noun*. This usage has not been generally accepted.

(28) King Rama IV's edicts	current popular usage
săam máa	máa săam tua
three horse	horse three CLF
three horses	three horses

The *horse* case provides a good transition to the second category of classifier prescriptivism: denouncement of the increasing tendency to count nouns with the pattern *number + noun*, given royal sanction in (28), rather than with *noun + number + CLF*. Although in the case of *horse number + noun* has not been widely used (save in a brand name for tea), the structural change indicated is now widespread, particularly in journalism. In a descriptive-analytical vein, Palakornkul (1976:195) has documented the modern 'anti-classifier' tendency. More prescriptively, Thichinphong (1979:162) and especially Posakritsana (1978: 61,72) have warned that such a change would undermine the 'identity' of the Thai language. Posakritsana displays data such as those in the columns below and labels her columns unequivocally 'wrong' [I.] and 'right' [II.].

(29)	[I.]	[II.]
three professors	săam ?aacaan	?aacaan săam khon
five girls	hăa yŋsăaw	yŋsăaw hăa khon
four young men	sîi nùm	chaaynùm sîi khon
two trucks	sǒŋ rǒtbanthúk	rǒtbanthúk sǒŋ khan
every educational institution	thúk-thúk sathăansùksăa	sathăansùksăa thúk-thúk hèn

As the examples suggest, human taxa are particularly affected.

A diachronic note may help to clarify some of these trends in classifier use as they relate to diglossic register. To judge from early Thai inscriptions (Khanakammakan chat phim ekkasan thang prawatsat 1978) and also from comparative evidence, the original classifier system was simpler and more flexible than the current normative one. Only a few classifiers, such as *khon* (for people), *tua* (for animals) and *?an* (for inanimate objects) were in wide use for counting. To a greater extent than perhaps than now these few classifiers were also common in certain anaphoric or definite-relative constructions. Some examples from Inscription I of King Ram Khamhaeng:

- 'There were five (*khon*) of us brothers and sisters from the same womb ...'
- 'I struck Lord Sam Chon's elephant, *the one* (*tua*) called Matsamu'ang ...'
- '... *the* Buddha image *which* (*?an*) is large ...'

As for counting, it is clear from the text of the inscription immediately following (a) that classifiers could be and perhaps regularly were omitted in some contexts: the siblings are specified as "three boys, two girls" with *no classifiers used at all*, the pattern being *noun + number*. Inscription V contains a monastic gift list in which items are similarly counted without classifiers, although in Inscription XIV a similar gift list uses the classifier *duaŋ* for small items (*duaŋ* today is used for lights and a few other items like seals and stamps). The general impression from these inscriptions is one of gradually shifting classifier taxa, proliferation of items used as classifiers and eventual codification in polite court speech and literature. Sometimes new forms were adapted from Indic (*ʔoŋ*, cp. *aṃga body*) or from Khmer (*chabàp*, used for documents). Classification of people, as we have seen from the work of Haas (1942), had links with an elaborated vertical social structure. Correct classifier use was explicitly recognised as part of refined speech, and by the mid-19th century the form class was referred to as *words spoken at the end of a number phrase* (*kham phûut plaay bàat sǎŋkhayǎa*). The modern diglossic sensitivity of classifiers is thus related to their history as salient features in differentiating elitist court registers. It should come as no surprise to find that in present-day lower-class speech or in rural Thai dialects of the various regions one hears a simpler 'basic' and more flexible system - cp. the early inscriptions. The normative system is not generally acquired by young children in the natural course of language acquisition; rather it tends to be taught explicitly by parents and later by teachers at school.¹⁷ It remains to wonder about the 'anti-classifier' trend exemplified in (29): is it entirely a recent (English-derived?) corruption? To cite Inscription I again (2:21), here given in modern pronunciation:

- (30) *muaŋ sùkhōothay níi mii sìi pàaktuu lǔaŋ*
town Sukhothai this have four gate large
The town of Sukhothai has four main gates.

The Thai expression for *four gates* here follows the pattern in (29) [I.]. The inscription similarly quantifies ghosts directly with no special classifier. The pattern was used then as now for non-discrete concepts, such as in time expressions (*nineteen years*) and in proper measurements (*3400 armspans*). Since one effect of subsequent classifier proliferation would have been to increase to the point of making virtually 'open' the class of forms allowed to occur directly in post-number position, we could see (29) [I.] as a rather natural outcome of shifting diachronic options. King Rama IV's attempted treatment of *horse* in (28) would be a convincing milestone along the way. The 'option' may now be receiving new impetus from the need to keep headlines minimal in journalism, etc. as suggested by Thichinphong (1979:165).

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are another sociolinguistically sensitive form class in Thai. As above, criteria for diglossic register differentiation interact with other selectional features. We see this in the case of benefactive prepositions.

- (31) a. *chán kèp ɲən hây dɛɛŋ*
I collect money give/for Daeng
 b. *chán kèp ɲən hây kɛɛ dɛɛŋ*
I collect money give/for for_x Daeng

- c. chán kèp ɲən hây dɛɛ thân-rátthamontri
I collect money give/for for_y cabinet-minister

These items (based on Sinlapasan 1937:151-152) exemplify some basic issues:

(i) Benefactive prepositions kɛɛ and dɛɛ are strictly-speaking (syntactically) optional after the benefactive verb hây *to give (to)*, etc.; but they may have a function in disambiguating two readings of *for* (English *for* and Thai hây permit similar benefactive ambiguity):

(a₁) *I collected money {for
to give to} Daeng. [→ kɛɛ]*

(a₂) *I collected money {for
on behalf of/instead of} Daeng.*

(ii) dɛɛ and kɛɛ are used for recipients who are respectively of relatively higher and relatively lower (or equal) status vis-a-vis the donor-subject.¹⁸

(iii) Principle (ii) is characteristic of higher registers; otherwise the variation is kɛɛ ~ Ø, covered by (i).

The considerations above are actually part of a larger pattern suggested implicitly in the work of Sinlapasan (1937). In colloquial speech, semantic 'case relationships' like possessive, dative-benefactive, instrumental, locative, purposive, etc. tend not to be marked overtly but are rather construed from context. Serial verb constructions may introduce such nominals into discourse: *take-knife-go-cut-rope*, compare: *cut the rope with the knife*. Case-marking with overt markers like prepositions is possible in Thai, but is often associated with a shift upwards in speech level.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (32) | [I.] | [II.] |
| a. | s̥wā ɲɛ̌w
<i>short Ngao</i>
[POSSESSIVE]: <i>Ngao's shirt</i> | s̥wā khɔ̌ɔŋ ɲɛ̌w
<i>shirt of Ngao</i> |
| b. | hây ɲɛ̌w
<i>give Ngao</i>
[DATIVE/BENEFACTIVE]: <i>Give it to Ngao.</i> | hây kɛɛ ɲɛ̌w
<i>give to Ngao</i> |
| c. | ɲɛ̌w chɔ̌ɔp kin m̥w̥w
<i>Ngao like eat hand</i>
[INSTRUMENT]: <i>Ngao likes to eat with his fingers.</i> ¹⁹ | ɲɛ̌w chɔ̌ɔp kin d̥uay m̥w̥w
<i>Ngao like eat with hand</i> |
| d. | ɲɛ̌w y̥u bâan
<i>Ngao stay house</i>
[LOCATIVE]: <i>Ngao is at home.</i> | ɲɛ̌w y̥u thîi bâan
<i>Ngao stay at house</i> |
| e. | tó? khĩan n̥áŋs̥w̥w
<i>table write book/writing</i>
[PURPOSIVE]: <i>a writing-table</i> | tó? s̥ám-ráp khĩan n̥áŋs̥w̥w
<i>table for write book/writing</i> |

In general, diglossic high registers tend to mark relationships such as those in (32) explicitly, as in [II.]; but qualifications are necessary. If practical ambiguity were to arise in direct noun-phrase complement interpretation, explicit prepositional marking would be one disambiguation strategy, and speech-level might be little affected. Also, in some cases further nuances of a temporal-aspectual nature are added to the case-type relationships indicated above through explicit prepositional marking. For the locative examples in

(32d), [I.] could (but need not) carry a habitual-durative connotation (- *he is at home these days, having lost his job* -) whereas the explicitly-marked *thîi* alternate might suggest a more temporary state of affairs (- *he is at the house just now* -). If the locative complement is an institution such as a company or bureaucratic unit the contrast is quite salient. In any event, to indicate high register a separate preposition *ná?* is available for the locative.

Similar high-register markers are available for allative and, although unusual and archaic, for accusative-objective case relationships.

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (33) | [I.] | [II.] |
| a. | <i>rwsǎi pay phûukhǎw</i>
<i>hermit go mountain</i>
[ALLATIVE]: <i>The hermit went to the mountain.</i> | <i>rwsǎi pay yaŋ phûukhǎw</i>
<i>hermit go to mountain</i> |
| b. | <i>phrá? sadεεŋ tham</i>
<i>monk express dharma</i>
[ACCUSATIVE/OBJECTIVE]: <i>The monk preached the dharma.</i> | <i>phrá? sadεεŋ sŭŋ tham</i>
<i>monk express [ACC] dharma</i> |

In (33b), due to Sinlapasan (1937:151), we note the form *sŭŋ*, a homophone of the relative form in (23a), but here marking a direct object. It may well be, as Sinlapasan appears to suggest, that this form and other prepositions in case-marking function have gained currency through ecclesiastical translations, where the forms were used consistently to indicate Pali case-endings. This would help to account for their high-register associations.

Prince Damrong Rajanubhab in his *Memoirs* (*Khwamsongcham*, edition 1973:276) relates an enlightening anecdote recalling how the preposition *dooy* came to be used to mark manner and agent. Prior to the late 19th century the form, originally from Khmer, was used in the sense of *along, following*, e.g. in *along the river*. When the Prince and others of the royal household were being educated by a foreign tutor who knew little Thai, a bilingual wordlist on the teacher's desk was frequently consulted during lessons. In this way a one-to-one correspondence between *by* and *dooy* became established for classroom purposes. The wordlist had apparently equated *dooy* and *by* on the basis of locative usage (*to walk by the river*), but the other agentive and manner uses of *by* were transferred to *dooy* as well. Thus sentences like (34) became 'royal classroom-ese'.

- (34) *khǎw pay dooy* *rwa*
 3P *go along* (i.e. *by*) *boat*
 They went by boat.

Expressions like *written by* were also translated using *dooy*. Later when Prince Damrong and his colleagues had positions of power and influence in the court, the phraseology was retained for official court correspondence. The high prestige of courtly writing imbued this English-derived prepositional usage with an accepted register-marking status. At present it appears to be completely acceptable in higher registers, and prescriptivist or puristic authorities do not seem to raise objections.

More recent direct translations of English prepositions have not been so well received. Thai versions of ... *thank you FOR dinner* ... and ... *calling forth the disapproval OF the people TOWARD the soldiers* ... are held up as peculiar and unnatural (Kanittanan 1979:56; Posakritsana 1978:72). Posakritsana provides an indirect hint that English-derived "translationese" with respect to preposition use may be getting out of hand, with Thai prepositions now added for stylistic effect even where English prototypes would not have prepositions.

Posakritsana criticises the sentence (1978:63):

kháw tǒp kĕe thəe She [etc.] answered you.
3P. answer for 2P.

as containing the preposition kĕe unnecessarily, which is "... probably translated from the word *to* in English; it creates extraneous verbiage [kham fŭmfway] ...". But of course the English verb *to answer*, in this case like its Thai counterpart tǒp, normally takes direct post-verbal noun-phrase complements, not prepositional phrases (... answered you; ... answered the question).²⁰ So Thai speakers or writers who are using prepositions in this way appear to be applying some analogical principle ('stylistic preposition insertion') for register colouration, and there may be links both with English translations and with the older (Pali-derived?) use of prepositions described above.

CULTURAL CONTACT AND LINGUISTIC CHANGE

More generally, the question of English syntactic influence on Thai is taken up by Thai scholars in both a descriptive (e.g. Kanittanan 1979) and prescriptive way. Kanittanan does well to compare over-extension of the Thai (adversative) passive in thŭuk, use of Thai *man* *it* as a non-anaphoric sentence initiator, and other clear examples of English-derived lexicosyntactic innovation, with Thai attitudes towards blue jeans, ice-cream cones and the latest Western hit tunes. There is an obvious contrast in attitude between 'Westward-looking' urban middle-class youth and a more conservative 'establishment' of older tradition-conscious (and one might wish to add 'elitist') educators. What to the former group are tokens of peer-acceptance and avoidance of outdated (chəəy) norms and attitudes, to the latter group are corruptions threatening 'Thai identity' (?èekkalák thay) and older norms which should be upheld and preserved. (It should be borne in mind however, as we have seen above, that some of the 'received corpus' of prescriptive attitudes dates from the contact that princes and other Thai scholars had with English public-school prescriptivism nearly a century ago.)²¹

Above we have sampled linguistic forms which are salient in one way or another in indicating diglossic register, as seen mainly in the writings of Thai scholars. Many other important aspects of register differentiation have been omitted in this brief survey, especially technical aspects of literary composition and questions of rhetorical evaluation which go rather beyond phonology, lexicon and syntax defined narrowly. The general picture seen above is one of rich variation far more complex than a neat two-tiered system, although there are many binary aspects to the variation and the broad arrangement of diglossic registers would be along a high-to-low continuum. Some historical proposals have been suggested to link register differentiation to traditional Thai societal verticalism, especially as it developed in the Ayudhian period, and to link more recent normative codification to similar Western prescriptivist attitudes toward national language standardisation in the era of nation states. More recent inroads English may be making on Thai linguistic structure are subject to a certain evaluative ambivalence: there are pressures both for and against phonological, lexical and syntactic borrowing from English, and register differences associated with such borrowing are not so easily classified in the diglossic scheme.

It remains to ask to what extent Thai scholars are interested in the development of present-day language norms and in how descriptive and prescriptive statements about language may differ or be interrelated. Phraya Upakit Sinlapasan, Phraya Anuman Rajadhon and other authorities of the Royal Academy established by King Rama VI had a set of interests and abilities which combined descriptive and

prescriptive approaches to language. Modern Thai authorities could probably see in those works such a synthesis. But Achan Banyat Ruangsri (personal communication) suggests that in the 1970s staff and students of Thai teacher's colleges became quite polarised over how the Thai language should be studied in schools. One group advocated descriptive investigation and analysis of language as it is used in different situations (taking statements like (2) above seriously); another group held that prescriptive norms alone constituted what should be taught, or sought to redefine the issue into one of which particular forms were 'correct'. The former group would associate itself with courses and manuals called *Language Use* (kaancháy phasǎa); the latter with [normative] *Language Principles* (lǎk phasǎa, the original title of Sinlapasan 1937) or perhaps *Grammar* in the traditional school sense of the term. As might be expected, those back from overseas courses in linguistics and their students tended to champion the former cause. As the debates came to take place during the turbulent political events of the mid-1970s, they became part of more comprehensive campaigns to criticise and change or defend and preserve the Thai educational system more generally.

With Thai, virtually any attempt to do linguistics becomes sociolinguistics quite rapidly, either overtly or covertly. One can hardly ignore what we have called diglossic registers above without related oversights and oversimplifications. One hopes that the near future will bring studies of Thai with increasing sociolinguistic sophistication, especially by Thai scholars with training in linguistics more broadly.

NOTES

1. The Thai National Research Council and the Australian National University have both kindly facilitated field research reported here. Special thanks go to Achan Sutira Wacharaboworn, Achan Banyat Ruangsri and Khun Chaliao Chotithewachub; they are not responsible for shortcomings.
2. Thichinphong (1979:165) with an element of Thai 'social pragmatism' holds that speech selections should be made "efficiently, so as to be of advantage in whatever the speaker intends". He also provides examples of "too high" registers used in the family or in the market place which would be interpreted as attempts at humour or scorn (cp. dàtcarìt above).
3. However there is evidence that even kings could find royal speech irksome and, as H.H. Prince Chula Chakrabongse observed, "members of the Chakri Family have often written to one another in English to avoid the elaborate language required for different ranks even amongst relatives." (Quoted by Gedney 1971:111n.)
4. Wayaakoon also translates *grammar* and can be used for lǎk phasǎa in the expressions above, but the latter term is more common and has a more normative connotation; see also below.
5. A few more obvious specifically Thai features such as classifiers have been labelled. Haas has recognised "secondary verbs", which are now called by some kriyaa ร้อย. Other important features of Thai await consensus on nomenclature. 'Particle' as a word-class has no generally accepted Thai equivalent, and particles are effectively ignored in standard grammars (Sinlapasan

1937; Thongprasoet 1975, etc.), even though they are of crucial importance in questions, commands and in a great range of sociolinguistic issues.

6. Thus terms like *kam*, *tham*, *bun*, *bàap*, *thâat*, *kathĭn*, *phĭksù?* occur as Buddhist vocabulary in early inscriptions. Later it is common to find legal-secular terms like *punishment* (ʔaatchayaa), *legal case* (khadii), *permit* (ʔanuyâat). The prefixal form *phrá-* is used in early Sukhothai inscriptions in religious contexts; later it is applied to kingship as well, along with other Indic royal formatives (*raachaa*, *borom*, etc.; Ishii 1972).
7. Sometimes the coined neo-Indic guise was draped over an English form in a 'diaphanous' manner:

<i>communication</i>	→	<i>khomanaakhom</i>
<i>seminar</i>	→	<i>sămmanaa</i>
<i>statistics</i>	→	<i>sathĭʔtĭ?</i>
<i>automatic</i>	→	<i>ʔàttanoomát</i>

- the latter giving rise to erudite quarrelling as to proper use.

8. e.g. in *Ni Lae Lok* of *Dok Mai Sot*. One is reminded of the Russian verb *katarvat'* 'to pronounce a French r' (as an aristocratic trait).
9. There is an interesting range of poetic -r- insertion phenomena such as:

<i>clean</i>	<i>saʔàat</i>	>	<i>saràʔàat</i>
<i>nose</i>	<i>camùuk</i>	>	<i>còoramùuk</i>

Some Thai words have been re-spelt in Indic fashion with -r- inserted or substituted, such as:

<i>honour</i>	<i>k\at</i> (as though < <i>kiarti</i>)	เกียรติ
<i>milled (rice)</i>	<i>s\an</i> (as though < <i>sāra</i>)	สาร

Also, in some cases the prefix *kra-* appears to have been assigned analogically under influence of a preceding -k:

<i>sparrow</i>	<i>nók còok</i>	>	<i>nók kracòok</i>
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(Rajadhon 1956:158,183).

10. Both modern forms for *insect* appear to be derived from an earlier **mleɛŋ* (the current form in conservative Southern Thai dialects). Some argue that the [I.] form is proper in compounds such as *mleɛŋmum spider*.
11. Two decades ago an immensely popular song *Headman Li* (*phūuyàì líi*) made use of *pig* variants ((19) c. [I.] ~ [II.]) to make fun of rural people's misunderstanding of level-sensitive vocabulary. But the fact that the song was an upcountry 'hit' too leads one to suppose most listeners in fact understood the term in question.
12. Tabu in Thai is too broad a subject to deal with here. Suffice it to add that for high registers certain expressions are normatively avoided if interchange of initial consonants would produce anything 'off-colour'. This accords with a Thai word game called *kham phuan* (Haas 1957; Gandour 1974). Some examples:

common form	tabu metathesis	circumlocution for higher registers
<i>phàk bŭŋ</i>	<i>bàk phŭŋ</i>	<i>phàk thòwt yòwt</i>
<i>sp. edible plant</i>	(vulgar reference to male genitalia)	<i>vegetable casting forth shoot tops</i>

common form	tabu metathesis	circumlocution for higher registers
pèet tua <i>eight CLF animals</i>	tèet (pua) (vulgar reference to female genitalia)	sii khuu <i>four pairs</i>
tàak dèet <i>expose to sunlight</i>	dàak tèet (vulgar reference to female genitalia)	phùŋ dèet <i>dry in sunlight</i>
thùà ɲòk <i>beansprout</i>	(ɲua) hũa thòk (vulgar reference to male genitalia)	thùà phó? <i>sprouted bean</i>

(Source: Ayudhya Teacher's College 1976:254.)

13. yàak and ?aw can have sexual connotations, hence perhaps hesitation on the part of some to use them in polite speech or writing.
14. As Haas notes (1964:601), high royalty are usually classified by phrá?oŋ.
15. naay as a classifier is mainly in bureaucratic and journalistic prose.
16. Palakornkul (1976:194) notes that in fact "most Thai speakers use tua for elephants in casual speech." Some claim chũak is proper for tame elephants, tua for wild ones, but that would be to miss King Rama IV's original Buddhist motivation for specifying chũak.
17. John Grima (personal communication) has helped me to see this. Kanittanan (1976) has touched on some of these issues in her discussion of the evolution of the classifier ?an.
18. A similar constraint on relative status of nominal arguments of hây used in a causative sense is stated by Posakritsana (1978:64).
19. The verbs ?aw *to take* and chây *to use* also introduce instrumental nouns, particularly in longer serial verb constructions. I am indebted to William Foley for help in seeing the significance of serial-verb functions of this sort in a wider typological context. Posakritsana (1978:63) notes the fact that frequently Thai prepositions are 'optional'. (32e) is her example.
20. Although one can *answer to the authorities* or *answer for one's impudence*, it is difficult to see these somewhat specialised expressions as giving rise to what Posakritsana has in mind.
21. Rather than Kanittanan's blue jeans and ice cream, perhaps colour T.V., flush toilets and the family car would be better analogues of the extension of thùuk expressions and man-pen ... initial sentences; adult Western-educated upper-class urban elite are more responsible for these imports than are the teenagers on the streets. Ironically, some of the most hair-raising (to a strict prescriptivist) 'misuses' of thùuk are in Sinlapasan 1937, which is usually received with scriptural authority. Consider:

chán thùuk thân khĩan nắŋsũw thũŋ
 1P. *undergo* 3P. *write letter, document reach*
I was written to by him.

thân thùuk chán khít thũŋ
 3P. *undergo* 1P. *think reach*
He was thought about by me.

(Sinlapasan 1937:151)

Adversative readings of these sentences are rather far-fetched and they are hardly sentences that 'normal people' would use.

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