

The home domain and minority language maintenance: a sociolinguistic view of three Black Tai families in Thailand*

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1. Introduction

In Fishman's Reversing Language Shift (RLS), a set of language planning priorities known as the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) is proposed. Fishman (1990, 1991, 2001) contends that, of all the eight stages on the GIDS, Stage 6 which involves informal use of an ethnic language in the home and the community is critical to the survival of the language since it is this stage where intergenerational family transmission of the language takes place. Thus, in this paper, I study an ethnic Black Tai minority language community at Nongkhe village, Petchaburi province, Thailand, in order to understand how Black Tai families are or are not using the ethnic language in the home situation there.

Black Tai is a 'displaced Tai language' (according to Smalley, 1994), from the Tai language family, with a long history of residence in Petchaburi Province. There are between 20,000 and 30,000 speakers in Thailand (Grimes, 1996).

During my community-level study, it is found that people still use their ethnic Black Tai language actively around the community regardless of their age, gender, educational level and occupation. However, to ascertain whether and how there is intergenerational transmission of the language in the home, home-level research was specifically conducted in three Black Tai families. Spending over a month in each family, I interviewed family members and observed both their language use and attitudes toward the language in an attempt to determine which home factors contribute to the maintenance of the ethnic language and which home factors promote its shift. I also recorded actual conversations among family members at four different occasions to investigate real forms of the language used as excessive structural changes are said to be an important indication of language shift as well (Crystal, 2000). Thus, the home-level research not only has provided insightful information on

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intergenerational family transmission, it has also allowed me to obtain more complete data on the maintenance or shift of the ethnic Black Tai language.

This paper consists of five sections in addition to this Introduction. Section Two describes the three families. Section Three deals with language use in the three families while Section Four discusses attitudes of family members toward their own language and culture as well as those of others. Section Five summarizes home factors as related to language maintenance and shift. Section Six provides recommendations for promoting ethnic language maintenance.

2. Description of the three families

2.1 *Family 1*

Family 1 consists of four family members: 60-year-old father, 46-year-old mother, 16-year-old daughter and father's older sister. All of them are Black Tai who are bilinguals of both Black Tai and Standard Thai. They live in a typical Black Tai-styled house – huge and elevated on stilts with a spacious communal area with a room for ancestral spirits in one corner of the upper level and a bamboo litter and hammock in the space below. The house is equipped with some modern electrical appliances like rice cooker, television set, fan, refrigerator, iron, typewriter and recently installed telephone. Although piped water is available in the community, the family prefers using water from a well as it is cheaper.

The parents are farmers cultivating rice and other crops in their own 11.2-square kilometer field; thus, they spend most of the time in their paddy field. Although the aunt is still healthy at 69, she suffers from osteoporosis and has difficulty walking a long distance. Therefore, she mostly spends all day at home doing all kinds of work around the house. The daughter is up very early, gets ready for a minibus to pick up and arrives school in the town of Khaoyoi district by 7.30 a.m. She is at school all day and usually gets back home at 5 p.m. The women normally have dinner together; the father sometimes joins them but most of the time he is out socializing with his male neighbors drinking and discussing agriculture. Family members spend relatively little time together during weekdays. On weekends, on the other hand, they also have breakfast together in addition to dinner and television viewing times. School breaks are also the time when the family can enjoy the company of one another even more. When the daughter does not have to go to school, she accompanies her parents to the field and renders her help there as well. Moreover, during weekends, the daughter regularly visits her maternal grandmother, aunt and uncle who live in another Black Tai-styled house 50 meters away. The family is not very loquacious, and yet strong bonds and close relationships among family members and between the two families are obvious. They always look out for one another. Also, they like to save good rare stuff they gather from the woods, such as *hèt khoon* 'a kind of mushroom' and *phàk waan* 'a kind of vegetable,' for one another instead of selling it.

The daughter seems to be the center of attention in the family. Since the daughter has been doing so well in school, the family encourages her to have the best education she possibly can. However, they are very concerned about her now that drugs and other serious problems have reached children in schools. The grandmother inquires after her granddaughter every time she sees her. Likewise, as I was informed by the teacher with whom I stayed during my field research, the paternal aunt always expect her niece to be back from school at an exact time. Once she was home unreasonably late, the parents walked to the teacher's home and demanded an explanation. When her niece is going to town, the maternal aunt makes sure she has enough money. The family likes it that the daughter is different from other teenagers. Instead of constantly hanging out with a lot of friends, she has only one close friend who is Black Tai living in the community, and is mostly at home.

Family 1 is strongly attached to their Black Tai roots. One of the most noticeable ethnic markers is their appearance. The grandmother and paternal aunt put their hair up in the traditional Black Tai way and wear customary Black Tai top and sarong. The family also upholds traditional beliefs about spirits. Inheriting clan spirits of the leader class, the family carries out *seen paat toj* every five days and *seen phii hian* every three years to worship their ancestral spirits. All but the paternal aunt regularly participate in the Black Tai Festival annually held at Nongprong Temple. Despite strong attachment with the ethnic culture, the family members are good Buddhists who like to go to the Buddhist temple to make merits, particularly on important religious days.

2.2 Family 2

There are five members in Family 2: father, mother, two children (a daughter and a son), and paternal grandmother. All family members are Black Tai born in Nongkhe and can speak both Black Tai and Standard Thai. Existing traces of Thai influence present an interesting mixture of the two cultures.

Their traditional Black Tai-styled house is huge, elevated on stilts with an open verandah with a ladder attached, and roofed with corrugated iron with a pick-up truck parked in the lower area. The house is equipped with modern electrical appliances like that of Family 1. Attached to the rear of the house is a beauty shop which is always loud with popular music from a stereo combo and crowded with customers who come for beauty as well as pay phone service.

The 47-year-old father is a farmer. He gets up and leaves for his rice fields very early in the morning and comes back home from the field before dark. Being a hairdresser working in her own beauty shop, the 45-year-old mother starts and ends her day later than the rest of the family and rarely eats dinner with the family and often goes to bed when other family members are already asleep. Just like her mother who has never relished the quiet life in the

countryside and the rice field, the 19-year-old daughter chose to complete her secondary education at the provincial school. Instead of daily commuting back and forth between home and school, the daughter decided to rent an apartment room close to her school where her parents could come for a visit and spend a night with her during weekends. All the time she was doing her high school diploma, the daughter came back home only occasionally. Since high school, the daughter has pursued her undergraduate degree at a private university in Bangkok. The daughter spends very little time with her family in the Nongkhe community. Unlike his older sister, the 12-year-old son is much more attached to the community and thus the Black Tai culture. He is back home every day although he has gone to a secondary school in the provincial town since graduating elementary education from Wat Nongprong School. When he finishes his homework, he likes to hang out with other Black Tai community boys or plays with his young cousins who live next door.

The paternal grandmother is 72 years old. She is very healthy and active for her age. She spends most of her time during the day sweeping the yard, trapping fish and preparing meals. She is a true Black Tai person in the sense that she wears customary Black Tai outfits, speaks only her ethnic Black Tai language, lives in Nongkhe village and hardly leaves the Black Tai community, worships only spirits of Black Tai ancestors, and leads a rather traditional Black Tai lifestyle. She gets up before dawn and goes to bed very early without watching any television programs. The grandmother and her grandson are very close as they are always home eating together and sleeping in the same mosquito net while other family members separately go about their business.

The family still upholds traditions regarding spirit worship. Descending from a commoners clan, they practice *seen paat toj* every ten days and *seen hian* every three to five years to worship spirits of the ancestors. While the grandmother and her grandson follow more traditional Black Tai ways, the parents and daughter tend to lean more toward the Thai culture.

2.3 Family 3

The 65-year-old grandparents have four children: one son and three daughters. The son is an officer in the Royal Thai Army. He has worked in Bangkok and married a Thai wife. Due to a confined residence and lack of a babysitter, the parents have had to leave their 3-year-old daughter under the grandparents' care at Nongkhe Village since she was a baby, coming to visit from time to time. The eldest daughter married a Black Tai man and had a daughter, but they are now divorced. Her 9-year-old child has lived with her in the grandparents' house. Graduating from a vocational college, the middle daughter, also living in the house, supervises a group of skilled workers in a well-known clothing factory in Petchaburi Province. The youngest daughter is a nurse. In spite of working in Bangkok, she comes back to the Nongkhe community every month to visit her parents during which time she stays for a

few days. Although Family 3 consists of many family members, only six people stay home permanently. They are the two grandparents, the eldest and middle daughters and the two granddaughters, all of whom use both Black Tai and Standard Thai to communicate among one another.

The family's house looks very different from their neighbors' after reconstruction and refurbishment. The typical Black Tai-styled house has been transformed into a two-story house. The wood-based upper story is kept unchanged from its original Black Tai style. The lower area, on the other hand, changes greatly. The open space in the lower level, which was once used as the family's living room as well as storage space, is now floored and walled in cement. The back section is divided into a row of eight rooms each of which has a wooden door and louvered windows. The house has in it almost all modern home equipment like stove, refrigerator, rice cooker, fan, iron, telephone and washing machine.

The grandparents and their second daughter are farmers who grow rice and other agricultural crops on their own land. While they are gone, the third daughter who starts her work at 10 a.m. cares for the children. The older granddaughter studies at Wat Nongprong School and leaves for school at 7.30 a.m. On weekdays, either the grandmother or her eldest daughter has to come home to look after the younger granddaughter before the middle daughter leaves for work. They do not have to do so on weekends as the two grandchildren can play together and the older one can help take care of the younger one. In the afternoon, the adults again go to the field but one of them needs to remain with the younger grandchild until the older granddaughter is back from school. The family members have dinner together at around 6.30 p.m.

Even though the family is somewhat modern, some traditional Black Tai traces are still evident. The grandmother wears traditional Black Tai hairstyle and clothes. The family upholds traditional Black Tai beliefs with respect to the rites of passage and spirits, and continues to carry out ceremonies concerning spirit worship. When neighbors worship their ancestral spirits, the family always attends the ceremonies and lends their labor for the food preparation process.

3. Language use

It is certain that the ethnic Black Tai language is intergenerationally transmitted in the three families but to different degrees given the different backgrounds of each family. Intergenerational transmission of Black Tai constantly happens in Family 1 as it includes only Black Tai members who spend a lot of time together and therefore communicate in the language all the time. Although Family 2 consists of all Black Tai members, intergenerational transmission of the ethnic language does not occur steadily with all members. Opportunities for the language to be transmitted intergenerationally to the

grandson are greater since he spends more time with Black Tai adults, especially the grandmother. The granddaughter, on the other hand, receives much fewer chances for the intergenerational transmission of the ethnic language because she spends little time with her family in the Black Tai community. Family 3 members spend plenty of time together in the Black Tai community compared to Family 2, and yet, intergenerational transmission of the ethnic language is inconsistent as it is influenced by the more dominant Standard Thai. There are at least two reasons for that. One reason is that some members spend most of their time in the surrounding environment and workplaces, for example, in which Standard Thai is the dominant language. The other reason is that the family has a young member whose parents have different mother tongues. Even though the child is raised in the Black Thai environment, family members prefer to transmit the dominant language to her alongside Black Tai as her parent thinks of her as Thai. By and large, it is safe to say that intergenerational transmission takes place in all three families. However, it is by no means an easy task to determine exactly to what degree it is happening in each family.

Considering more closely the transcription of the tapes recorded on four different occasions in each family (12 altogether), I found some striking features in the utterances made by members of the three families at the phonological, morphological, lexical and discourse levels. The features are pivotal as they will ultimately provide additional evidence for arguments on whether maintenance or shift is occurring in the ethnic Black Tai language.

3.1 *At the phonological level*¹

The feature that occurs at the phonological level is the shifting of the phonemes /ai/ to /aw/. The diphthong /ai/, which is a Proto-Tai vowel according to Li's (1977) reconstruction, is still preserved by the Black Tai members in all families. In Family 1, words with the diphthong /ai/ are observed in the grandparent and parent generations, as in the following examples:

¹Data obtained from the transcriptions of the tapes are presented using the following abbreviations:

- Abbreviations for speakers:
F = father, M = mother, GF = grandfather, GM = grandmother, PA = paternal aunt, MA = maternal aunt, GC1 = the older grandchild, GC2 = the younger grandchild
- Abbreviations for grammatical words:
1S = first person singular pronoun, 2S = second person singular pronoun, 3S = third person singular pronoun, 1P = first person plural pronoun, P = particle, Q = question word, POSS = possessive, Ex = exclamation word, CF = classifier, CP = comparative, PN = proper name, D = verb of direction, CAU = causative, Adv = adverb

(1) Use of /ai/ in Family 1

- (a) GM: *lej **baɪ** man juu hii na saw jaŋ bɔ hee **taɪ** na*
 Ex receipt 3S be here P 3S still not yet return P
 ‘The receipt is here. She has not been back (home) yet.’
 (TS 2/2/12)
- (b) M: *?aw cook cook paj taan nan na cook paj **hai***
 Ex pull pull go way that P pull go give
man saaj saaj paj taan nan la ?e
 3S loosen loosen go way that P P
 ‘Pull it that way so that (the rice seedlings) loosen up.’
 (TS 1/9/8-9)
- (c) M: *?ə ?iphuu kɔ tɔŋ **hai** kua kon la saamsip*
 Ex 1P P must give P person each 30
*baat na **huacai** saw na ja? laj ?ee*
 baht P heart 3S P want get much
 ‘We must pay him 30 baht each, (so) he wants to take many
 (people).’ (TS 1/17/2-3)
- (d) M: *?aaj ?isuu jaŋ juu hian **phujai** han na*
 father 2S still be house village headman P P
 ‘Your father is still at the village headman’s, isn’t he?’
 (TS 3/4/2)
- (e) PA: *haa thom din **sai** taan naam niaj jæx læj*
 1S fill soil put in water way be tired much P
 ‘I filled the waterway. I am very exhausted.’ (TS 1/4/4)
- (f) MA: *ho khɔɔŋ bɔthuaj ɲɔ? hii ka nii **mai***
 Ex POSS PN sprout long CP this P
 ‘Thuay’s rice seedlings sprout longer than these.’ (TS 1/6/3)

However, the diphthong /ai/ has been replaced in the grandchildren generation with /aw/. Thus, all the bold italicized words in examples (1a) to (1f) are pronounced by the grandchildren as *saw*, *maw*, *haw*, *huacaw*, *baw*, *taw* and *phujaw*, respectively.

In Family 2, just like in Family 1, the diphthong /ai/ is lost in the grandchildren generation and replaced with the phoneme /aw/. It is nevertheless maintained in the grandparent and parent generations. In Family 2, the diphthong /aw/ appears in the same set of words as found in the speeches made by Family 1 members with additional words presented in the examples below:

(2) Use of /ai/ in Family 2

(a) GM: *ʔet ʔet tɔlai kɔ bɔ pɔɔ khaaj nɔ sut*
do do how much P not enough sell P dress

nɔɔj sut ɲai
small dress big

‘(Student uniforms), both small and big sizes, are not enough to sell no matter how much they make them.’ (TS 5/12/3-4)

(b) M: *taŋcai tææŋ ləj ʔanna*
intend abort P P

‘(She) must have intended to abort the baby.’ (TS 7/16/5)

The preservation of the diphthong /ai/ is observed in Family 3 as well, but only in the grandparent generation. In the parent and grandchildren generations, the diphthong is lost and replaced by the phoneme /aw/. The phoneme /ai/ appears in the same set of words illustrated in (1) and (2).

It is interesting to observe that the replaced diphthong /ai/ happens to be pronounced like the Standard Thai phoneme /aw/. Therefore, it is possible that the replacement of the diphthong /ai/ with the phoneme /aw/ by the grandchildren and parent generations is influenced by Standard Thai since they are more exposed to the language of the dominant culture than those in the grandparent generation.

Shifting of /ai/ to /aw/ is the only phenomena observed at the phonological level. The process seems to occur as a consequence of intense language contact between Black Tai and Standard Thai. It does not seem to be an indicator of language maintenance or shift.

3.2 *At the morphological level*

A four-syllable phrase is created with the reduplication of either similar sounds or similar meanings. Four-syllable phrases are an important feature of many languages in Southeast Asia, particularly those in the Tai family (Suriya, 1988). This morphological phenomenon is observed over and over again in the speeches produced by Family 1 members. That is, twenty four-syllable phrases of three subtypes are listed over the two-hour period of tape recording. Some examples are given below:

(3) Use of four-syllable phrases in Family 1 (Sub-type 1)

(a) GM: *bɔ khəəj waw maa waw too haɲ too kwaa bu*
not ever say come say what not know
‘(She) has never told me things. I do not know what she is saying?’ (TS 4/15/12)

- (b) M: *?əə ?i hai kuu paj sam paj law ?ina*
 Ex will give 1S go do again P
 ‘Yes, (my husband) will have me go sowing (unsowed sticky rice seedlings) again.’ (TS 1/10/20)
- (c) M: *ma?phia hii ?əj jaŋ ma? laj kep ləj*
 taro here P yet not get collect P
khin mok khin laa khon ?ɔ? paj
 become moldy carry out go
 ‘I had not collected the taros, but they became moldy. So I had to take them out.’ (TS 1/19/13)

(3a) – (3c) are examples of the first subtype. Under this first subtype, the meaning of the phrase remains unchanged after the reduplication of sounds and meanings. For instance, in (3a), the base for the reduplication has two syllables *too haŋ*. The first syllable *too* is a classifier word whereas the second one *haŋ* is a question word meaning ‘what.’ When the two syllables are put together, the meaning of the word stays the same and the word *toohaŋ* still means ‘what.’ The grandmother then elaborates on the word by reduplicating the sound and meaning of the first syllable in the base form but changes the second syllable of the base form to some other word which, by itself, means nothing. After the reduplication process, the meaning of the four-syllable phrase remains as ‘what.’

(4) Use of four-syllable phrases in Family 1 (Sub-type 2)

- (a) PA: *?eem too na wia? ?ee wia? laaj ləəj paj ?aw*
 mother self P work much so go take
?isaaw jot
 unmarried woman PN
 ‘Her own mother was busy working, so she had to take Miss Yot instead.’ (TS 1/26/8)
- (b) MA: *juu kan tɔɔ kan na*
 equal P
 ‘(The prices of the Chinat rice and the Phitsanulok rice) are the same, aren’t they?’ (TS 1/7/17)

The expressions in (4a) – (4b) are examples of the second subtype of four-word phrases. Like the first subtype, the process again reduplicates both *sounds and meanings from the base form*. However, while the reduplication of meaning is partial in the first subtype, it is complete in the second one. To illustrate the point, let take (4a) as an example. The base form *wia? ?ee* has two syllables: the former means ‘to work’ while the latter refers to ‘much.’ Then the paternal aunt reduplicates both the sound and meaning of the first syllable in the base form *wia?* before replacing the second syllable of the base

with another word. However, this time the replacing word *laaj*, which also means ‘much,’ has the same meaning as the word *?ee*. After the complete reduplication of sounds and meanings, the meaning of the four-syllable phrase remains unchanged and still refers to ‘to work a lot.’

(5) Use of four-syllable phrases in Family 1 (Sub-type 3)

- (a) F: *khooj kə khaaj phak naa caa naap kə khaaj phak*
 things P sell vegetables P sell vegetables

pootsaanphit

chemical-free

‘(They) sell things. (They) sell chemical-free vegetables.’
 (TS3/11/3)

- (b) PA: *bəj ?i huusop kə niŋ ɲapɲap bə na kəæw ɲapɲap bə*
 look P mouth P move Adv P P chew Adv P

lej bəkhəj thaaj hen lu? taw khaw cii kan lej ca
 P not quite broadcast see offspring P P P

‘Look at their mouth moving and chewing. We cannot quite see the faces of (the queen’s) offspring (from the TV live coverage).’ (TS 3/11/6-7)

Examples (5a) – (5b) illustrate the third subtype of four-syllable expressions. It is different from the first two subtypes in that, after the reduplication process, the newly created four-syllable phrases will have an additional collective sense to them. Generally, the base form is made up of two words with close meanings and the process is done with the reduplication of the vowel sound from the base word. For instance, in the expression *phak naa caa naap* in (5a), the base form consists of the first two syllables which are close in meaning: *phak* means ‘vegetable’ and *naa* is ‘grass.’ The father then elaborates on the base form by adding two more syllables which share the same vowel /a/ and which, by themselves, have no meaning. Instead of talking about one particular kind of vegetable, the whole phrase refers to ‘vegetables’ collectively after the reduplication process. Likewise, in the expression *lu? taw khaw cii* in (5b), the first and last syllables which have close meanings combine to make the base form. The first syllable *lu?* is ‘child’ while *cii* means ‘child’s child.’ Then the paternal aunt elongates the base form by inserting another two syllables with the same vowel to create the collective meaning of ‘offspring.’

From the above examples, it is evident that only speakers in the grandparent and parent generations exhibit this striking morphological feature. The feature is not observed in any speakers of the grandchildren generation. In fact, upon listening to the recorded conversations, one grandchild made a comment on the language style used by her predecessors as ‘different and weird’ (FN 13/7/01: 79).

Four-syllable phrases are also observed in Family 2 as well. Yet, they occur much less frequently than those in Family 1. Over the two-hour period of tape recording, only two expressions are found. Both expressions belong to the second subtype in which the complete reduplication of both sound and meanings is done. For example, in (6a), the base form contains two syllables, *haaw* and *ciin*, the first of which means ‘not’ while the second is ‘fresh.’ The grandmother then elaborates on the base word by reduplicating the first syllable *bɔ* from the base form and replacing the second one *haaw* with a new word *ciin* that has similar meaning. After the reduplication process, the meaning of the expression remains unchanged. It still means ‘not (feeling) fresh.’

(6) Use of four-syllable phrases in Family 2

- (a) GM: *kɔ jaajthaw nan laj tookaj nan juu tookaj*
 P old woman that chase away chicken that stay chicken
lɔəj nam kamhua khaam paj ləj jaajthaw man ləəj
 so tread head cross go P old woman 3S so
pen tantæx nan maa bɔ haaw bɔ ciin
 become sick since then that D not fresh
 ‘The old woman was chasing the chicken away when it trod on her head and flew away. So the old woman has been in poor health.’ (TS 6/4/7-10)
- (b) GM: *?isuu pɔɔ laaj pɔɔ lee ?isuu na bɔ mii taaj lɔ? ?isuu*
 2S keep one’s distance 2S P not have way P 2S
na kon phunii na
 P man this P
 ‘You like to keep your distance. There is no way (you will get acquainted with someone easily). (TS 6/8/8)

As the examples in (6) reveal, Family 2’s limited use of this morphological feature is entirely by the grandparents. The situation is the same for Family 3 as the grandparents are the only members who use four-syllable phrases in their speech. As in Family 2, they only produce the phrases twice over the two-hour period of tape recording. Both expressions are illustrated below.

(7) Use of four-syllable phrases in Family 3

- (a) GM: *paj ?et ɲaan pum ɲaan puun ka hian ?ikukkik pin na*
 go do cement work at house PN there P
 ‘She went to do the cement work at Kukkik’s house.’
 (TS10/17/10)

- (b) GF: *khæ? baan jaan paa too sin ?əj kə jaan*
 scream loudly CF like that P P scared
 ‘You screamed so loudly. Why were you scared of this animal?’
 (TS 9/23/9)

The two phrases in (7) display two subtypes of four-syllable expressions. (7a) is an example of the first subtype found also in Family 1. To produce a phrase of this first subtype, the first syllable of a base form is reduplicated while the second one is replaced with a word that has no meaning by itself but has a similar syllable structure with a slight change of some consonant and vowel. (7b) exhibits yet another subtype of four-syllable phrases. Here it looks like the phrase undergoes sound reduplication of the vowel /a/. However, reduplication of meaning is not present in this phrase. On the other hand, each word has its own meaning: *khæ?* means ‘to scream,’ *baan* is ‘village,’ *jaan* refers to ‘to be afraid’ and *paa* is ‘forest.’ When all the words are combined to form a four-syllable phrase, the original meanings are somehow maintained and the phrase can roughly be defined as ‘scream loudly, be afraid of the forest.’ As explained by Hom, my language helper, when someone screams so loudly that every one in the village can hear his or her screaming, the loud screaming will wake up spirits of the forest. That is the thing he or she should be afraid of.

It is interesting to note that, although four-syllable phrases are used in Family 3 by the grandparent generation, the phrase in (7a) contains a word from Standard Thai, namely *jaan* meaning ‘work.’ The mix of the traditional morphological process and Standard Thai vocabulary may be due to the fact that both languages are used in their daily lives among family members. However, this lexical mix is not an indicator of shift away from the family language. Rather, it is convergence where the traditional morphological structure is flexible and vital enough to accept borrowed terms.

3.3 *At the lexical level*

Three lexical phenomena are observed in the recorded speech produced by members of the three families. These phenomena include borrowing, substitution and repetition.

3.3.1 *Borrowing*

The first phenomenon concerns borrowing of words from other languages that express objects, places or concepts new to the Black Tai community, or new proper names as given in (9). As advances of the more dominant culture have reached the community, it is not uncommon for people to look for more words to talk about new things. Instead of creating new Black Tai words for the new entities, the Black Tai borrow foreign words to express concepts that never existed before in their language. This is the case with Family 1 members as well. Borrowed words are mostly from Standard Thai, as in examples (8a) – (8c), but occasionally they are from English, as in (8d) – (8e) and (9a).

(8) Non-existing borrowing in Family 1

(a) GM: *wəntaa haa paj juu kalai lej*
 eyeglasses 1S go be where P
 ‘Where are my eyeglasses?’ (TS 2/9/1)

(b) F: *jiiin jiiin juu cəəhan kə hət loonphajabaan na*
 stand stand be there P arrive hospital P
 ‘(Taking the elevator) at the hospital, I stood still and then I got there.’ (TS 4/14/4)

(c) GC: *juu kuəŋ tuujen han na ʔee ləj*
 be in fridge that P much P
 ‘There is a lot in the fridge.’ (TS 3/6/6)

(d) M: *saw bə waa ka haa haa kə bə paj saw ŋam wa*
 3S not inform with 1S 1S P not go 1S think that
haa təŋ paj ləj pəəcen
 1S must go 100 percent
 ‘She did not invite me, so I did not go. She must have thought I would go for sure.’ (TS 1/5/12-13)

(e) MA: *cəəp na ʔan hii na kap saj kem læəwko*
 delicious P CF this P with egg salty and
namsəot
 dipping sauce
 ‘Are you sure it is delicious with a salty egg and dipping sauce?’
 (TS 2/13/4)

(9) Proper name borrowing in Family 1

(a) GM: *bən ʔisuu paj thiaw saw ʔən toohəŋ lej bik sii*
 place 2S go go out 3P call what P PN
mæn ja
 yes Q
 ‘What is the place you went called? Big C, isn’t it?’ (TS 2/7/9)

(b) PA: *həj chəəlii bə na həj chəəlii taj ʔə? maa*
 mollusk PN P P mollusk PN creep out come
kua na
 P P
 ‘Is that the Cherry mollusk creeping out?’ (TS 1/11/12)

Considering from the examples in (8) – (9), the Standard Thai as well as English words seem to be inserted into Black Tai sentences. Such a sentence structure looks like that of intra-sentential code-switching proposed by Poplack (1980). It refers to the process of switching within clause, sentence and sometimes within word boundaries. However, since the foreign words are phonologically adapted to fit sound patterns of the Black Tai language, I follow Haugen (1956) and term the process ‘borrowing.’ As can be seen from the above examples, borrowing occurs in all generations in Family 1.

In Family 2, borrowing also takes place in each generation, as displayed in (10). Borrowed words are from English as well as Standard Thai. Since members of Family 2 are exposed to cultures other than their own, there are greater chances that they will borrow foreign words more frequently. That is what actually happened.

(10) Non-existing borrowing in Family 2

- (a) GM: *lot khaw fajnææn bɔ bɔ mæn na*
 car enter finance Q not correct P
 ‘Did you arrange your car payment with the finance company?
 You didn’t, did you?’ (TS 6/13/13)
- (b) M: *mii niŋ laj nom bɔ ni sɔɔj phæk lææw*
 day 1 get milk Q P 2 pack already
 ‘Will (working) one day be enough to pay for the milk? (The
 child) already takes two packs a day.’ (TS 7/18/5)
- (c) F: *suu pen fææn ?inun na ?aaj man maa hap na*
 2S be boyfriend PN father 3S come pick up P
naamsakun haŋ ?ej ?inun na
 last name what P PN P
 ‘Are you Noon’s boyfriend? Her dad came to pick her up. What
 is her last name?’ (TS 6/16/1-2)
- (d) GC: *waaj saw phaakhonnuu bɔkhaj lej na waaj*
 Ex wear towel who P P Ex
 ‘Whose towel are you wearing?’ (TS 7/19/14)

Every member of Family 3 also depends on word borrowings from Standard Thai and English when they discuss new issues, as illustrated in (11), and proper names, as exemplified in (12). Like Family 2, Family 3 members use borrowed words much more than Family 1.

(11) Non-existing borrowing in Family 3

- (a) GF: *saw mət patlom toonuj khop lææw hen ja*
 3S turn off fan mosquito bite already see Q
 ‘She turned off the fan, so the mosquito bit you already. Did you see that?’ (TS 19/3/3)
- (b) GM: *thinij na man soɔ haa baat paj sii naampan thitææ*
 once P 3S ask 5 baht go buy juice shake in fact
man paj kin kuajtiaw
 3S go eat noodle
 ‘Once she asked me five baht to buy a juice shake, but in fact she spent it on noodles.’ (TS 11/8/9)
- (c) M: *nææw suu ni tɔj pen kon samphaat ?ææ bɔ na*
 type 2S P must be person interview some P P
 ‘From the way you are, you must be the interviewer sometimes.’
 (TS 10/12/2)
- (d) GC1: *haa ca paj luu thiiwii toohaj lej limoot*
 1S will go watch TV what P remote
 ‘I am going to watch TV. What is this? It is the remote control.’
 (TS 9/16/13)

(12) Proper name borrowing in Family 3

- (a) GM: *khawjɔɔj witthajakom liwaa khawjɔɔj wat jaag*
 PN or PN
 ‘Did she go to Khawyoi Witthayakom or Khawyoi School at Yang Temple.’ (TS 11/5/1)
- (b) A: *mii nii mii sulijothaj ka wat bɔ ?an*
 day this have PN at temple Q P
 ‘I wonder if they will air ‘The Legend of Suriyothai’ at the temple today.’ (TS 10/1/3)

Borrowed terms account for less than 5% of the total output of language on the tapes. Despite various types of lexical borrowing documented, none seems cause for concern as they do not indicate shift away from the ethnic language.

3.3.2 Substitution

Substitution is another phenomenon found to be produced by all three families at the lexical level. Substitution refers to a process when existing Black Tai words are replaced with words from other languages even though

the substituting foreign words do not signify anything new at all. Examples of substitution observed in Family 1 are given in (13).

(13) Substitution in Family 1

- (a) M: *ɲəʔ hii ton man taŋ kɛæ nii kɔɔ man*
 sprout long rice.plant 3S just like this clump 3S
na kɔɔ man kacitliaw bɔ ʔee tɔlai lej
 P clump 3S little not much how much P
 ‘Rice plants have sprouted this long. Their clumps were little, not that much.’ (TS 1/18/3-4)
- (b) PA: *sak phaa pen kalamaŋ bəlɛm ləj*
 wash clothes be basin big P
 ‘(You) washed a big basin of clothes.’ (TS 1/25/12)
- (c) MA: *chɔɔn met lej pat*
 spoon gone P PN
 ‘There are no more spoons, Pat.’ (TS 4/1/12)
- (d) GC: *haa bɔ huu ca paj ʔaan toŋ naʔ man na*
 1S not know will go read place where 3S P
 ‘I do not know where to read (for the instruction).’ (TS 2/3/3)

In the examples above, the family members discussed familiar concepts and objects like big, small or spoon in which Black Tai has the words to describe them already. However, instead of using the Black Tai words *nɔj cɔj*, *ɲəɔ*, *cəŋ law* and *kabuəŋ* to talk about the aforementioned common things, they used Standard Thai words but made some phonological adjustments so that the adopted words became fully integrated into Black Tai phonology.

Only the parent and grandchildren generations exhibit substitution while the grandparent generation does not. Although those in the parent generation substituted Standard Thai words for existing Black Tai words many times, the substitution occurred in two contexts. One was when members of the parent generation communicated among themselves with me, a non-Black Tai person, who was also present, as in (13a) – (13b). Thus, it is possible that they did so to enhance my understanding of their conversations. Another occasion was when they directed their questions to their 16-year-old granddaughter, as in (13c). Since she used to ask her mother when hearing the word *kabuəŋ* what it meant, I assume that the maternal aunt used the Standard Thai word for ‘spoon’ to make sure her niece knew what she was talking about. As for the girl, she speaks Black Tai with very few substitutions from Standard Thai words. Her statement in (13d) happened after she was asked to find out for her grandmother the information on parcel collection. When the grandchild said the sentence, she did not really address it to anyone. It was more like she

was murmuring to herself, but I happened to be there. Therefore, the substitution occurring in her statement may have been influenced by my presence.

Unlike Family 1, all generations in Family 2 substitute Black Tai words *ʔet wiaʔ* ‘to work,’ *saaw* ‘twenty,’ *khai* ‘dry’ and *khibææw* ‘to betray’ with the bold Standard Thai words given in (14) even though words in the ethnic language are adequate for the concepts in question. Moreover, substitution occurs very often in this family. The grandson once mentioned that he always spoke only Black Tai in the community but his parents’ speech was ‘like those produced by the Thai speaking Black Tai because they put many Standard Thai words into their speeches when they spoke Black Tai’ (FN 24/8/01: 126).

The use of substitution in (14a) - (14c) was not influenced by my presence since I was not with the family when the tape was recorded. Although I was present when the grandchild directed his (14d) sentence to his young cousin who has a Black Tai mother and a Thai father, I was not an important factor. Rather, he was affected by his interlocutor who is a Black Tai and Tai mix as there were other occasions where I was not with the children but the patterns persisted.

(14) Substitution in Family 2

- (a) GM: *kʰi ka sɔɔj huu maʔsia ʔi ʔan na waa*
 same with stitch buttonhole shirt P P P think

*liikwaa saw paj **thamɣaan** miʰ la hɔɔj mai lej na*
 better 3S go work day each 100 P P P
 ‘It is like stitching a shirt’s buttonholes. I think it is better than working for 100 baht a day.’ (TS 5/10/9-10)

- (b) M: *loo saamhaa loo saamsip loo jiiphaa loo **jiisip** loo*
 kilo 35 kilo 30 kilo 25 kilo 20 kilo

*saamhaa **ʔalɔj** kwaa waan kuu khəɔj kin lej*
 35 delicious CP sweet 1S used to eat P
 ‘(The oranges come in many prices) 35, 30, 25, 20 baht per kilo. The 35-baht-per-kilogram ones are more delicious. They are sweet. I used to eat them.’ (TS 7/4/9-10)

- (c) GC: *bɔɔnaam **hææŋ** lææw wa*
 well dry already P
 ‘Is the well dry already?’ (TS 8//8/17)

- (d) GC: *thoolajot haw ma?sia lææw thoolayot*
 betrayer give shirt then betrayer
 ‘You, betrayer. I gave you the shirt and then you betrayed me.’
 (TS 8/22/8)

Like Family 2, all generations in Family 3 exhibit substitution. As displayed in (15a) – (15d), they use Standard Thai lexemes (in bold) instead of existing Black Tai words *ha?* ‘to vomit,’ *ɲam* ‘to think,’ *ɲwam* ‘to cover’ and *ʔet* ‘to do.’ As a matter of fact, substitution occurs in almost all utterances produced by the Family 3 members, especially in the parent and grandchildren generations. This is not surprising since members from the parent generation spend a lot of time in the outside community and one of the grandchildren is ‘Thai’ from a mixed Thai/Black Tai marriage. Thus, speaking Black Tai with Standard Thai words seems like a norm in this family. As illustrated in (15a), substitution is possible with both lexical and grammatical words. Examples (15e) and (15f) are a particularly interesting kind of substitution because both grandchildren use their own names to refer to themselves when speaking to older people instead of a first person singular pronoun. Such a characteristic is similar to present day Thai children.

(15) Substitution in Family 3

- (a) GM: *ʔuuj ʔuak ʔo? lææw mim buan paak sai kuan*
 Ex vomit out already PN rinse mouth put in
kathoon han sa
 spittoon that P
 ‘Mim, you vomit. Rinse your mouth and spit it in the spittoon.’
 (TS 9/21/3-4)
- (b) A: *khit bəŋ kɔɔn khit bəŋ kɔɔn*
 think watch before think watch before
 ‘Let me think first.’ (TS 10/4/8)
- (c) GC1: *man mii faa lææw ʔisaw ʔaw paj kхоop saj*
 3S have lid then 3S take go cover put
 ‘It has a lid. So she used the lid to cover it.’ (TS 9/15/6)
- (d) GC2: *tham haŋ mee lej tham cəŋ law lej*
 do what PN P do place where P
 ‘What did you do to May? Where did you (hit) her?’ (TS 12/3/5)
- (e) GC1: *kum mee kɔ mii pææt kon*
 group PN P have 8 person
 ‘There are 8 people in my group.’ (TS9/5/13)

- (f) GC2: *mim ca khaw na*
 PN will enter P
 ‘I want to go in.’ (TS 10/11/9)

3.3.3 Repetition

In addition to borrowing and substitution, repetition is also found in the speech of members of Families 1 and 3. Repetition here refers to a process where both Black Tai words and their Standard Thai equivalents are used in the same speech event. As displayed in (16), repetition occurs in my data only in the parent generation.

(16) Repetition in Family 1

- (a) MA: *tha haw ?et laj lii man kɔ juu ka haw mai lej*
 if 1S do able good 3S P be with 1S P P
juu haŋ haw ?et na ʔo juu haŋ haw patibat ?ik lej
 be what 1S do P P be what 1S do P P
tha haw patibat lii man kɔ laj ʔee
 if 1S do good 3S P get much
 ‘It also depends on how we do it. If we are able to do it well, we will get a lot of produce.’ (TS 1/8/1-3)
- (b) M: *lææw khɔɔŋ ?ikhæp cə na khai khai bɔ huu pen*
 P POSS PN P P dry dry not know be
haŋ man plæk khɔɔŋ saw hææŋ khɔɔŋ haa cə
 what 3S strange POSS 3S dry POSS 1S P
man lin miik kəna
 3S soil damp P
 ‘Kap’s rice seedlings are very dry. I do not know what is going on. It is strange. Hers are dry, my planting soil is damp.’ (TS 1/20/4-6)

In these repetition cases, they spoke using Black Tai words first followed by Standard Thai ones that bear similar meanings. In (16a), Black Tai words *?et* and *mai* were said first. Then, in her next sentence, the maternal aunt repeated what she had said but replaced the Black Tai words with Standard Thai words *patibat* and *?ik* respectively. The mother did the same thing in (16b). She began her statement with *khai khai*, a Black Tai word meaning ‘dry,’ before replacing it with Standard Thai *hææŋ* when repeating the concept in her following statement. Because I was with them when they were conversing and that was the only time the repetition took place, I infer that their repetitions in Standard Thai were again meant to help me understand their speeches although, according to Romaine (1995), ‘repetition’ or

'translation' phenomenon is rather common among bilinguals even in contexts where a monolingual speaker is not present.

While repetition does not occur in Family 2, it is found to be used by the parent generation in Family 3. Examples are given in (17).

(17) Repetition in Family 3

- (a) M: *lɔŋ ʔi lɔŋpʰeeŋ haw ʔeem mææ faŋ kɔn ʔi*
 sing P sing a song give mother mother listen before P
 'Sing. Mother wants to listen.' (TS 9/3/1)
- (b) A: *cəŋ hii lɔʔ ʔaw faa maa hap pit ʔi ʔo*
 place this P take lid come close close P P
 'Put the lid down to cover it here.' (TS 10/14/7)

In this family, repetition seems to be influenced by the children. Example (17a) is extraordinary in the sense that the repetition, emphasized in bold, looks also like the reduplication of meaning. It is, however, different because in repetition, the repeated words come from different languages, while in reduplication, the repeated words are from the same language. Because the mother has cared for the younger granddaughter as if she were her own daughter since she was a small baby, the baby calls the woman 'mother' as well. However, to differentiate between her real mother who is Thai and her 'adopted' Black Tai mother, the Standard Thai equivalent *mææ* is attached to the Black Tai word *ʔeem* meaning 'mother' to yield the repetition phrase *ʔeem mææ* also meaning 'mother.' The phrase refers only to the Black Tai mother.

The aunt directed the imperative sentence in (17b) to the older grandchild, the daughter of Black Tai parents. Here, she ordered the grandchild to close the lid to cover the pot using the Black Tai word *hap*. Following no reaction from the grandchild, she then directed her command to her again but using the Standard Thai word *pit* instead. This time it worked like magic and the grandchild was quick to follow her command. The use of Standard Thai in this incident can be interpreted either as being instigated by lack of complete vocabulary knowledge of the ethnic language on the child's part or as the use of 'foreign' or 'more powerful' language in situations of reprimand or of inducing obedience.

3.4 Discourse

At the discourse level, particle usage and code-switching are two important phenomena exhibited by members of all three families.

3.4.1 Particle usage

As far as particle usage is concerned, it is found that there are some changes in the way people use particles. Due to their complexity, the use of particles is one of the most striking features of many Southeast Asian

languages. In Black Tai, there are many particles which can occur almost everywhere in a sentence, i.e. at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. Studying only final particles in Black Tai, Anchana (1994) observes that there are 21 single final particles which can also occur in combination to yield another 80 forms. The situation with particle usage is similar in all three families. That is, people of the grandparent and parent generations still used a lot of particles in a number of positions in sentences. However, the number of particles and the position in which they occur in a sentence are reduced considerably in the grandchildren generation. At present, children speak Black Tai with only a few particles all of which are the sentence-final types. The younger the children are, the fewer particles they use. While the particles *na*, *wa*, *lej*, *kɔ*, *lɔʔ*, *ʔəj*, *kua*, *lææw*, *ʔi* and *ʔo* are observed as being used most frequently by the 16-year-old grandchild of Family 1 while the 11-year-old grandson of Family 2 most often uses *lej*, *na*, *lææw*, *ʔi*, *kua* and *lɔʔ* and the grandchildren of Family 3, aged 3 and 9, reduce their particles to *na*, *lej* and *lɔʔ*.

Structural simplifications of the ethnic language are said to be a manifestation of language shift. However, the reduction in the number of particles used by younger generations is the only pattern observed. It is therefore not extensive enough to be a conclusive indicator for shift away from the ethnic Black Tai language.

3.4.2 Code-switching

Code-switching, the alternate use of two languages in the same utterance, is observed in all three families. In Family 1, code-switching occurred only four times over the two-hour tape recording. They take place in the parents' and grandchildren' utterances only. Two types of switching, intra-sentential and inter-sentential, are produced in the speeches of Family 1 members. The former refers to the process of switching within clause, sentence, and sometimes within word boundaries whereas the latter involves a switch at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or another (Poplack, 1980).

As displayed in (18), the grandchild produced an intra-sentential code-switching once when she read an instruction on picking up a parcel at the post office. She began her sentence in Black Tai. Then when it came to the instruction part, she read it out just like the way it was written in Standard Thai before ending her sentence with a Black Tai particle.

(18) Intra-sentential switching in Family 1

GC: *saw waa phaaɲaj sǎam wan na*
 3S say within 3 day P
 'It says, 'within three days.' (TS 2/3/9)

Inter-sentential code-switching was produced three times by the family members during one dinner time in which I joined them. In all of those times, the switching from Black Tai to Standard Thai was made when they wanted to direct their statements to me, as shown in (19).

(19) Inter-sentential switching in Family 1

- (a) F: *kin hāj ʔim māj tōŋ kua thlinŋi duu si* (ST)
eat CAU full not must be afraid here look P
'Eat until you are full. Do not be afraid. Look!'

laaw khaaw ɲəə (BT)

granary big
'The granary (here) is big.'

māj tōŋ kua (ST)

not must be afraid
'Do not be afraid.' (TS 4/4/15)

- (b) M: *kō mʔan kan nānləʔ* (ST)

P same P
'Just the same.'

kii sathoo nanləʔ ləəw man lian hai saw
same kind of liquor P so 3S matter CAU 3S

kin khəŋ nəəw hii ləwbo (BT)

eat thing type this P
'Just like a kind of liquor. And so why do you want to make her drink this kind of liquor?' (TS 4/8/14-15)

- (c) MA: *maa ʔaluam maa maa kin maa* (BT)

come PN come come eat come
'Luam, come and eat.'

ɗaw ʔaw paj kin kuŋthēep paj kin jōʔ jōʔ (ST)

in a moment take go eat Bangkok go eat much much
'When you go back, take it to Bangkok with you to eat.'

bən nii ləʔ bo mii faj ja (BT)

place this P not have light Q
'Isn't there a light here?' (TS 4/1/2-4)

(d) PA: *kin ləəj ja* (BT)

eat now Q
‘Shall we eat?’

baj má?kəkək jət má?kək kin pen máj (ST)

leaf hog plum shoot hog plum eat able Q
‘Can you eat hog plum leafs and shoots?’

cææp ?ee lej (BT)

delicious much P
‘Very delicious.’ (TS 4/2/6-8)

It can be concluded from the examples in (18) – (19) that code-switching between Black Tai and Standard Thai made by Family 1 members is influenced by the label written in Standard Thai as well as a non-Black Tai outsider.

Only inter-sentential code-switching is found in Family 2. The examples were produced by members from the grandparent and parent generations. Over the two-hour period of tape recording, code-switching occurred three times and they did so in two contexts. (20a) shows the switching made in the occasion when the grandmother was telling a story about a man who obtained his household equipment by drawing lots at his workplace. She began her story in Black Tai but switched to Standard Thai when she repeated the man’s statement exactly like when he had spoken to his boss. (20b) – (20c) are switching produced by the mother when her son was playing with his young cousin from a mixed marriage. Thus, switching in these instances in Family 2 happened when Thai people were involved. Compared to the substitution process which is common in Family 2, code-switching is infrequent.

(20) Inter-sentential switching in Family 2

(a) GM: *man ma? ?aw lə? tətŋ na* (BT)

3S not take P gold P
‘He did not want the gold.’

phəm khək cap ?iik hən nɨŋ (ST)

1S request draw lot again time 1
‘Could I draw lot again?’

saw ləj hai man cap mai ləj hii lə? (BT)

3S so give 3S draw lot again get this P
‘So they let them draw lot again and he got this.’ (TS 8/14/7-8)

- (b) M: *ʔuuj nɔɔŋ ʔi tokcai kaŋkiin ʔet sin*
 Ex younger sibling will frightened at night do like that
maʔ ʔaw loʔ nɔɔŋ ʔi haj (BT)
 not take P younger sibling will cry
ʔooj ʔooj láwaj man fɪm taa ʔaw (ST)
 Ex Ex be careful 3S poke eye take
 ‘Be careful! You will get poked in your eyes.’ (TS7/3/13-14)
- (c) M: *maa maa dǎaw jaaj kəʔ*
 come come in a moment grandmother take the flesh out
háj (ST)
 give
 ‘Come here, I will take the flesh out for you.’
ʔaw ʔaw ʔi ʔaw tɔɔlai lej ʔo (BT)
 take take will take how much P P
 ‘Take this. How much of this do you want?’
maa maa háj phii puj dǎaj (ST)
 come come give older sibling PN also
 ‘Come here and give some to Brother Puy also.’ (TS7/19/3-5)

As illustrated in (21) – (22), both intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching are noticed in Family 3. They happened in all three generations a total of seven times during the two-hour period of tape recording. Despite many occurrences, there is only one context for both kinds of code-switching. They took place when older family members wanted to show off their 3-year-old grandchild by encouraging her to sing. To do that, they began by asking the grandchild in Black Tai to sing. Then, they would switch to Standard Thai when they arrived at the lyrics or titles of the songs, shown in the examples in bold. Songs they wanted her to sing were mostly those she had learnt from the kindergarten as well as those popular songs she had heard from TV or radio.

(21) Intra-sentential switching in Family 3

- GM: *mim loɔŋ kua ʔimee waa thiiʔiin kɔɔ mii thǎm*
 PN sing P PN tell elsewhere P have much
paj ʔan sin na
 go P like that P
 ‘Mim, sing the song May sang to you, “There are a lot like this elsewhere.”’ (TS 9/2/5)

(22) Inter-sentential switching in Family 3

GC1: *tæŋmoo phôn jàj jàj* (ST)watermelon CF big big
'Big watermelon.'*lɔŋpheɛŋ haw faŋ kɔn faaw faaw* (BT)sing a song give listen first hurry hurry
'Sing for me first. Hurry up.'*tæŋmoo phôn jàj jàj* (ST)watermelon CF big big
'Big watermelon.'*ʔaw liaw ʔəj lɔŋ ʔææ* (BT)Ex in a moment older sibling sing some
'I will sing with you also.' (TS 11/13/16-18)

It can be seen that members of the three families exhibit the same structural patterns of language use despite their different backgrounds. Striking features can be observed at almost all structural levels, be it phonological, morphological, lexical or discourse. Although such features are found in all families, the extent to which they occur is different from one family to another depending on the family background. Some features are regular processes of language change whereas others have some implications for the maintenance or shift of the ethnic language. This will be dealt with in greater detail when maintenance and shift factors are discussed.

4. Language attitudes

Like the majority of people in Nongkhe community, the three families are economically secure even though they are not affluent, allowing them to *feel good about themselves and be proud of whom they are*. Because they are more or less still identified with their ethnic Black Tai heritage and seem to carry themselves well when contacting people from outside the community, members of the three families as a whole appear to have positive attitudes toward themselves, their Black Tai fellows and others of different ethnicities.

However, when taking a closer look at one family at a time, it becomes clear that different families sometimes bear different attitudes regarding out-group members. The conceptualization of a person family members desire their children and grandchildren to marry is a good indication of how they feel about other people. In spite of the accord by all three families that marrying a Black Tai or Thai partner is not a big issue, members of each family have their particularities as well. Members of all three families agree that the person who is marrying into their families must be a good person, and yet, their ideas about 'good' differ. While Family 1 members conceptualize a

good person as someone who works hard for the wellbeing of the family, Family 3 members link a good person to good education and secure financial background. Unlike the other two families, Family 2 members did not offer a definite description of a good person but the mother asserted later that 'marrying a Black Tai person would be complicated' (FN 25/8/01: 128). The mother was referring to her daughter, who she thought could experience a lot of strife if she married a Black Tai man now that her lifestyle had moved away from the Black Tai community. Despite a lack of explicit statements by members of the three families, it can be inferred from their other utterances and from observations that, although Families 2 and 3 have given a clear indication of positive attitudes toward outsiders, it is much more difficult to determine from my data where Family 1's attitudes are situated between positive and negative.

While ethnicity does not play a key role in selecting a marriage partner, inheriting clan spirits seems to be indispensable. Members of the three families stress that no matter whom their children marry, they must maintain their descent from their family's spirits by assuming all responsibilities regarding ancestral spirit worship. Clan spirit inheritance normally belongs to male members; however, women can also take over the responsibility if she is the only descendant of her family. Being the only child, the granddaughter of Family 1 is expected to inherit her family's clan spirits regardless of the ethnicity of her husband-to-be, the responsibility which she herself is willing to take on. According to her parents, the responsibility means that the granddaughter will have to continue to live in her home in the Nongkhe community (FN 13/7/01: 77). In case the granddaughter pursues her future career in Bangkok or elsewhere, the parents insist that she will have to return home on a regular basis during weekends (FN 13/7/01: 77-78). Such a strong confirmation better guarantee that the family's expectation will be met.

Although there are two grandchildren in Family 2, only the grandson is expected to inherit the family's clan spirits. Thus, while the granddaughter of Family 2 has been allowed, and even encouraged, by her parents to pursue the life of the dominant culture outside the community, the grandmother has instilled Black Tai feelings into her grandson. Only 12 years of age, he is very aware of his family's expectation but genuinely willing to take on his role and responsibility. According to him, continuing to inherit and worship spirits is pivotal no matter whom he marries, what he does, and where he works. He strongly believes that failing to recognize this aspect of the Black Tai heritage will result in either bad luck or failure in life (FN 24/8/01: 127).

Like Families 1 and 2, Family 3 members also stress that clan spirit inheritance is crucial and must be carried on. Because three of the four children are women, the eldest son is undoubtedly expected by his parents to inherit his family's clan spirits. Despite the family's strong desire, I doubt that the parents' expectation will be fulfilled given that a part of clan spirit inheritance involves the worship of ancestral spirits residing in their house's spirit room by offering them food every ten days, but the son works in the Army, married a

Thai wife and lives in Bangkok. However, the oldest daughter suggests that she will be willing to take over the responsibility concerning clan spirit inheritance from her brother if he really cannot, since she is the one who lives permanently in the community (FN 19/10/01: 173).

By and large, people in the three families feel strongly about upholding their tradition with respect to clan spirit inheritance. Strong positive attitudes of the people have an important implication for the maintenance or shift of their ethnic Black Tai language. The matter will be further dealt with in the following section when maintenance and shift factors at the home level are discussed.

As far as languages are concerned, there are two languages, namely Black Tai and Standard Thai, which are pertinent to the lives of the members of the three families. Despite its status as a world language, English is only relevant to the grandchildren generation who use the language in their schools. Although Standard Thai is considered by all members to sound more beautiful, they assert that the language they genuinely like is Black Tai as it is their ethnic language. They also agree that each language has its own advantages and disadvantages depending on interlocutors, occasions and places. Despite being the national language, and thus, the language of wider communication, Standard Thai is inadequate for use in the Black Tai community. Black Tai, a minority language, and therefore, a language of little importance in the larger Thai society has, on the other hand, immeasurable value in this Black Tai community. Hence, members of the three families on the whole have positive attitudes toward both languages as they think they both are useful.

Although positive language attitudes are expressed explicitly by all members of the three families, positive attitudes toward the ethnic language are sometimes stated in a negative way. There were two occasions where my language helper remarked on the language used by the grandmother in Family 3. She said the grandmother ‘did not speak like any of [the people] at Nongkhe Village’ (FN 10/10/01: 156). Surely, the grandmother was different considering the fact that she was not born in the Nongkhe community, but moved to live there only after her marriage to a Nongkhe husband. Yet, the remark did not arise on account of her distinctive accent, but rather her use of so many formal Standard Thai words like *?anúmát* ‘to approve,’ *mǎpmǎaj* ‘to assign,’ etc. in informal Black Tai contexts. Such a remark is in line with comments made by some villagers about the Black Tai in general. To them, it is acceptable for people of other ethnicities to speak Black Tai mixed with a lot of Standard Thai words. They, however, are not very pleased and often label the ethnic Black Tai language containing a lot of Standard Thai words

produced by Black Tai people as ‘strange.’² It seems that negative attitudes of the Black Tai toward in-group people may be brought about by the way people use their ethnic language. Therefore, this underscored respect for the ethnic language and its ‘proper’ use suggests that the Black Tai hold positive attitude toward their own language.

Given that language use is commonly influenced by attitudes of the people who use the language, it can be inferred from the people’s continued use of Black Tai that they hold positive attitudes toward their ethnic language. According to them, no matter how many languages they can speak, Black Tai fits them most suitably. The 14-year-old grandson of Family 2 states that ‘Black Tai is very important to [them] because [they] are living [there] in the Black Tai village (FN 24/8/01: 125). He adds that ‘Black Tai will continue to hold a special place in [his] life because [he] will continue to live [there]’ (FN 24/8/01: 125). The important status of the ethnic language at Nongkhe Village is also underlined by the mother of Family 1. According to her, ‘it is all right for Black Tai people to speak other languages alongside Black Tai, but they should do that outside the community. Once they get in the Black Tai community, they need to speak Black Tai’ (FN 13/7/01: 77). The grandmother of Family 3 supports the continued use of the ethnic language saying that ‘[she] always insists on [her] children speaking to her in Black Tai. If one day it happens that the children do not follow, [she] will certainly reprimand them’ (FN 24/10/01: 176).

Due to intergenerational transmission as well as adults’ continued use of the language, members of the three families are confident that their ethnic Black Tai language will never die out. The Family 1 father’s attitude is very confident of the survival of Black Tai. According to him,

I will speak Black Tai to my grandchildren for sure because learning [the ethnic language] at a very young age is easy. Thai will be easy for them to learn, but Black Tai will be difficult. They are born Black Tais, so they need to learn Black Tai first. I do not know about other people but I think that if we teach them [our language] since they are very young, they will not easily abandon the language as they need to use it to speak to us. So everything depends on the parents actually. If they speak Black Tai to their children, the children will never leave Black Tai. (FN 22/7/01: 87)

²Being a native speaker of Standard Thai, I myself found some of the grandmother’s utterances containing Standard Thai words somewhat odd. The oddity was not triggered by the mixed use of Standard Thai and Black Tai. Rather, her utterances sounded odd because she picked Standard Thai words from the wrong register. For instance, I would use the words *ʔanùmât* ‘to approve’ and *mǎɔpmǎaj* ‘to assign’ in formal contexts when discussing with my boss or teacher or referring to them, but use a more informal word *hǎj* when talking with my colleagues or student friends.

Despite such a positive vision, it cannot be guaranteed that the ethnic Black Tai language will survive without cooperation from the grandchildren generation, especially amid the era of globalization and information technology. In other words, while people from the grandparent and parent generations may strongly believe that the language will survive as long as they keep speaking to their children in the language, the language may not do so if the grandchildren generation does not continue on in the same fashion. However, such a vision from the Family 1 father seems to be very promising when it is supported by commitment from the grandchildren generation. The grandchildren of Families 1 and 2 insist that they will speak Black Tai to their children. They add that, since their children will live at Nongkhe Village, which is a Black Tai home, they will need to know Black Tai.

The middle daughter of Family 3 asserts that, for the last ten years, some families have decided to introduce Standard Thai to their children instead of letting the children learn it from school hoping to get them well prepared for their future education. She, however, thinks that people's attitudes toward Black Tai people and language will never change in spite of such practices. As stated by the youngest daughter, she is convinced that the Standard Thai lessons given to children by their parents will neither make children abandon nor decrease their competencies in the ethnic language. According to her, living in the Black Tai community, children will constantly hear and speak Black Tai. If that does not happen with their parents, children will certainly have to hear it from and speak it with their neighbors. Thus, as long as they are in Black Tai surroundings, children will use their ethnic Black Tai. For her, reasons for a person to use his or her ethnic language are not complex at all. As a matter of fact, there is only one simple reason: 'people use Black Tai language because they are Black Tais' although they do not have to speak Black Tai to be a Black Tai person (FN 27/10/01: 178). As for herself, she will continue to speak Black Tai to her children even though she may marry a Thai husband and live in Bangkok since '[her] children will be half Black Tai and therefore they will need the language to speak with their Black Tai relatives, especially their grandparents' (FN 27/10/01: 179).

From the above description, the only occasion when negative remarks were made against in-group people was on their language use, especially when their conversations contained so many formal Standard Thai words. Other than that, it can be concluded that members of the three families generally have positive attitudes towards their own language and culture as well as those of other ethnicities'.

5. Summary of home factors as related to language maintenance and shift

As can be seen from my studies on people's language use and attitudes in the three families, some features seemingly promote maintenance whereas others are likely to contribute to shift of the ethnic Black Tai language. Maintenance and shift factors at the home level are summarized below.

The ways people use and perceive their language encourage the maintenance of the ethnic Black Tai language. Of all language use features, intergenerational transmission of the ethnic mother tongue is the most prominent maintenance factor. As emphasized by Fishman (1990, 1991, 2001), a threatened minority language stands a chance of survival if intergenerational family transmission is evident. In all of the three families studied, members communicate among one another in Black Tai, and the ethnic language is evidently passed on from the grandparent and parent generations to the grandchildren generation. Due to the presence of intergenerational family transmission of the ethnic mother tongue, Black Tai has been maintained rather strongly in those three families. The maintenance is likely to persist given the reassurance by younger members of the three families that they will pass on the knowledge of the ethnic language to the next generation should they have children of their own.

Despite intergenerational transmission of the ethnic language, the continued use of Black Tai in the home may be interrupted if family members enjoy watching television or listening to the radio more while talking to one another less. The effect of mass media has started to reveal itself in some processes of code-switching. Although various types of code-switching were observed in the three families, switching under the influence of mass media, both electronic and printed, may potentially bring about shift in the ethnic language considering how influential the mass media is on the world at present. From the recorded conversations, switching influenced by the media was found to occur most often. The finding is not surprising taking into consideration how much time family members spend on radio and television. Since the language of the media is predominantly Standard Thai, it is through the media that family and other community members are more exposed to the language of the more dominant culture. As a matter of fact, it is under the media influence that people shift toward Standard Thai the most frequently.

Although code-switching instigated by the mass media may seem to cause shift, code-switching on the whole is another feature of language use that can help maintain an ethnic language. Having studied the actual conversations made by members of the three families, it was found that both inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching occurred. Generally, a large number of code-switchings is said to contribute to shift in a language (Crystal, 2000). Given intense contacts between the Black Tai and the Thai and prestige associated with the latter language, code-switching between Black Tai and Standard Thai

should be anticipated to occur a lot with Standard Thai words incorporated into the conversations by Black Tai speakers. Considering how linguistically close the two languages are, all types of code-switching should be expected. However, as can be seen from the data gathered from actual conversations made by members of the three families, only a small number and two types of code-switchings took place. While code-switching does not seem to contribute to a shift away from Black Tai, it is a healthy indication for the Black Tai maintenance for their persistence in the use of the ethnic language almost exclusively under immense pressure from the dominant Standard Thai shows that they are closely identified with their ethnicity and ethnic culture. Such positive feelings in turn encourage people to maintain its ethnic Black Tai language.

In addition to intergenerational family transmission and rare code-switching, preservation of some traditional linguistic features is another aspect of language use that supports the maintenance of the ethnic language although evidence to the contrary has been documented.³ The traditional features that were preserved and occurred in the conversations made by members of the three families include the phoneme /ai/ and the use of 4-syllable phrases. Despite their limited occurrence, i.e., they appeared in the speeches made by the grandparent and parent generations only, those traditional Southeast Asian features indirectly indicate that changes occur at a rather slow pace particularly in the three families and in this Black Tai community in general. Such an indication is in line with an observation by a villager that ‘things in Nongkhe community change very slowly’ (FN 28/09/01: 150). As far as changes are concerned, there is little evidence that shift necessarily happens according to the slow process of change typical of traditional societies whereas shift from Fishman’s stage 6 to stage 7 can happen rather quickly. Moreover, Woolard (1989: 356) points out that

Dorian has given us the term “tip” for the situation in which a demographically stable language experiences a sudden change that leads rapidly to loss. “Tip” is of course the concern of defenders of such lively but dominated language as Catalan ... Could this apparently vigorous language with a stable demographic base, yet still politically precarious, suddenly overturn and sink into a sea of Spanish like the Herald of Free Enterprise into the English Channel?

In spite of lack of concrete evidence, such slow changes provide a perfect environment for the maintenance of the ethnic language amid growing pressure for negative language shift from the more dominant Standard Thai and the Thai culture.

³For example, Hamp (1989) finds that many languages cannot escape extinction even though the phonological integrity of the languages has been sustained until the end.

Another feature of language use that encourages maintenance of the ethnic language concerns the notion of borrowing. According to Crystal (2000), an extensive incorporation of words from the dominant language into speeches of the minority language is an indication of a negative language shift as well. Yet, not all incorporations of a more prestigious language should be considered as a stimulant for language shift. Take borrowings as an example. Borrowed words that represent concepts new or foreign to the ethnic culture are crucial for the survival of language. Presently, the world constantly changes and new things occur all the time. Thus, people need new words to express those new concepts. Not just an ethnic minority language like Black Tai, but a national language such as Standard Thai has to produce new words as well. In fact, borrowing existing words from other languages has been a common process for a long time. Doing that does not mean that borrowing languages have to die out. On the contrary, a minority language cannot afford to be inflexible for people may decide to shift away from their language if they feel that it is not capable of adequately expressing existing entities. Woolard (1989) maintains that languages that strive for purity and resist borrowing words are much more likely to experience language shift than those languages that change and adapt. Therefore, borrowing words from Standard Thai (or English) to express concepts new to Black Tai can work to promote maintenance of the ethnic language.

Substitution is, however, different. When substituting, people use words of the dominant language to substitute for words already existing in the ethnic minority language. The phenomenon was found in all families. In spite of different rates at which substitutions were found in the three families, they may indicate either that family members have been exposed too much to the dominant language and become influenced by it or that they are losing their competencies in the ethnic language, either one of which helps promote shift away from the ethnic language.

Apart from language use, attitudes of the people toward their language are an important indication for either maintenance or shift of a language (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998). In the cases of the three families, the majority of the family members have positive attitudes toward themselves, their own ethnic language and culture; thus, they are likely to maintain their ethnic Black Tai language. Not only do family members think positively of their heritage, they also have strong attitudes regarding clan spirit inheritance. To inherit clan spirits, family members are required to take on all responsibilities with respect to the worship of ancestral spirits. One of the responsibilities involves providing food to the ancestral spirits residing in the spirit room of each family every five or ten days. In order to fulfil the responsibilities, family members then need to be permanent residents in the Black Tai society or come back on weekends. Living in the Black Tai community means that the family members will have to use the ethnic Black Tai to communicate with their Black Tai community fellows. Therefore, continuing to live in the community will encourage the continued use and maintenance of the ethnic Black Tai language.

Fishman (1992: 401) argues that unless the minority language community has ways of 'enforcing' group loyalty in a language contact situation, the tendency is for the group's younger generation to shift toward the dominant language and culture. 'Language loyalty' refers to the social mechanisms that put pressure on members of a minority language community to use and respect their language even when a larger, more prestigious language shares the same space (cf. Grinevald, 1998 (for Guarani); Kapanga, 1998 (for Shaba Swahili)). As Kapanga (1998: 262) states,

In other words, the task of those working toward the preservation of a language would then be to find ways to attribute one or more of the social factors ... to an endangered language. This can be done by identifying the endangered language with social variables associated with the daily lives of a community; these variables must in turn have the highest degree of ethnolinguistic vitality within the linguistic community when the endangered language is spoken. Thus, the best approach to revitalize a language would be to relate it to the social variables that are closely associated with allegiance to the vernacular culture of a linguistic community.

Thus, it seems that the close linkage of the clan spirit worship with Black Tai language and the very strong emphasis made on clan spirit inheritance which is a vital social function in Black Tai community combine to create a strong loyalty of members to the traditional language and culture resulting in language and culture maintenance.

The qualitative data collected in three Black Tai families at Nongkhe Village indicate that the Black Tai language is in vital and widespread use in these three homes. The Black Tai residents there have developed sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices that contribute to a lively language and culture. However, the shift from 'healthy' to 'endangered' can happen very suddenly in an ethnolinguistic community, and there are several indicators that something like that could happen to Black Tai. In the next section, I will make several recommendations for community-based language planning that may contribute to continued good language health for the Black Tai residents at Nongkhe Village.

6. Suggestions for promoting maintenance

In the Black Tai community at Nongkhe Village, the ethnic Black Tai language is largely maintained. However, with the vast spread of the dominant Standard Thai language, ethnic language maintenance may be short lived. To guard against ethnic language shift, an intervention is needed. Since minority people do not usually realize until too late that their ethnic language is threatened or endangered, it is important to raise awareness among Nongkhe community members before any strategy can be implemented. One of the

possibilities is for a language planner to go back to the community to explain the sociolinguistic situation to them. This can be done by showing them where their ethnic mother tongue is placed on the GIDS, and to discuss with them the various factors that contribute to language shift. When they become aware of the possible ethnic language endangerment, they can begin to look for ways to prevent that unfortunate event from happening. There are two stratagems that can strengthen the ethnic language: literacy development and formal education.

6.1 Literacy development

There are different perspectives on literacy and minority languages. Some scholars think that literacy is a crucial step in ensuring continued use of a particular language (Fishman, 1990; Grenoble and Whaley, 1998). Others, however, contend that literacy facilitates language loss, especially among traditionally oral societies (Mühlhäusler, 1990). Despite the debate over the role of literacy vis-à-vis language maintenance and loss, literacy as a key element is included in language revitalization programs by language planners throughout the world (Crystal, 2000; Fettes, 1999; Hornberger, 2002; King, 2001; Reyhner, 1999; Romaine, 1995; Tucker, 1998). Literacy should be developed in the Black Tai community at Nongkhe Village as an effective tool to strengthen the ethnic language, especially when there are community people expressing their desire for it. According to the people themselves, literacy in their own language will create pride in their Black Tai ethnicity. Although some people have already used Standard Thai alphabets to write down historical events of the Black Tai group or chants used in spirit worship ceremonies, Black Tai orthography should be developed. Black Tai orthography development is very plausible for the Nongkhe Black Tai as there are still elders who are capable of reading and writing the Black Tai alphabet and who have already expressed their willingness to help disseminate the knowledge of ethnic language. At present, the task is definitely feasible as there are increasingly numerous groups that are encouraging and supporting language revitalization and maintenance. For instance, I was informed that advocates of Chong, an extremely endangered language in Thailand, have managed to gain support and cooperation for their revitalization program of the language from the following:

- Thailand Research Fund and Japan Toyota Foundation for financial support of the program
- local governments for funding teachers
- the local primary school for access to classrooms
- Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University and SIL International for outside expertise
- Rajabhat Institute for certifying the teachers

Similar kinds of support can be obtained from similar groups to establish a literacy program for the Black Tai at Nongkhe Village. Apart from non-governmental organizations, planners can also acquire financial support of the program from other resources, especially Nongprong Temple. In Thailand

where most people are Buddhists, temples have become a social institute that usually play a very important role of administering the communities since Thai people especially those in the rural area listen to, obey, and are very faithful to the monks. Temples are a good financial resource as people love to donate their money to the temples as a way of making merit. Since the present Abbot is Black Tai and has also expressed his desire for a literacy program, then it is wise to get Nongprong Temple involved in the program.

Apart from financial support, there are other priorities that planners of a literacy program will have to consider. First of all, they will need to contact local government officers and notify them that planners will be working with the community members to establish a literacy program. Since the program will be for the community members themselves, it is therefore vital to get them involved in every step of planning the literacy program. To do so, planners can contact the Abbot and the village headman as they are key men and they know who else are good representatives of the community to be included in the running of the program. Based on my research, many graduates from Rajabhat Petchaburi Institute, a teacher training school, still live in the community. They are capable of being trained as teachers for a Black Tai literacy program. There are also elders who are mother tongue literates and keep records of many interesting stories with respect to Black Tai heritage. Although these elders are probably not capable as teachers themselves owing to their age, they can contribute significantly to primer development and teachers' training.

As representatives of the local community, local planners should encourage the people to participate in decision-making about what they want for their language development program regarding the writing system and its standardization, primers, teachers training, literacy classes, and so on. The roles of outside planners, should be limited to that of consultants and advisors to the program.

6.2 Formal education

Based on Fishman's GIDS, Black Tai is clearly within Stage 6 where the language is still used and intergenerationally transmitted to younger generations. It also has the potential of moving into Stages 5 and 4. As Fishman sees the school as the bridge to bring the language back from the weak side (Stages 8-5) to the strong side (Stages 4-1), Black Tai mother tongue education then seems a reasonable move to help strengthen the ethnic language. Not only does formal education create uses of the ethnic language in a formal domain, minority children benefit greatly from having primary education in their mother tongue (Unesco 2003). Formal education is a good means toward ethnic language maintenance and is even better when 11% of the research participants, a small but significant group which includes the village headman, expressed their desire for some kind of formal education of Black Tai children in their ethnic language.

Given that the majority of the students at Wat Nongprong School are Black Tai, it should not be too difficult to implement the plan. Now that schools are encouraged to organize their own curriculum to a certain extent, including the ethnic Black Tai language in the curriculum is no longer far fetched. At the beginning of the implementation stage, Black Tai may be included as a subject to find out the strong and weak points. As preferred by some 11% of the research participants, the program should finally be transferred into a bilingual school teaching some courses in Black Tai and others in Standard Thai. Bilingual schools are popular in Thailand nowadays. A bilingual school would be good for Black Tai children as it would offer the children the ethnic knowledge while preparing them for future education in the dominant language.

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