

CODE-SWITCHING OF ISAN WOMEN IN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES ON YOUTUBE

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Abstract— This research is a linguistic study aimed at analyzing the code-switching practices of Isan women in transnational families on YouTube. The research data includes YouTube video clips from 2021 - 2022 by Isan women married to European husbands, collected from 10 YouTube channels with a total of 100 video clips. Each channel has more than 100,000 followers. The theoretical framework is based on Gumperz's (1982) concept of code-switching, which posits that code-switching is related to contextual information and the topic of discourse.

The findings reveal three patterns of code-switching among the participants: (1) between Standard Thai and Isan Thai, (2) between Isan Thai and foreign languages, and (3) between Standard Thai and foreign languages. These instances of code-switching serve functions such as explanation and translation. Additionally, the patterns of code-switching are closely associated with the content and topics being discussed.

Keywords— Code-Switching, Isan Language, Standard Thai, Transnational Family

1. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching occurs when bilingual or multilingual speakers alternate between languages during conversation (Poplack, 2001). This alternation can involve different languages or dialects within the same language and can occur at the levels of sound, words, or sentences (Gumperz, 1982). In Thailand, Standard Thai serves as the national and official language. However, the country is home to over 60 local and ethnic languages (Premsrirat, 2004). In the northeastern region, or Isan, the Isan language is the primary language, making most Isan speakers bilingual. They use Isan as their mother tongue and Standard Thai as the lingua franca (Chanthao, 2022). Other regions of Thailand also exhibit bilingualism, leading to observable phenomena of code-switching across all regions (Khamnon & Chanthao, 2017; Kongkerd, 2015; Pitak & Salee, 2016). Previous research has highlighted the widespread occurrence of code-switching between Standard Thai and regional varieties of Thai. However, no studies have yet examined code-switching using data from YouTube channels—a modern medium where individuals worldwide can express their personal language identity and share it publicly.

The phenomenon of transnational marriages involving Thai women, particularly Isan women and Western men, has become increasingly prominent over the past half-decade (Lapanan, 2018). Many women in this group have relocated to their husbands' countries and established their own YouTube channels to share various aspects of their daily lives. These platforms also serve as a source of income. Among Isan women in transnational marriages, those with YouTube channels attracting over 100,000 followers exhibit clear patterns of code-switching between Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and foreign languages.

The concept of code-switching emerged in the late 19th century and gained prominence through the work of Blom and Gumperz, which has been widely discussed in linguistics and interdisciplinary studies. Blom and Gumperz (1972) defined code-switching and code-mixing as phenomena influenced by situational factors, language usage, and the topic of conversation, categorizing it into two primary types. The first, Situational Switching, occurs when situational factors determine language use, often reflecting societal norms. For example, formal settings such as government offices necessitate the use of Standard Thai, while informal settings allow for casual language or dialects. The second type, Metaphorical Switching, is influenced by the topic of conversation, with speakers using Standard Thai for formal topics and switching to regional dialects for personal or informal discussions. Furthermore, Blom and Gumperz identified another form of code-switching known as Conversational Code-Switching, which occurs within a single sentence. In this phenomenon, speakers alternate between two languages in a balanced manner, guided by the context of the interaction.

Linguists have applied the code-switching framework of Blom and Gumperz (BG) to the study of various languages worldwide, and several scholars have expanded upon their concepts. For instance, Ervin-Tripp (1964) highlighted that code-switching occurs significantly in relation to the setting and the topic of conversation. Romaine (1994) categorized code-switching into two types: intra-sentential, which occurs within a single clause or sentence, and inter-sentential, which takes place between clauses or sentences, where one clause is in one

language and the subsequent clause is in another, without language mixing within the same clause. In both types, speakers alternate between languages based on the appropriateness of the linguistic context, including factors such as interlocutors and the topic discussed. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) further explored code-switching as a reflection of linguistic identity shaped by the social and cultural conditions of speakers, positioning it as a subject within the domain of sociocultural linguistics perspective.

This article aligns with the findings of Gumperz (1958), who studied code-switching among Norwegians in regions with distinct local dialects. Gumperz observed that men who travelled outside their villages were more likely to switch between dialects than those who remained within their local areas. Similarly, Isan women in Thailand who marry foreigners and relocate from their native linguistic environment in the Isan region to their husbands' countries exhibit a propensity for code-switching in their daily lives. This includes their speech on their personal YouTube channels, where they enjoy the freedom to use language in a natural and unrestricted manner. Such instances provide valuable insights into the phenomenon of code-switching among Isan women in transnational families.

2. Code-Switching in Thai Society

Research on code-switching in Thai society reveals patterns, functions, and social factors associated with this linguistic phenomenon. For example, Fongrit (2013) examined code-switching between Standard Thai and Isan Thai among local radio broadcasters in the Isan region. The study found that code-switching occurred at the phrase, sentence, and discourse levels. It served three primary functions: emphasizing importance, providing additional explanations, and expressing emotions. The study identified four factors influencing code-switching: proper nouns, formality, topics of conversation, and native language. Buddanang and Chanthao (2018) explored the functions of code-switching among Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and Pali in Buddhist sermons by monks. The findings revealed three forms of code-switching: between Standard Thai and Isan Thai, Standard Thai and Pali, and among Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and Pali. Seven functions of code-switching were identified: explanation, emotional expression, cultural communication, quoting, emphasis, humor, and addressing the audience.

Koanamsai (2014) analyzed code-switching data from Facebook interactions among Isan people, identifying occurrences of code-switching at the levels of words, phrases, and sentences. Similarly, Kongkerd (2015) examined the functions of code-switching between Thai and English on Facebook, highlighting three key purposes: (1) expressing politeness, (2) conveying precise meanings and emotions, and (3) presenting group identity and membership. Chanthao (2022) investigated code-switching between Standard Thai and the Isan dialect among rural villagers in Isan, focusing on situational code-switching within village contexts. The study employed observation and questionnaires as data collection methods. The findings revealed that factors such as interlocutors, location, and the age of the participants influenced code-switching behaviour. Standard Thai was more frequently used by individuals who travelled outside the community and brought back new language practices. Younger individuals exhibited a higher frequency of code-switching compared to older groups. Moreover, the research underscored the growing influence of Standard Thai on the Isan dialect, which was once widely used in the daily lives of rural Isan communities.

The aforementioned studies highlight code-switching between Standard Thai, regional varieties of Thai, and English across various contexts, including daily conversations, social media interactions, and the diminishing usage of local languages. This research aims to shed light on another dimension of code-switching, focusing on data derived from video clips published on YouTube channels. It provides new insights into the code-switching practices of Isan women in transnational families.

3. Transnational Marriages in Thai Society

A significant number of Thai women in intercultural marriages share their personal experiences on YouTube. These narratives often stem from their relocation abroad, with each individual presenting unique perspectives on life in a foreign country. Such content aims to inspire and guide Thai women who aspire to marry or form relationships with foreign men. In contemporary Thai society, particularly in the Isan region, transnational marriages have become a notable trend. Many Isan women view marrying a foreign spouse as a means to fulfill aspirations for a better life. The study by Ayuwat and Narongchai (2018), titled "Living Expectations of Rural Women with a Foreign Husband: A Case of Northeast, Thailand," examined these dynamics. The research revealed that women preparing to marry and relocate abroad must equip themselves with knowledge of the language, society, and culture of the destination country. They must also be aware of their marital rights, anticipate potential needs for assistance abroad, and often hold expectations for a stable and sustainable life. Key aspirations include having a loyal partner who provides economic support, ensuring the well-being of their parents, and offering financial assistance to their families.

Lapanan (2018) observed that transnational marriage and migration have emerged as significant social phenomena over the past two to three decades, attracting sustained academic attention. Studies on transnational marriage and migration illuminate the dynamics of research frameworks, knowledge production, and a variety of debates. Thai women's intercultural marriages often stem from economic hardships within their families, the desire to escape difficult living conditions, or previous failures in family life. Consequently, these marriages are frequently pursued without regard for legal formalities (Kangkan, 2017; Chaikitpinoy, 2017). Singpliam and Kirdnark (2024) proposed a redefinition of the concept of *mia farang* (foreigners' wives) as a socio-regional and gendered expectation among Isan women. They noted that this concept expands when situated within the space of flows, as observed through both online and offline activities of Isan women. While networked society and spaces provide

opportunities to challenge the dominant narratives surrounding *mia farang*, hierarchies based on race and gender persist. This underscores how the *mia farang* identity continues to rely on familiar representations of Isan women. Based on the aforementioned research on transnational marriages among Isan women, it is evident that these studies primarily focus on social aspects, quality of life, and adaptation to new societal contexts. Such research highlights the adaptability and learning capacity of Isan women in transnational marriages.

Consequently, Isan women in transnational families must adapt and acquire multilingual proficiency to sustain their lives abroad. Additionally, they utilize platforms like YouTube to share their experiences and way of life, providing insights for Thai women considering marriage and migration to live with foreign husbands. The language used on YouTube exhibits distinct patterns of code-switching, which are prominently observable.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives and Research Questions

This study aimed to identify the code-switching patterns of Isan women in transnational families as observed on their YouTube channels. The research questions were: What types of code-switching occur, and how do they manifest?

Research Design

This was a qualitative linguistic study focusing on multilingual speakers' code-switching behavior. It employed Gumperz's (1982) framework, which posits that code-switching is linked to contextual information and the topic of discussion. The findings were presented through descriptive analysis.

Data

The data comprised spoken language from 10 Isan women in transnational families who shared content on their YouTube channels. Each channel had over 100,000 followers, with videos published between 2021 and 2022. A purposive sampling method was used, requiring the channels to predominantly use Standard Thai or the Isan dialect and feature consistent code-switching throughout their videos. A total of 100 videos were analyzed.

Research Framework

Gumperz's (1982) code-switching framework suggests that code-switching can occur at the level of words, phrases, and sentences across different languages or dialects. It is closely related to contextual information and the topic of discussion. This framework guided the identification of code-switching patterns and their relationship with contextual and topical factors.

Analysis

The research involved transcribing the spoken content from the videos, categorizing the languages used, and analyzing code-switching at the word, phrase, and sentence levels. Contextual information associated with code-switching instances was also examined. Symbols were used to denote language in the analysis: T = Standard Thai, E = Isan Thai, and F = foreign languages (e.g., English, Swedish, Norwegian, German, French). These notations provided clear representations of the code-switching patterns observed.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Languages Observed in Code-Switching

The study analyzed 40 videos from the YouTube channel Noona Sweden Fanpage using the code-switching frameworks proposed by Blom and Gumperz (1972) and Prasitratthasin (2005). The findings revealed three primary patterns of code-switching: (1) Standard Thai–Isan Thai, (2) Isan Thai–Foreign Languages, and (3) Standard Thai–Foreign Languages. Each pattern demonstrated distinct functions of code-switching, which are discussed as follows:

1) Standard Thai and Isan Thai

Code-switching between Standard Thai and Isan Thai was observed, with Isan Thai serving as the primary language and Standard Thai used in formal contexts. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

Example 1: Channel: Noona Sweden Fan page

“สวัสดีค่ะ (T) กินข้าว (E) ขนมนจีนน้ำพริกนรก กินเท่าที่มี (T) ช้อนกะเหลือยู่คันเดียว
ถ้วยชามนามกรกะเหลือยู่สามสี่อัน
เพราะว่าลีย้ายไปอยู่เมืองไทยแล้ว คลิปนี้อาจจะเป็นคลิปสุดท้ายที่กินข้าวอยู่พาดมันตรงนี้นะ (E)
คลิปสุดท้ายที่กิน
ข้าวที่พาดมันที่แต่ก่อนเคยอยู่(T)”

Translation:

"Hello (T). Eating rice (E). Fermented rice noodles with spicy chili paste, eating what is available (T). There's only one spoon left, and only three or four bowls remaining because we're moving back to Thailand. This might be the last clip of eating here in this apartment, this place (E). The last clip of eating in the apartment where we used to live (T)."

Example 2: Channel: Nammy E

“กะลิมอีกจักหนวย กะปองได้สามหนวย บรูว่าในห้องได้ก็หนวย(E) สด ยอด ชิมไปเรื่อย ๆ ต้นไหนหวานเราก็กะเก็บ

เก็บได้แค่สามลูก(T) แต่แบบสะออนคัก(E)

Translation:

"I'll taste another one. This can have three fruits. Not sure how many fruits are in the belly (E). Amazing. Keep tasting, and whichever is sweet, we'll pick it. We managed to pick only three fruits (T), but it's so delightful (E)."

The examples demonstrate code-switching between Standard Thai and Isan Thai at the sentence level. The speakers alternated between these two languages in nearly equal proportions, using both to narrate their stories or describe ongoing activities seamlessly. The languages were not used redundantly; instead, each served to contribute distinct content or detail to the narrative.

2) Isan Thai and Foreign Languages

Code-switching between Isan Thai and foreign languages, particularly English, was the second most frequent pattern, following the code-switching between Standard Thai and Isan Thai. This type of code-switching occurred in alignment with the content or topic being discussed, aiming to clarify the message for the audience. The foreign languages used included English and the native languages of the speakers' spouses, such as Swedish, Norwegian, German, and French. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

Example 3: Channel: Nammy E

“จะเอ สวิสจำพี่น้อง มือนี้น้ำกะจะพาเข้าไปในเมืองเด้อจ้(Е.) **ลินคอร์นเชอร์**(F.) ในเมืองที่น้ำอยู่ น้ำสิพา(Е.) **แอนโทนี่**(F.) ไปตัดผม แล้วกะสิพาไป(Е.) **ช้อปปิ้ง**(F.) นิดๆหน่อยๆ”

Translation:

“**Hey**, hello everyone. Today, Nam will take you into the city (E) **Lincolnshire** (F), the city where I live. I will take (E) **Anthony** (F) to get a haircut and then go (E) **shopping** (F) a little bit.”

Example 4: Channel: Suwan In UK Language Isaan

“ตอนนี้กะ(Е) **เมมโมรี่การ์ด**(F) กะสิเต็มอีกแล้วพี่น้องเอ้ยย **เฮ็ด**(E) **วิดีโอ**(F) สอง(Е) **วิดีโอ**(F) กะสิเต็ม(Е)”

Translation:

“Now (E) the **memory card** (F) is about to be full again, everyone. I **recorded** (E) two **videos** (F), and it's almost full (E).”

Examples 3 and 4 illustrate code-switching between Isan Thai and foreign languages at the lexical level, involving proper nouns such as names of individuals and places, as well as loanwords. In these examples, code-switching occurred as the speaker narrated events or described upcoming activities in their videos. Proper nouns were used to reference specific people or locations, while loanwords served as universally understood terms to enhance clarity and facilitate effective communication.

3) Standard Thai and Foreign Languages

Code-switching between Standard Thai and foreign languages occurred at the level of words, phrases, or sentences, exhibiting a variety of patterns. This is because the speakers are fluent in foreign languages due to their long-term residence abroad, where they regularly use these languages in daily life. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

Example 5: Channel: Mai Thai in France

“ใกล้ถึง(T) **nimes** (F) สรุปนะคะนั่งรถมาจากบ้านยายใหม่ มาถึง(T) **nimes** (F) ก็ประมาณ 3 ชม.คะพี่น้องขา เราขึ้นทางด่วน
มานะคะ ไปกลับก็ประมาณ 6 ชม. นะคะ(T)”

Translation:

"Almost at (T) Nimes (F). To summarize, we traveled by car from Grandma Mai's house, and we arrived at (T) Nimes (F) after about 3 hours. We took the highway, and the round trip was about 6 hours (T)."

Example 6: Channel: Petssy Channel

“**โซน**(F) นี่เรายังไม่เคยมานะคะ เดินเลยจากโรงแรมที่พักเรามา เลยจากร้านเมื่อคืนมานิดหนึ่ง มีพวกของขายด้วยนะคะ แล้วก็”

ร้านอาหารด้วยนะคะ มีหมดเลย(T) **โซน**(F) นี่จะเป็นโซนแบบไม่หรูหรา ไม่มีของ(T) **แบรนด์เนม**(F) ก็จะเป็น(T) **โซน**(F) แบบทั่วๆ ไป จะไม่เหมือนโซนที่เราไป โซนที่ว่าของวังหรือว่าที่อยู่ของ(T) **ดยุค**(F)

Translation:

"This (F) zone is a place we've never visited before. We walked a bit from our hotel, just past the store we went to last night. There are items for sale here (T), and there are restaurants as well (T). This (F) zone isn't fancy; there are no branded goods (F), just a typical (T) zone, not like the area we visited, the palace or the residence of (T) the Duke (F)."

Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate code-switching between Standard Thai and foreign languages, with the switching occurring at the word level, such as city names and other specific terms. The code-switching does not solely involve English but also includes languages from the region where the speaker resides, such as French, Swedish, and Italian. The switched words are often proper nouns, such as city names, currencies, or other specific terms.

YouTube channels created by Isan women in intercultural marriages often present personal narratives about their lives abroad, comparing their experiences in foreign countries with life in Thailand, particularly in their hometowns or the Isan region. The topics discussed are closely linked to code-switching, as the chosen vocabulary often reflects cultural and contextual elements. Specific terms frequently used are tied to cultural aspects such as food and Thai traditions. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon.

1) Cooking and Eating

A recurring theme on these channels is the depiction of food preparation or consumption, showcasing the enjoyment and comfort of living abroad. Content related to cooking includes buying ingredients, preparing meals, and eating. The following example illustrates a YouTube video showcasing an Isan woman preparing food for foreigners to enjoy.

Example 7: Channel: Mai Thai in France

“สวัสดีจ้า สวัสดีอย่างเป็นทางการจ้า หอยแมลงภู่ ล้างทำความสะอาดเรียบร้อยแล้วจะพี่น้องจ๋า เหลือแต่เอาขนมันออก ขนหยิกๆหยองๆ นี่จะพี่น้องจ๋า ยายไหมจะทำอะไร ยายไหมก็จะเอาไปอบกับเนยจ้า ใส่กับแป๊ะซิน แป๊ะซินก็คือผักชีฝรั่งจะพี่น้องจ๋า”

Translation:

“Hello, everyone! A very formal hello to you all. Mussels are already cleaned, my dear friends. Only the hairs remain to be removed—these curly little hairs here, my dear friends. What will Grandma Mai do? Grandma Mai will bake them with butter. I’ll also add pae-sin. Pae-sin is parsley, my dear friends.”



Fig.1: Depicts the narrative of preparing Isan cuisine.

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQn9ofW5K18>)

The above example illustrates a cooking event in the kitchen, showcasing vocabulary in Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and foreign languages related to food and storytelling. For instance, "พี่น้องจ๋า" (Phi Nong Ja) is a phrase commonly used in Isan Thai to address a group of people, while "หยิกๆ หยองๆ" (Yik-Yong) combines Standard Thai and Isan Thai in a reduplicative form to vividly describe the object being discussed. Additionally, "แป๊ะซิน" (Pae-sin) is a French term for parsley, explicitly explained in the clip to enhance audience comprehension. The code-switching observed in this context primarily serves to clarify meanings and ensure effective communication with the viewers.

2) Experience

Isan women in transnational families who relocate to Europe to join their husbands often share their experiences of living abroad, working, learning a new language, raising children, adapting to a new cultural and social environment, and navigating marital life with their foreign spouses. Every video clip involves code-switching between Standard Thai and Isan Thai, predominantly using Isan Thai. The following is an example:

Example 8: Channel: Nammy E

“กะมีหลายๆ คนเนาะ(E) ที่อยากรู้น้ำกับแฟนน้ำเจอกันยังไ.(T) มือนี้น้ำกะจะมาเฝ้าให้ฟัง(E) เจอกันในงานปาร์ตี้. ตอนนั้น, เราก็มี่แฟน, เขาก็มีแฟน.(T) กะคือเป็นหมู้กัน(E)”

Translation:

"There are many people, you know (E), who want to know how Nam and my boyfriend met (T). Today, Nam will tell you about it (E). We met at a party. At that time, I had a boyfriend, and he had a girlfriend (T). We were just friends (E)."

This example recounts the experience of how an Isan woman and her British husband first met. They fell in love at a party hosted by Thai friends in England. The narration employs a mix of Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and English. Sometimes, the languages overlap to reiterate meanings, while at other times, explanations are provided for the husband's understanding. This can be further observed in Figure 2.



Fig.2: Depicts the narrative of a romantic life experience.
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2u9Idsh-AA>)

3) Activity

The activities of Isan women presented through YouTube include mushroom picking in local forests, socializing with Thai female friends, traveling with family, celebrating with the husband's family, and participating in significant festivals both in Thailand and the husband's country. The following example illustrates an activity involving mushroom picking to prepare Thai cuisine for the family.

Example 9: Channel: Noona Sweden Fanpage

“สวยๆ สวยมากเลยดอกนี้.(T) เก็บไปแกงโลฟสดให้ท่านผู้ชมเบิ่ง อันนี้เห็ดขอน เห็ดขอนสน ข้อยกะลี่ยถ่ายคลิปรวมๆ ให้เจ้าเบิ่ง

นะคะเนาะ(F)”

Translation:

"Beautiful, this one is very beautiful. (T) I'm going to pick them and cook live for the viewers. This is a 'khon' mushroom, a 'khon sone' mushroom. I'll take a general video for you to see. (F)"

The example above demonstrates code-switching between Standard Thai in the first sentence and Isan Thai in the subsequent part, as the specific names of the mushrooms, such as "khon" or "khon sone," are terms from the Isan dialect that do not have equivalents in Standard Thai. The following image shows how mushroom picking is carried out in the local forests of Europe.



Figure 3: Depicts the activity of mushroom picking
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUP3w7c14ok>)

4) Festivals and Special Days

The content related to festivals and special days in Europe, such as Christmas, New Year, Songkran, and the national holidays of the countries where the Isan women reside, is commonly presented. The Isan women describe their participation in these events, including the preparation of food for shared meals.

Example 10: Channel: kin Thai pai Rang

“สวัสดีค่ะ วันนี้ยายกับคุณแม่จะทำขนม, ซึ่งเป็นขนมยอดนิยมหรือว่าเป็นประเพณีของเดนมาร์กก็ได้ ที่เขากินในช่วงปีใหม่ ส่วนผสมมีไม่เยอะนะค่ะ ได้แก่ (T) มาชิปัน, คันสเค, โนกัส, น้ำตาลไอซิง (Icing sugar) (F) ซึ่งไม่รู้ภาษาอังกฤษเรียกว่าอะไร มาชิแพนนี่, เขาก็ทำมาจาก อัลมอลด์ (T)”

Translation:

“Hello! Today, Grandma and Camilla are going to make some sweets, which are a popular treat or a Danish tradition eaten during the New Year. The ingredients are not many, such as (T) marzipan, kandske, nogus, and icing sugar (F), although I'm not sure what it's called in English. Marzipan is made from almonds (T).”

Example 10 demonstrates code-switching at the word level, with Standard Thai used at the beginning of the conversation. The speakers then switch to Danish and English for the specific names of ingredients. At the end of the video, there are scenes of celebrating New Year's with their friends, as shown in Figure 4.



Fig.4: Depicts the celebration of the international New Year festival.
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfHFvL3pviQ>)

6. Summary

The patterns of code-switching employed by Isan women in transnational families on YouTube effectively address the research questions. The study identified three languages involved in code-switching: Standard Thai, Isan Thai (regional dialect), and foreign languages. These patterns are categorized into three types: (1) Standard Thai and Isan Thai, (2) Isan Thai and foreign languages, and (3) Standard Thai and foreign languages. Foreign languages encompass English as well as the native languages of the spouses' countries, such as French, Swedish, German, and Italian. The findings align with Gumperz's (1982) theory of code-switching, which suggests that code-switching occurs between distinct languages or between dialects of the same language. In this context, Standard Thai and English/other foreign languages, as well as Standard Thai and Isan Thai (Thai dialect), exemplify these dynamics. Furthermore, the study reveals that code-switching correlates with the topics being discussed, occurring frequently in five key areas: cooking, experience, activity, shopping, and personal referring. The switching was observed at the word, phrase, and sentence levels.

The new knowledge derived from this study highlights the relationship between code-switching and the topics of discussion. Speakers tended to switch languages when discussing aspects of life in Thailand and abroad, particularly the lifestyle within Isan communities. This phenomenon is evident in the vocabulary and idiomatic expressions of the Isan dialect, which appear consistently throughout the video clips. Additionally, the findings emphasize the prominent role of the Isan dialect, as the mother tongue, in code-switching practices.

7. DISCUSSION

The use of spoken language data from YouTube channels offers significant advantages for researching code-switching, as it captures natural language usage, including prosody and body language, which correlate with language choices.

The code-switching patterns reviewed align with this study, particularly in relation to switching between Isan Thai and Standard Thai (e.g., works by Chanthao, 2022, and Fongrit, 2013) as well as between Standard Thai and English (e.g., studies by Koanamsai, 2014, and Kongkerd, 2015). However, this research presents a unique finding regarding the variety of languages involved, including French, Danish, Swedish, and others. This distinction arises because the participants in this study are multilingual speakers who use Isan Thai, Standard Thai, English, and the national languages of their foreign spouses. They acquire these additional languages through formal education for living in their spouses' countries. This multilingualism differs from previous studies, such as those by Koanamsai (2014) and Kongkerd (2015), which focused on code-switching between Standard Thai and English on Facebook.

Gumperz (1982) stated that code-switching occurs naturally; however, in reality, it does not arise solely from natural causes. Instead, it happens when discussing cultural aspects of a particular country or locality, prompting a shift to the language associated with that culture. For example, when talking about Isan culture, speakers may switch from Standard Thai to the Isan dialect. Similarly, when referring to festivals from foreign cultures, speakers may switch to the language of their respective country.

This study highlights the characteristics of code-switching as conceptualized by Blom and Gumperz (1972), who categorized it into two types: Situational Switching and Metaphorical Switching. Situational Switching occurs during conversations with listeners who speak different languages or dialects, even among Thai speakers from various regions, where speakers employ code-switching to communicate effectively with an audience that has diverse linguistic backgrounds. Metaphorical Switching, on the other hand, involves the use of language to explain cultural content, such as employing the Isan dialect when discussing Isan cultural elements or using English to refer to significant cultural events in a foreign country. These two forms of code-switching provide valuable frameworks for analyzing language use on social media and among Thai speakers more broadly.

The findings of this study also align with Ervin-Tripp's (1964) framework, which suggests that code-switching is significantly influenced by the situational context (setting) and the topic of conversation. The results indicate that the situations and topics discussed by Isan women in the video clips lead to code-switching in various contexts, such as cooking, sharing experiences, engaging in activities, and celebrating significant festivals. Thus, the context and topic serve as key factors driving code-switching between Standard Thai, Isan Thai, and other foreign languages. This linguistic adaptation enhances the audience's understanding of the situations and narratives shared by Isan women in transnational families on YouTube.

Code-switching also serves as a means of expressing the identity of Isan women in transnational families on YouTube. This aligns with the findings of Hanan Omar A. Ben Nafa (2016) in the study “Code-Switching and Social Identity Construction among Arabic-English Bilinguals: A Stance Perspective”, which posits that code-switching can reflect a unified identity at both individual and interactional levels, as well as contribute to the construction of a macro-level identity. Therefore, examining code-switching facilitates the exploration of the identity of Isan women, as code-switching represents a distinctive aspect of their identity within transnational families on YouTube.

Contribution

This research represents a pioneering study in code-switching within the context of Thai transnational families. It examines bilingual practices through data sourced from YouTube, a modern medium, and addresses the increasing prevalence of transnational marriages in Thailand. The findings offer valuable insights into bilingual communication strategies in a transnational context, with a specific focus on Thai women.

8.Future research

The next research study related this finding should figure out do research about the understanding bilingualism in the context of transnational families in other regions of Thailand.

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