

Linguistic Features of ‘Good English’ Spoken in Thai English Movies

Pairote Bennui

Ph.D. (Languages and Linguistics), Assistant Professor,
Western Languages Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Thaksin University, Songkhla
E-mail: pairote1977@hotmail.com

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Abstract

It has been debatable whether Thai people’s spoken English is ‘good English’. Many Thais are claimed to speak ‘improper English’ because of their idiosyncrasies. However, there appear to be a number of Thais in different professions who can use English effectively. In the entertainment sector, in particular, several Thai actors and actresses are able to speak proper English in their English language movies. This is evident in Thai English movies, namely ‘The King of the White Elephant’ (1941) and ‘The King Maker’ (2005). This research aimed to analyze and describe linguistic features of ‘good English’ spoken by Thai characters in the movies as well as to discuss the extent to which the features imply Standard Thai English. It applied Joos’s (1967) ‘five styles of English usage’

and Prasithrathsint's (1999) 'good English in the Thai context' as a theoretical framework. The data was analyzed by using a content analysis. It was found that the Thai characters performed the linguistic features of good spoken English styles and mirrored their Thai culture and identity of English through their speaking. The latter indicates the use of the standard Thai variety of English.

Keywords: Good English; Thai English Movies;
Standard Thai English; Linguistic Features

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ลักษณะทางภาษาศาสตร์ของการพูด 'ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดี' ในภาษาไทย ฉบับภาษาอังกฤษ

ไพรโรจน์ เป็ญนุย

Ph.D. (Languages and Linguistics), ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์
สาขาวิชาภาษาตะวันตก คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์
มหาวิทยาลัยทักษิณ

E-mail: pairote1977@hotmail.com

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บทคัดย่อ

เป็นที่อกเกียงกันว่าภาษาอังกฤษที่คนไทยพูดเป็น 'ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดี' หรือไม่ กล่าวกันว่าคนไทยจำนวนมากพูด 'ภาษาอังกฤษที่ไม่ถูกต้อง' เพราะมีข้อผิดพลาดทางภาษาหลายประการอย่างไรก็ตามปรากฏว่ามีคนไทยจากหลากหลายอาชีพจำนวนหนึ่งที่สามารถใช้ภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ โดยเฉพาะในวงการบันเทิง มีนักแสดงไทยหลายคนสามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษที่ถูกต้องในการแสดงภาษาไทยฉบับภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสิ่อ สิ่งนี้ปรากฏชัดในภาษาไทยฉบับภาษาอังกฤษ เรื่อง 'พระเจ้าช้างเผือก' (*The King of the White Elephant*) (2484) และ 'กบภูท้าวศรีสุคจัน' (*The King Maker*) (2548) งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งวิเคราะห์และพรรนนาลักษณะทางภาษาศาสตร์ของการพูด 'ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดี' ของตัวละคร

ไทยในภาษาญี่ปุ่นทั้งสองเรื่อง ตลอดจนอกไปรายว่า ลักษณะการพูดดังกล่าวบ่งบอกถึงภาษาอังกฤษมาตรฐาน แบบไทยมากน้อยเพียงใด งานวิจัยนี้ใช้กรอบทฤษฎี 'วัฒนลีลาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษทั้งห้าแบบ' ของ มาร์ติน วูส (2510) และ 'ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดีในบริบทไทย' (2542) ของ ออมรา ประสิทธิ์รัฐสินธุ์ การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงเนื้อหา พบว่า ตัวละครในภาษาญี่ปุ่นทั้งสองเรื่องสามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษโดยมีลักษณะทางภาษาศาสตร์ตามลีลาการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษที่ดี และสะท้อนวัฒนธรรมและอัตลักษณ์ ของความเป็นไทยในภาษาอังกฤษ สิ่งนี้แสดงให้เห็นถึง การใช้ภาษาอังกฤษมาตรฐานแบบไทย

Introduction

In Thailand, English is used as a foreign language. Mostly, Thais speak English to only foreigners, not among themselves. Further, Thais are not in need of expressing themselves in English as those in post-British/American colonial societies are. This leads to a Thai identity pride in language and culture. At present, English is not a colonial language, but it is a global language which affects the everyday life of world's population. English is a key tool for the world citizen to serve their communication and work needs. This function of English is inevitably spread to Thailand, although Thais cannot speak proper English (Bennui & Hashim, 2014). As Thailand's crucial income is based on tourism, many Thais attempt to attain effective English proficiency to work in the tourism industry (Horey, 2006). Although several Thais speak simple English for survival, there appear to be a few Thais who can use good or acceptable English in their professional communication.

It is claimed that many Thais do not speak English effectively. They do not have a chance to speak English (Yusica, 2014). Thai teachers of English still use Thai as a medium of instruction to accommodate their students' understanding of lessons. This becomes a case of fossilization. Their oral English has a low proficiency due to a difficulty in transferring their thought patterns in Thai into English. Thinking in English is impossible as it is affected by Thai structure (Choomthong, 2014). This leads to the phenomenon where Thais speak little English.

It is said that many Thais express broken English, but some can use 'good English' such as those working in international business corporations, diplomacy, hotels and tourism, and international

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education. However, another profession which has been little known as a Thai speaker of 'good English' involves actors and actresses. In Thai entertainment sectors, the use of Thai language as a medium of movies, songs, and television dramas and series stands out. Thai viewers prefer to watch Thai movies produced in the Thai language. Eventually, Hollywood movies have been dubbed in Thai to suit the viewers. Thai movie stars use Thai rather than English, and this can make them speak little English. This assumption is both right and wrong. The majority of Thai actors and actresses use inefficient English; the minority can converse in proficient English. The importance of Thai movie stars' use of 'good English' thus interests this study. Like many other Thais, Thai actors and actresses have no opportunities to use English, as the main language of the movies is Thai. On the other hand, they have to speak English in any movies in which English is the medium of communication. According to MThai (2016) and Monomax (n.d.), there are some Thai movie stars who starred in Hollywood movies such as Sinjai Hongthai in 'Air America' (1990), Ratha Pho-ngam in 'Only God Forgives' (2013), Sarah Malakul Lane in 'Jailbait' (2016), Nirut Sirijanya in 'The Hangover Part II' (2011), and Tony Ja in 'Furious 7' (2015). Evidently, these Thai celebrities can speak English in international movies although their spoken English is based on the edited film script.

However, the use of English by Thai stars in Hollywood movies is not the focus of this study. Those movies do not belong to Thai film productions. Indeed, their oral English represents the 'good English' of non-native speakers. Instead, this study attempts to present the way Thai actors and actresses speak English in Thai movies. If they play

Thai movies in which English is the main language of the script, this would be implausible. Nevertheless, some Thai films were produced in English or the so-called Thai English films, namely 'The King of the White Elephant' (1941), 'Province 77' (2002), and 'The King Maker' (2005). In these movies, the Thai characters mainly used English, but they conversed in Thai in some scenes. This is apparent in the film 'Province 77' that the characters, Thai American residents in a Thai town in Los Angeles, employ code-switching (Bennui, 2016). All these three films mirror Thai actors and actresses' use of correct English. However, only the movies 'The King of the White Elephant' (1941) and 'The King Maker' (2005) are selected for this study. The film 'Province 77' differs from the two others as it presents Thai English, ranging from broken to good English. The characters use more American English slangs than Thai English; thus, their 'good English' does not reflect much Thai linguistic identity. Meanwhile, the other two movies convey the similar theme of Thai monarchy. The characters express much more 'good English' than weak English, mirroring the refined Thai thought patterns.

The concept of 'good English' plays a major role in this study. It is assumed that Thai characters have 'good English' skills in starring in the Thai English movies, but the term 'good English' is vague because of the emerging varieties of English worldwide. 'Good English' may be judged against Standard English, either RP (Received Pronunciation) of BBC English or GA (General American English) of CNN English.

Good English is very broad. It is defined by many scholars. According to Johnson (1982), 'good English' involves 'superior English' or the English used by high class people in society, and its feature is

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grounded in good grammar structure. In contrast, Mathur (2013) views that 'good English' covers both spoken and written skills by providing principles and practices in improving one's proficiency in English. On the contrary, Newman (1995, as cited in Glisdorf, 2002) uses Standard English as a criterion to propose the terms 'good Englishes' and 'bad Englishes'. He views that the business and educational sectors refer to Standard English (SE) or 'good English' while 'bad English' is normally performed by non-Anglophone speakers, who use English without regard for proper English grammar. Although this statement mirrors a negative view as now English used by non-native speakers according to paradigms of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca conforms to the criteria of intelligibility rather than native English norms, the notion of 'native English speaker' is inevitably significant such as standard English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

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Although the notions of 'good English' and 'bad English' seem to be traditional, they are still embedded in non-native English speakers' perception. In Jenkins' (2005) study, an empirical evidence provides a view regarding good pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Eight non-native English teachers from the Outer (ESL) and Expanding (EFL) Circle countries, namely Malaysia, Italy, Japan, Poland, and Spain, generally viewed that native English accent is considered to be "good, perfect, proficient, competent, fluent, real, and original English" whereas a non-native English accent is regarded as "not good, wrong, incorrect, not real, fake, deficient, and strong" (p. 541). This shows that native English is not the focal point of ELF, but non-native English speakers still admire the native English identity as an acceptable model of spoken English. This also yields Bruthiaux's

(2010) study on Singapore's Speak Good English Movement (SGEM). Although the use of Singlish or the colloquial variety of Singapore English is popular, it is not accepted by the Singapore government as it mirrors non-Standard English forms resulting in a bad image of the country. The SGEM policy has been promoted in many ways such as the website which contains Standard English grammar and expressions of American English style so that Singaporeans will follow this model. Nevertheless, this policy is not popular as Singaporeans still use Singlish to accommodate their everyday communication and to reflect their creative language expressions which differ from Standard British/American English.

The views of Glisdorf (2002), Jenkins (2005), and Bruthiaux (2010) are similar in that correct English or English used by native speakers is still vital and embedded as it indicates the acceptable or standard form of English. This is also related to World Englishes in which Standard English signifying 'good English' used by non-native speakers has been questionable. Hence, in many ex-colonial British/American countries where English is used as a second language, the notion of Standard English has been formed and institutionalized such as Standard Singapore English and Standard Philippine English. Although they are not widely accepted, they have been used in such countries (Plat et al., 1984). On the other hand, such standard form of English in Thailand is not apparent because native English is still used as the norm in the country. According to Kirkpatrick (2012), the Inner Circle variety of English, especially British English and American English, is regarded as the model in Thailand. This myth of English has been rooted in Thai society. Thus, Thai English or Thai identity of English is still developing following the

native English model. This accords Prasithrathsint's (1999) views that there is no institutionalized standard Thai English. However, she claims that there should be one variety indicating 'good English' used by Thais. This statement is taken into consideration in this study which will examine whether Thais, namely the Thai characters in Thai English movies, can express spoken English with regard to stylistic features of 'good English' in the Thai context, namely Standard Thai English.

Standard Thai English can refer to the highest level of Thai English used by the minority of Thais. It is considered the best English minimally grounded in Thai linguistic structure. However, this variety of English differs from Standard British/American English in that it is grammatically correct but it entails Thai accents. This definition is somewhat idealistic as this local variety has not been accepted.

Indeed, there are neither previous direct empirical studies on Standard Thai English nor good English in a Thai context. Former linguistic studies on Thai English emphasize its sounds, words, grammar, and style aspects. There are some studies on sounds and spoken communication in Thai English, for instance, the works by Pillai and Salaemae (2012); Rogers (2013); Sarmah et al. (2009), Smalley (1994), and Tsukada (2008). Morphologically, Thai English words are found in studies by Bennui (2015); Bolton (2003); Butler (1996; 1999a; 1999b); and Mathias (2011). Syntactically, Thai English grammar is revealed in studies by Pingkarawat (2009) and Trakulkasemsuk (2007). Textually, Thai English discourse styles are apparent in studies by Bennui and Hashim (2014); Chutisilp (1984); Watkhaolarm (2005); and Singhasak and Methitham (2016). For Thai English movies, some existing studies are not directly related to the notion of good English, but only varieties of Thai English in a Thai movie in which 'Standard

'Thai English' is mentioned as an acrolectal variety of English and 'non-Standard English' referred to a basilectal variety of Thai English used by the protagonists (Bennui, 2017). This is the only study relevant to Standard Thai English. Obviously, there is a need to conduct a study that points out 'good English', 'Thai English', and 'Standard Thai English' in a media channel which can present the Thai way of using effective English. Thus, this present study aims to bridge the gap by examining the linguistic features of 'good English'— sounds, words, grammar, and styles — used by the Thai characters in Thai English films. Moreover, it discusses the extent to which those linguistic features imply Standard Thai English.

This research is significant as it is a pioneer study that raises the notion of 'good English' used by a group of Thais who can be modelled. Indeed, the image of 'Thai English' has been viewed as 'weak English'. However, this study attempts to argue that Thais, namely celebrities, are able to speak English effectively as many other non-native English speakers. Moreover, it is a chance to identify the existence of 'Thai English movies' as a linguistic evidence that this variety is being developed to local and global viewers. Further, this study will be an evidence that the linguistic features of 'good English' spoken by the Thai characters will reflect their use of Standard Thai English. This contributes to the power of Thai English in Thai films as a choice of medium used by Thai actors and actresses.

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Theoretical Framework

This study combines two major works that mark speaking 'good English' with linguistic features — phonology, morphology, grammar, and styles. The first is the most classical approach to stylistic studies, namely

'Joos's (1967) 'five styles of English usage' taken from the book titled 'Five Clocks'. Each style implies a hierarchical aspect of 'good English' as follows:

- (i) The frozen style or an oratorical style or the elegant variety of English means 'best English' as it is often used by the superior group of English users — orators, lawyers, and preachers;
- (ii) The formal style or the style of language is used for a serious situation; however, its linguistic forms are not as polished as the frozen style. This level means 'better English';
- (iii) The consultative style is typically used in everyday conversations with a special care of language use. It is found in business transactions and doctor-patient communication, among others. This style also deserves 'good English';
- (iv) The casual style is the speech style used in a relaxing situation among friends or colleagues. It suits 'fairly good English'; and
- (v) The intimate style is used in the settings of conversation among close friends, lovers, and families. It is not very informal style, so it yields 'poor English' which may be full of taboos, colloquial, and broken English forms.

This framework is based more on stylistics than World Englishes which emerged in the 80s. However, it implies a variation of English used by speakers with various socio-cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds.

Another work is Prasithrathsint's (1999) 'good English in the Thai context' which supports Thai English. As many Thais have been regarded as speakers of more broken English than Standard English, this conceptual framework is proposed to assert an existence of Thai speakers who use

'good English' with their Thai identity. This proposed framework requires Thais' knowledge of 'good English' which comprises the conceptual world of English, the dialects of English, and the register of English. Each component is described below.

(i) Conceptual world of English is cognitively important. Thais should be aware of culturally significant categories in English, namely English-speaking people (not only native or Anglophone English). This knowledge is of grammatical features of the English language. This covers lexico-grammatical, lexico-morphological, and morpho-grammatical elements embedded in English utterances. Further, Thais speaking 'good English' should be able to differentiate ungrammatical English from grammatical English. 'Good English' grammar patterns used in both native and non-native varieties of English contexts can be modelled by Thais;

(ii) Dialects of English here does not only mean the regional varieties of British, American, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian English that should be perceived by Thais. But many other non-native varieties of English spoken by ESL speakers, namely Singapore English and Indian English, among others, should also be realized by Thais. This will provide them with many advantages to understand English with native and non-native interlocutors. In this respect, ability in switching from English to vernaculars in appropriate levels should also be encouraged because of its necessity; and

(iii) Registers of English should be recognized by Thais who will apply 'style shifting' in their speech communication, ranging from informality to formality, to use English for social purposes. An awareness of registers of styles will be good for Thais to understand English expressions in

different domains — business, science, law, media and journalism, and tourism, etc. If Thais can use English in those professional contexts, they will understand how to express 'good English' in particular situations.

The first component focuses on the lexical and the grammatical features of 'good English' while the second looks at the phonological and communicative strategies of 'good English'. In the meantime, the last points out stylistic or discourse elements of 'good English' with regard to professional contexts and Thai socio-cultural settings. These two works are combined as the integrated framework used to analyze the way Thai characters speak 'good English'. Whether their linguistic features of English yield the linguistic elements of Joos's (1967) 'best English', 'better English', 'good English', and 'fairly good English', as well as conform to Prasithrathsint's (1999) conceptual world of English, dialects of English, and registers of English will be examined and discussed using previous studies to draw some implications for Standard Thai English.

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Research Methods

This research is based on a content analysis which employs data sources and methods of analysis which are delineated below.

Data sources

Movies are the major sources of data for this study. DVDs' copies of the Thai English films titled 'The King of the White Elephant' (1941) and 'The King Maker' (2005) were purchased at the Thai Film Foundation, Nakhon Pathom (Thai Film Foundation, 2005; AVE, 2005). The two movies' English scripts, the original language of the medium, are the

vital data sources. The first movie had characters played by Thais and Eurasians while both foreigners as well as Thais and Eurasians starred in the second movie. Specific language samples from the two movies are taken from the scripts. They are based on the English expressions used by only the Thai and Eurasian major characters. Those expressions must represent the use of effective English though they are uttered with some Thai words.

The two movies are synopsized. 'The King of the White Elephant' is based on a historical novel by the previous Thai Prime Minister, Pridi Banomyong. Set in 1560, this story talks about King Chakra of the Ayodaya Kingdom who did not conform to the royal duty of having 365 wives. Instead of pursuing such a duty, the King hunted 365 elephants. Luckily, the King caught the white elephant symbolizing the good omen of the country. This was discovered by King of Honsa, the neighbor, who wanted to challenge King Chakra. The invasion of Honsa Kingdom in Kamburi, a border town of Ayodaya, led to a negotiation between King Chakra, who loved peace and King Honsa, who liked war, but it was not successful. King Chakra was forced to join the war. Fortunately, King Honsa was beaten by King Chakra through man-to-man fighting. King Chakra was called 'the King of the White Elephant' as he did not want the soldiers of both kingdoms to be killed because of the war. Finally, King Chakra married only Renoo, Lord Chamberlain's daughter, instead of the other 364 wives as he paid attention to the welfare of his people rather than taking care of his wives (Banomyong, 1990).

On the other hand, the movie 'The King Maker' follows 'The Legend of Suriyothai'. It focuses on the major roles of the Portuguese community in Ayutthaya, Siam during 1524-1549, in assisting Queen Sudachan's

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rebellion against King Chairacha. It started with the shipwreck experience of Fernando de Gama in Ayutthaya, who was captured by Arabs to be a slave, but he was bought by Maria for freedom. Maria brought de Gama to her father, Philippe de Torres, the major soldier in service of King Chairacha. Gama could remember that Torres killed his father when he was young. During the war between Ayutthaya and Lanna, King Chairacha was in the battle field. De Gama and Tong, a farmer, became the soldiers. Both became acquainted and the royal bodyguard. While the King was away, the Queen, his major consort, committed adultery with Phan, a noble in the court. When she was pregnant with her lover, she planned to assassinate the King through the help of de Torres, and the Japanese army in the kingdom, but this duty was not successful. De Gama and Tong finally suspected this assassination. He was fighting with de Torres until Torres was killed. As the King was not killed, the Queen used the poison given by Yai Jun, the witch, in food. After the King's death, the Queen also killed her son, Prince Yodfa. The rebellion by the Queen was found out by de Gama and Tong. However, they were slandered as the murderers of the King; thus, they were jailed. Tong's family and Maria, the lover of de Gama, were also jailed. After the funeral of King Chairacha and Prince Yodfa, the Queen tried to promote Koon Chaiyachit, Phan, or her lover to become the King, and she ruled the kingdom. The Queen and her lover wanted to kill de Gama and Tong, so they launched an elephant show with a fighting between de Gama and Tong. The Queen's plan was to kill the two of them after the fight, but Tong and de Gama, using axes and swords for the fighting, tried to throw their weapons to the Queen and her lover. It was successful; Koon Chaiyachit was dead. Finally, Prince Chakkraphat, King Chairacha's

younger brother, arrived at the show. He revealed that the Queen rebelled against the kingdom. Thus, the Queen was killed. Tong, his family, de Gama, and Maria were safe while Prince Chakkraphat succeeded the throne (IMDb, 2018).

Methods of analysis

Textual analysis is the main method for analyzing the language samples taken from the movies' scripts. This analysis device requires the following steps. First, the two movies' scripts were transcribed by the researcher while he was watching the movies. In this regard, the transcription of the two movies was proofread by the language specialist of this research study. Second, samples of 'good English' expressions spoken by the Thai characters were coded with regard to their scenes and put into the researcher's electronic files. Third, specific phonological, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic features of 'good English' were highlighted. Phonological features can be the pronunciation of consonant and vowel sounds as well as the performance of stress and rhythm according to the near-native English patterns. In this regard, English spoken by the Thai characters with the influence of British, American, and Australian accents is analyzed through the online Standard English dictionaries of British English (English Oxford Living Dictionaries) (Oxford University, 2018), American English (Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary, 2018), and Australian English (Macquarie Dictionary, 2018). Lexically, specific good English features include the use of correct English words which are meaningful in semantic and pragmatic contexts. Syntactically, certain English expressions are grammatically correct. Stylistically, specific

English utterances yield "best, better, good, and fairly good" styles of English used. These expressions include an appropriate use of Thai expressions in words, sound patterns, and discourse particles, for example. Fourth, all the expressions selected as the samples of good English by the Thai characters are analyzed and interpreted using the theoretical framework which combines the works by Joos (1967) and Prasithrathsint (1999). Last, particular features of 'good English' and standard Thai English used by the Thai characters are discussed.

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An analysis of the linguistic characteristics of 'good English' used by

the movie characters follows Joos's (1967) four styles of English usage which are illustrated below.

A. The Frozen Style 'Best English'

In the movie 'The King of the White Elephant' (KW), there are three scenes in which the characters' spoken English is considered 'best English' — in the Ayodaya palace, where the message from Honsa Kingdom was read, in the battle field, and in the declaration of war. These scenes are obvious that King Chakra presents his 'best English' rather than the other characters.

An example is given.

Example 1

King Chakra: Bring the prisoners before me. (Declare) Soldiers of Honsa!

You have been misled into a war with us, we who always wished to live in peace with you. You now stand defeated before us, but we will not wreak vengeance on you for

all the harm you have done us. Let this be a lesson to you. A lesson to all of us. Never allow yourselves to be driven like dumb cattle again. Tell your children and your children's children of this day, when King fought King in single combat to settle their difference, so that future generations may know and compel their leaders to do likewise, if fight they must. In that way alone can the peoples of our world be spared useless wars and unnecessary sufferings. You have, today, seen your comrades and your beloved ones slain before your very eyes. Many of you will bear scars of today's fight for the rest of your lives. Let not these scars eat into your hearts. Beat no malice towards one another for what has taken place today. Our dead demand this of us. Soldiers of Honsa! Take up your arms and return to your homes in peace. Soldiers of Ayodaya! Do honour to your brothers of Honsa.

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Soldiers of Ayodaya: Chaiyo! Chaiyo! Chaiyo!

Prince Bureng: Soldiers of Honsa! Salute Chakra, King of the White Elephant, noble as noble. Long live the King of the White Elephant!

Soldiers of Honsa: Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

King Chakra: Henceforth, let there be mutual understanding and goodwill between us, and May Peace, once more, reign over us and all our sister nations of the world for evermore. Farewell.

Prince Bureng: Farewell, Sire.

In Example 1, King Chakra could speak 'best English'. This is considered the frozen style, though he is communicating with his soldiers and the Honsa army. This is supported by the use of the fixed style for preaching the soldiers of Ayodaya and Honsa Kingdoms. This is evident in the use of imperative verbs — 'bring', 'let', 'allow', 'tell', 'beat', 'take up', and 'do'. The use of the pronoun 'you' helps increase the power of the addressing term conveyed to the Honsa army. Further, lexical items used are not words in everyday communication, but they are academic and formal ones—"lesson, compel, suffering, malice, honor, mutual understanding, good will, demand, reign, and sister nations". Moreover, some idiomatic expressions are used, such as "wreak vengeance, like dumb cattle, scars of today's fight, beat no malice". Likewise, Prince Bureng uses some idiomatic and fixed expressions to respect and praise King Chakra — "King of the White Elephant, noble in name and in nature as noble" and "Long live the King..." Then, the use of the word 'farewell' by King Chakra and Prince Bureng instead of 'good bye' indicates the frozen style and 'best English' of word selection. Besides, the Thai identity of English is obvious in a Thai word 'Chaiyo' expressed by only soldiers of Ayodaya as it is different from the English word 'Hurrah' uttered by non-Thai characters in this context. This is the only Thai word used in the film based on lexical borrowing, namely a loanword from Thai. This word which was coined by King Vajiravuth (1910-1925) means 'victory' that signifies nationalism in Siam (Scalena, 2005). The expression "Never allow yourselves to be driven like a dumb cattle" implies a Thai idiom translated in English. This is considered an instance of a figurative description of Thai English discourse style (Chutisilp, 1984). Additionally, King Chakra's oral English is correctly pronounced according to British English with

educated Thai accents. He does not stress all words as other Thais do. Instead, his spoken English shows the stress on certain important words. The words 'Honsa' and 'Ayodaya' are not uttered with Thai tones; they are expressed in a medium level of Thai accent. Although Prince Bureng's accent shows more Thai tones than King Chakra's, it is considered 'best English' as it is an educated variety.

In the film 'The King Maker' (KM), there are also three scenes where the characters present 'best English': the King's emissary who informed the Ayutthaya King the message of the Lanna King, King Chairacha's declaration of the war, and the royal messenger's reading the message after King Chairacha's death. An instance from this movie is discussed below.

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Example 2

The Royal Messenger: In the year of the ox, on the first day of the waxing moon. I, as the King, want to make known my last wishes. I solemnly bequeath the entire kingdom to my son and heir, King Yodfa. His Mother, as Queen Regent, will guide him in his decision until he comes of age and is able to take on his responsibilities as king.

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Example 2 shows that the speaker speaks 'best English' using a diplomatic style. This is seen in some fixed words in a monarchical context—solemnly, bequeath, and Queen Regent. Further, this oral English shows the very formal verb form 'is able to' instead of 'can' and the first person pronoun's viewpoint through 'I' representing 'a direct speech' given by the King. Moreover, the phrases 'the year of the ox' and 'the waxing

moon' represent English words tied with Thai cultural items of dates used in the royal message. Besides, this oral English does not emphasize the Thai accents of the speaker. The Thai proper name 'Yodfa' is moderately uttered without a Thai tone of the high level as /yOdf'a/. This is also supported by his stress patterns for certain key words, but this oral English sounds Thai, neither British nor American accents. This goes beyond Smalley's (1994) views on many Thai speakers' habits of applying Thai tonal levels in pronouncing English words.

B. The Formal Style 'Better English'

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In the KW movie, there are seven scenes representing the characters' 'better English' — the announcement of Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya, the announcement of Lord Chamberlain of Honsa, the announcement of the War Minister, during the break of the fighting between the two kingdoms, King Chakra on the elephant, in the battle field, and the victory of King Chakra. An instance is presented.

Example 3

Lord Chamberlain of Honsa: Silence! Silence! His Majesty the King of Honsa!
King of Honsa : My people, the King of Ayodaya has refused my generous proposal for Peace. There is no other course consistent with honor. Let each one of you make ready for war. We shall then attack Ayodaya.

(A venerable old man tries to say something while the others are silent.)

The old man: May it please Your Majesty, the people are tired of wars.

During my life time, I have been called over ten times for war; and what is one single White Elephant? I feel sure that what Your Majesty wants us to die for can be obtained

by peaceful negotiations.

King of Honsa: (is very upset and dissatisfied. He throws the spear to this old man, after that this man dies.) My command is the supreme law!

Example 3 presents the three characters' use of 'better English'. Lord Chamberlain and the old man present more the formal style than the King because of their lower ranking. There appear to be formal and academic words in this dialogue—"silence, His Majesty the King, proposal, consistent, Your Majesty, honor, obtain, negotiation, command, and the supreme law". Further, the sentence patterns here are refined and have neither reduction nor omission in grammar. The announcement by the King is full of declarative and imperative verb forms. Meanwhile, the old man's sentences seem to be polite and respectful with a rhetorical question, resulting in the King's anger. The use of the verb 'feel' instead of 'am' is appropriate for the speaker's lower rank, and it shows 'better English' than 'am'. Both the King and the old man's oral English sound much Thai. They act as non-Thai characters in this movie, but their real identity is Thai. This affects their accent. The old man stresses all words in the expressions as he does in Thai. The word 'negotiations' does not show the fricative sound /s/ at the end. This is in line with Tsow (2006) and Tuaycharoen (2003) that this sound is one of the most difficult sounds in English faced by Thais. Moreover, it is pronounced with Thai tone, especially the falling level at the final syllable as /nigəuʃi' ei ʃ(ə)n/. This accords what Smalley (1994) states that Thai English speakers seem to eliminate the English intonation by adding Thai rhythm and tones into English consonants and vowels. Likewise,

the King's accent sounds more French Thai. He clearly pronounces the retroflex sound in the words 'generous' and 'supreme' as Thais hardly utter this consonant sound.

Similar to the KW movie, the KM film provides seven scenes mirroring the notion of 'better English' used by the characters — in the palace of Queen Sudachan, in the Portuguese community, an interaction between Queen Sudachan and Senor Del Torres, the time when Tong and de Gama were the King's body guards, in the cave where Yai Jun was residing, after King Chairacha's death, and the elephant show. A remarkable example is discussed.

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Example 4

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Queen Sudachan: Senor Del Torres. Welcome. My compliments on a successful campaign.

Torres: I came as soon as I receive Your Majesty's command.

Queen Sudachan: How long have you served me, Senor Del Torres?

Torres: I have served you mam almost since the time I first came to the kingdom which is now approaching nine years. May I presume that Your Majesty has a problem that requires discretion and infinite delicacy.

Queen Sudachan: My problem as you rightly surmise, Senor Del Torres...is delicate and considerable. But one, given the mall fortune I am prepared to pay for your favours. I feel confident you'll be able to undertake.

Torres: Your Majesty has the most extraordinary powers of persuasion. What is that you wish me to do?

According to example 4, this conversation is very formal. Though Torres spoke more formal than Queen Sudachan because of his lower rank, the Queen's spoken English has some linguistic elements which do not fit the frozen style. For example, she pronounced the word 'considerable' /kɔ:n'si:d(ə)lə'b(ə)l/ with very Thai accent although its correct pronunciation in both British and American English is /kən'sid(ə)rəb(ə)l/. As this word is polysyllable and the retroflex sound /r/ is quite difficult for a Thai, the Queen does not properly pronounce this word as a native English speaker does. This parallels Rogers's (2013) study that Thai English speakers' pronunciation of the rhotic /r/ is altered to the lateral /l/. This character also stresses three syllables of this polysyllabic word, including the final syllable. This is related to a typical prosodic feature of Thai English in which Thais often accentuates the final position of the polysyllable words in English (Smyth, 2001). Further, the Queen uses the contraction 'will', namely "ll". This reduces the degree of formality. Lexically, English words used by the Queen here mirror 'better English': "compliments, campaign, serve, surmise, considerable, the mall fortune, favour, and undertake". Overall, these features make the Queen speak 'better English'.

C. The Consultative Style 'Good English'

The use of 'good English' in the KW film is plentiful as there are nine scenes, for instance, the beginning and end of the dancing shows in the Ayodaya palace, King Chakra's hunting elephants, in the camps of Honsa city, in Kanburi or the border town of Ayodaya, and at the house of Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya. Two remarkable examples are discussed.

Example 5

(The dancers are ready. Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya walks to the King)

Lord Chamberlain: Ahem! Ahem! Your Majesty! The girls are here.

Is it your pleasure that they should dance now?

King Chakra: Yes! Yes! By all means.

(The lord walks to his daughter, Renoo, and asks her to follow him and says)

Lord Chamberlain: Come with me.

Renoo : (Pays homage to the King)

Lord Chamberlain: Here is my daughter, sire... Your Majesty! Here is my daughter, Renoo.

King Chakra : So this is your daughter. Yes!...Yes!...very beautiful. Now let us see you dance.

Renoo What kind of dance would you like to see, Your Majesty?

King Chakra : Any dance will do. Just — er — dance.

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Based on example 5, the consultative style is used according to its serious language function. Lord Chamberlain offers King Chakra a serious topic on choosing girls or dancers for his wife. The language forms used here are not formal as there are repetitive expressions by the Lord and the King — 'Ahem, Ahem', "Here is my daughter", and 'Yes, Yes'. Further, the particle 'er' is used to reduce the formality as it enhances the consultative tone. Although the Lord and Renoo still use the formal words 'sire' and 'Your Majesty' to represent their lower rank, their spoken English implies less formal tone. The rhetorical question raised by Renoo is somewhat formal, but the verb form 'would like'

balances the relation between the King and a commoner. Further, these three characters have no problems in uttering some sounds which are problematic to other Thais — the fricatives /s/ in the final syllable of the words ‘girls’, ‘yes, yes’, ‘means’, and ‘dance’ as well as /ð/ in the initial syllable of the words ‘the’, ‘that’, and ‘this’. This accords Kanokpermpoon’s (2007) point that Thai English speakers face difficulty in pronouncing the initial sound /ð/ and the final sound /s/ as these sounds are not found in Thai. Overall, these characteristics yield the three characters’ ‘good English’.

Example 6

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Lord Chamberlain: Your Majesty! If you attack Ayodaya, you will have the whole world against you.

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King Honsa: The whole world? You think the whole world will form themselves into a league against me?

Lord Chamberlain: But, Your Majesty, it was only last month that you signed the Arbitration Treaty with Ayodaya. (The King laughs)

Prime Minister: Listen to him: treaties indeed! I will show you what to do with treaties.

King Honsa: Bring me the Treaty with Ayodaya!...(He receives the Treaty)...A Treaty of Arbitration between Honsa and Ayodaya.. Ha, ha, ha. Treaties!... Pooh! (the Treaty is torn)

In example 6, the three characters of Honsa Kingdom, namely Lord Chamberlain, the King, and Prime Minister, are conversing in a

consultative style with 'good English'. The King's English is less formal or more consultative than the Lord and the Prime Minister' due to his higher rank. This is seen in the question 'The whole world?' which contains a grammatical reduction of the full form "Will the whole world have against me?" Indeed, this conversation provides a serious topic for consultation, so particular words in the contexts are used such as "the whole world, against, league, the Arbitration Treaty, and treaties". However, this talk is not serious as the King's language behavior through the words 'ha ha ha' and 'pooh' is non-formal to serve as his laughter. Further, the Lord and the Prime Minister's oral English sounds Thai as they stress all syllables of the words or 'stressed-time syllable' (Rogers, 2013), although they can pronounce the fricatives /s/ and /ð/. Distinctly, the King's oral English is 'French Thai accent' because he is a French Thai actor. This is seen in the clearer pronunciation of the consonant cluster /tr/ in the words 'treaties' and 'arbitration' than other Thais can. Remarkably, this consonant cluster accentuation shows the aspirated consonant in spite of the fact that the two words in British and American English are un-aspirated. This becomes more 'French Thai English' than Thai English. According to Dohalská and Schulzová (1991, as cited in Otruba, 2016), the plosives /p/, /t/, /k/ are non-aspirated consonants in French. When French people pronounce English initial positions, they do not utter as aspirated consonants. This character has a French blood, so he is different from other Thais. That is, he can pronounce regarding the retroflex /r/ sound as many other French people can. This yields what Otruba (2016) states that French speakers of English do not find difficult to pronounce the approximant [j].

In the KM movie, there are five scenes indicating the use of 'good English': in Maria's house, on the way to the battle field, after Tong and de Gama' fighting the hidden enemies, Yai Jun's being arrested, and the arrival of Prince Chakkraphat in the palace. An outstanding example is provided.

Example 7

In the jungle after the war with the Lanna and on the way back to the palace and Tong and Gama can help the King's fighting the hidden enemies, the King comes out.

King Chairacha: They look like they are from the south. I have no quarrel with this tribe. What's the connection to Lanna? Why attack me?

Prince Chakkraphat: Very curious indeed. I'll look into it when I get back to my city.

King Chairacha: You are both brave men and fought well.

Tong: (tells Gama to kneel) Hey, Gama. The King.

King Chairacha: You will be rewarded and promoted to the rank of my personal bodyguard. Prepare to march, my brother. We leave for home today.

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According to example 7, the way King Chairacha talks to his brother is neither formal nor casual because they are among the soldiers. This thus looks more consultative about who is behind the assassination. The use of particular words shows less formality, but is consultation in style, namely 'quarrel' and 'connection'. The King uses sentences to show the consultative style in the question without

any auxiliary and subject — "Why attack me" instead of "Why did they attack me?" when he communicates with his younger brother, Prince Chakkraphat. Then, he shifts into the quite formal style via the expression "You will be rewarded and promoted to the rank of my personal bodyguard" with regard to the change into the commoner 'Tong'. In this regard, this character played by Nirut Sirijunya, an Australian educated Thai actor, displays his Australian English accent through the word 'promoted' /prə'moutid/ (pruh'moht) with the longer vowel than in British English /prə'mæutid/. Likewise, he can utter the word 'bodyguard' /'bɒdɪgɑ:d/ ('bodeegahd) as in Australian English with the longer vowel (di: or dee) than British English /'bɒdɪgɑ:d/. This yields the distinctive feature of Australian English monophthongs mentioned by Voice Science (2018) that Australian English shares many vowels in both British and American English, but it stands out in terms of the duration of the vowels and the mouth shaping. That is, long single vowels are longer than those two varieties of English. However, his pronunciation of the words 'connection' and 'attack' sounds more Thai English than Australian or British English. He pronounces the word 'connection' as /kə'nɛkʃən/, but neither kə'nɛkʃən (kuh'nekshuhn) in Australian English nor /kə'nɛkʃ(ə)n/ in British English. Similarly, the Prince uses less formal sentence patterns; 'very curious indeed' shows the omission of the expletive 'it is very curious indeed'. The Prince also uses a contraction "ll"; this decreases the formality as he talks to his brother, the King. The King's English shows more Thai accent than the Prince who is actually a Belgian Thai actor. Both are aware of stress and rhythm in English, and they do not apply Thai tones into their pronunciation. This is seen in the word 'Lanna' which

is generally accentuated by the King; there is no Thai tone, the high level, as /ɪ/ 'anna/.

D. The Casual Style 'Fairly Good English'

The KW movie provides only two scenes evidencing 'fairy good English' used by King Chakra and King Honsa. Meanwhile, the KM film is full of this English level found in five scenes via the love affairs between Queen Sudachan and Phan in the palace, an interaction between Tong and de Gama at the cocking field and the waterfall, a romantic scene between de Gama and Maria, and the elephant show. Some examples are shown below.

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Example 8

The officers of Honsa forced seven women of Ayodaya to get into King Honsa's camp.

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King: (order one woman to come to him) Come here! Come here!

The woman: (comes)

King: Go away! Come here! Go away! Come here! (the woman follows the order)

The woman: (wails the king)

King: If I tell you to go away. (Tells the soldier), keep this woman away, and whip her 10 times.

(The soldier drags this woman out of the camp and whips her).

King: (pulls two women to him) Don't be afraid. (He hugs these women)

In example 8, King Honsa speaks 'fairly good English', although it provides grammatical sentences. This casual style is evident in the repetition of the verb phrases 'go away' and 'come here', implying the King's fun intention as he wants seven women from Ayodaya, namely the war prisoners, to entertain him. This dialogue seems to be a one-way communication as the women caught by the King do not orally respond to his command, only action. The King seems to stress all syllables of the English words as he does in Thai. This is similar to what Sarmah et al. (2009) have found among 12 Thai speakers residing in America who speak fluent English but still have mother tongue interference in rhythm. Their Thai English appears to be "consistently stress-timed in its rhythm" (p.85). Further, he clearly applies the high level of the Thai tone to pronounce the word 'away' as /ə'wei/. This yields what Smalley (1994) has indicated as a phonological feature of Thai English, that is, the addition of Thai tones to English words, especially in commercial advertising via Thai television. This is revealed that "the announcer read off the names of six or seven English textbooks used, pronouncing the titles with English consonants and vowels, but with Thai rhythm and tones" (p.19). Overall, his oral English is still of 'fairly good English' since he does not produce an intimate style of English. The women caught are not his people.

Example 9

(In the bush at the palace at night, Queen Sudachan is walking.)

The Queen: No, how many times have I told you? This is dangerous.

What if we are seen? (kisses Phan)

Phan: Believe me. I am skilled becoming a shadow. Nobody saw me come.

The Queen: It matters not anymore. I have spoken to the King and he has given the permission to engage a new court administrator.

Phan: And how is that good news for me?

The Queen: Because Phan, you are my new court administrator and have a new title, Koon Chaiyachit as such you can come and go to my palace at will.

Phan: Come and go as I please. (They kiss each other)

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Referring to example 9, the Queen and her lover speak ‘fairly good English’. Some utterances spoken by the Queen show a reduction of grammatical forms — ‘it matters not anymore’ which can be ‘it does not matter anymore’. The tone is quite intimate because of adultery. These speech patterns become more casual, however. They do not use intimate words; instead they utter quite formal lexicons such as “skilled, permission, engage, court, and administrator”. Moreover, they also use the expressions ‘at will’ and “come and go as I please” which are not colloquial. This is because their relationship is also based on the Queen and the nobleman, so the language used is not loose. Indeed, Phan’s English is near Anglo American rather than the Queen’s. Phan is played by Akara Amarttayakul, an American educated Thai actor, so he utters fluent English. However, he cannot hide his Thai accent. Meanwhile, the Queen speaks Thai English. In this scene, she does not stress all syllables of the words as she does in other scenes, but her accentuation of the Thai addressing term ‘Koon’, the

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lowest nobility conferred by the King, is very Thai according to the rising level of Thai tone as /khǔn tʃʌiyatʃi:t/. This partially parallels Smyth's (2001) views that Thais ignore to use intonation in any types of questions but they overgeneralize this rule through the use of the rising tones with Wh-questions.

Example 10

Tong: Hey Portuguese. I think he wants to share his food with you. You want some? Try it?

Gama: I'll get the small one (eat the chicken)

Tong: (is talking to his friend) No taste.

Father Pedro: Khun gin aria? (what did you eat?)

Gama: It ain't that bad.

Tong: Rats.

Gama: (is shocked) Hey, wonderful. (spits out)

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In example 10, Tong can speak 'fairly good English'. Although he has just met de Gama, their conversation is informal. Tong uses some questions with missed grammatical forms — (Do) you want some? and (Do you) try it? This is similar to four Thai tour guides along the Andaman Sea with the moderate level of English, namely the Thai English speakers of the mesolectal variety. They can use effective English but it conveys an omission of auxiliaries. This does not help them reach their status as the standard Thai English speakers (Bennui, 2014). Moreover, the use of the addressing term 'Hey Portuguese' here represents the casual style as Tong does not know the real name of de Gama. Besides, Tong's oral English sounds Thai, but it is not based on the adaptation of Thai tones.

Overall, King Chakra mostly stands out in the KW film. He can speak English in different levels — the ‘best English’, ‘better English’, ‘good English’, and ‘fairly good English’. The final level appears in a few speech patterns in a scene. In the meantime, Queen Sudachan is the most remarkable character in the KM movie, but she mostly uses ‘better English’, ‘good English’, and ‘fairly good English’. She provides less varying degrees of ‘good English’ than King Chakra. In fact, the above examples and some others will be discussed again for the notions of Good English in the Thai Context and Standard Thai English.

Standard Thai English in the Thai English Movies

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It is complicated to clarify the notion of ‘Standard Thai English’ because the term ‘Thai English’ has not been widely recognized as other non-native Englishes such as Singapore English and Philippine English. The norm and model of English use among post-British/American colonial countries where English is used as a second language have been controversial as the English users here do not follow Standard British/American English. Instead, they attempt to promote their own English as a Standard Variety, especially the acrolectal variety (Kachru, 1986; Platt et al., 1984). This is evident in Standard Singapore English, the educated variety of Singapore English in formal purposes (Low & Brown, 2005, as cited in Lim, 2012). This yields the Speak Good English Movement by the Singaporean government (Bruthiaux, 2010). Likewise, Standard Filipino English is the educated level of English of acceptable speech in a language community in the Philippines (Llamzon, 1969). On the other hand, those who use English as a foreign language such as Thailand lack

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a history of developing its own English norm and still conform to Standard British/American English (Bennui & Hashim, 2014). Thus, the term 'Standard Thai English' has never been empirically studied. This heading thus attempts to discuss the possibility of Standard Thai English used by the Thai characters in the two movies with regard to the proposal of 'Good English in the Thai Context' by Prasithrathsint's (1999) framework and other previous studies. Prior to the examination of each criterion of this framework, particular sounds, words, grammar, and discourse styles expressed by the Thai characters with 'good English' which can possibly be modeled as 'standard Thai English' are presented and discussed.

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Linguistic Features of Standard Thai English

Phonologically, there are five protagonists in the KW film who can speak Standard Thai English. Firstly, King Chakra or in reality Renoo Kritiyakorn is a Thai-French who worked in an English-American Tobacco company in Bangkok (Banomyong, 2017; Sulaiman, 2001). However, his French accent is not obvious in the film. Instead, he speaks very fluent English "best, better, and good English" in mostly frozen, formal and consultative styles with the influence of British accent such as the words 'record' /rekɔ:d/ and 'force' /fɔ:s/. This is related to a study by Beebe (1980, as cited in Siegel, 2010), who examines nine adult Thais living in New York and acquiring American English as their second language. They pronounced the /r/ sound in initial and final positions as the way they utter non-rhotic dialects of English such as British English and Australian English. This is because of their L1 interference; the articulation of /r/ in Thai is a trill which does not

occur in the final position. King Chakra in reality may have educational and professional background in British English and his English accent is affected by Thai, not French. He also pronounces the English expressions regarding the stress and rhythm of Standard English. He neither uses 'stress-timed syllables' as many other Thais perform nor applies his Thai tonal levels into the pronunciation of Thai words.

Secondly, Prince Bureng who is played by a Thai actor named Vivit V. Pitak could express 'best, better, and good English' with Thai accent, especially when interacting with King Chakra in the palace and the battle field. His spoken English is very Thai, especially regarding the stress-timed syllable. This is similar to what Rogers (2013), Sarmah et al. (2009), and Smyth (1987) found that stress-timing for all syllables of a word affecting the stress-timed rhythm is the indicative feature of Thai English phonology.

Thirdly, Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya or Suwat Ninsen who is a Thai-Danish actor speaks very fluent English 'better English' with Thai accent with the influence of American English accent as seen in the way he pronounced the words 'record' /'rekəd/ and honorary /'ää-nə-,rer-ē/ because of the obvious retroflex enunciation, namely the rhoticity. This accords the study by Briere and Chiaphanpong (1980) that four Thai speakers in America had been trained via American English but they still could not speak the American variety. This is evident in the dropping of the sound /r/ in the word 'party' which is similar to British English; their pronunciation does not convey the rhotic accent, but trill. These speakers and other Thais have been taught through British English and their mother tongue, for the sound /r/ for the final pronunciation is not stressed. Although these rhotic

pronunciations by the Lord does not occur at the final position, his American English is apparent.

Fourthly, Renoo who is played by Pairin Ninsen, a Thai-Danish actor, speaks English at the 'better, good, and fairly good' levels when interacting with King Chakra and his father, Lord Chamberlain. She naturally enunciates the reduced form of the expression "you have spoilt" into "you've spoilt", but her Thai accent is apparent through the pronunciation of the adverb 'very' as /weri/ as the way many other Thais perform because of the Thai language influence. This could support Thai English rather than Standard English. This yields what Isarangkura (2015) has found that among half of 60 English majors at Durakij Bundit University, Bangkok, substituted the sound /v/ for the initial /w/ due to the L1 interference. There is no sound /v/ in Thai; this results in their articulation of the sound /v/ in English.

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Lastly, King Honsa or in reality Pradab Rabilvongse speaks 'good English' with a mixture of Thai and French accents — the consonant cluster 'tr' is more similar to French than Thai such as 'troop', 'arbitration', and 'treaties'. This is in line with Görlach's (2004) view that French is considered "an r-full language, postvocalic [r] is normally pronounced in all positions" (p.115). Though he does not speak 'best English', his 'better, good and fairly good English' can contribute to his standard Thai English.

In the KM film, there are more Thai characters who can produce 'good English' than in the KW film. They are Maria, Prince Chakkraphat, Yai Jun, Phan, King Chairacha, Queen Sudachan, and Tong.

First, Maria's oral English has not been much discussed. This character is played by Cindy Bishop, an American, English, Indian,

Thai actress. As her English is very near native, it is not very indicative of Thai identity. Though her English is perfect, she does not have a chance to speak with the frozen and formal style, especially with the royal family characters. Her English in this movie falls into the consultative style or 'good English', especially when she talks to her lover, de Gama. However, her accent is a mixture of American English and British English. She has very few Thai accents. This is caused by her linguistic and genetic backgrounds according to Chee (2003). Her father is American who moved to Thailand in the 70s and her mother is half-English, one-quarter Indian and one-quarter Thai. Further, she was educated in an international school and university in Thailand.

Second, Prince Chakkraphat is not a protagonist. Her has some scenes in interacting with King Chairacha and Queen Sudachan through the consultative style, so he uses 'good English'. His English is near British English, but his Thai accent is clearer than Maria's. He pronounces a word 'grant' through the British English vowel /a:/ as /gra:nt/, not /grant/ in American English. Besides, he enunciates words with the sound /r/ in the final position as trill, not the rhoticity, that is, "hear, brother, murderer, singer, learn". This is because of his linguistic and cultural background as a Thai-English bilingual and Eurasian named Oliver Poupart, through his Belgian father and Thai mother (Bzz, 2016).

Third, Yai Jun played by Amora Asavanond, a French Thai actress, actually speaks 'better English' with a near British and American English accent when interacting with the Queen in the cave. Her Thai accent seems to be hidden. The sound /r/ is based on trill, not rhoticity as seen in the words 'worry' /'wʌri/ while the words 'hot' /'hät/ and 'palace' /

'pa-ləs/ are close to American English. This character expresses a hybridized phonological feature of oral English.

Fourth, as the lover of the Queen and the low ranking noble, Phan mostly speaks 'good English' and 'fairly good English'. His English is indeed near native English, but it is positioned between American English and educated Thai English with a rigid Thai accent. This role was played by Akara Amatayakul, an American-educated Thai actor. In this study his American accent is obvious through the words 'every' /'ev-rē/, 'royal' /'rōi(-ə)l/ , and 'your' /yər/ due to the explicitness of the rhoticity, not trill in British English.

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Fifth, King Chairacha in reality Nirut Sirijunya, speaks mostly 'better English' because of his highest rank. It is aforementioned that his oral English is near Australian English, but it also conveys Thai English. Further, he does not pronounce much the letter /k/ in the word 'attack' as either /ə'tak/ in British English or as /ə'tæk/ (uh'tak) in Australian English. That is, his Thai English accent is that the word /k/ in the final position is pronounced as it is inaudible released as in Thai. This accords Kanokpermpon's (2007) views that Thai students often face problems in pronouncing the English final plosives /p, t, k/ as [p̪], [t̪], and [k̪] due to the Thai phonological interference. In Thai these final plosives have no audible released but in English they can be pronounced in three ways-aspiration [p^h], [t^h], and [k^h], non-aspiration [p], [t], and [k], and inaudible release [p̪], [t̪], and [k̪]. The word 'attack' in Australian English and British English is pronounced with aspiration. However, there are a few scenes where he speaks 'good English', especially with Prince Chakkraphat and his bodyguards named Tong and de Gama. His English is neither native English nor very Thai

English; his educated/acrolectal Thai English can be modelled for many other Thais.

Sixth, Queen Sudachan is the most distinct Thai English speaker because of her obvious Thai accent. She mostly speaks 'better and good English' because of her major consort. Her Thai accent is quite strong in a number of polysyllable words and in stressing all words in sentences. In reality, Yosawadee Hasadeewijit, who played this role, has had overseas experiences in using English as a model. However, her English is also accepted as 'good English'. This is evident in her adaptation of a Thai tone, namely 'the falling-rising tone' in the interrogatives through the words 'are, mad, me, want' as well as in the declarative for the Thai title 'Koon Chaiyachit'. This partially parallels Smyth's (2001) views that Thais ignore to use intonation in any types of questions but they overgeneralize this rule through the use of the rising tones with Wh-questions.

Last, Tong acted as a farmer who was promoted to be the King's bodyguard. This character is played by a Thai actor named Dom Hetrakul. He speaks 'good and fairly good English' with reference to his role, although in the reality he was educated in an English program in a Thai university. His Thai accent is as noticeable as Queen Sudachan's. However, he does not show much his Thai way of stressing English words in utterances. His verbal Thai English falls into much 'good and fairly good' speakers because it conveys some grammatical omission, namely 'auxiliary verbs' as a simplifying strategy used in non-standard patterns.

Lexically, a number of words used in the two movies are indicative of standard Thai English. In KW, many classical British

English words have been used and they can show the monarchical system of Thailand though they are not based on the Thai language such as "Sire, Lord Chamberlain, War Minister, Royal Harem, and Comrades". In this regard, the term 'Sire' has been extensively used throughout the film as it is the respectful term of addressing used by the noble and commoner characters to refer to/ communicate with the King. According to English Oxford Living Dictionaries (2018a), this archaic word is indeed a legacy of the Middle English from Latin origin, namely the 16th century as the timeline of this film. However, English words with the hierarchical system of Thailand are used. The addressing terms for the royal family member, namely 'Your Majesty', 'His Majesty' and those for the minister 'His Excellency', are being used. These lexical items are evident in that British English words or the British variety of English are a significantly preferable choice for Thai speakers of English due to a share of the monarchical system (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

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Remarkably, the word 'white elephant' is a codified Thai English one or an English word with a Thai origin. This word is found in 'English Oxford living dictionaries' (2018b) which is defined as "From the story that the kings of Siam gave such animals as a gift to courtiers they disliked, in order to ruin the recipient by the great expense incurred in maintaining the animal". The word 'white elephant' or an albino elephant is universally used in English as it means 'something that has cost a lot of money but has no useful purpose.' In KM, many contemporary monarchical British English words are used — "Queen Regent, Your Highness, the court administrator, the court singer, the royal physician", among others.

Only an American English word in the film 'KM', namely 'Lord

Buddha', is a hybrid. The word 'Buddha' which means 'enlightenment' has been accepted as an English word with the Pali-Sanskrit origins as it is compiled into an American English dictionary, namely Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961) (Jackson, 1982) due to the nativization process of English. The word 'Lord Buddha' refers to Gautama Buddha or the founder of Buddhism, namely Siddhartha. This word is uttered by Phan; it replaces the word 'Oh My God' which is based more on non-Buddhism. This word is universally used in the Buddhism context including Thailand where the majority of the nationals are Buddhist and Pali- Sanskrit is the grounding linguistic element of Thai lexicons. This word could be a part of Thai English.

In light of standard Thai English grammar, as these two Thai English movies are grounded in monarchical and historical stories, the language used follows the frozen, formal, and consultative styles of English. Their sentences are grammatically correct according to either British or American Standard English. However, in this context, 'Thai English grammar' means the influence of Thai grammar on English expressions. This seems to be errors performed by non-native English users. If this linguistic factor is used as a parameter, the two movies rarely present such sentences. The film scripts are edited. However, the term 'standard' means the best or most acceptable variety. Standard Thai English grammar is the best or most acceptable English grammatical points influenced by Thai structure. Discussing this notion thus requires the solid studies on Thai English grammar used by the most acceptable users. There appear to be three works supporting this feature.

Firstly, Pingkarawat (2009) reveals that the Thai journalists of the English newspaper 'The Nation' outstandingly use non-finite clauses,

restrictive relative clauses, and shared head nouns rather than those American English ones of the newspaper 'USA Today'. This feature is observed in the two films. In KW, a non-finite clause is spoken by Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya — "Your Majesty, don't forget to observe the custom before going to war". Moreover, restrictive relative clauses are spoken by King Chakra and the Lord — "...I hope to be able today to go to the people and tell them the good news that you have followed the custom of your forefathers" and "You seem to be the only one that understands me", respectively. In KM, the restrictive relative clause is found in many scenes such as "This day we march to face the army of the treacherous dog who calls himself 'King of Lanna'" spoken by King Chairacha, "I am in need of poison that can kill immediately and be without taste" by Queen Sudachan, and "Admit to me that it was you who killed my brother and his son..." by Prince Chakkraphat.

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Moreover, Trakulkasemsuk (2007) found that the Thai writers of English magazines 'Tropical Art Culture & Travel' and 'Metro' use the greater amount of noun modifier, higher preference for post-modifiers than pre-modifiers, lengthy, and complicated noun modifiers, and indirect speech than those British writers of the magazines 'Conde' Nast Traveller' and 'Hello'. This characteristic, namely a complicated noun modifiers, is evident in this study. Only the words 'an additional three hundred and sixty five elephants' expressed by King Chakra in the KW movie and 'a more than generous compensation' uttered by Queen Sudachan in the KM film are the longest and most complex words with many modifiers in the two movies.

Additionally, Rogers (2013) examines English spoken by 12 highly educated Thai speakers residing in south-western America as well as

central and north-eastern Thailand. It reveals a feature of morpho-syntax of Thai English. This study reveals a comparison between linguistic features of Thai English and World Englishes as well as Standard English. As the notion of deviation is concerned, the use of World Englishes comes along the features of Thai English. Standard Thai English grammar thus needs to be interpreted in relation to only Standard English. This study shows that Thai English resembles Standard English grammar in light of gender in the NPs, modality in the VPs, disallowance of the use of the progressive form with the stative verbs, disallowance of the use of unstressed DO in the VPs, and Question tag. In this respect, only the modality, especially 'may' and 'would' in the VPs, which indicates politeness regarding Thai culture of speaking English, is observed in the two movies. In the KW movie, such modality is used by three characters. The modal 'may' in "Danger from Honsa, who with Moghul's help, may at any moment crush us..." is uttered by King Chakra. Further, the modal 'would' in "it would be against immemorial custom and there would be a general strike among the girls" is expressed by Lord Chamberlain of Ayodaya. Moreover, Renoo expresses "what kind of dance would you like to see, Your Majesty?" In the KM film, the modality is orally performed by four characters. The modal 'may' in "How may I serve you?" is expressed by Yai Jun. This modal is also used by Maria when she is talking to Fernando de Gama for the first time, that is, "they may not be the latest fashion..." The modal 'would' is spoken by Queen Sudachan while she is announcing in the public through the expression "I now know what my late husband would help me do to keep the glory of the kingdom alive". This modal is also uttered by Phan through the

expression "if only the King would fight a war every day, I would be a very very happy man".

Standard Thai English discourse styles refer to the stereotypical and most acceptable linguistic features of cultural patterns in Thai English expressions. The most outstanding study by Chutisilp (1984) concerns language styles and cultural patterns affecting the way Thais' thought patterns in the creation of literary and non-literary texts in English. Stylistically, they contain the use of long sentences, one sentence paragraphs, figurative description, wordiness, pretentious words, and modes of addressing. Culturally, there are Thai social norms and values (a respect for elders, the notion of politeness and social etiquette, and teaching Buddhist philosophy), Thai social status and role relationship (superiority, power, and ranking status in Thai society), and Thai perception of nature (Thai perception of animals' sounds).

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Stylistically, only figurative description appears in light of translation of Thai proverbs/idioms in English which is not found in any other varieties of English. In the KW film, there are "Never allow yourselves to be driven like dumb cattle", "We send an envoy to demand the white elephant from the King of Ayodaya", and "Tradition says that if a King captures a white elephant, he will reign over his people in peace". In KM, there are "the King of Lanna refused to pay the tribute and sent the head of your tax collector in its place", "In the year of the ox, on the first day of the waxing moon" and "...before he and Yodfa join the wheel of life..." These are called 'nativization of rhetorical styles' (Kachru, 1986) in which idiomatic expressions of Buddhist beliefs and monarchical perspectives are translated into English.

Culturally, Thai social norms and values are embedded in the two

films. In the KW movie, the expression “the traditional Thai custom of having many wives” is tied as the key background information of this story. This custom is not only limited to the monarchy but the nobles and commoners. This suits the word ‘royal harem’ in the ancient period. It is believed that a guy with many wives signifies a wealthy and honorable person. At present, this social value is faded. Further, the KW film is full of Buddhism doctrines in many scenes (Sulaiman, 2001), especially regarding peace, kindness, anger, and sacrifice. King Chakra’s expression “Soldiers of Honsa! You have been misled into a war with us, we who always wished to live in peace with you. You now stand defeated before us, but we will not wreak vengeance on you for all the harm you have done us” depicts the notion of peace or tolerance in Buddhism. The author advocates that peace is contrary to a war through this character who adheres to Buddhism that war leads to the disaster. Though this war was started by Honsa, it would not be responded by Ayodaya. This reflects the way King Chakra has patience and tolerance towards King Honsa’s action. Likewise, in the movie ‘KM’, Phan’s expression “Pick up your weapon and fight like me. Or I will send for your loved ones immediately ‘Now fight!’” shows his anger. He wants de Gama and Tong to be dead as both are the scapegoat who conspires the death of King Chairacha and his son. Moreover, the concept of kindness is not seen in Phan’s characterization. He says that “Bring out their families. Bring them out. And kill them all...” This utterance mirrors his cruelty towards the victims. After this, the teaching of Buddhism about ‘karma’ affects Phan and Queen Sudachan’s misconduct and rebellion as seen in the scene that “Tong punches Gama and Tong throws the axe to kill the King. The King is dead”.

The notion of politeness in Thai English discourse is observed in the two films in which themes are tied with monarchical aspects. Hence, the language used by the characters for communication conforms to the superiority and respect which promote the highest level of politeness. In the KW movie, King Chakra speaks to the army of Honsa politely through "Brother, it has come to our knowledge that you are preparing for war against us". The addressing term in English 'brother' seems to indicate that the King still considers the Honsa army as the brotherhood due to the close relationship between the two kingdoms. He does not want the war to occur, so the term 'brother' is to soften his speech to harm the fighting. Likewise, the KM movie provides the terms 'Your Majesty', 'Your Excellency', and 'Your Highness' in many scenes as shown in the polite and respectful way the commoner characters speak to the royal family members.

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Another concept of culture and Thai English discourse is presented by Smith (1988). Thai national identity via English can be manifested through spoken and written English expressed by Thais who can be modelled as standard users of Thai English. Thai identity can appear in (i) spiritual matters in religious beliefs by Thai people with regard to not only Buddhism but also other religions — Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Taoism, (ii) the Thai concept of self in a Thai sense of humor, and (iii) a sense of relationships such as the notion of independence and interdependence between people and nature. It was found that the Thai sense of humor in the KW film is when the Lord states that "I think that if you had three hundred and sixty five wives, then took them along with you to help hunt the elephants. Your Majesty might get ten times that number of elephants". This is funny as the Lord still

conforms to the custom of having many wives but the King ignores it. It is humorous if the King follows this suggestion. It is difficult for women (wives) to help the King's catching the elephants. The viewers of this movie may laugh at this speech. In the KM movie, Tong makes fun with his new friend, namely de Gama. This Portuguese man eats a piece of meat given by Tong, and he asks Tong about it. Tong states that it is rat, so de Gama vomits. This senses a humor in the Thai way as Tong merely wants to kid de Gama who never eats rats as some Thais often do. Overall, the notion of humor observed in this study is contrary to Andersson's (2009) study that the non-standard variety of English indicates the stupidity and humor of the characters. Lord Chamberlain and Tong can use a range of 'good English' for humor, not broken English. In light of relationship, the KW film provides the relation between Thai (Ayodaya) people and nature. In the KW movie, the Honsa officer says that "Sire, this wine is made from the very best rice of Ayodaya". It is seen that rice is the national crop of this kingdom. Thai (Ayodaya) people are linked to rice. It can be made in many products. Moreover, it symbolizes Thais' lives. In the KM film, the royal messenger's expression "In the year of the ox, on the first day of the waxing moon..." shows the natural entities, namely the ox and the waxing moon, which are linked to Thai natural life. An ox is a key animal used as a vehicle in farming and plough in Thailand. Further, the waxing moon indicates the lunar month or calendar in the traditional Thai society.

Overall, the aforementioned features represent possible standard Thai English sound patterns, vocabulary items, grammar patterns, and discourse styles created by the Thai movie characters.

Good English in the Thai Context: The Possibility of Standard Thai English

The above examples examined via Joos's (1967) study and previous studies are observed in Prasithrathsint's (1999) work, so that the possibility of Standard Thai English is to be discussed through the following three parameters:

(a) Conceptual world of English: The characters in the movies have performed "best English, better English, good English, and fairly good English". Syntactically, they can differentiate ungrammatical sentences from grammatical sentences. This is excluded in only some scenes. In KW, only one scene used by Prince Bureng shows an intentional use of an ungrammatical sentence while Tong in the KM movie produces some ungrammatical sentences of reduction, omission, and direct translation as he plays a role in a farmer. Lexically, the characters can use English words suited for the frozen, formal, consultative, and casual contexts. Further, they can use some Thai words — names, titles, places, and addressing terms.

(b) Dialects of English: In KW, although the protagonists are the Eurasians, their English is neither totally British English nor American English. Their oral English remains a range of standard or most acceptable Thai English though a grasp of British/American English influence, especially King Chakra, Lord Chamberlain, Renoo, King Honsa, and Prince Bureng. Here, only King Honsa partially speaks French English because of his ethno — linguistic background. Moreover, Renoo can mix and switch from English into Thai in some situations. This is similar to Pleng, the protagonist in the Thai film "I Fine Thank You Love You" (2014), who is considered a speaker of

Standard Thai English; she speaks ‘best English’ but switches into Thai in some situations to accommodate her student named ‘Yim’, who speaks Tinglish (Bennui, 2017). In the KM film, there are a number of foreign characters who mainly use American English. However, Torres intends to authentically utter Portuguese English. Those who show more American/British English than Thai English could be Maria, Yai Jun, and Prince Chakkraphat. Meanwhile, Phan and King Chairacha speak mostly ‘better English’, and their English is balanced between standard Thai English and native English (American English and Australian English respectively). Queen Sudachan and Tong speak ‘good English’. Here, the Queen shows the most distinctive Thainess in many utterances. She could mix and switch from English into Thai in some situations. Hence, these two characters’ English is very Thai English in the acceptable level compared to others with much influence of native English. It could be said that Renoo, Tong, and the Queen present their bilingual communication in code-mixing and code-switching. This is in line with the study by Beichenbacher (2012) that the characters in Hollywood movie can perform code-mixing and code-switching from English to other European languages in some scenes, and

(c) Registers of English: The two movies are full of registers of English. Style shifting is obvious in KW. For example, King Chakra can shift from the frozen style to the formal style when negotiating with Prince Bureng. King Honsa shifts from the consultative style to the casual style when talking to Prince Bureng in the camp. In KM, this shifting is minimal; there is a scene when King Chairacha is talking to his brother, Prince Chakkraphat, in the consultative style

and shifts to the formal style when talking to Tong, his bodyguard, for instance. Further, the two movies employ particular royal words such as 'Sire', a classical word in KW. Moreover, varieties of Thai English sounds can support the hierarchy of 'Standard Thai English' in spoken English — 'American Thai English' (Maria), 'British Thai English' (Prince Chakkraphat), 'British and American Thai English' (Yai Jun), 'best Thai English with an influence of British English' (King Chakra), 'best Thai English with the American English influence' (Phan), 'best Thai English with the Australian English influence' (King Chairacha), 'better Thai English with the American English influence' (Lord Chamberlain and Renoo), 'better Thai English' (Prince Bureng), 'good Thai English' (Queen Sudachan and Tong), and 'fairly good English with the influence of French English' (King Honsa). In this regard, only Maria, Yai Jun, and Prince Chakkraphat are the characters expressing more British/American English than Standard Thai English. Their English is similar to the characters' in Hollywood movies examined in the study by Andersson (2009) that the protagonists speak Standard British/Standard American English, RP/GA. In addition, there are some English sentences simplified by the Thai characters in the two movies influenced by Thai structure using the reduction, omission, and direct translation strategies. Besides, Thai English discourse styles are apparent such as the switching from English into Thai through Renoo's singing a traditional Thai song, the mixing of a Thai word 'Chaiyo' by the soldiers of Ayodaya to represent Thai identity, and the use of royal addressing terms by the Queen — 'Koon Chaiyachit'. The styles also cover the use of figurative descriptions translated from Thai into English, a representation of Thai social norms and values, Buddhism

doctrines, the politely sociolinguistic and sociocultural elements used between the Thai characters, as well as the Thai national identity in Thai sense of humor and relationship between Thai and nature.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that English spoken by the Thai characters in the movies 'The King of the White Elephant' (1941) and 'The King Maker' (2005) reflects the four styles of 'good English' — 'best English', 'better English', 'good English', and 'fairly good English'. Phonologically, their 'good English' indicating a Thai identity is seen in the reduction and adaptation of their Thai tones, the stress of all syllables in words, substituting the retroflex sound for the lateral sound, and the omission of the fricative sound. There are many varieties of English influencing the Thai characters' oral English, namely British English, American English, Australian English, French English, educated or standard Thai English, and Thai English. Further, the movies show 'edited scripts' of English with Thai accents. Some characters in the KW film speak English as if they are 'memorizing'; only some naturally speak English such as King Chakra, Lord Chamberlain, King Honsa, Renoo, and Prince Bureng. In KM, very few characters speak unnatural English. Morphologically, the characters can apply words in academic and monarchical contexts in speaking 'good English'. Interestingly, only one word 'white elephant', the very Thai English lexicon codified in a British English dictionary, is manifested in this study. Grammatically, the Thai characters use non-finite clauses, restrictive relative clauses, and modality to express their 'good English', although they employ direct translation, omission, and reduction in some casual situations. Stylistically, they adapt Thai

idiomatic and proverb expressions acculturated in English to present their thought patterns in Thai cultural and religious contexts. Besides, they can apply Thai cultural and religious identity into their English expressions. These features are proposed to be indicative of some standard Thai English characteristics created by the Thai actors and actresses with the most acceptable English use because their oral English reflects the concept of world English, the dialects of English, and the registers of English in the Thai context. It implies that their 'good English' in the movies can be modelled by many other Thais for using English communicatively. Hence, this study asserts that 'good English' in the Thai literary and cinematic context seems to imply standard Thai English.

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