CONTENTIOUS IDENTITIES OF THE MEKONG KARAOKE GIRLS: A NEXUS ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ACTIONS AND A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	Contentious Identities of the Mekong Karaoke Girls: A Nexus Analysis of Social Actions and a Critical Discourse Analysis of Ideologies
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This dissertation examines the social actions and discourses of the Mekong karaoke girls focusing on contentious Identity construction and ideologies within the liminality of the Mekong border karaoke bars and Khong Chiam community settings. The study triangulates Critical Discourse Analysis and Nexus Analysis. The first trajectory of nexus analysis, historical body is supported with bodily capital concept; the second trajectory of interaction order is relied on Goffman concept of situated activity system, and the third trajectory is analyzed by Sociocultural Linguistic Approaches focusing on discursive practice of othering and discursive practice of used pronouns. The data is collected according to Nexus Analysis guidelines. Participant observation is conducted in six months, interviews with 22 MKGs, one police officer, six karaoke bar owners, and four hospital staff. Also, three sessions of focus group with the MKGs, hospital staff, and male karaoke customers Findings from the historical body anaylsis reveal that there are three main pre-karaoke identities; young girl, female, and Laotian. The present-karaoke body shows that their bodily capital constructs young girl, adult female, Laotian, karaoke girl, and other contentious identities such as bread winner, explorer, mother, daughter, and lover. Processes of constructing those identities through investing on their bodily capital are underpinned by both patriarchal and capitalist ideologies. The interaction order reports processes of contentious identities through normative roles and their situated activity system in the greeting and singing sessions. Patriarchal and capitalist

ideologies are intertwined into the systemic structures of their daily karaoke activities. Those ideologies thus sustain social relationships and asymmetric power relations in liminal space of karaoke session among the participants. Also, the system of social arrangement of the karaoke sessions is a system where identity negotiation and power resistant co-occur. Discourse in place elucidates that discursive strategies of othering in Mekong karaoke interaction construct contentious identities. The discursive use of pronouns unveils ways in which the Mekong karaoke girls construct their positive and negative selves as well as ways in which they cope with liminal identity which people foisted on them. The patriarchal and capitalist ideologies play a key role in sustaining the discourses of identity construction, identities negotiation, and even resistance within this particular liminal space and in a society as a whole. Contributions of this study are; comprehension of identity construction of inferior group of people, knowledge extension on social actions and discourse studies, and the understanding that this social injustice should be taken into account for those who work with, work on and interested in working toward egalitarian society.

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Words do define our world. Thank you mother for never letting me say the word 'give up.' Without both of you, I might not be able complete another chapter of life. If any meaningful word remaining in my heart can be expressed, I love you. And once again thank you all.

Worathanik Photijak

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Equivalence
DA	Discourse Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
MBKB	Mekong Border Karaoke Bar
MKC	Mekong Karaoke Customer
MKG	Mekong Karaoke Girl
SAS	Situated Activity System

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mekong border karaoke bars (thereafter MBKBs) and Mekong karaoke girls (henceforth MKGs) are a typical sociocultural phenomenon that persists on the Thailand and Lao P.D.R. borders. These MBKBs and their MKG engender to various economic, social and cultural issues including illegal immigration, illegal laborers, smuggling, and especially pandemic HIV and STDs within the sex trade. The social actors of this phenomenon are generally perceived as 'troubles' by which they are discriminated by people living in the same community of Khong Chiam.

They have become topics of academic study and the academic discourse highlights their roles as being the victims, the trafficked, the exploited, the illegal migrants, illegal labors, sex workers. The community of Khong Chiam also views the MKGs as the /yɯɯà/ (victims) and the /phuû yǐŋ hɑǎ ŋən/ (money seeker). The latter term indirectly contributes to the perception that this women are of low moral character as they are seen to search for money through exchanging their body with men's sexual desire while deny to do other hard, professional, or legal work.

1.1 Rationale

The dominant discourse of the /phuû yǐŋ hɑǎ ŋən/ identity contributes to various aspects of being out-group members. The out-group membership in this case is attributed to different aspects; being unaccepted, insulted, and stigmatized. The MKGs' /phuû yǐŋ/ identity is not accepted on the ground that they are 'atypical women.' This means that they do not share positive social values of acceptable women. The /phuû yǐŋ/ in this context also indexes them as being people of different citizenship (Laotian). They are young, attractive, and sexually appealing women. These attributes can be considered positive attributes in other contexts, but in Khong Chiam, these are conversely seen as threats. The reason is the young and desirable

Laotian girls are perceived by the in-group housewives to be threatening to their husband-wife relationship and to the family institution. This word also indexes their spatial identity-the MBKB where the MKGs belong. The karaoke bars then signifies their temporal existence, the night-time women. Both spatial and temporal involvement is also seen as degrading to the eyes of the community because women are expected to stay home at night. Though all working women /haǎ ŋən/ (seek for money), this word is used only with women who sell sex. This engaged place and time indicate further how the MKGs 'seek for money.'

The word /haǎ ŋən/, literally means 'to seek for money,' additionally made the /phuû yǐŋ/ identity even more pejorative. This is because the word encompasses some unacceptable activities involving ways they 'seek for money.' The main method is to sell sex. The sex trade is illegal according to Thailand's prostitution laws and generally seen as immoral and/or a low dignity job by the people in the community.

The example of identity above shows that the sex trade of the MKGs in the Khong Chiam MBKBs emanates one complex identity- the/phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən/. This identity is emphasized by the in-group members residing in Khong Chiam. Overtime, this identity gets internalized into the people's cognition, empowered to be the dominant discourse, and certainly public discourse by the dominant group. We now conclude the processes here as the discourse is constituted by the society. Then what this discourse gives to the community in return is that it shapes the way people think of the MKGs as the problematic out-group members' relevant but negative identities such as the illegal, Laotian, young (family threatening) girls, entertainment place girls, night-time women, STDs transmitters, and low moral character. Thus the discourse of this identity construction is constitutive since such negative information is the resource for which the society can reproduce the /phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən/ discourse.

This dialectical relationship is signifying that the available discourse in the society is imperative for reproducing a certain ideology. Discourse works by networking some sets of negative notions as to give negative attributes to the out-group members. By so doing, asymmetric power relations between the in-group/ dominant group and the out-group/ dominated group exist. With the construction of other the identities and the maintenance of these identities, the Khong Chiam society

retains discrimination against the MKGs. Injustice experienced by the inferior group persists but is never resolved.

This is a significant point where research on identity construction through discourse should intervene. The /phuû yǐŋ hɑǎ ŋən/ exemplified here fundamentally points out that a given linguistic realization shows complex indexicality of identity. This identity has explicated the sociocultural attributes which conform ideologies and inform an imbalanced power relationship between the two groups of human.

Therefore investigating identity construction through the discourse of the MKGs residing in the unique MBKB setting where social conditions are highly complex is both interesting and imperative. As we have seen, discourse has the power to shape society and society has the power to empower certain ideologies to make people comply. Some may resist the ways in which the group in power wants it to be. Regardless, those ways make the unegalitarian society.

When we touch upon a certain social issue, it is quite common that we are in line with the dominant discourse produced by the dominant group. The methodologies which researchers have applied also promote the perceptions of the superiors. This study does not want to take the topic from home and investigate the participants as the 'targeted', but rather considers methodologies that allow the co-contributions of all participants. After gathering the contributions, the study will start to form the knowledge there with them.

Starting from 'there with them', we are moving to information pertaining to Isan regional entertainment practices. Thus we have some ideas of how the MBKBs, the MKGs, and their Mekong karaoke customers (MKCs thereafter) come into existence in this specific place.

1.1.1 Entertainment Practices in Regional Isan

Entertainment consumption culture in regional Isan has been dynamic. Overtime, the entertainment forms have changed in terms of forms, contents, and targeted people who consume a given form of entertainment. Traditionally, *mohlam* is believed to be the oldest form of entertainment practiced in this region. Traditional *mohlam* was performed for sacred, intellectual, and courtship purposes. The older form of *mohlam kon* is a performance by a pair of male and female performers

improvising courtship demonstrations all night long. In their improvised debates, topics encompass a wide range of issues such as greeting, personal preferences, cultural knowledge, social customs, and religious intellectuals. Like other social phenomenon, *mohlam* has dropped its popularity as other forms of entertainment permeate into Isan region.

During the 'nation state building' (Waeng Phalangwan, 2002), *ramwong* was introduced to Isan. The *ramwong* is performed by participatory dancers composed of pairs of a man and a woman dancing with hand gestures and walking single file in a circle. Although the origin of *ramwong* is politically influenced, this form of participatory performance was popularly used by famous *ramwong* troops in Isan. The troops provided young and beautiful female dancers. They were hired to go perform at a particular festive occasions or religious ceremonies. At the ceremony, the young female dancers were presented at the back of the floor and men came to buy the *ramwong* ticket and then to go to pick a girl who he liked to dance with in a circle.

Some forms of entertainment involve interaction between sexes. For example, public consumption the performance of *mohlam* and *ramwong* are performed in public places and later shifted to private zone. After the *mohlam* and *ramwong* have declined, entertaining forms that involve technology and media almost replace those older forms. Therefore the *lukthung* songs and some famous *lukthung* troops came to be very popular, coupling with radio, television, and cassette tapes recording technology disseminate entertainment to the audience's home.

While the public and participatory performances declined, commercial entertainment places increase both in terms of amount and various forms of services. Therefore pubs, bars, and karaoke lounges gradually grew in Isan. The in-trend entertainment like karaoke makes use of various advantages; popular songs, recording and projecting technology, and participatory performers in the semi-public and private area.

Karaoke, as a form of singing by participatory audiences, have been prevailing in Bangkok as well as major cities, its popularity does not stop in towns but permeates into small bordering towns along the Mekong River from the far north to southern Isan including Ubon Rathchathani. When it arrives in the Mekong region, it becomes popular for unique services.

1.1.2 Mekong Border Karaoke Bars Phenomenon

Mekong border karaoke bar is a unique entertainment space where it houses the MKGs who are young Laotian woman and girls who migrate to border areas of Thailand to make money in the border sex trade. This is a common phenomenon along the Thai-Lao border from the far North to Southern Isan. Khong Chiam is a border town in the southernmost part of the Thai-Lao border. In this area, there are numerous karaoke bars set up by the locals. The young Laotian girls from Champasak and some other provinces of Lao migrate to and try to find service jobs in the karaoke bars. These Mekong karaoke bars are operated to mainly serve local Thai male MKCs.

For decades, the MKGs exist and become a part of Khong Chiam local community. As a main tourist town of Ubon Ratchathani and a bridging town to Chongmek check point, the majority of Laotian girls migrating through Chongmek check point find service work in Khong Chiam karaoke bars. Therefore Khong Chiam gradually integrates the MKGs into its local life. Although it is imperative to note that the integration is by no mean egalitarian, but they are still recognizable in terms of cultural, social, and economical livelihood of Khong Chiam. Their unequal status is reflected by their illegal status. Some of them migrate legally, but most of them do not. All of them violate Thailand's prostitution laws. Socially, they are generally poorer, uneducated, and deemed dissolute.

1.1.3 The Mekong Karaoke Girls

Most of the MKGs in Khong Chiam are young Laotian girls who migrate from villages in Champasak province which is the closest province of Lao P.D.R. situated on the opposite side of the Mekong from Khong Chiam district. A few of them come from central provinces such as Vientiane, Sawannakhet, and far North Luang Prabang. Most of them age 13 to 22 years old. Most Lao people finish primary school or drop out when they are still very young, they normally date and get married when they are about 14 to 20 years old. This is to note that the majority of the young girls migrating to work in Khong Chiam dated, got married and some of them divorced with or without children before coming to Khong Chiam for karaoke serving job. It is common in Khong Chiam that the girls live within the owner's place which is an

annex building next to of the karaoke bars without rental cost. The minority of them rent a room in local apartments in Khong Chiam town.

There are four ways that girls find employment in the MBKBs. Firstly, young Laotian girls in villages are introduced to work in the karaoke bars by their colleagues who used to work in /hɑɑ́n kɨn dɨ̀ɨm/ (entertainment places) in Laos, and later learned that they could migrate to work in karaoke bars in Thailand for a better pay. To elaborate, they might earn average 4,000 to 12,000 baht per month in Laos, but their average income in Thailand ranges between 6,000 to 15,000 baht per month. In some cases, they might be able to develop intimate relationships and marry a Thai man or even set up their business in Ubon Ratchathani. Those are incentives for them to cross the Mekong border.

Secondly, the MKGs who currently work in karaoke bars in Khong Chiam return to their home town and recruit new girls, who are usually their relatives and friends, to come work in the same karaoke bar. This type of recruitment allows the recruiters to inform the recruited that there will be sexual services attached to the karaoke service jobs.

Thirdly, the MKGs who have left, or are leaving, a karaoke bar convinces their acquaintances to come to Thai karaoke bars. Then the recruiters permanently leave the bar and leave the new comers with karaoke owners. The last pattern is that the Isan recruiters go to different villages and convince young Laotian girls to come work as karaoke service staff. The women and girls who come to Khong Chaim through the latter two recruiting channel are normally not forewarned that their job will involve the karaoke sexual services.

The recruited women and girls arrive at their prospective karaoke bars. Some are already informed that there will be karaoke serving jobs together with sexual services to perform, some of them are not. For those who know, they quickly learn their job descriptions, and start to provide sexual services to the karaoke male customer as soon as they can. Thus they could generate sufficient income to cover their traveling cost and living cost in Khong Chiam. For those who are not informed or even are lured to come, they might take more time to adapt into the karaoke conditions. The karaoke owners will not force them to provide sexual services, they rather cheer up the new girl to talk and provide common karaoke serving jobs for

them to do. Later, when the new girls like her MKCs, she will decide on her own to accept the request from the MKCs.

The MBKBs are typically open 5.00PM to 1.00AM daily. Their daily life normally starts when they wake up around noon. They have their lunch which provided by the MBKB owners. After that they dress up, put on make-up and go to the receptionist area. When the MKCs arrive, they welcome the MKCs into the singing lounge and serve throughout the session. In the singing session, they basically serve food and drink. They maintain an entertaining atmosphere by chatting, joking, teasing the MKCs, as well as sharing the customer food and drink. It is noticeable that they actively cheer the MKCs to drink as much as a man could. If the singing session goes well, they succeed develop satisfaction of service, a good personal relationship or even intimacy with the MKCs, then the MKCs tend to ask them to provide sexual service after the singing session ends. After they are taken out by the MKCs, they are supposed to be transported back to the karaoke bar by the customer.

It is worth noting that in case if any karaoke serving girl does not like her customer or she considers that she is being assaulted by the customer, she reserves the right to deny serving this customer during the singing session. In some cases that the girls are not satisfied with the negotiated price, place, or styles of sexual services, they may refuse to provide the sexual service to their MKCs.

MKGs do not generate income from salary but earn from several methods. The first one is the 'drink fee' which is presumably a 'service charge' defined by the karaoke bar owner and collected from the MKCs. It is ranged from 50-80 baht per one singing session. During the singing session, they could also earn some tips from the MKCs. The possible tips may range from 20 to 1,000 baht. However, the main income is made by offering sexual services to male MKCs after the singing session completes.

1.2 Statement of Problem

As they live and work in the Khong Chiam community and they are desperate to be included into the local community as mentioned above, there are two common ways that the Khong Chiam community views the MKGs. These are realized through

their public discourses. The two views are very different. They are both the denigrating views of the MKGs, but they are stigmatizing in fundamentally different ways.

On the one hand, most of the local people understand that the young Laotian karaoke girls are simply 'the girls for commercial sex' so that the Khong Chiam community cognitively takes them as /phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən/ (the money seeker). Thus the girls are seen as someone who induces men to pay for their sexual services, items, and living costs. The community associates this money seeking notion to many negative social impacts of the Khong Chiam locals such as domestic financial shortage, broken home relationships, and STDs and HIV carriers.

On the other hand, some sectors of the Khong Chiam community foster another demeaning idea of the young Laotian karaoke girls. The locals keep in view that they are 'the victims' of human trafficking, child exploitation, and gender oppression. In this regard, the girls are recognized by some locals, especially the social and healthcare service providers that they are poor, helpless, powerless, and submissive to those of traffickers, exploiters, and oppressors. It is common to hear Khong Chiam people saying 'The girls are pitiful.' They are lured into the sexual commercial business. They cannot help themselves from violent male MKCs. From this perspective, the girls are being taken advantages of by the karaoke owner. The health risks that they take benefits others, including the karaoke owners, male MKCs, and corrupt-officers.

As this dissertation will show, the karaoke girls are not simply /phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən/ nor simply /yɨɨà/ of human trafficking. Rather their identities are more complex and fluid. Therefore we should understand this complexity and fluidity if we would like to enrich our understanding of their marginalized status and if we want to take action to mitigate the risks and injustices they face in their mundane life.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

This dissertation will explore the complexity of the Mekong border karaoke girls' lives by examining 'nexus of practice' of the MKGs which they experience over the course of their 'Mekong karaoke girl' life time. Briefly, in examining the nexus of

practice of the MKGs, the study will explore 'historical body' is a life time of personal habits which one person brings in to carry out a given social action. This experience is internalized into the person's body until it is natural, so the social action is continued without being explained. This part will also look specifically into how the 'bodily capital' of the MKGs are formed and mediated. The study will then investigate 'interaction order' which refers to feasible social arrangements that people establish relationships in social interactions. Lastly, the study will analyze 'discourse in place' which is empirical discourses that enable the karaoke social actions. This section pays attention to how discursive strategies deployed within the context of MBKB interaction convey the MKGs' liminal identities. Also how influential ideologies are interlocked into the processes of their meaningful construction of selves. Those three main trajectories will concurrently show how the Mekong border karaoke girls' multiple identities are constructed, negotiated, and strategically represented.

The formal name of this approach is termed Nexus Analysis. This is the analytical approach which proposes that the 'nexus of practice' is the point where historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which itself alters those historical trajectories in some way as those trajectories emanate from this moment of social action (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004, p. 8). Adopting this approach, the historical body of the Mekong karaoke key participants will be traced. The social arrangement or, as Goffman (1983) terms "the interaction order" will be deliberated. In terms of micro analysis of the MKGs' discourse in place, sociocultural linguistic approaches will be applied. Thus we can locally unfold how the emerging identities are constructed in the local encounters of the Mekong karaoke discourse setting.

By following the nexus analysis, this research also take 'discursive practice' as a focus of analysis. Discursive practice will shed light on processes that allow cultural meanings to be constructed and understood. This approach offers a distinctive perspective on linguistic anthropology as well as cultural anthropology as a whole. It extends beyond the traditional field of linguistic anthropology and is principal to contemporary cultural anthropology, especially its concern with ethnographic methods. The main focus of a discursive practice approach is to bring in theories and

techniques relevant to the analysis of meaningful behavior in actual social situations. Discursively oriented methods emphasize linguistic, semantic, and interactional aspects of culture as well as extralinguistic discourse modalities. It deals with the range of social forms and practices in terms of how they are discursively produced and understood.

The dissertation purports to develop a detailed description by tracking processes which the MKGs' identities are discursively produced as they are linguistically realized through their mundane discourses in the virtual place by the key participants with their specific historical bodies which locally occur in their face-to-face encounters. With regard to critical discourse analysis which concern asymmetric power relation between the dominant group and its minority portion, the dissertation sets the objectives for answering both 'what' and 'how' inquiries.

1.4 Objectives

1) To explore identities of the MBKBs' participants and how they are strategically constructed within the Khong Chiam interactions

2) To examine how the MKGs discursively construct, negotiate, and represent their contentious identities in Khong Chiam contexts

1.5 Research Questions

This dissertation will answer the following questions:

1) What are identities of the MBKBs' participants and how they are strategically constructed within the Khong Chiam interactions?

2) How the MKGs discursively construct, negotiate, and represent their contentious identities?

1.6 Definition of Terms

Identity refers to the social positioning of self and other (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586)

Identity Construction refers to a process of positioning and defining oneself in relation to other in a given situation.

Identity Negotiation refers to identity negotiation refers to the processes through which perceivers and targets come to agreements regarding the identities that targets are to assume in the interaction (Swan, 2005).

Mekong Border Karaoke Bars (MBKBs) refer to the karaoke bars located in the bordering towns by the Mekong River. In this research, the term refers specifically to the ones located in the town of Khong Chiam.

Mekong Karaoke Girls (MKGs) refer to young Laotian woman and girls who migrate to Thailand and work as a service staff at karaoke bars located along the Mekong Thai-Lao border areas.

Mekong Karaoke Customers (MKCs) refer to male karaoke customers in the MBKBs.

Session refers to a period of a particular activity, in this dissertation one session is meant a period of a given form of karaoke interaction including greeting session, singing session, and sexual service negotiating session.

Drink Fee is an alternative form of service charge which is defined by each karaoke bar and this fee is charged from the MKCs and then paid to each karaoke service girl who serves throughout the whole period of the singing session.

Tips is an amount of money or an item which the male MKCs reward the MKGs for showing appreciation or satisfaction either on their karaoke serving jobs or sexual services they provide.

Take out Charge is an amount of money which a Mekong karaoke girl charges her customer for her sexual services.

Local Hotel is a small hotel service places located in the area of Khong Chiam town and the nearby districts. Some of the local hotels provide overnight rate and 'temporary' rate which is charged by limited amount of service hours.

Local Resort is a small hotel service places located in the area of Khong Chiam town and the nearby districts. Majority of the resorts provides overnight service and temporary service which the MKCs are charged for limited-hour service.

1.7 Procedures

This ethnography of the MKGs is constructed by collecting empirical data namely from the karaoke bars that existed in Khong Chiam, during 2014 and 2015. The participants are the MKGs working the Mekong karaoke bars during those years. The data was collected from the Mekong karaoke bars and Khong Chiam community from November 2014 to April 2015. The procedures are mainly participant observation and other supplementary techniques such as field survey, community mapping, semi-structured interview, and focus group. The data was analyzed by mapping the trajectories of the interaction order, historical body, and discourse in place.

1.8 Significance of the Dissertation

As the dominant public discourse of the money seekers and victims solely persist in Khong Chiam community, the MKGs suffer various social stigmas and they are marginalized by different sectors. Since the narrative of self and identity is the story we live by, this dissertation seeks to extend knowledge on the constructed identities of the MKGs as they are virtually constructed, negotiated, and represented in their daily life.

The finding is imperative for offering alternative identities and some may lead to counter discourses to the dominant discourses. More importantly, the more complex and fluid identities of the MKGs will promote better understand and lead to developing an egalitarian society as they all live in the same community.

In short, the dissertation is important to show that the MKGs' discourses allow various identities to be constructed within the social interactions. The dominant discourses of the victims and the money seeker could be only one sided view of identity in the MBKB and Khong Chiam community. Meanwhile, the complex and

fluid identities can also demonstrated through different forms of language realization. Presumably, those complex identities could be the key for promoting justice for the marginalized/ inferior group. Positively, those constructed identities could also be heard and enable changes.

1.9 Limitations

In terms of sampling, Mekong sex workers are the hard-to-access group. Snow ball sampling is only suitable method for this study. Therefore, accessibility to this group of participants is limited to connection of the local hospital, research assistants, and the researcher who know the karaoke owners and the MKGs. The data and findings of the dissertation is confined to only the Mekong karaoke sex workers who we accessed over the course of field work, not include other MKGs' experience which we did not access. This specific context of the MKGs whom we interacted with is subjective, the findings are extended knowledge of the field of study and relevant topics but they cannot be generalized.

1.10 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation shows the complexity and fluidity of the constituted identities of the MKGs in the context of Khong Chiam community. It will show how the complicated and fluid identities are virtually constructed, negotiated, and carefully represented. This dissertation is conducted in order to shed light on the Khong Chiam community's public discourses and argue that the MKGs' identities are more complex and fluid. Therefore this community needs kaleidoscopic perspectives on this issue for which better understandings and better practices can be emitted.

The organization of this dissertation is as follows. Chapter 2 provides a brief explanation of Khong Chiam and the MBKBs as liminal spaces and the history of karaoke business in Thailand especially in border areas. It centers on unique characteristics of the Mekong karaoke bars in Khong Chiam district of Ubon Ratchani. The second section of this chapter focuses on topics related to the MKGs and the third section provides the theoretical framework reviews of Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA), Nexus Analysis, and Sociocultural Linguistic Approaches and then the chapter will be closed by addressing knowledge gaps which the former studies inform.

Chapter 3 provides descriptions on how the research was designed and processed. This chapter introduces the research setting, identifies the participants, reports a case of pilot study, and explains how the instruments are designed. The next section focuses on procedures in which the data collection was conducted following the Nexus Analysis guidelines. Then briefly describes how the data is processed by utilizing three main analytical domains of interaction order, historical body, and discourse in place. The last part will also show concerns on ethical consideration of conducting this study on the marginalized and hard-to-access group of participants.

Chapter 4 presents analysis of the historical body of the Mekong karaoke participants. This chapter investigates what are the participants' life-long habitual experiences and how those lifetime experiences residing their body enable the Mekong karaoke social actions.

Chapter 5 presents the analysis of the interaction order. The chapter explains the main frame of karaoke social encounters called 'karaoke service encounter' is maintained as a 'situated activity system' (SAS) and then explores its significant sub social arrangements which are termed the 'singles,' 'with,' and 'conversational encounter.' Within those karaoke social encounters, the notions of roles, impression management, and role distance are examined.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the discourse in place. This chapter elaborates what are the empirical discourses realized through their interactions. How the participants utilize available discourses to facilitate their interactional goals meanwhile accomplish in terms of constructing, negotiating, and representing their complex and fluid identities.

Chapter 7 gives a summary of this dissertation as well as discusses the results of the analyses and directions for the local people, stakeholders and any public and private sectors who work with/ on this marginalized Mekong karaoke sex workers. The final chapter will provide literature review on relevant contents including regional background, pertaining topics, and adopted theoretical frameworks for the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As proposed in the previous chapter, the study of discourse of the Mekong Karaoke Girls (MKGs) is an endeavor to investigate the emergence of MKGs' identities and the processes of how those are constructed, negotiated, and represented in the MKGs' mundane interaction. This chapter provides regional, topical, and theoretical background for which the dissertation will investigate. The first section begins with tracking the karaoke origin, business model of the Mekong karaoke, and sociocultural dynamics of the Mekong entertainment by focusing on transformation of Isan entertainment practice and Khong Chiam as a tourist destination and border link. The second section provides background of relevant topics focusing on 'karaoke sex worker/hidden prostitution' in the Mekong karaoke business. The third section deals with theoretical frameworks including critical discourse analysis (CDA), Nexus Analysis, and Sociocultural linguistic approaches to identity construction.

Lastly, this chapter will point out some knowledge gaps which the former studies do not cover and how the critical discourse and analysis research on identity construction could extend the edge of knowledge on what are kaleidoscopic identities and how those of which are constructed, negotiated, represented, and probably contested the dominant discourse by which the Khong Chiam community imposes on the MKGs as realized through their discursive practices.

2.1 Liminal Space of Khong Chiam

Khong Chiam district is a unique border town. Its uniqueness derives from the fact that a liminal space which exists between recognized, ratified spaces. The liminal space which is used here is an extended term from original use by Turner who used *liminality* to refer simultaneously to one phase of the multi-step transition process effected through a rite of passage, the place within which that transition takes place,

and the state of being experienced by the person making the transition. The liminal phase is one of separation from a previous status or social state (Turner, 1985, p. 154). Within this liminal phase, place, and state, according to Turner, initiands (person who are about to initiate) are afforded the rare opportunity "to contemplate for a while the mysteries that confront all men," including societal as well as personal difficulties, and to learn from the ways in which their "wisest predecessors" have attempted to make sense of these mysteries and difficulties (Turner, 1974, p. 242 as cited in Cook-Sather, 2006, pp. 110-127). The mysteries and difficulties mentioned here involve all conditions that the participants may not know when they are in the liminal period.

In the age of globalization, Khong Chiam has become 'liminal' in complex ways. As pointed out by Kanokwan Manorom, it becomes a nodes and network society in the international border area through trade, services and tourism. The government has regulated these activities in the town by facilitating the crossing of products, people and culture. Both Lao and Thai people cross the border to trade, purchase good, receive health care services, and find a job and visit friends and relatives.

Khong Chiam however is defined as liminal space by ways in which it is always in transition. It is the space where the participants 'contemplate for a while the mysteries that confront by men.' Of course the participants confront both 'societal and personal difficulties,' and try to make sense of their difficulties while living in this space, especially the MKGs in the MBKBs.

Khong Chiam is a space in 'between' on different aspects. Kanokwan Manorom's case study on the Dynamics of the Border Town of Khong Chiam (2009) reveals unique characteristics of Khong Chiam. It is liminal by its geography, natural resources, economic development, and entertainment.

2.1.1 Geography

Khong Chiam district is located in a unique area. Kanokwan Manorom explains that it is nationally known as a district located in the easternmost point of Thailand. It is promoted by government and local authorities as a tourist city. It has a tourism slogan as "The first sunrise place in Thailand". Having beautiful nature has been a great advantage of the district. Also, it is a place the confluence of the Mekong

River and Mun River take place. Therefore it has made Khong Chiam a great tourist town. Moreover, it is made part of a border town where there is a temporarily permitted area border trade operating three times a week. The area itself is less than 50 meters away from Chong Mek Border Checkpoint which is the most important border crossing for migrating people, goods and transference of technology and culture in the Lower Isan region. The border has brought a lively border trade between Thailand and Laos (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009, pp. 360-361). However, the Mekong River is a natural border where drugs, smuggling, illegal immigration are also observed.

2.1.2 Natural Resources

This region has a large area of dense natural forests. Therefore it is rich in natural resources such as thick forests and various types of non-timber forest products which local people rely on as their food source such as mushrooms, bamboo shoots, honey, wood oil, Rosin oil, and wild animals. Also, its reserve forests including Kaeng Tana National Park, Khong Hin Thong Forest, Pa Lang Phu Reserve Forest, Dong Phu Lon Reserve Forest, and Pha Taem National Park. One hundred and forty fish species in Mekong and Mun rivers are the critical important aquatic resource which determines local people's careers (Ubon Ratchathani University, 2002, as cited in Kanokwan Manorom, 2009). Therefore the resources have made Khong Chiam a great tourist town. Consequences of becoming a famous tourist town have driven Khong Chiam to be a 'transforming' space for various groups of people. For example, tourists, cross-border labors, service girls in karaoke bars and so forth. These people have been in Khong Chiam for a period of time, do some activities in Khong Chaim amd depart. Thus with abundant natural resources and unique tourist town, Khong Chiam is likely a liminal space for those people who visits, enjoy, make use, or even spoil the resources and depart.

2.1.3 Economic Development

Tha Phae village is a main area where karaoke bars are located. It is suitable for this business because it locates slightly far away from the center of the town, so that karaoke noises do not disturb people at night time. The houses are scattered and

the population of the village is not dense thus there are not many people affected by the noise. Nevertheless, the village is not too far for people to cross the bridge and enjoy some night life in the karaoke bars. In 1973, a ferry was built for people to cross to other side of the river called "Tha Phae Village". This had made it more convenient for students to come to study in Khong Chiam. People could also bring their cars on the ferry to commute to the district which resulted in more convenient transportation. There was a transportation route from Nong Chad Village - Huan Ta Phaan District - Sirindhorn Dam to Phiboon Mangsahan District which offered the service to people once a day. Therefore, this had made Khong Chiam an old peaceful town suitable for a getaway trip among tourists. Later in 2001, a bridge was built and was complete in 2003. The town has expanded more and more after the completion of the bridge (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009, pp. 358-359). This infrastructure and other tourist facilities such as guesthouses, hotels, and resorts increased accordingly. Thus Khong Chiam since 2003 has become a town in transition. That means it is no longer a tranquil town on the border where villagers live their slow life, but the town is also in a stage of 'becoming' a prosperous one, especially its economy. Since there are numerous tourist attractions in Khong Chiam, tourism in the area has been greatly developed in the past 20 years. It can be seen that there is an increasing number of various types of accommodations and nightlife and entertainment places. At the same time, the transportation system and infrastructure have been improved. The town's natural resources such as various fish species from the Mekong River and the Mun River and natural tourist attractions have played a crucial role in transforming Khong Chiam into a unique tourist town. This border town is a sphere that reflects international relations through trading activities, cultural exchange and interaction between people and government, as can be seen through various illegal activities (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009, p. 388). By 2014, it was noticeable that Khong Chiam has been a liminal space where people are transforming in terms of economic, social, as well as cultural aspect.

2.1.4 Entertainment

Khong Chiam is similar to other Isan communities in a way that it has traditional forms of Isan entertainment. *Luukthung* song, *Mohlam* performance, and

Ponglaang musical bands are still in practice. At the same time, Khong Chiam is different from other Isan communities by its modern form of entertainment called 'karaoke' which is attached to the restaurant business. The karaoke entertainment and restaurants significantly influence Khong Chiam livelihood. For example, Kanokwan Manorom has compared the Singsamphan village located at the opposite bank of the Mekong River, right across Khong Chiam town, the Lao village was tranquil while Khong Chiam is considered the city that never sleeps. This dues to a large number of restaurants and nightlife entertaining places decorating with illuminating post lamps which help to attract nightlife lovers until 2 am. There are two main large restaurants on the bank of the rivers which are open until 10 pm. Additionally, karaoke bars and hotels have made Khong Chiam, a small border town, look lively (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009, pp. 360-361). Therefore, the karaoke, a new entertainment form and restaurant business have turned Khong Chiam into a stage of 'liminal space' where people in Khong Chiam are also transforming according to the new form of entertainment's influences. Its impacts include people's economic transformation, social changes, and cultural adaptation.

Unavoidably, Khong Chiam has some problems related border crossing in Khong Chiam district as other border towns. The expansion of the town results from the increasing number of hotels, resorts and other kinds of accommodation which then have emerged from the Mun river bridge connecting Dan and Tha Pae villages with Chong Mek Border Checkpoint (this checkpoint is a permanent crossing border while the border in Khong Chiam is temporarily) which facilitates the people travelling between Chong Mek to Khong Chiam. As a result, Khong Chiam town has become a nightlife hub full of karaoke bars along the road from Dan village to the bridge approach and from the bridge approach to Tha Pae village since 2003. The bridge which was called by students (and local people) as "the newly-built bridge" was used as a motorbike racing venue for both male and female bikers. Not so long after that more and more karaoke bars were opened. Laotian girls cross the border to work as waiters at these bars (and to secretly work as sex workers). Some students who need money also work there. Most karaoke bar visitors are male civil servants and local men. Having karaoke bars as sex trade venue is not the only new problem in this town.

The author also notes that the spread of HIVs which affected tourists and had killed a lot of the male civil servants and local men during 2003 - 2005. At the same time Lao karaoke bar girls who were HIVs infected moved back to Laos with the infection that could be spread further. In Dan Village, there are three karaoke bars and there are six karaoke bars in Thaa Phae Village (based on the information gained from interviewing a villager of Dan village). It is found that most local people, both Lao and Thai aged people had a negative attitude towards karaoke bar girls because they thought they had a bad career (selling sex). Thai local sellers such as noodles seller and a male seller who relies on Lao labor had quite a negative attitude towards these girls as they think the girls like an easy job (working in a karaoke bar and selling sex) compared to other jobs such as working in a shop or a restaurant (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009, pp. 385-386).

Based on those remarks, Khong Chiam is the liminal space where it locates in between Thailand and Lao P.D.R. nation states, Thai-Lao people links, natural-nightlife tourist destination, growing township-challenging social problems. Out of those liminal aspects, the Laotian sex workers are interesting liminal persons living in the liminal 'Mekong border Karaoke Bars.' This is challenging to see who they are and how they live their life in the MBKBs. Presumably the MBKBs in Khong Chiam is another liminal space where it is not exactly the restaurant or bar, not a work place but the business and service people are there, and not a brothel but sex can be bought.

2.2 Origin of Karaoke: From Japan to the Mekong Border

2.2.1 Origin of the Karaoke

People normally have common perception of karaoke bar as a place where it provides As the Japanese word 'karaoke' is now well known throughout the world, the karaoke culture originates in Japan and later spread to different parts of the world. In our case, the karaoke practices spread to Thailand when Japanese business men come to work in Thailand, mostly in Bangkok. The karaoke place gradually became popular in Bangkok and then spread to major regional cities and finally reached out to the border towns of the Mekong. This dissertation will deliberate more about the Mekong border karaoke in Ubon Ratchathani province, Khong Chiam district in

particular. Before doing so, I shall briefly cover the origin of the karaoke practice by first tracing its historical and cultural root.

Chaiyan Pratthaphong (1993, p. 130) emphasizes that 'karaoke' becomes tremendously popular form of entertainment to Asians as well as well-known to people throughout the world nowadays. He explains that this prevailing Japanese word is composed of two morphemes. The first one 'kara' means 'empty' and the second one 'oke' means 'music or orchestra.' Together, 'karaoke' is literally 'empty music.' In other words, it is music without lyrics.

Historically, karaoke practice originates in Japanese's post war. After the World War II, Japan as the surrender experienced various post war traumas. They suffer serious poverty and major depression. When the Japanese were in such a hard time, they tried to cast out stress and depression. They also value singing because it was very effective but economic method to reduce their post war depression (Chaiyan Pratthaphong, 1993).

In 1960, professional singers were back on the stage. However they needed to cut the costs of the performance. To make the singing performance as economic as possible, they subsequently brought recorded music, without lyrics, to use in their performance instead of hiring a full music band with numerous musicians (Chaiyan Pratthaphong, 1993, p. 130).

Later, entertaining places such as bars and pubs brought in equipment which the customers could sing as they like. Technologies for singing with 'empty music' have been gradually developing. As a result, karaoke sound systems are almost replaced live-music bands.

In general, singing is one of ways people reduce stress. Chaiyan Pratthaphong further notes that Japanese people 'love' to sing and 'every' Japanese sings well. This assumption might exaggerate, but highlights that karaoke originated in order to respond to the Japanese entertaining demand. Later, it becomes a part to the Japanese ways of life (Chaiyan Pratthaphong, 1993, p. 130). In Japan, it is common for males as they finish their work they do not go back home right away, but they gather for drinks. After drinking, they are slightly drunk and normally sing out loud in a small room where they are drinking. This activity then requires a singing space and equipment that help the male drinkers to sing. As a result, karaoke juke boxes are

provided. Lyrics, in the past, were prompted on pieces of paper. After that, producing karaoke juke boxes has been very popular due to they could respond to people's dream of becoming a singing superstar. Many people use karaoke juke boxes to practice their singing skill. In responding to such popular trend, many recording companies then produce and develop karaoke goods to the high-technological level. This is not only to offer to the drunken males, but also for anybody who wants to be a singing star (Wichai Suwannaban, 1993, p. 130)

About 20 years after the karaoke culture became a part of the Japanese's daily life, karaoke technology has been continuously developing. For instance, an echo-circuit is used in order to make the singer's sound nicer than it normally is. The selection of songs can be processed more quickly, and the lyrics are presented on monitors so the lyrics are no longer separately provided on papers (Ibid).

In Japan, popularity of the karaoke effectively supports the growth of music industry. Once the karaoke records are sold, it turns out that the singing records of famous singers increase its popularity. That is because teenagers buy the karaoke records so they practice singing with it and then perform for show to their peers in karaoke bars. In the meantime, the karaoke bars also spread throughout Japan from big cities to small towns. It quickly gains popularity among young adults of Japan (Ibid).

2.2.2 Karaoke from Japan to the Mekong Border

2.2.2.1 Japanese Entertainment Center at Thaniya Area

Karaoke is estimated to establish in Thailand in the 1980s. At the very beginning, karaoke business was only known in the Japanese bar area on Thaniya Road, Silom, Bangkok. The Japanese bars and pubs served as a hub for Japanese business men and tourists to come for relaxation and business meeting. Soon after, in 1989 Mr. Lin Chong, a Taiwanese business man who successfully ran karaoke business in Taiwan and Hong Kong, firstly setup his international scale karaoke bar, called 'Kampaay' in Thailand. The international scale karaoke business of this time mainly served businessmen and tourists who came from Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea. These people experienced 'karaoke' before coming to Thailand (Chaiyan Pratthaphong, 1993).

Characteristics of the early karaoke in Thai karaoke bars were similar to the ones in Japan. There was sake and women who served the customers. Fundamentally, serving tasks mainly included facilitating the customers to come out and sing on the stage where live-music bands played music. Later, karaoke owners on the Thaniya area encountered more complications dealing with live music bands. For instance, musicians did not show up on time and high cost. Thus the bar owners started to bring in recorded karaoke music which was the same as those used to be in Japan. Lyrics were provided on paper.

2.2.2.2 Karaoke Spread in Bangkok and Major Towns in Thailand

The karaoke increased its popularity very quickly, so it spread widely to other areas of Bangkok and major towns in Thailand. It then mushroomed in almost all kinds of entertainment venues such as high-end clubs, hotels, restaurants, food shops, and cafeterias. Karaoke blogs, which provided small rooms with drinks and snacks, were popular in shopping centers. Consequently, there were more varieties of karaoke customers. More importantly, technology also facilitated that customers did not need to remember the lyrics as they were running on the monitor, no longer prepared on separated paper sheets. By the end of 1993, there were estimated 400-500 karaoke bars running in Bangkok (Prattaphong, 1993, p. 133).

2.2.2.3 Growth of Thai Karaoke Bars

In line with the growth of karaoke in Bangkok, the karaoke business has been popular in major towns of Thailand. It has also varied in terms of *karaoke technology* and *forms of music video* and *additional services*.

The growth of karaoke and its long lasting viability in Thailand have suggested that characteristics of karaoke business become diverse according to their temporal and spatial conditions of the business. The popularity has also taken karaoke to many of the Mekong bordering towns. The next section will review characteristics of in practice the Mekong border karaoke bars (MBKB) practice in comparison with the city ones.

2.3 Liminal Space of Mekong Border Karaoke Bars

The Mekong border karaoke bars share some core characteristics of karaoke services as those in city zone may arrange. For instance, service providers principally prepare a singing lounge, singing equipment, food and beverage service, and karaoke service staff or / and female company, taking care of the customers in each singing space. The Mekong border karaoke bars in Khong Chiam are considered a liminal space by which the bars are in 'between' space for reasons; a) the unique form of service itself does not conform the original form of karaoke in Japan or in Bangkok, however it is still named itself 'karaoke,' b) entertainment with available sex service, c) Thai old men meeting with Laotian girls, d) their encounters involve courtship and romance as well as money. The next section will elaborate what makes the MBKB liminal and unique.

2.3.1 Contrasts of City-karaoke and Mekong Border Karaoke Bars

2.3.1.1 City-karaoke Bars

Previous studies reveal contrasting characteristics of city karaoke bars and Mekong bars. The work of Khuanruthai Jangjumras (2001) and Pornphiphit (2001) explain significant aspects of running karaoke bars in major cities such as Bangkok, Nonthaburi and Chiangmai in terms of organization of the karaoke bars, income generation of the women and their customers are resumed herein. In general, city karaoke bars are bigger. The organization of the business is more systematized. For instance, a karaoke shop in Chiangmai consists of approximately 60 people working in 7 departments including: human resources, cashiers, reception, service, food, cleaning, and light and sound controller (Khuanruthai Jangjumras, 2001, p. 46). Women working in city karaoke bars have to follow guidelines and regulations which are defined by the bars. Violations to the regulations compulsorily lead to salary deduction. For example, coming to work late is deducted 50 baht. Another karaoke shop in an entertainment area has a rule that if a girl comes 30 minutes late, 500 baht of her salary will be drawn back. If a girl goes out with a customer without informing the bar, 1,500 baht is deducted. Taking leave on Sunday-Wednesday, the salary will be deducted 400 baht and another bar deducts 1,000 baht. Taking leave during

Thursday- Saturday will be deducted 800 baht at one bar and 1,500 baht at another bar (Rattaphon Phonphipit, 2003, pp. 26-27). In contrast, the border karaoke bar girls are rarely deducted money in any case, either coming late or missing from the bars on work days. However, their income is not as much as the city bars girls could generate. For example, the border bar girls in Ubon Ratchathani only make 60-100 baht for serving one session of singing. This amount of drink fee is fixed per one session. It does not depend on amounts of drinks or amount of the customers in a given session.

In terms of generating income, the city karaoke bar women rely on several sources. First they receive a salary. The money is paid by karaoke owners every two weeks or every month depending on each bar's management. The average amount of salary is 3,000-5,000 baht. The second source of income is made by encouraging customers to buy drinks. Each karaoke bar normally announces its policy for the women to sell 100-120 drinks per month. From each charged drink, the charge will be divided into two parts—one for the owner and the rest is for the women who encourage the alcohol consumption. In detail, it could be counted that the charge is subdivided into 3 parts. For example, 160 baht earned from a drink the girl who sells the drink can keep 60 baht and 100 baht will be kept by the karaoke owner. This 100 baht is then split, 50 baht for the owner and 50 baht for the women's salary. Thus the girl earns two-thirds out of any sold drinks she makes. Another type of income is 'tips' paid by their customers. The last source of income comes from offering sexual service to their customers, but this is optional to the women who want to make extra income (Rattaphon Phonphipit, 2003, pp. 24-25).

The customers of the city karaoke bars are diverse in terms of profession, economic status, gender and age group. For example, a manager from a karaoke bar in Chiangmai classified his customers into 4 groups including: foreigners, working people both in private and government sectors, graduate students, and families. The women are able to serve Asian customers from other Asian countries coming for business in groups with a translator. English speaking customers are less likely as the women hardly speak English. Due to the bar's location close to a university, graduate students are regular customers who come in groups when they celebrate social and academic success such as: student welcome party, birthday, farewell, and commencement ceremony. For working people, only some high-ranking

officers come to the bar but not many government staff can come often as they have limited income. Most working people are from the private sector including companies, freelancers, and traders. Then the family customers come in groups of father-mother-children and their relatives who would come on weekends and leave the karaoke bar sooner at 11.00 PM or midnight (Khuanruthai Jangjumras, 2001, pp. 70-71).

In summary, the karaoke women working in city karaoke bars work for bigger business establishment so that more staff working in various departments. Also, their customers are diverse in groups and have good affordability. The service women's income can be generated from the so called 'salary,' share from selling drinks, and tips. For those who want to make extra income they can offer sexual services to their male customers.
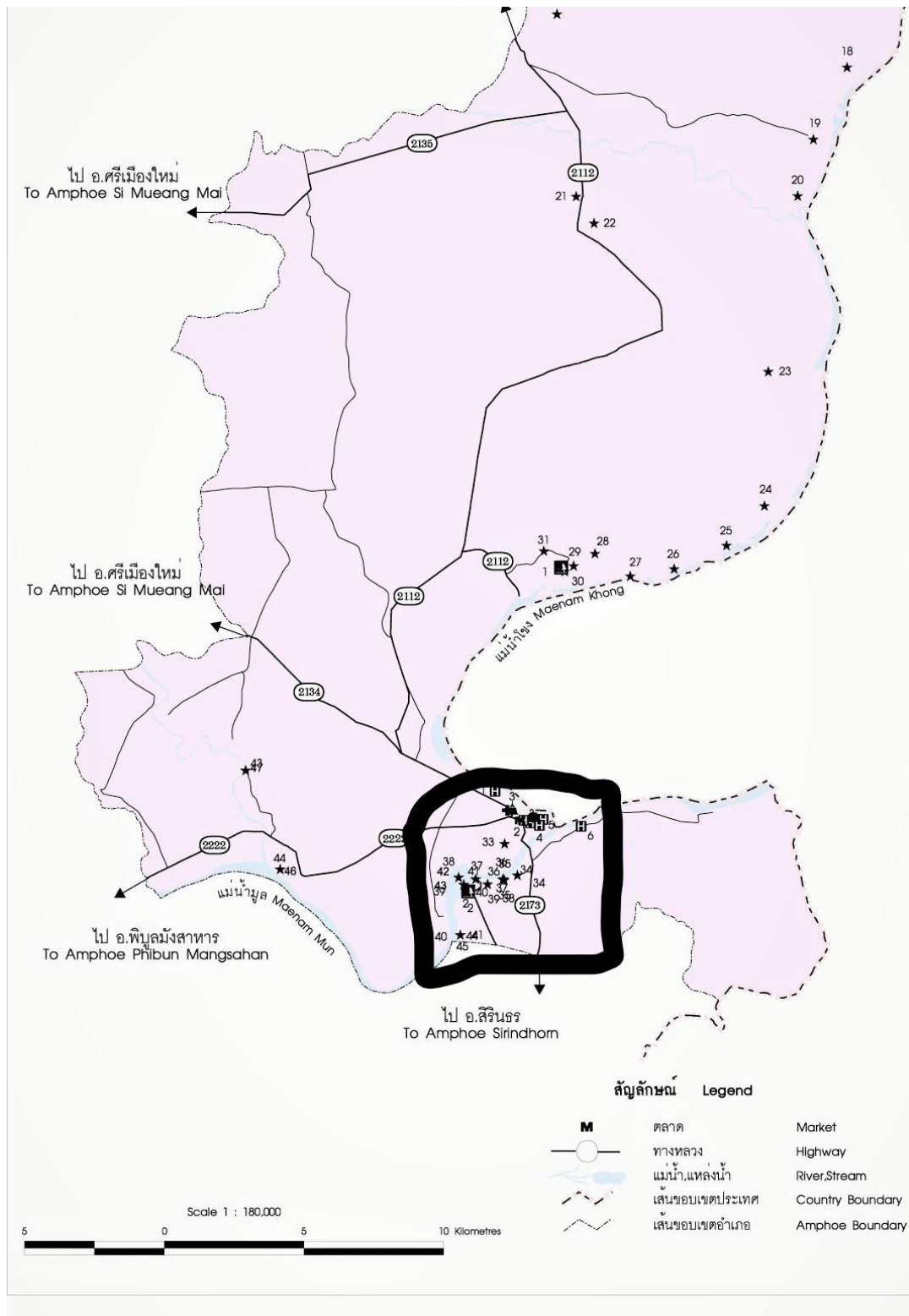
Figure 2.1 Map of Mekong Border Karaoke Bar Area in Khong Chiam

2.3.1.2 Mekong Border Karaoke Bars

The MBKBs, however, are almost a bottom-up phenomenon. The Mekong border karaoke girls work for little shops run by residents in the districts. Thus their shops are fundamentally organized by members of the owners' family. Their income hardly generates from shares of selling drinks and tips, but is mainly earned from tips and offering sexual services to their male customers. This is in part due to the fewer number of customers at karaoke shops along the Mekong border. Also, the finances of the customers are fewer than those of the city bars. Most of their customers are a small group of 'salary men' working in the government sector in adjacent communities (Share Foundation, 2015).

Most Ubon Ratchathani karaoke bars share characteristics with Mekong karaoke girls working in a border town in the North, Chiangkhong district, Chiangrai province. Rattanaphon Tangthanaseth (2011) reports that Chiangkhong karaoke girls live in the shops where they currently work. Their main roles are to facilitate and chat with their customers. Offering sexual service occurs depending on their satisfaction with their customers. Their income from offering sexual service ranges from 1,000-5,000 baht for one-time service. Most of the girls are responsible for their family's financial burdens, thus they are required to send remittance to their family. Most of them want to save money then leave the karaoke shops to work in their hometown and get married.

Those formers research reveal that the most significant characteristic of the border karaoke bars is the availability of sexual service behind the façade of a seemingly innocent restaurant. While the in-town karaoke bar attracts music lover crowds, with good sound systems and friendly atmosphere while sexual services are likely optional for the service women who may conduct, the MBKB attract male customers with exotic young Laotian girls available there in disguised as 'waitresses.' Therefore, main activities are not only *singing* for *stress release* as the Japanese 'karaoke' originates, but the local sense of the MBKB also encompasses a space and time which allow male MBKB customers to relieve themselves from banality and burden of work and family responsibility, suspending all other identity and become a free man again in the bar. The local MBKB goers' activities are to sing-drink-flirt that

leads to the MBKB's ultimate goal that is taking the Laotian waitress out of the bars for sexual services.

2.3.2 Business Model of the Mekong Border Karaoke Bars

2.3.2.1 Investment and Karaoke Service Scales

The MKGs play a key role in sustaining the MBKB viability. These girls keep the clients company and participate in singing and chatting with them. Thus male customers can choose only to flirt with the ladies or bluntly ask them for sexual service. The latter is not the girls' preference, but some customers do practice. This becomes the MBKBs' highlight and the next section will elaborate how the business is setup, operated, and sustained. This is the site where the MBKB interactions are possible, also the site for which various identities are constructed and negotiated.

In general, karaoke bars in Khong Chiam are normally set up and run by local people. In 2014, there were ten karaoke bars located in the town of Khong Chiam. Most famous karaoke bars locate at another end of the Moon River across from the town. There also different scales of karaoke bars ranked by the customers. Interview with local former customers, they concluded that there are two technological oriented bars with standard service. The standard by the rank means, the bar provided computer, monitor, good sound system, VIP rooms, clean common lounge with good cushioned seats, well-trained service staff, large selection of food and beverage menu, and variety of songs. This also provides smoking area, CCTV, and separated male and female toilets. The second grade bars included several of them. This grade of the bars provided karaoke juke boxes with manual song ordering and karaoke coins, karaoke coin (a ten-Baht coin, used for operating karaoke juxe box to play a selected song) well equipped karaoke lounge but not with VIP rooms, separate toilets, but without CCTV. The third scale is a very small and casual bar with karaoke juke boxes, microphone, lower quality of sound system, common singing lounge with bamboo bench seats. This grade basically has lower service quality. For instance, this type of bar can provided fewer song selections, limited choices of snacks, food and beverage, and cleanliness of the karaoke lounge is under hygiene standard (Sukhumphan, personal communication, November, 2015).

Some MBKBs are not legally set up so business license, tax decoration, and social security for the employees are not processed. Most Laotian girl migrants serving in the MBKBs have no work permit (Supan Srisattra, personal communication, December 28, 2015).

Although those bars are different in terms of investment which results in varieties of sizes, standards, facilities, and choices of services, the shared character of service is that the service contributors working in the bars are young Laotian girls of 13-23 years old. In addition to service tasks, they do offer sexual service to their male customers since salary is not paid. This significance of the Mekong karaoke service in Khong Chiam becomes known to the locals and some tourists as this characteristic is orally spread or shared via word of mouth and personal/social media.

2.3.2.2 The Mekong Karaoke Girls Recruitment

Since the MKGs are the main attraction of the MBKB experience, the bars have several channels to recruit the MKGs to come work at their bars. Natedao Taotawin (2008) reveals that in her interviews with migrant sex workers from Lao PDR whose age ranging from 15 to 31 years old, some sex workers decide to work as waitresses at karaoke bars as a way to escape poverty and other problems in their lives. They hoped that working in Thailand will help them to improve their lives by finding a better job, marrying a Thai person, obtaining Thai nationality or gaining life adventures.

The MKGs are recruited from their home town through several recruiting patterns. Firstly, young Laotian girls in villages are introduced to work in the karaoke bars in bordering districts by someone who has worked in entertainment places in Laos, and later learn that they could move across the Mekong River to work in karaoke bars in Thailand for a better pay. For instance, they may earn an average of 4,000 to 12000 baht per month in Laos, but their average income in Thailand ranges between 6,000 to 15,000 baht per month. With such incentive and suggestion from known persons in Laos, they decide to migrate to Ubon and find karaoke jobs in Khong Chiam, Nataan, and Khemmarat sub-districts (Supan Srisattra, personal communication, December 28, 2015).

Secondly, the MKGs who currently work in karaoke bars in Thailand returned to their home town and recruited new girls, who are their relatives and

friends, to come work in the same karaoke shop. Thirdly, former MKGs who have left, or are leaving, a karaoke shop convinces their acquaintances to come to Thai karaoke shops. After which the recruiters permanently leave the shop and leave the new comers with karaoke owners (Sirikorn Asasri, personal communication, July 12, 2014; Laanna Waiyawan, personal communication, July 12, 2014).

The fourth pattern, possibly the most effective method, the Thai agencies go to villages in Laos and convince young Laotian girls to come work as a restaurant service staff. By not informing complete job descriptions, the girls decide to follow the agencies for work and they later learn their work place is the MBKB which require them to work without salary paid, but they are encouraged to offer sexual services to their male customers. Those patterns of recruitments are effectively employed by the MBKB owners in those three districts; Saengsawan, 2015). Field survey in Khong Chiam also reports the same pattern.

2.4 Sex Work and Hidden Prostitution in the Mekong Karaoke Business

2.4.1 Trafficking and Exploitation

Natedao Taotawin (2008) reveals that in her interviews with migrant sex workers from Lao PDR whose age ranging from 15 to 31 years, some sex workers decided to work as waitresses at karaoke bars as a way to escape poverty and other problems in their lives. According to Asian Migrant Center (2002), the percentage of Laotian teenagers aged between 15 to 18 years working as sex workers is higher than 50%. (as cited in Natedao Taotawin, 2008). They hoped that working in Thailand will help them to improve their lives by finding a better job, marrying a Thai person, obtaining Thai nationality or gaining life adventures. A common way for traffickers to recruit young children and women from Lao PDR is by cross border trafficking. The trafficker usually promised them a good job with higher pay than one they can find in their country. Another common way used to recruit sex workers is by persuasion from recruiters who used to be sex workers. Therefore, they persuade girls and women who are their friends, relatives or neighbors to come to work as sex workers in the border areas. Apart from the two methods mentioned above, female sex workers were willing to get involved in sex trade after they have experienced a life crisis such as a divorce

and have to take care of their children. As a result, they look for a job to do for a living.

Molland (2012), as a former United Nations anti-trafficking project advisor, provides an insider's view of recruitment and sex commerce gleaned from countless conversations and interviews in bars and brothels in the Mekong region. He delivers a view that complicates popular stereotypes of women forced or duped into prostitution by organized crime. Molland's ethnography shows a much more varied picture of friends recruiting friends, and families helping relatives. The recruiters rationalize their act as a benefit or favor to a village friend; relationships between prostitutes and bar owners are formed with kin terms, as used by Iwazaki and Preeya Ingkhaphirom (2009), and familial metaphors. Sex work in the Mekong region, in Molland's view, follows patron-client cultural scripts about mutual help and obligation, which makes distinguishing the victims from the traffickers difficult. His research illuminates the methods and motivations of recruiters as well as the economic incentives and predicaments of victims. The trafficking chain of sex trade along Thailand and Laos border in is an alluring and lucrative business: the supply of girls is constant, the costs of operations are low, and interference from law enforcement is weak to non-existent. Anti-trafficking organizations and governments commonly appropriate such market metaphors of supply and demand as they struggle with the moral-political dimensions of a business involving trade, labor, prostitution, migration, and national borders.

2.4.2 Label and Stigmatization

Some former studies reveal that the Laotian migrant workers crossing the border to work in Khong Chiam are labeled and stigmatized upon different aspects; pejorative attitudes toward their work attitudes and career, STDs spreaders, stigmatized job as whores, and illegal migrants, for example.

Kanokwan Manorom (2009) discovers that most local people, both Lao and Thai had a negative attitude towards karaoke bar girls because they viewed that they have had social and culturally unacceptable career since they sell sex. Thai Local entrepreneurs such as noodles food stall owners and a male shop owner who relies on Lao labour had quite a negative attitude towards young Laotian girls on the ground that they think the girls like an easy job. By this context, it refers to working in a

karaoke bar and selling sex as an easy option, compared to other jobs such as shop keepers or waitress in the community.

Rattanaphon Tangthanaseth (2011) concludes that karaoke bar girls normally isolate themselves from the other people, but rather socialize with their own folks from the same villages or the same bars. They count the karaoke owners as their fictive kin, calling them with kinship terms for example mother, sister and relatives. They keep their job secret and never mention karaoke life to their family members, and natal communities since they worry about social stigmatization attached working in the sex trade. The author also marks that they do not want to pursue higher education or vocational training as they believe they are not capable.

Natedao Taotawin's research (2008) shows that from 1982 to 2003, there had been continuously higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection in Ubon Ratchathani province. According to Kanokwan Manorom's study (2009), the period of time coincides with the emergence of karaoke business in Khong Chaim, especially after building the bridge and the karaoke bars and restaurants were densely setup at the skirt of Khong Chiam town and Thaa Phae village. It was found that the three border districts were the highest HIV/AIDS infected areas. Lao sex workers were identified as those who spread the disease (Office of Ubon Ratchathani Public Health, 2003, as cited in Natedao Taotawin, 2008). One of the factors that lead to high risk of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS infection among Lao special service women is a common belief among Thai men who do not wear condom during sexual intercourse is more pleasurable. The author also notes that Thai officials usually consider Lao special service women as "whores" or "illegal migrants." Such status makes knowledge and services concerning reproductive and sexual health provided by state health care centers unavailable for them.

2.4.3 Marginalization

As migrant workers, the young Laotian girls are marginalized in some ways. Previous studies show that they are they are seen as inferior to the Thais and put at risks on various practices.

Watcharee Srikham (2012, p. 492) reports that Laotian migrants performing sexual service work is highly prone to STDs, including HIV. Laotian girls aged 14-18

years old who offered their virginity for the price of 20,000-30,000 THB. However, they are young and lack of knowledge and negotiating skills to convince customers to wear condom. The customer counterpart also assumed that the Laotian girls are virgin. Therefore they are disease free. It was found that every girl who charged extra money for virginity affirmed that their customers did not use condoms. Therefore STDs and HIV risks were deemed very high. More importantly, the myth about selling virginity is an act that signifies more economical power, more physical strength, and male dominance. As a result, 80 percent young Laotian girls aged lower than 18 years old, lacked of knowledge on sexual health, safe sexual intercourse, and safe from STDs. Also, they lacked of negotiating power and skills to convince their customers to use condoms hence they were vulnerable to get STDs infection.

Sangsawan (2014).The MKGs are targeted as a vulnerable group for STDs, especially HIV infection. Although the local hospital occasionally organize sexual healthcare and preventive STDs programs, we still found that young Laotian sex workers working in karaoke shops along the Mekong border region, lacked sexual healthcare knowledge, including negotiating skills for practicing safe sex with their customers. They are found vulnerable to forced sex, violent sex, as well as STDs risk for not using condoms.

According to an official report in 2003, HIV/AIDS infection in some districts of Ubon Ratchathani has become more and more prevalent. However, is it impossible to obtain the official number of sex workers who were infected with STDs and HIV/AIDS. (Office of Ubon Ratchathani Public Health Care Service as cited in Natedao Taotawin, 2008). In addition to the fact that Thai men do not want to wear a condom when having sex, it was found that reproductive or sexual health care services provided by both governmental or non-governmental organizations is yet inaccessible for these sex workers. Moreover, the far distance of those health care centers and high cost of health care services might also be the reason why special service women cannot access to such reproductive or sexual healthcare. Above all, they might not want to ask for help from health care officials because they are afraid of being arrested if the officials find out that they are sex workers (Natedao Taotawin, 2008).

Kanokwan Manorom (2009) also notes that the spread of HIVs which affected tourists and had killed a number of the male civil servants and local men during 2003-2005. When Laotian karaoke bar girls who had HIVs infection repatriated, they could spread HIVs to their Laotian sexual partners.

2.4.4 Dehumanization

Some studies investigate dehumanizing aspect of karaoke sex workers. The Laotian girls taking on karaoke sexual services as part of their jobs are conceived to be dehumanized by different processes.

Khuanruthai Jangjumras (2000, 2001) analyzes the dehumanization process experienced by the karaoke girls who are labeled and stigmatized by society and their resistance through the construction of self-identity. The study adopts ethnomethodology and include some qualitative data collection techniques; participant observation, informal interviews, and in-depth interviews. The researcher engages in a participatory participant as a receptionist in a karaoke lounge as public relations person. The participants' life experiences, in-depth interviews of six karaoke girls, interviews with workers and customers are recorded and analyzed. The author reports two salient findings, in terms of dehumanization the karaoke girls admitted being dehumanized through four steps; distancing themselves from families and society both physically and socially, disengage mental self while having sexual relations, disassociate mental self and pretend to have emotional involvement, and disembody mental self completely without emotional involvement and attachment. In the realm of resistance, they develop new character and adopt appearance of sophisticated girls who drink, smoke and take drug, dress openly to show sex appeal and arouse desire; and negotiate their economic interest in a straight-forward manner. The author concludes that the new identity is used to resist the power of their clients, karaoke workplace, and society as a whole.

Natedao Taotawin (2005) studies perception of the Laotian karaoke sex worker toward violence which experience in their daily life while working in the karaoke bars in Khong Chiam. The author conducts in-depth interviews, participates in the karaoke lounge as a health care volunteer working with the karaoke girls. Then the author reports that the karaoke girls and the customer perceive violence

differently. While the customers interpret most verbal and physical violation as normal and acceptable, the girls take those forms of actions as verbal, physical, and emotional violence.

2.5 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) is a discipline which concerns the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. In other words, Discourse Analysis is a branch of applied linguistics which investigates the study of language in use (Farahani, 2013). McCarty explains (1978, p. 5) "This field of study grew out of work in different disciplines in 1960s and 1970s, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology".

The major roles which DA contributes to social research today are grounded on the fact that human social life is a complex space of shared meaning, the discursive practices then are clearly important for human knowledge and understanding of social reality. Discourse analysis as a social research method is an endeavor to retrieve: 1) the knowledge of social intersubjectivity provides us with indirect knowledge about the social order because intersubjectivity is a product of it and because the social order is formed and functions through this social intersubjectivity; 2) discourse analysis allows us to understand social intersubjectivity because discourses contain it and because social intersubjectivity is produced through discursive practices (Ruiz, 2009).

In analyzing discourses of the MKGs in the context of the MBKB setting, we aim to look closely at ways in which the MKGs use available linguistic capital for constructing their identities and the ways they deal with liminal identities forced on them. The constructed identities will then show the social reality and structure which are constitutive to the MKGs and in return the social reality and structure are constituted by discursive practices of the MKGs based on the liminal conditions of the Khong Chiam MBKB interactions.

2.5.1 Ontology of Discourse Analysis

Discourse is taken as the core of this study. Fundamentally, discourse theories are useful for social research in ways that analysis of discourse can contribute to different level of understanding of a society. To the most basic level, discourse analysis gives information about society and social phenomenon. If we take it further to critical stage which concern power relations, critical discourse analysis then unfold relationships between agencies of that particular society. The next level is ambitious but it is proved to be possible by some research that the discourse analysis itself is a form of social practice which can have positive actions on the social issues under study. This means critical discourse analysis may also raise awareness, amend some social actions, or even change social practices and ideologies that govern the society of its time.

This section will provide definitions, development, attackable points, and strengths of conducting CDA research as we have faith on doing critical discourse analysis in order to understand social actors, interactions, asymmetric power relations, and ideologies that exist in the MBKBs' of Khong Chiam district.

2.5.2 Definitions

As originated in both linguistics and social sciences, the term discourse can be a stretched term. Consequently, there are various definitions of discourse. Scholars similarly define discourse to either a narrow linguistic sense or broader socio-cultural sense. Since Saussure (1959) discourse is defined as 'any linguistic sequence more extended than a sentence.' Schiffrin classifies: 'anything beyond a sentence, language use and a broader range of social practice including non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language (Schriffrin et al., 2001, p. 1).

In a broader sense, discourse is use of language seen as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts work with within sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1997, p. 7). Discourse in a narrow sense, language in use; in the broader sense, a body of language use and other factors that form a 'social language' such as the discourse of traffic regulation, commercial discourse, medical discourse, legal discourse (Scollon, 2003, p. 210). Foucault (1972, p. 49)

defines discourse ideologically as "practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak."

Those meanings are only a few samples from all discourse definitions available in the today academia, but we can take them to point out significant aspects of doing discourse analysis which focus on a) language itself, b) language in use-its usage in context, c) socio-cultural aspects which attach to language, and d) power issues which is embedded within the socio-cultural context where language is it constituted.

2.5.3 Functions

However, discourse is not a study of grammar per se, but how it functions. Thus, discourse is observed by its functional aspects as part of the communicative event (van Dijk, 1997, p. 2). Halliday then offers three meta-functions of language ideational-constructing model of experience, interpersonal-enacting social relationships, and textual-creating relevance to context (Halliday, 1994, p. 36). On the ground that language is functional, he views language 'not as a set of structures but a network of SYSTEMS, or interrelated sets of option for making meaning (Ibid., p. 15, capitalized in the original).

Focusing on not only forms, but also on functions of language, 'discourse studies are devoted to the investigation of the relationship between the form and function of language communication, with the issue of meaning at the centre' (Renkema, 1993, p. 1). Gee (1990) uses the term discourse to talk about language in use, or the way language is used in a social context to 'enact' activities and identities. van Dijk then lays out that discourse has three dimensions, language use, communication of belief and interaction in society (van Dijk, 1992, p. 2).

If we take three dimensions of language as a point of departure, language use occurs in society where communication of belief is processes under proper social rules. The social rules then, either consciously or unconsciously, influence how people in that society interact. Therefore, language in social interaction is regulated as well as generated in relation to society. As a result, discourse and society relationship is not a one-way phenomenon but dialectical as they relate each other.

2.5.4 Relations

From those functional aspects of discourse, it emphasizes the fact that discourse is generated within a social milieu. Consequently, it is imperative that we analyze discourse with its 'context' and take into account what's context and how context shape the discourse. In this section, we discuss dialectical relationship between society and its discourse.

A classic field of sociology focuses on studying a group of people. Bourdieu offers an additional field of the sociology called 'Reflexive Sociology.' This sub-field centers on analyzing language as it the reflection of social practices, thus reality about society can be investigated through analysis of discourse available in that society.

Thus doing discourse analysis is meant to be studies of language by taking its contextual relevancy and relationship of language and society into account. Discourse is a form of social practice which both *constitutes* the social world and is *constituted* by the other social practices. As social practice, discourse is in a dialectical relationship with other social dimensions. It does not only shape and reshape social structures but also reflects them (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 61, italicized in original).

By investigating relationships between society and its discourse, the focuses of analysis can be very broad and those can be accomplished by different approaches. For instances, pragmatics examines the 'acts' of signs, looking at meaning as constituted in the language use; psychology heavily explores cognitive process of language users; sociolinguistics matches correlations of social characteristics and discourse (Savitri Gadavanij, 2003); conversation analysis looks at the process by which the interactants organize their talk; ethnography provides a sense of stability, status and resonance that linguistic forms, rhetorical strategies and semiotics materials have in different social networks beyond the encounter-on-hand (Rampton, 2008).

2.6 Critical Discourse Analysis

Social sciences contribute great influence on discourse analysis. Discourse analysis later challenged scholars in various fields to move from viewing language upon it forms, function, and contextual relation with society. Discourse is seen as

having meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition (McGregor, 2003). Discourse is then treated as system that conveys a broad sense of meanings and the meaning is identified by immediate social, political, and historical conditions. For this reason, 'our words are never neutral (Fiske, 1994, as cited in McGregor, 2003, p. 2).

As a linguistic sub field, critical linguistics is regarded as the field that is greatly influenced by the Frankfurt School. To name a few, Antonio Gramsci (1971), Michael Foucault (1972), Jurgen Habermass (1979, 1984), and Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1991) are prominent and influential on critical linguistic and later critical discourse analysis. Those works concern ideology, power relations, and social construction.

In particular, social scholars have seen social practice to have a reflexive element (Bourdieu, 1977; Gidden, 1991, 1993). Reflexive elements of practice is meant the 'constant generation of representation'; people never act simply,' they produce the representations of their actions as well (Fairclough, 2000, p. 168). As Fiske affirms above, our words are not neutral. Regarding discourse as not 'neutral' and social actions are not simply enacted, 'critical' sense of framework and analytical tools are concerned. Therefore complexity of social construction, ideology, and power relation are taken into account.

Critical theories have influenced scholars to take discourses as ubiquitous ways of knowing, valuing, and experiencing the world. Discourses can be used for an assertion of power and knowledge, and they can be used for resistance and critique. In every context, discourse is utilized for building power and knowledge and power relations, and for hegemony (McGregor, 2003).

Daldal notes that Gramsci and Foucault make use of Machiavelli's notion of "relations of force," to develop theories of power and ideology, but they differently explain the power relations to the complex mechanisms of society.

By comparing the two theorists, the author explains that power in Gramscian analysis resides in ideology. Or in other words, to be conscious of the complex social network-hegemonic forces-within which an individual realizes himself already generates power. Once a social group is able to modify the ensemble of these relations and make it "common sense", it is creating a hegemonic order.

In Foucault's analyses, however conceive that power is everywhere as well as in his theory. Power is "omnipresent". It comes from everywhere and is produced every moment. Similar to Gramsci, Foucault also sees power as a relation of force that only exists in action. Foucault's basic difference from Gramsci is that the latter saw power relations in terms of binary oppositions (such as the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled etc.). For Foucault, power as well as the resistance it generates, are diffused (Daldal, 2014).

Although scholars may see each focus and explain it differently as we have seen in Daldal's comparison of Gramsci and Foucault, but those three aspects of critical theories are useful in conducting research in the influenced fields including CDA. CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts (van Dijk, 1988).

So far critical discourse analysis is considered useful to analyzing identity construction of the MKGs in the MBKBs in Khong Chiam. As the field takes discourse which is units larger than sentence in relation to society, discourse is closely interconnected to its society which it is produced and it has dialectical relationship with its society. When it is constituted in society, it is also constitutive by which it influence how social world is shaped by discourse. Furthermore, discourse as it is interrelated to society is seen as not 'neutral.' Analyzing discourse should be treated with 'critical perspectives.' Therefore, asymmetric power relationships, ideology, and social construction of identities are produced, maintained, and pass on to the serve the superior group while dominate or even oppress the submissive one. That way, inequality persists and injustice remains unsolved in society, the MBKBs-Khong Chiam in this particular case.

If we wish to tackle this social issue existing in Khong Chiam, as well as other MBKB societies, we may go back to ask what are the MKGs' identities as mutually constructed among themselves and other dominant group members? How the constructed identities make sense in such society? And whether we have an appropriate approach to explain the MKGs' identity construction so that ideologies

and power relations which are embedded in that social construction can be unfolded, questioned, and probably changed.

2.7 Nexus Analysis

In general, it is not easy to make change on social problems because they are underpinned by ideologies and maintained by systemic power relations controlled by dominant groups. However, it is by no mean unchangeable.

2.7.1 Ontology of Nexus Analysis

Nexus analysis is an approach to discourse analysis that developed within a theoretical framework called 'Mediated discourse analysis.' This theory can be traced back to Bakhhin (1981) who influences Wetsch (1994) and later passes down to Scollon (2001, 2003); R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2004). A concept of 'voices' by Bakhtin (1981, 1986) insists that we never speak in a voice that is purely our own, but instead 'borrow' and 'ventriloquate' the voices of others: we 'rent' meaning and then give it back to the community according to the protocols it establishes (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 5).

Bakhtin proposes that every utterance is heteroglossic, in that it may contain many different voices at once, and dialogic, as each voice exists in response to, or in 'dialogue' with, other voices. While every word we speak, every practice we perform and every identity we claim is always 'half of someone else's' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). Therefore words, practices and identities are also 'half of our own.' When we borrow them, we change them, populating them with our own semantic and expressive intentions, speaking them in our own 'accents.' Thus, not only is the way we take action transform by the tolls we use, but these tools themselves are transformed the actions they are appropriated to perform (Norris & Jones, 2005, pp. 5-6).

What Wetsch (1998) calls voices is a chief notion among different mediational means. Wertsch and his colleges consider mediational means as key to their developed approach called 'the sociocultural approach to mind. It states that all

actions are mediated through 'cultural tools;' objects, technologies, practices, identities, social institutions, communities, and also language and the semiotic systems (Wertsch, 1998; Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1990; Lantolf, 2000). All of which has histories that have shaped the regulation that can be done with them and the regulation that cannot. The cultural tools then embody particular affordance and constraints. (Noriss & Jones, 2005, p. 5) conclude that these affordances and constraints, however, are not deterministic of what social actors do with them but, rather, create a tension as actors appropriate them into their habitus (Bourdieu, 1997) and deploy them purposefully in social situations.

This approach emphasizes that ways we discern social life involves not just understanding the tools available for mediated actions nor the intensions, goals, plans of habits of social actors, but also, and more importantly, involves understanding the 'tension between the mediational means as provided in the sociocultural setting and the unique contextualized use of these means in carrying out particular concrete actions (Wertsch, 1994, p. 205).

By adopting the mediated action, the focus of mediated discourse analysis which is developed by R. Scollon and S. Scollon is then not discourse per se, but the whole intersection of social practices of which discourse is a part. It explores, among other things, how, at that nexus, discourse becomes a tool for claims and imputations of social identity (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 4). MDA starts out with the action or the mediated action, which is the real time moment when juxtaposition of meditational means, social actors and the sociocultural environment occur (Ibid).

By not privileging discourse which people take action, either along with discourse or separate form of it, MDA strives to preserve the complexity of the social situation. It provide a way of understanding how all of the objects and all of the language and all of the actions taken with these various meditational means intersect at a nexus of multiple social practices and the trajectories of multiple histories and storylines that reproduce social identities and social groups (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 4).

2.7.2 Methods of Nexus Analysis

Nexus analysis is an action oriented approach to discourse. The primary concern of nexus analysis is the complex relations between discourse and action. All action is seen as inherently social and mediated and carried out by social actors through the use of meditational means (Osten &Vershuren, 2014).

Scollon (2001, p. 144) critiques that "many theories of language and of discourse start out with a focus on 'social action' such as speech act theory, pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, and CDA but then somehow in practice tend to become focused only on text. Other aspects of social action and other mediational mean that language and discourse are in the background as 'context.' By this point, Scollon point outs how several traditions, yet concerned dialectical relationship between language and society, tend to drop the imperative role of action, which results in gleaning focus in favor of text.

Nexus analysis is not in the opposite position to most CDA trends that focus on text analysis, but rather alternative and supplement to discourse analysis the view discourse as action. The focus shifting from large scale discourse, language and text to concrete action performed by social actors, enables the researcher to include both micro-and macro perspectives, without postulating a micro-macro dichotomy frequently treated in social research (Ostman & Vershueren, 2014). Even supposing nexus analysis takes a social action as its point of departure in conducting research, the approach is firmly grounded within critical tradition of social science and humanities.

If the social engagement of nexus analysis is guided as R. Scollon and S. Scollon propose: "Nexus analysis is our response to Hymes' call three years ago for each of us to reinvent anthropology as 'a personal general anthropology, whose function is the advancement of knowledge and the welfare of mankind" R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2007, p. 608). This declaration on 'a personal general anthropology' provokes researchers to engage in social issues. This methodological position posits nexus analysis firmly in the critical tradition within social sciences and humanities (Ostman & Vershueren, 2014).

The focus of nexus analysis is not primarily on discourse, but language is seen as tool used in order to accomplish actions (Norris, 2002, p. 97). Though nexus

analysis shifts the focus from large scale discourse to social action, nexus still take firm interest in discourse because discourse intrinsically linked to social issues (Ostman & Verchueren, 2014). The difference between CDA and nexus analysis is a matter of focus: CDA focuses on discourses of social issues whereas the primary object of study of nexus analysis is social action through which social produce the histories and habitus of their daily lives which is the ground in which society is produced and reproduced (Scollon, 2001, p. 140).

The proposition of the approach is that a social practice happens at the intersection of three key domains. This intersection is termed the 'nexus of practice' is the point where trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects are synchronized and all partially facilitate some action which itself also change the nexus of practice in some way (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004).
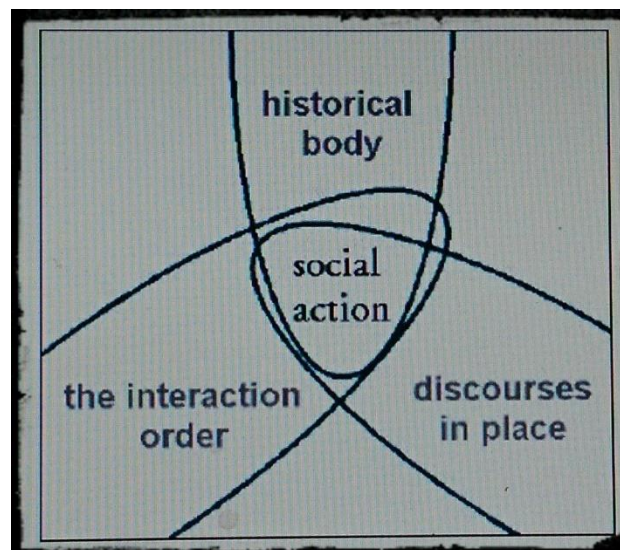
Figure 2.2 Social Action

Source: R. Scollon and S. Scollon, 2004, p. 20.

1) Historical Body-A life time of personal habits come to feel so natural that one's body carries out actions seemingly without being told.

2) Interaction Order-Many possible social arrangements by which we form relationships in social interactions.

3) Discourse in Place-All places in the world are complex aggregates (or nexus) of many discourses which have circulated through them. Discourses are relevant or "foregrounded", some discourses are irrelevant or "backgrounded" for the social actions in which the analyst is interested (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004, pp. 13-14).

Nexus analysis takes analysis of discourse as social action. The analytical frame work proposes 3 main activities:

1) Engaging the nexus of practice
2) Navigating the nexus of practice
3) Changing the nexus of practice

The first task requires the researcher to enter 'the zone of identification' which mean where and when the discourse analyst includes herself into nexus of practice under study. The second task designates the analyst to work on the trajectories of places, participants, situations and see crucial discourse, actions that can be identified. The third task is through both discourse and motive analysis, the analyst seeks to change the nexus of practice (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004).

2.8 Sociocultural Linguistic Approaches to Identity Construction

2.8.1 Approaches to Identity Construction

Researchers have been analyzing how people's choice of languages, and ways of speaking, do not simply reflect who they are, but make them who they are, or more precisely, allow them to make themselves. In turn, the languages they use are made and re-made in the process (Joseph, 2010, p. 9). He points out that features of recent work on language and identity include the view that identity is something constructed rather than essential, and performed rather than possessed- features which the term 'identity' itself tens to mask, suggesting as it does something singular, objective and reified. Each of us performs a repertoire of identities that are constantly shifting, and that we negotiate and re-negotiate according to the circumstances (Joseph, 2010, p. 14).

2.8.2 Sociocultural Linguistic Approaches

Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 586) offer a general sociocultural linguistic perspective on identity which one of the focuses on both details of language and the working of culture and society. By sociocultural linguistic, they mean the broad interdisciplinary filed concerned with intersection of language, culture, and society.

In line with abundant sociocultural linguistic research, Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 587) argue that identity is a discursive construct that emerges in interaction. Identity is defined as 'the social positioning of self and other' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p. 586). The authors argue for a view of identity that is intersubjectively rather than individually produced and interactionally emergent rather than assigned in an a prior fashion. They value analytical approach that treat identity as a relational and socio-cultural phenomenon that emerge and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories.

Although they realize that identity does not emerge at a single analytical level; vowel quality, turn shape, code choice, or ideological structure, it operates at multiple levels simultaneously. They privilege the interactional level, because it is in interaction that all these resources gain social meaning. Thus they take from a number of social theories that are principally relevant to an understanding of the intersubjective construction of identity within local interactional contexts.

In *identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach*, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) propose five principles as a framework to analyze construction of identity during linguistic interaction based on the premise that identity is dynamic and is socially and culturally formed at multi-level of interaction. The intersubjective construction of identity is thereby derived through situated context.

Instead of viewing identity as fixed and stable, the first principle-the emergence principle-looks at identity as emergent and is reflectively produced through social interaction in which language is used as not only as a medium of intersubjectivity but also a reflection of the user's inner state of mind within the particular social and cultural phenomenon.

The second point, the positionality principle views that identity is not a collection of broad social categories but it is a temporary role or oriented to by the

participants in order to create intersubjectivity during specific social interaction. Because identity can be simultaneously constructed, it is necessarily to consider different kinds of position from multiple viewpoints of a social interaction which are possibly constructed in a fleeting and simultaneous moment.

Next point, the indexicality principal concerns how identity is constructed through indexical linguistic forms. The concept of indexicality which involves association between linguistic forms and social meanings encompasses (a) overt use of identity categories and labels, (b) implicatures and presuppositions, (c) temporary position, stance and footing oriented to during interaction, and (d) linguistic structures and systems ideologically related to particular group. According to these, the understanding of language and identity are based on cultural beliefs and values.

The forth principle, the relationality principle focuses on identity as relational construction whereby the formed identity derives its social meaning through several and overlapping complementary relations. Such processes include adequation/ distinction, authentication/denaturalization, and authorization/illegitimation.

The last point, the partialness principle suggests that identity can be constructed partly intentional and partly habitual; however, such construction often occurs with less consciousness. Also it can be partly negotiated during social interaction as well as an outcome from perceptions of other people or larger ideological processes and material structures such as cultural categories or social positions.

These principles of identity and interaction allow us to scrutinize the participants' identity during social interaction in ethnographic and interactional context. The linguistic resource used to constructed identity is broad and flexible and, thus showing that through complementary relations as well as partial accounts can intersubjectivity be created.

In short, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as well as Joseph (2010) agree on the principle that identity is no longer understood as a constructed, preformed rather than a solid fixed form of social status. Bucholtz and Hall affirm that identity construction happens culturally and socially within various levels of interaction. They explain further that the five principles are fundamental by which identity can be constructed

on the basis of intersubjectivity, positionality, indexicality, relationality, and partialness.

2.8.3. Discursive Practice of Othering and Identity Construction

As Bucholtz, Hall, and Joseph, with constructivist view point to identity, emphasize that identity is seen more today as fluid and emerging in interaction, former scholars explain in similar fashion. Fundamentally, social actors do 'identity work' when they come to encounters.

Hall (1996) proposed that the foremost instrument for the construction of one's identity can be processed by invoking difference. In the same trend with Derrida 1981, Laclau, 1990 and Butler (1993), Hall argued that "it is only though the relation to the Other (Capitalized in original), the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it takes, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term-and thus its 'identity'- can be constructed" (1996, pp. 4-5). In the same trend, Teun A. van Dijk (1994) finds that topics play a key role in making 'US' and 'THEM.' The overall social cognitions about the immigrants or refugees under his analysis, the 'them' indexes socio-cultural difference, deviance of established, and competition for scarce resources. Thus, in his view, othering "THEM" occur by linking topics to the participants' identity.

Identity construction is thus seen as an act of drawing boundaries and creating exclusion zones though the processes of "closure." For instance, the visibility of the racial/colonial other is at once a point of identity and at the same time a problem for the attempted closure within discourse (Bhaba, 1994; Hall 1993). In details, Hall exemplifies the processes of zoning by referring to concepts of contrast, for example "white" being defined by "black," "day" being defined by "night," "masculine" by "feminine," etc. Also, "us" vs. "them" is realized through a simple contrast or difference between such entities as man / woman or black / white.

Leach (1976, 1982) argues that, in a world structured in oppositions, humans attach concept of "normality" to everything they perceive as simple, intelligible, and logically ordered, in contrast to the "abnormality" of that which is disorderly and unintelligible. The perception of a feature as normal or abnormal is never a question of "objective" fact, but of the circumstances in which it is observed; for example,

"sexual activity, which is in itself a normal part of normal life, can suddenly become abnormal when it is classified as 'dirty'" (Leach, 1982, p. 115).

Nevertheless, the first view to identity construction based on drawing boundaries and creating binary opposition of selves, the later works on identity construction have different perspectives on constructing identity. Identity is no longer viewed as X is opposite to Y, but view as co-constructive work of making meaning with a given interactional context. Identity construction is a 'process' of making 'who we are,' not simply a product of identity work. Thus, identity can be co-constructed, fluid, and negotiable within social interactions.

Jaworski and Coupland (2005) explains that the status of other persons of groups can be altered or manipulated depending on whether persons want to represent them as "same" or "different." In either case, identity is definite, unambiguous, and clear. It does not cause anxiety and maintain status quo. However, the identity of a person can be altered so that he or she will be perceived as someone who belongs neither to 'us' nor to any accepted, normal, and ambiguous "they"; some people can be thought of as "outcasts', "rejects", "freaks", etc.

Jaworski and Coupland (2005) emphasize on redefined someone's social status by arguing that it is feasible to redefine one's status and, even more importable, to make anomalous is that social boundaries have 'fuzzy edge' which means social concepts overlap. Thus overlapping areas are ambiguous by its nature. The authors takes examples quoted by Leach, such entities as "Man" and "God," and "Death" involve intermediate concepts, respectively, of a mediator, "a god-man towards whom all religious ritual is addressed and who is thought of as the source of metaphysical power" (Leach, 1977, p. 17), and "sickness where the individual is neither altogether alive nor altogether dead" (Leach, 1977, pp. 17-18).

Leach's work (1977) argues that individual's ambiguous status can also be manipulated depending on the situation. As illustrated by an example of "criminals" can be said to be the mediator between the society and its members defined as "rebels," while "policemen" ("heroes" or "rulers") mediate between the society and the ruled. In the act of breaking into a private house by a criminal or by a policeman "will depend, not on the facts of the case but what we believe to be the case with regard to the legitimacy of the situation" (Leach, 1977, p. 16). So we can see; Leach's

work on taboo does not always relate negativity of status. Gods, royals, policemen, may be the devil, rebels, and criminals can be revered, admired, and emulated, although they reserve in inaccessible, remote, and marginalized space.

2.8.4 Othering and Identity Construction

The word "othering" refers to processes that are the human tendency to believe in a group that ones are a part of it. These processes are results in hostility or threats from those who are not part of a group, as they can be seen as a threat or liability that is detrimental to the group's existence (Last, 2015). As a result, human create an 'us vs. them' mentality. The 'us' and 'them' might base on social categories of race, religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, country, sexual orientation, species and so on.

In terms of process of identity construction, othering involves constructing identities though the use of marked registers (e.g. humor, parody, caricature), naming/ labeling which symbolically dehumanizes the referent ("monkeys," "insects," beasts," "serpent"), and accusation of stupid, irrational behavior (e.g., giving land and women away). The other (capitalized in original) is impure, sinful, and dirty and threatens to pollute "us'. Just as "dirt" is matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966, p. 48 as cited in Jaworski & Coupland, p. 675), the other is a person out of place.

On the other hand, Jaworski and Coupland consider different aspect of othering. As they state that othering need not apply to out-group members only but it can be also applied to in-group members and self. Based on Coupland's earlier work stating that "othering is the process of representing an individual or a social group to RENDER THEM distant, alien or deviant" (emphasis in original) and that it "raises issues about group boundaries" (1999, p. 5), but not so much by making these boundaries clear by blurring them to provoke anxiety or excitement (Jaworski & Coupland, 2005, p. 675).

Coupland (1999) identifies five discursive manifestations of othering: homogenization (stereotyping), pejoration (typically represented by various terms of verbal abuse, racial slurs, etc), suppression and silencing (e.g., omission, selective representation), displaying "liberalism" (e.g., hedging racists remarks by claiming non prejudicial intent), and subverting tolerance (e.g., ridiculing "political correctness,"

humorous, parodic mockery of minorities). Focusing for the most part on the disparaging and minoritizing instances of "other representation," he also flags the possibility of non-stigmatizing instances of "other representation," including "self-othering" and subverting hegemonic ideologies as well as emphasizes "other representation" as context-bound and interactionally emergent.

Jaworski and Coupland attempt to demonstrate participants' "gossipy episodes" that focus largely on derogatory/disparaging gossip, and to a lesser extent on celebratory gossip. Eggins and Slade (1997) claim earlier that gossip allows participants jointly to achieve group solidarity and to strengthen group identity. The authors argue that if gossip accomplishes social cohesion through evaluation in the storytelling, it does so by specific processes of "othering" by which the protagonist in the gossip-story is subjected to imposition of a borderline or liminal identity. This makes Jaworski and Coupland interested in tracing the discursive strategies of othering in gossip. They demonstrate othering processes as strategically deployed resource for the regulation of interpersonal distance between interactants and third parties in casual conversation, operating momentarily, usually at very short intervals/stretches of talk (Jaworski & Coupland, 2005, p. 675).

Their analysis concludes that there are particular strategic patternings, those of which includes; homogenization (positive/ negative stereotyping; indicating interplay between the individual and the group), evaluation (by (a) pejoration and/or (b) celebration of another's anti-social behavior, voicing/ reported speech of another, of the self as other, silencing and suppression, displaying liberialism, subverting tolerance; use of humor (Jaworski & Coupland, 2005, pp. 685-686).

Thus far, identity construction can be meaningfully processed through discursive practice of othering. In processes of othering which are performed by social actors, it can be processed by making a clear cut boundary by provoking difference or binary opposition of concepts. The work of van Dijk identifies two directions of othering, one is constructing positive selves, and another one is constructing negative other through text and talk. However, as Leach, Jaworski and Coupland argue, identity can also be ambiguous, unclear, and context bound. Thus those scholarly works reveal that identity as being comprehended nowadays is by no mean a fixed form of status, social category, or cultural representation, or may not be

a single ideology but rather contingent, ambiguous, co-constructive, comprise of complex socio-eco-cultural concepts, and definitely shaped by contexts.

2.8.5 Discursive Practice of Othering by Uses of Pronouns

In obtaining identity as constructed and negotiated in social interactions, there are numerous forms of linguistic realization that can facilitate to convey identity construction. As proposed by a sociological linguistic approach, identities can be linguistically realized through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures or systems (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 585). More specifically, van Dijk (2003) propose that social members' talk in any virtual contexts might instantiate, either covertly or overtly, speakers form social relation that could be of dominance, politeness, assistance or solidarity. He further emphasizes social interactions and its contexts would probably entail the use of expressions that may be intended or interpreted as signaling social relations. For example, pronouns may be markers of dominance or politeness. We may propose that pronoun is one of many linguistic forms which reveal how various identities are co-constructed. By considering selective pronouns used in virtual social interactions, we may discern that there is either sense of inclusion or exclusion made available in each interactional context. Each interlocutor can either assign positive sociocultural values or negative one through the selected pronouns which he/she uses.

Each local organization of social interaction may facilitate or constrain the selection of pronouns used in each social interaction. Within social interactions, pronouns can be varied according to the local encounters between each pair of interlocutors. Taking identity as the outcome of intersubjectively negotiated practices and ideologies (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), here we consider language as spoken by the group member with in-group member, and spoken to the out-group member. The face-to-face encounters may allow encounters among the in-group speakers; sometimes bring together the in-group and out-group speakers.

Social categorization of identity can be realized through the use of pronouns in the interaction. Grammatically, the first-person pronoun posits the speaker while the second-person pronoun addresses the listener. The third-person pronoun refers to

other people or things that are not present at the moment of the speech (Pitarch, 2016).

In real-time language used in any social interaction, however the use of pronoun is by no mean neutral in terms of participants' cognition, culture, society, politics, and so forth. For instance, long ago scholars have explicated already that ethnocentricism and prejudice have their origins in the process of social categorization by which people subjectively classify others as members of their own group (in-group) or as members of another group (out-group); e.g. Allport, 1954; Hamilton and Trolier, 1986; Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oaks, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987; Wilder, 1986; Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990, p. 475). Relatively, perceivers come to view that in-group members (us) are more similar to them in ways other than the criterion used for categorization. Perceivers also appear to view out-groups (them) as relatively less complex, less variable, and less individuated than are in-groups (Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990, p. 475).

Language is a major determinant of perceptions of the social world; names and labels applied to other persons subtly sculpt impressions of those persons in directions suggested by those labels (Turner, 1980). Because of their ability to imply the in-group or out-group status of people, collective pronouns such as we, us, and ours or they, them, and theirs are likely to be especially powerful influences in social cognition and perception. When these terms are used in reference to people, they are linked to one of the most basic decisions in person perception: the cognitive categorization of people into one's in-group or out-group (Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990, p. 475).

In terms of Social cognition, some scholars suggest that words referring to in-group categorization may therefore overtime accumulate primarily positive connotations while out-group-referent word are more likely to accumulate less favorable connotations, in some cases, it even outright negative associations (Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990; Holtz, 1989; Rosenbuam & Holt, 1985). A number of scholars have examined at length the socio-cognitive schemata underlying polarities us vs. them. The binary categorizations and demarcations have a tendency. La Capra (1989, pp. 23-24) concludes that to assume either in overt or covert ways a privileged position, a dominance of one group's perspective over the other.

In the field of linguistics and anthropology, as emphasized by Bamberg, De Fina and Schiffrin (2006), both linguists and anthropologists primarily acknowledged significance of pronouns in anchoring language to specific speakers in particular contexts and in signaling the reciprocal changes in the roles of participants through their performance of, and engagement in, interactional communication. Silverstein (1976) supports also that linguistic signs at referential level identify speakers both in regard to their interactional roles or gender and how they direct to elements of the speech situation such as time and place. In actual linguistic terms, Riggins (1997, p. 8) emphasizes that "expressions that are most revealing of the boundaries separating self and other are inclusive and exclusive pronouns and possessives such as we and they, us and them, and ours and theirs." Through a management of these linguistic realizations, a speaker may utilize pronouns to express affiliation with mainstream or 'naturalized' positions (Fairclough, 1992). Some members of a dominant group may unconsciously give off controlling self over the minority group meanwhile a member of the minority group may also try to distance her from being labeled as the derogative 'them'. van Dijk (1984, p. 125) calls such pronouns "demonstratives of distance" since their major function is to establish a contrast in the groups being described.

Thus, those earlier works on pronouns show that pronouns are not a purely grammatical unit which people use to identify persons relevant to the course of talking, but also a discourse unit that people use as discursive practice by which they construct and construe meaningful sense of self and other. Then, the constructed sense of self or other might align, contrast, or even resist the dominant groups within a given society.

2.8.6 Liminality and Identity Construction

Arnold Van Gennep (1909) calls the 'liminal phase' of the 'rites of passage.' The rite of passage, as defined by Gennep, is 'rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age.' He defines all rite of passage or 'transition' are marked by three phases; separation, margin (or Latin word 'limen, signifying 'threshold'), aggregation. In details, the first phase of the rite of passage comprises of symbolic behavior signifying the 'detachment' of the individual or group either from

an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions, or from both. The second phase is the intervening period 'liminal period' which is ambiguous. This means that the (ritual) subject passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state/position. The third phase is 'aggregation or reincorporation,' the subject is in the relatively stable once more and by this sake has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and 'structural' type. Therefore he/she is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such position.

Derived from van Gennep's rite of passage stages, Victor Turner (1969) later extends the concept of 'liminality' or 'liminal personae' (threshold people). He explains it as a period when people are necessarily ambiguous, because 'this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space.' Liminal people are neither here or there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. Their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions (Turner, 1969, p. 95).

Turner explains the liminal subjects as being normally passive or humble. They must obey their instructor implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. This is to the thought that they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life. Among the liminal subjects, they tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism. Secular distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homogenized.

Turner also infers that liminality implies dialectical processes of social life that involves successive experience of high and low, communitas and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is to the limbo of statuslessness. Each individual's life experience contains alternating exposure to structure and communitas, and to states and transitions (Turner, 1969).

Jaworski and Coupland (2005) discuss that various forms of verbal stylization as presented in their work are instances of 'crossing.' In a similar trend, Rampton (1995) argues; those forms positively enhance liminal moments of period when normal social relations are loosened or subverted. Jaworski and Coupland then argue that they elaborate how gossipy events, as little rituals of everyday life, can be categorized into 'liminal genre,' or 'liminoid' as of Turner's term. This liminiod Turner coins for covering of acts of play and leisure in modern settings. The instances of crossing indeed construct 'liminal identities' for people, as in their gossipy events, who are their objects. The authors discuss further that discursive strategies of othering, found in their analyses, lend themselves to similar interpretation of invoking liminal identities of the objects of gossip, for example, stereotyping denies a person's 'true' status as an individual; pejoration ultimately relegates people to tabooed status as 'wasted'; silencing deprives people of their voice, which is both a symbol of the individuality and humanity. In gossipy scenes, othering is a drastically face threatening act to both the gossipees and their 'compliances,' which is probably why subverting tolerance and displaying 'liberalism' (Coupland, 1999). Othering strategies are then imperative as they work toward managing the face of those constructing othering- giving reason, claiming high moral ground, and so forth.

So far the former literature on liminality and the analysts who apply the concept to explore liminal event of gossiping found that liminaltiy fundamentally define temporal and spatial space for the participants. More importantly, the participants 'construct their liminal identities' while the social relations are loosened meanwhile assign 'liminal identity' to the absent people. Different discursive strategies of othering convey methods which people deny someone's true status or identity, relegate some people into 'unwanted' category and facilitate how people manage their face work while being face-threatened during the daily ritual. In the processes of constructing various individual and group identities under the confinement of liminality, discourses play a crucial role in constituting identities and are constituted evidences of the social reality and structured world around the social actors.

2.9 Conclusion

So far, the former studies on Khong Chaim and its karaoke business life has suggested that Khong Chiam and the MBKBs in particular are interesting liminal space based on its unique geographical characteristics, abundant natural resources, dynamic township development, and current challenging problems. The young Laotian migrants are living in such space where most former topical studies on karaoke sex worker found that they are vulnerable as they are trafficked, exploited, labeled and stigmatized, marginalized, and dehumanized based on their immigrant status and unacceptable sex work. Those conditions point out that this liminal space exist ideological control, imbalanced power relations and injustice in the community.

Thus, inequality that persists in Khong Chiam is a critical social issue which invites more researcher/ scholars from various fields as well as contributive methodologies to investigate the social issue.

Considering previous studies on karaoke sex workers, most studies examine the community and its people on the basis of interviews. Therefore, the perspectives the researchers take are from etic perspective or outsiders' point of view. Unsurprisingly, their findings depict the MKGs as being victimized, not the living agencies who do have power to exercise. On top of being viewed as victims and money seekers by the community residents, the academic discourse also emphasizes their existence by conceptualizing them into the sex worker, the stigmatized, marginalized, trafficking victims, and so on. This indexes that there are research gaps remaining.

A methodological gap is that more insider views should be more engaging in those topics and community. Although Molland (2012) does ethnography, his stand point is an outsider. Some other scholars investigate the social problematic issues based on interviews. Interviews can give rich information, but the messages are possibly mediated, so that some actual interaction is not yet collected and analyzed. Therefore the virtual social interaction which the participants truly live their life and naturally conveys their social meanings still need social research. This gap opens for a methodological fulfillment for which the participants' real time language in use,

discourse in action and as action, and social interaction that allow naturalistic social construction are taken into account.

Second, there still needs social research on the karaoke girls in different areas. Khuanruthai Jangjumras (2000, 2001) can be a ground breaking work on studying karaoke girls with binary views which take both the dehumanized aspect and resistance into account. She engages in the community of the karaoke girls by working as a receptionist in a karaoke bar and reports the dehumanized process performed by others and resisting identities constructed by the girls with the etic point of view. This work informs us that the research concerns power relationships between the superior group members and the inferior one. However, what can be added up to this ground breaking work is that more investigations on contextual, socio-cultural, political, and may be powerful ideologies that produce, sustain, and reproduce such unequal power relationship between the karaoke girls and their society. That way we can discern the karaoke girls' experience through a microscopic lens and its holistic social milieu which retain such kind of injustice.

Some scholarly works on identity constructions and discursive strategies of othering, various reveal, as shown by Bucholtz and Hall, Coates, Coupland, and Jaworski and Coupland, othering can be co-constructed by the participants by making difference or drawing boundaries of being 'differrent.' While van Dijk finds that othering can be made up by making "positive US" and "negative "THEM," Some empirical works, especially by Coupland and Jaworski, also add on that othering might not always be negative as they found that self-othering do occur in social interactions, e.g. gossip.

At this point, the other karaoke communities are open to be investigated, not in a city scene but in a unique bordering area. Adopting CDA, which concerns those social issues, would be useful for investigating ideologies and power relationships. Nexus Analysis is an ethnography that takes social action into account. This analytical framework highlights intersection of people, places, objects so that we can see the holistic process of identity construction by the participants. To look closely on how the participants construct their self, define who they are in different circumstances, sociocultural linguistic approach is seen contributive to analyze ways in which the participants co-construct, shift, and negotiate their sense of self. The linguistic

realizations will prove what and how their multiple social identities are keen to serve the dominant group to maintain in power meanwhile allow the dominated one to negotiate, challenge, or even change their status quo within the liminal space of the Mekong karaoke settings.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology which triangulates CDA framework, nexus analysis, and sociocultural linguistic approaches to explore what are the MKGs' contentious identities? Are they made liminal? How discursive practice sheds light on understanding the MKGs' contentious identities and processes of identity construction, as well as ways in which ideologies are intertwined and realized through discourse in place of the MBKBs and Khong Chiam interactions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The dissertation will employ critical discourse analysis as a framework of the study. Then nexus analysis is adopted in coupling with face-to-face analytical concepts theorized by Goffman and sociocultural linguistic approaches to conduct micro-inspections of the Mekong border karaoke social interactions. The analytical framework undertaken is nexus analysis which centers on investigating interlink of three trajectories; historical body, interaction order, and discourse in place. The dissertation also relies on various analytical tools available in sociocultural linguistic approaches to enable the micro analysis of social phenomena, specifically identity concerns.

The MBKB interaction is a site where it encodes the MKGs' alternative identities. The questions of what and how their contentious identities are constructed, negotiated, and represented will then be answered through the following ethnographical research design.

3.1 Research Design

Taking CDA as the research perspective which concerns issues of ideology, power relation as well as social construct, this research relies on ideological discourse proposed by van Dijk (2003) to orient the analysis. The unit of analysis is 'social interaction.' The methodologies then mainly rely on ethnography of social practice by Scollon (2001, 2003); R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2004). In terms of investigating the discourse, the detailed linguistic realization will be analyzed by adopting some key tools from sociocultural linguistic approaches.

As pointed out by Rampton (2008, p. 3), ethnography provides a sense of stability, status and resonance that linguistic forms, rhetorical strategies and semiotics materials have in different social networks beyond the encounter-on-hand; an idea of how and where an encounter fits into longer and broader biographies, institutions and histories; and a sense of the cultural and personal perspectives/experiences that participants bring to interactions, and take from them.

This research is an ethnographic investigation taking the stretched view of ethnography by which the research centers on the 'social action' rather than the 'group of people' as traditionally examined. Nexus analysis is adopted on the ground that it provides a framework to deconstruct significant aspects of social practice which Scollon terms 'mediated action' and understand how interaction involves 'mediational means or cultural tools such as language, gestures, material objects and institutions" (Scollon, 2001, p. 7). His framework is intended to show how practical action and the actions accomplished by language are related (Ervin-Tipp, 2003, p. 799). In order to be able to show how social action is accomplished, nexus analysis treats a given social action as a complex network of social practices.

Social action occurs at the intersection of the historical body which is an individual's accumulated experience of social actions of the participants in that action, the interaction order which they partially contribute among themselves and the discourses in place which enable a given action or are used by the participants as mediational means in their action.

Goffman's concepts provide a framework and procedures for investigating situated encounters. His concepts will help us to discern the rituals and moral accountabilities permeating the use of semiotic forms and strategies; and shifting spatio-temporal distribution of attention and involvement in situations of physical co-presence (Rampton, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, the research triangulates Goffman's concepts for which social action, face-to-face interaction in this case, can be deconstructed through detailed analysis in search of the participants' emerged identities.

The border town of Khong Chiam is a liminal space where asymmetrical power relations among the MKGs and other community residents persist. Under such unequal social status, the research purports to engage, navigate, and change the nexus

of practice within the zone of identification. The research adopts nexus analysis to explain what the MKGs' problematic identities are and how they manage to meaningfully construct, technically negotiate, and carefully represent their senses of self? Such dilemma of identity will also explicate whether they are fully controlled or simply relegated into the site where they do have power of controlling themselves or even challenging the others.

In doing so, the dissertation will provide the setting of the study, the participants, the instrumentations, and the procedures which show how the data is collected and analyzed. Also, notes on ethical considerations, reliability and validity of the research will be covered in the next section.

3.2 Setting

The site of engagement of the dissertation is Khong Chiam district, Ubon Ratchathani province. The observations, interviews, and focus group interviews are conducted with people who are present at Khong Chiam.

The Khong Chiam karaoke dynamics are complex but unique. The researcher had access to observe 10 MBKBs operated in Khong Chiam in 2014-2015. These MBKBs are run by the local investors. Most of the MBKBs were located at the out skirts of the town of Khong Chiam. Majority of them were located at the end of the Moon River Bridge, on the east side of the town. Some small scale MBKBs locate at the west side of the Moon River Bridge. Each bar is similar in terms of physical setting such as they locate the bars along the road number 2173 which links Khon Chiam district to Chongmek checkpoint. The popular and high volume bars are those located on the east.

Each MBKB's physical setup looks similar to night-time restaurants and night clubs. They decorate the front of the bars by lighting colorful and twinkling lights. Thus people could notice them as night time hang-out places. Some MBKBs turn on melodious music or rhythmic music as a communicating channel that says this bar is open.

Each MBKB provides their customers a parking area. The parking is mostly at the front of the bar and it is an outdoor rocky terrace. The customers normally park

their vehicles in front of the bar and walk toward the waiting MKGs right after they park.

In terms of services, the MBKBs provide food, soft drink, alcoholic beverages, and singing lounges. Some higher quality MBKBs also provide VIP singing rooms for the customers.

The majority of the customers are adult males from the town of Khong Chaim, nearby districts, and adjacent provinces. They are 'salary-men' which means workers in governmental offices and the private sector. Approximately, 90 percent of them are Isan men who speak both standard Thai and Isan dialect. Their ages are ranged from 28 to 65 years old. The majority of regular customers are about 45 to 60 years old.

3.3 Participants

Due to the fact that the research was conducted on the hard-to-access group, the participants are randomly selected by snow-ball techniques by which the organization and persons we already knew suggested the next participants to participate in the interviews and focus group interviews. The key social actors are identified according to the coordinators' introduction and their willingness to participate in the interviews, let the researcher observe their mundane activities, and occasionally be part of the activities.

There are two groups of key participants. The first group include the participants actively participated in the interaction which occur at the MBKBs. Within the MBKB interactions, there are the researcher and research assistants, the MKGs, MBKBs owners, and other officers such as the police officers and healthcare staff from the local hospital. The interactions among the participants at the MBKBs include the following encounters: the MKGs and the MKCs, the MKGs and MBKB owners, the MKGs and police officers, the MKGs with the researcher, the MKCs and the researcher, the MBKB owners with the researcher/ research assistants.

The second group of participants includes ordinary people who live their daily community life in Khong Chiam. Those participants are the researcher, researcher assistants, salon shop owners, Khong Chiam housewives, Khong Chiam working women, the auto technician, Somtam shop owner, the local hospital healthcare staff,

and some local MBKBs' customers. Those participants allow daily encounters between: the researcher and the Khong Chiam housewives, the researcher and the salon shop owners, the researcher and Somtam shop owner, the researcher and the MBKBs goers, the working women and working women.

3.4 Instrumentation

The researcher has provided some useful tools for collecting the ethnographical data as following:

3.4.1 Interview Protocols

In order to effectively collect data by the research and the research assistants, several sets of interview protocols are applied to retrieve basic information from the participants. Some in-depth interview questions are prepared so those questions allow the researcher and the assistants inquire answers in the meantime aware of sensitive questions to be delivered in the field works.

3.4.2 Research Assistant Training

In accessing the real time MBKB interactions, the researcher has organized four training sessions for the researcher assistants. The reasons for conducting different training sessions to various types of the assistants is scene surveys suggest that there are different types of customers going to the MBKBs. Thus we predict that the variety of customer should bring in different historical bodies, form different units of encounters and utilize diverse discourses in their face-to-face interactions. Therefore, bringing in different people of different backgrounds in terms of age, gender, profession, and race, and social distance is expected to enrich variety of the MBKB encounters. As a result, their divergent encounters can be observed and recorded. More importantly, the multifaceted identities can be observed based on their distinctive historical body, interaction order, and discourses.

1) Young Male Customers

This group of assistants is trained in order to go to the MBKBs as customers. They are informed about the characteristics of the MBKBs in the liminal

space of Khong Chaim bordering town. They are informed about the objective of going the MBKBs. They are prompted to ask some questions and be aware of unwanted behaviors. The assistants are allowed to inquire some information regarding the MKGs from the researcher and the field work facilitators.

2) Old Male Customers

There are two groups of older male assistants who are trained to go to the MBKBs as customers. The first group is composed of two local males working for a governmental office in Khong Chiam. They are about 30 to 35 years old. They are Ubon Ratchathani locals so they speak both standard Thai and Isan dialect. This group of customers is informed to go to different level of MBKBs, small bar, mid-ranged bar, and the respective high-end ones in Khong Chaim. They are informed to observe and interact with the MKGs as their customers. They are also informed to talk to the MBKB owners as their customers and report to the researcher. Since the tape recording is not allowed in the MBKBs, the assistant was reminded to limit alcohol consumption during the MBKB interactions. The second group of assistants is prompted to be business men from Ubon Ratchathani. They are in their late fifties. They own businesses such as local restaurants and private schools. They are assigned to go to use karaoke VIP room and interact with the MKGs. Then they report their encounters to the researcher.

3) Healthcare Staff

One session is prepared to be a casual healthcare consultation during the MKGs' dinner at a small MBKB. There is one local hospital healthcare staff member who is already known by the people at the MBKB. She is coached to be a conversational partner for the MKGs who want to consult their reproductive healthcare issues at their bar while they are at work. This assistant is informed the objective of the dining activity and to go to the small MBKB with the researcher.

3.4.3 Community Mapping

Community refers to people with common interests living in a particular area. Community mapping is generally used for identifying community assets and potential partners in project planning. The beneficial aspect of the community mapping is collecting data in order to create a map of community asserts and resources within a

defined area. A community map highlights people, physical structures, organizations, and institutions that can be utilized to create meaningful learning project.

The Khong Chaim community is roughly mapped. The maps focus on where the MBKBs and other relevant places are located. The Khong Chiam community maps identify location of local hotels, restaurants, and night clubs and the MKGs lodgings outside the MBKBs, fresh market, bazars, food shops, salon shops, clinics, and banks, etc.

Some MBKBs' exterior and interior setups of the MBKBs are mapped. There are three examples of MBKBs. Those of which include various scales of the MBKBs; a small, mid-ranged, and high-end MBKB.

3.4.4 Photographs

One of the important means for conducting the ethnographic fieldwork for this dissertation was using photographs. Although this research project has limitation in taking photographs due to confidential agreement, photography is still very useful as J. Collier and M. Collier suggest; photography is mostly used for overall surveys, for example at the beginning of research projects where the focus, is on mapping the field (J. Collier & M. Collier, 1986, pp. 29-44). The authors also point out that photography of sites or people creates overviews that are useful for questioning and thereby for further and more detailed investigations into the field.

Therefore, photographs of places and people are taken in Khong Chaim, outside the MBKBs and some are taken inside the MBKBs. Most of MBKBs do not allow taking photographs, especially in the service sessions. A few of them allow, but taking photographs in the service sessions must be taken on the MKGs' consent.

3.4.5 Field Notes

This ethnographical data collection heavily relies on the field notes. The field notes record Khong Chaim as a liminal space, characteristics and communal daily life of some Khong Chaim residents especially the MKGs. The notes are used by the researcher to collect community observations, MBKBs observation, and interaction observation. The note also collects the participants' interactions, communicative

contexts, and language in use. Also, the notes record the research assistant's reports on encounters and observations.

3.5 Procedures

3.5.1 Data Collection

The data is collected according to nexus analysis guidelines. The fieldwork takes place in three bordering districts of Ubon Ratchathani province. As nexus analysis proposes that a social action occurs up on interlinks of the historical bodies of the participants, the interaction order by which the participants come to the social encounters, and the discourses in place which are virtually used by the participants to enable their given action.

This research adopts a nexus analysis field guide which is based on concepts developed within mediated discourse analysis by R. Scollon and S. Scollon. A 'mediated action' is an action taken by one or more social actors using one or more meditational means (Scollon, 2001). This field guide presupposes knowledge of mediated discourse analysis which has been developed out of earlier work by the authors and many others in activity and practice theory, interactional sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, and linguistic anthropology.

3.5.1.1 Participant Observation

Nexus analysis is an ethnographic method which heavily relies on participant observation. Ethnography is the study of particular people and places. This research in particular studies social interactions among the MBKBs goers, the KMGs and the Khong Cham residents. In conducting participant observation, the observer participates in ongoing activities and records observations. Participant observation extends beyond naturalistic observation because the observer is a "player" in the action. The technique is used in many studies in Anthropology and Sociology. Often the researcher actually takes on the role being studied. In this research project, the observers play different in various occasions. Those roles include a cook assistant at a small MBKB, a solo customer and group customers of the MBKBs, and healthcare staff, for example. The data fundamentally consist of the observers' notes, and thus may not be as reliable as information gathered by two or more independent observers.

By following the guidelines, the field work enables the researcher to pursue three main activities of nexus analysis. Those are to engage in the nexus of practice, navigate the nexus of practice and then change the nexus of practice. These are main activities required intersection of those three domains where the 'mediated action' or 'social action/ interaction' occur.

Figure 3.1 Mediated Action
Source: Scollon, 2001.

1) Engaging the Nexus of Practice

The first required activity of a nexus analysis is to determine the mediated actions and social actors which are crucial to the production of a social issue and to bringing about social change. The tasks in the first section of the field guide provide heuristic ways of narrowing down to a clear focus on very specific actions as the center-point of a nexus analysis. The scholars emphasize that it is crucial to this process for the researcher to enter into a zone of identification with those key participants. They also note that there is no study from afar in doing nexus analysis. Therefore, the researcher himself or herself must be recognized by other participants as a participant in the nexus of practice under analysis. Taking the MBKBs as the zone of identification, the researcher is scheduled to be in the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community for six months.

The recognition of the nexus of practice and creating a zone of identification can be processed by five main activities:

(1) Establish the social issue under study

(2) Find the crucial social actors

(3) Observe the interaction order

(4) Determine the most significant cycles of discourse

(5) Establish your zone of identification

Through those processes, the social action can be identified and then investigated on the proposition that a social action occurs at the intersection of the historical bodies of the participants, the interaction order which they mutually produce among themselves and the discourses in place which are used by the participants as meditational means in their action.

2) Strategies for Obtaining Answers

In order to obtain the answers by those activities, the authors propose that the researcher could develop her own concept of the interested issues by making a survey of the public discourse on the social issues, by conducting scene surveys, or focus groups.

3) Discourse Survey

R. Scollon and S. Scollon suggest two effective ways in which the researcher can entrust that the research will observe the cycles of discourse which are germane to important issues as well as the crucial points at which the social actions occur. The first is to conduct 'media content surveys' and the second is to cross check the websites of governmental, non-governmental, and cooperate grant-making organizations to see if the issues are currently identified as needing research.

This research in particular, seeks issues which are missing from the stage of knowledge. Therefore the issues are in need of further research. More specifically, the issues concerning the young Laotian girls are in search of more multi-facets rather than the dominant and definitive master discourse of the 'money seeker' and the 'victims' available in the liminal space of the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community.

4) Scene Survey

Scene surveys, as explained by R. Scollon and S. Scollon, can make the research more significant by locating the people, places, and actions within those places which produce and maintain the flows of discourse. The idea is to find

where the social actions take place, who are the key participants and in what forms of the interaction order, and what discourses are circulating through those scenes.

The scene surveys can be organized around three kinds of questions on the three trajectories in which the social actions occur:

(1) Historical body questions:

Where do the people the researcher has identified as the main participants spend their time? Which ones are important for the issue you are studying? One good way of locating the crucial scenes is simply to follow the focused participants through their daily and weekly cycles of activity.

(2) Interaction order questions:

What is the place of the participants within the interaction orders we observe throughout their days? R. Scollon and S. Scollon noted that social actions arise not only from our own personal histories and values, but are also constrained or enabled by the people we stay with at a particular moment of action. Thus, we need to know not only what are the scenes within which people take action, but also how do they organize themselves for social interaction within those scenes.

(3) Discourses in place questions:

The crucial scenes under investigation can also be found by following the cycles of discourse. As of the questions concerning social actors, the interaction order, and discourses concurrently in endeavors to locate the crucial scenes for the study. As the participant researcher follows a person's daily round of habitual places and scenes, the researcher can ask; what are the interaction orders dominant within those scenes and what discourses are circulating through them? The objective at this stage is necessarily to narrow down to a few scenes in which we can find there is an intersection of the *people* on whom you want to focus, the *interaction order* that is most germane to the undertaken issues, and in which the *discourses* are concerned.

3.5.1.2 Focus Group

After the most crucial scenes are identified then participants and social actions which relate to the specified social issue will be identified. It is suggested to check these selections with the participants in the nexus of practice. The focus group is suggested, as experienced by the authors, the researcher can achieve a more robust analysis if he/she actually step outside this primary group to conduct focus groups

whose participants are demographically like the ones whom the researcher is investigating/working with but not the same ones or even not known to them. These focus groups will mostly confirm recurrence of phenomenon or thinking. This research project follows this suggestion by organizing various session s of focus groups. Mostly the focus groups are organized with the MKGs at different MBKBs.

The nexus analysis guideline expects a well triangulated and carefully comparative study encompasses four types of data (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 1998, Scollon, 1998, 2001). Those of which are obtained in the specific scenes of liminal space of the MBKBs and Khong Chaim community.

1) Members' generalizations: What do MBKBs' participants say they do (normatively)?

2) Neutral (objective) observations: What does a neutral observer of the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community the see? The data can be often at variance with the generalizations made about the group or the self.

3) Individual experience: What does an individual MKG and Khong Chiam residents describe as her/his experience? This can be often characterized as being different from one's own group.

4) Interactions with members: How do participants account for the researcher's analysis? This data will mostly focus on the resolution of contradictions among the first three types of data.

In short, collecting data is based on trying to get all four types of data. The model which the scholars offer to assist checking whether the data is accomplished or not by detecting:

'Everybody says the MKGs should X (members' generalization), but I usually do Y (individual experience).' Then the observer observe that while this person is saying X and Y, she is doing Z (objective observation). The participant observer says, 'But I just notice that you are doing Z (interactions with members).'

The first activity of nexus analysis provides the researcher with the zone of identification which is the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community for this research project. In addition, this task helps to identify the crucial mediated action (or actions) where that social issue is being produced, ratified, or contested. For instance, the

interactions among the MBKBs participants; the MKGs, the MBKB owners, the CUSs, and research assistants are identified.

1) Navigating the Nexus of Practice

As emphasized by the theorists, a nexus of practice is the point at which historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some way as those trajectories emanate from this moment of social action (Scollon, 2001).

The next task, the researcher will map the cycles of the people, places, discourses, objects, and concepts which circulate through what Scollon calls 'micro-semiotic ecosystem.' This procedure is to seek for anticipations and emanations, links and transformations, their inherent timescales, and to place a circumference of relevance around the nexus of practice.

(1) Person- Historical Body

In terms of mapping people, nexus analysis seeks to understand how the action-practice and the meditational means under study come into the historical body of each participant, not a full life history of a person per se. In mapping the historical body of the key participants, it is noted that there are also the 'hidden participants' who partially enable the social action/interaction as well. The focus of mapping the people is on aspects of the historical body which are relevant to the action under investigation.

In the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community, the guiding question is asked: How the MBKB participants come to be placed in at this moment and in this way to enable or carry out the MBKB and Khong Chiam action/interaction?

The focus of mapping the historical body is organized around how the habitual or innovative is the action-practice for a given MKG? What are other practices linked to for this MKG? How much is this action keyed to the uniqueness of this MKG. What is emotional valence or the emotional impact on the participant of this action? What discourses are transformed or internalized in this action? What individual's history and conditioning get inculcated to be the 'habitus' or 'cognate with habits' (Bourdieu, 1990)?

As Scollon considers that the habitus is a complex network of social practices, or 'an individual's accumulated experience of social action (Scollon, 2001, p. 6). This dissertation attempts to investigate identity construction issues. This procedure will enable the researcher to understand the key participants by ways in which they accumulate their lifetime experience and bring this in as one trajectory of the nexus of practice, in the meantime it is inter-subjectively contributed to construction of various identities based up on conditions of places and discourses that have come to the intersection of the MBKB nexus of practice.

(2) Discourse in Place

Scollon notes that there are very few places in the world where everything in that place serves a single purpose and where there is nothing extraneous. Nexus analysis concerns the places where actions occur so that an important question to ask is what aspects of this place are central or most important to the action under observation and what aspects are least important. On the grounds that a place is constituted in relation to the discourses present in that place, we need to explore the discourse in place by asking some question such as what kinds of overt discourse are present. Discourse in place, the MBKB's and the Khong Chiam community in this study that is needed to be observed include:

a) the interaction order - we also observe talk, writing, gesturing, of image making of the people who are there as singles, as conversational pairs, as customer and service staff, and all of the other combinations by ways that people organize their social gatherings.

b) Signs - images, texts, music, songs, clothing, and other objects and often background music.

c) Place discourses - the constituted built structures, furniture and decorative objects, room divisions, service corners, receptionist area, etc.

2) Changing the Nexus of Practice

It is suggested that in the final phase nexus analysis is to analyze change in the nexus of practice through re-engagement. This is suggested to be conducted by direct actions which are motivated by the nexus analysis. If not direct, this can be done by engaging in the negotiations with that nexus of practice,

bringing the result and understanding back to the 'semiotic eco system,' in this case the Khong Chiam community and the MBKBs.

By following the latter suggestion, the research findings and discussion will be brought back in Khong Chiam stakeholders such as the local hospital, the government authorities such as police officers, and the non-government organizations whose work involves the MKGs. Thus sharing the research results with the Khong Chiam hospital and the non-government organization are targeted to be completed in order to assure that the participant-analyst in this nexus of practice will partially transform discourses into actions and actions into new discourses and practices.

Table 3.1 The Time Line of the Research Project

TIMELINE	NEXUS ANALYSIS ACTIVITY	FILED ACTIVITIES
Engaging the Nexus of Practice		
JUL 2014	Scenes Survey	- Field surveys in bordering districts of Khemarat, Naataan, and Khong Chiam - Meeting with Share Foundation
AUG 2014	Discourses Survey Focus group	- Meeting with the MBKB's owners in Khemarat - Focus group with the MKGs and MBKB's owners in Khemmarat
SEP 2014	Scenes Survey	- Field surveys at Chong Mek and Khong Chiam
OCT 2014	Discourse Survey	- Visiting the MBKB's owners and the MKGs in Khong Chiam as customers - Contact the field coordinators - Meeting with the MBKB's owners and the MKGs in Khong Chiam

Table 3.1 (Continued)

TIMELINE	NEXUS ANALYSIS ACTIVITY	FILED ACTIVITIES
Navigating the Nexus of Practice		
NOV 2014	Collect data concerning:	- Neutral observation
DEC 2014	- persons-historical body	- Participant observation
JAN 2015	- the social arrangement of	- Non structured interviews
FEB 2015	the encounter- the	- Semi- structured interviews
MAR 2015	interaction order	- Focus group with the MKGs at a
APR 2015	- discourse in place – overt	small MBKB
	discourses and discourses	
	which internalized as	
	practice	
Changing the Nexus of Practice		
MAY 2015-	Transforming discourses	Share and discuss the research findings
DEC 2017	into actions and action into	with the stakeholders 1) Khong Chiam
	a new discourses	hospital's staff 2) Share Foundation
		staff

3.5.2 Data Analysis

As pointed out by Rampton (2008, p. 1), in research on identity it is imperative that it provides a window on social change. Different projects of identity investigation can answer questions about what are emerging identities based on familiar social class hierarchies. It can explore whether traditional political and community commitments are being replaced by a more volatile and dynamic 'identity politics'.

The study of identity investigates how different images and narratives 'grab hold' of individuals. It explains why people act from one basis rather than another and why they invest in some affiliations and alliances rather than others. Research on identity addresses some of the most troubling phenomena of our times: communal

violence, xenophobia and exclusion and discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and religion" (Open.ac.uk as cited in Rampton, 2008).

This dissertation analyzes the ethnographic data as committed to discover more emerging identities which are co-constructed within which the social practices, social actions, or social interactions occur and recur. On top of deliberating what are identities virtually realized through the participants' real time encounters, the analysis also attempts to answer how various identities are constructed, negotiated, and represented through their mundane life activities, of course within the liminal space of the MBKBs and Khong Chiam community.

As stated earlier that the identity problem existing in Khong Chiam, specifically in the MBKBs is the public discourses of the MKGs are confined to only the 'money seeker' and the 'victim'. Taking nexus analysis as the analytical tool, the analysis may be able to also discern what Foucault calls 'the immediate struggles' preoccupying people, overlooking the fact that before drawing on established categories to critique an unpleasant episodes as, for example, racist, sexist or ageist, "people [often] criticise instance of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the 'chief enemy' but for the immediate enemy" (Foucault, 1982, pp. 211-212).

This dissertation draws on major sets of analytical resources. This applies nexus analysis as the main analytical framework as well as some key concepts contributed by Goffman (1969) and some analytical tools available in sociocultural linguistic approaches proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Also draw the analysis upon liminality concept promoted by Turner (1969, 1974) and bodily capital as proposed by Wacquant (1992, 2004). Those of which will shed light on identities which emerged via the linguistic and meta-linguistic realization as detectable in their mundane social encounters. If we take Foucault's view on power struggle, the triangulation of Scollon's nexus analysis, Goffman's concepts on social encounters, and Bucholtz and Hall's sociocultural linguistic approaches it will help in answering the research question of what the emerged identities of the key participants are and how those constructed identities are negotiated and selected to be presented at given social encounter. Whether liminal identities are allowed to be made up and how liminal space of the MBKB interaction confines ways in which the social actors work

on their alternative identities? Taking discourse in place as a field where meaningful construction of identities occur, how discursive practice of othering play a key role on 'identity work' of the MKGs as the key participants. Through which processes, linguistic units and actions, power relation and influential ideologies can be traced.

The diagram below provides the ethnographic data treatment for this research on identity. Now we see that the liminal space of the MBKBs located in the liminal space of the Khong Chiam town is the zone of identification by which the researcher engages, navigate, and change the nexus of practice. By taking the nexus analysis to investigate the construction of the MKGs' identities, we shall see how the historical body, interaction order, and discourse in place correspondingly emit the participants' identities, signaling the MKGs' struggle in the asymmetric power relations where powerful ideologies are also interwoven.

A diagram on the next page shows that the analytical framework is designed in order to investigate identity construction of the participants by investigating the social actions and ideologies. The analyses are processed by triangulating nexus analysis by Scollon (2001); R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2004). Each trajectory is analyzed in detail by combine some useful concepts; the historical body is investigate upon 'bodily capital' by Wacquant (2004), the interaction order is analyzed with 'situated activity system' (SAS) by Goffman (1961), and for the discourse in place section the analyses are conduct by a) discursive practice of othering as suggested by Jaworski and Coupland (2005) and b) discursive othering through the use of pronouns proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Then each trajectory of the nexus of practice is traced so that powerful ideologies that back up each trajectory can be unveiled. Base on the triangulation of these analytical tools, the study aims to answer the questions of 1) What are contentious identities constructed within the MBKB interactions? 2) How the MKG's contentious identities are discursively constructed, negotiated, and represent in the liminal space of the MBKBs?

Nexus Analysis of Social Actions

Historical Body

Bodily Capital

Identities

Ideologies

Interaction Order

Situated Activity System

Identities

Ideologies

Discourse in place

Discursive Practice of Othering

Identities

Ideologies

Discursive Practice of Othering through Pronouns

Identities

Ideologies

Critical Discourse Analysis of Ideologies

Figure 3.2 Analytical Frameworks

Observation is generally the best method for studying natural behavior and it is customary to conducting ethnography. Its strength is in the richness of the description. Its weakness is its dependence upon the experience of the participant observer. Although the observation is contributive to ethnography, participant observation has a different set of strengths and limitations. Reliability is a major problem. It is rare to have independent observations of the same events. The method is subject to the biases of the observer. That can be counteracted by using multiple methods to gather data. For example, interviews can corroborate information gained through observation, trace measures, or other sources of data. Another way to gain reliability is called 'interobserver reliability' by which more than two observers cross check on an issue and try to find agreement on the detail of issue.

Individual field notes may not reliable. They lack independent confirmation. Checks on the observer's accounts may be available through other methods or from the work of other researchers. Use of additional observers will increase reliability. Because of their detail, the observations of a participant observer may be more valid than those done in a more systematic but less in-depth way. Validity can be increased by checking with other available data, for example, if the observers claim the group being studied does not engage in any illegal behaviors, yet many of the group members have been arrested, there would be reason to question the validity of the observation.

In order to increase reliability and validity, this research project utilizes both solutions to resolve the problems by using multiple methods to gather data, for example scenes survey, discourse surveys, neutral observation, participant observation, and focus group. In addition to multiple methods, the research has research assistants so that the interobserver reliability is practiced.

This chapter provides the ethnography research design which draws on nexus analysis, Goffman's concepts, and detailed analysis of socio linguistic approaches in analyzing the MBKB and Khong Chiam social encounters. This section details the setting, participants, procedures, analytical tools, and reliability and validity resolutions, and ethical concerns. The next section will then present the result of ethnographic data analysis by elaborating the historical body, interaction order, and discourse in place respectively.

3.6 Reliability and Validity
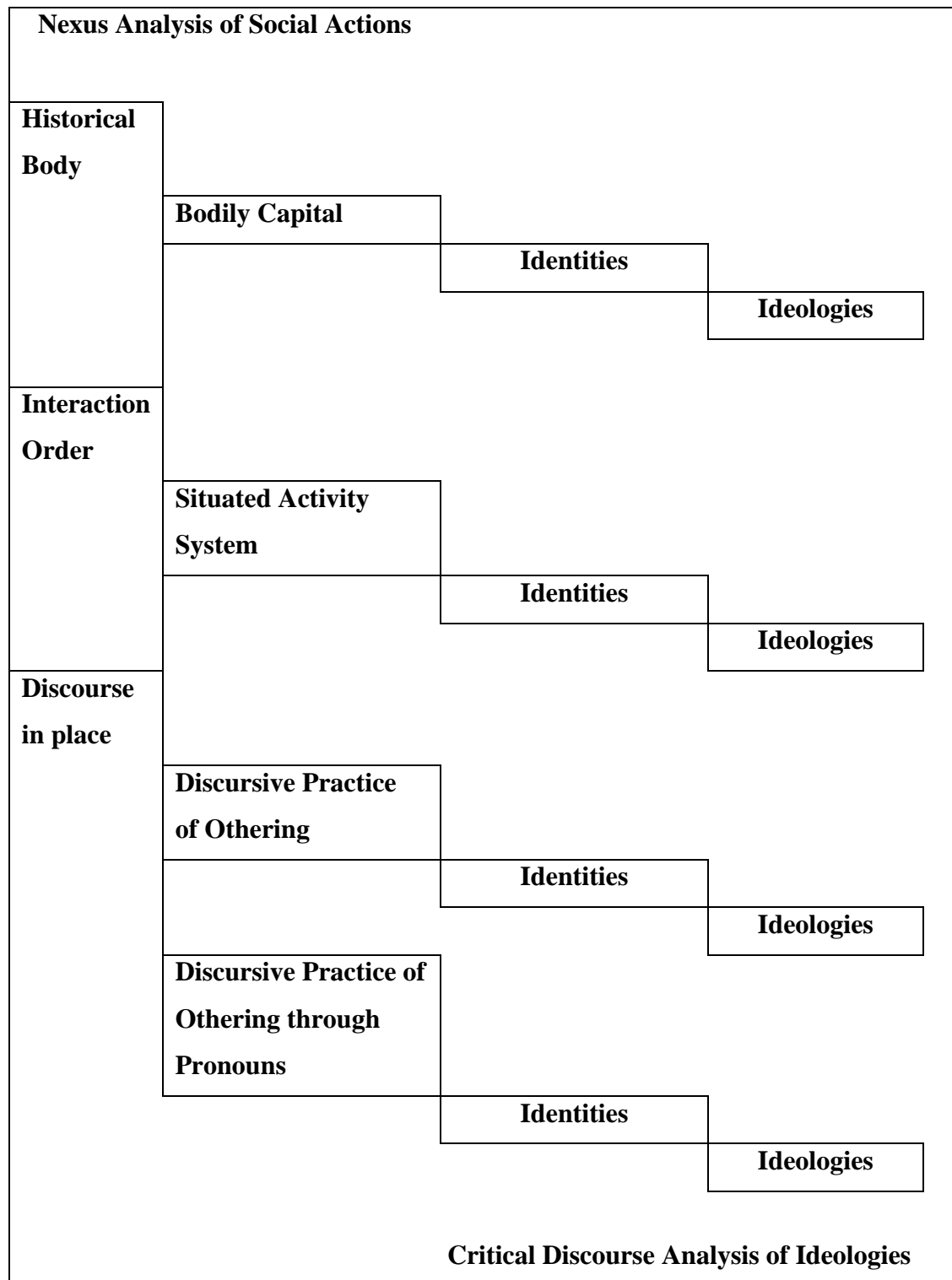
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ethnographic data analysis by elaborating the historical body, interaction order, and discourse in place respectively.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In accessing the hard-to-access group, the researcher will take into account the ethical consideration on research on humans. The data collection is conducted on the basis of permissions and mutual agreements among the researcher and the participants. This is to assure that the data collection and analysis will not violate their security and privacy. Those aspects include physical, emotional, social, legal, and human right concerns. There are two types of permissions and two kinds of agreement allowed on the site.

3.7.1 Permission to join the Community Programs in Khong Chiam Hospital

The researcher processes to access the MBKBs participants through the connection of the Khong Chiam hospital. Thus, the researcher requests permission to join the hospital healthcare staff who run the community healthcare program. For example, the community program has a medical service program for the 'special service staff working for entertainment business and patient's home visiting program. In November 2014, the Graduate School of Language and Communication, on behalf of the researcher, issued the permission letter to Khong Chiam Hospital and the hospital accepted the researcher to join the staff team as well as assigned three coordinators to assist with collecting data in Khong Chiam community in general and in the MBKBs in particular.

3.7.2 Permission to Collect Data at the Mekong Border Karaoke Bars

Requesting to collect data at the MBKBs is processed in verbal forms. In order to be allowed in the MBKBs as the participant observers, the research and the research assistants are introduced to each MBKB's owner under witnesses of the supervising police officer and the healthcare staff team from Khong Chiam hospital. There were several MBKBs where the owners allowed the researcher and the team to

be a cook assistant and regular customers. The owners are informed about the research project, objectives, needed practices, and the assistants who will assist in collecting data. Then the police supervisor and the healthcare staff guaranteed that the research project will not be harmful in any terms to the business, the MBKB owners, and the MKGs.

3.7.3 Agreement on Conditioned Photography and Recording

A major concern on business, privacy, and personal security is the participants are being recorded, published, or socially shared on social media. The MBKBs informed the research team must not take photographs/videos in the prohibited areas such as inside the VIP rooms, or at the singing lounge where other customers could captured in the pictures/ videos. Each MBKB defines different prohibited areas. Some MBKBs do not allow taking photographs of the MKGs while most of the MBKBs leave the permission decision to MKGs. The researcher and the assistants are informed to be strict with etiquettes that photographs and any videos must be verbally permitted by the MKGs before shooting. Any pictures already taken, in case the MKGs do not agree to be recorded the researcher and assistants must deleted it on the site. Also, to be published photographs must be face-covered versions.

3.7.4 Agreement on Confidentiality in Writing

All names and any potentially identifying information have been changed to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in this study. The participants are given the option of choosing their own pseudonym; those MKGs who do not choose their own myriad name are assigned one. Confidentiality of using real names or myriad names of the coordinators and research assistants depends on their permission. Thus the participants are protected from any harmful conditions which they concern.

Thus far this chapter has explained methodological aspect of this social research. The triangulation of research methodologies; nexus analysis of social actions and critical discourse analysis, are mapped out as well as the research design, validity and research ethics are concerned. The next Chapter will examine the first trajectory of the nexus of practice, the historical body of the key participants within the MBKBs interactional settings.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL BODY

This section will elaborate on the first trajectory which happens at the intersection of the social practice. Scollon terms this trajectory of 'the historical body' as 'an individual's accumulated experience of social actions (Scollon, 2001, p. 6). This derives from Bourdieu's term *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu defines habitus as "A structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). Habitus is the cognitive or mental system of structures which are embedded within an individual and/or a collective consciousness which are the internal representations of external structures. Habitus encompasses our thoughts, tastes, beliefs, interests and our understanding of the world around us and is created through primary socialisation into the world through family, culture and the milieu of education. According to Bourdieu habitus has the potential to influence our actions and to construct our social world as well as being influenced by the external (Hawthorn, 2017).

Bourdieu gives importance to the ability to reflect upon someone's habitus as it is indispensable to social theoretical discourse and research on the supposition that all fields are interlinked to 'other.' As the notion is central to understanding field theory, Bourdieu specifies four types of capital. A definition of capital is collection of goods and skills, of knowledge and acknowledgments, belonging to an individual or a group that he or she can mobilize to develop influence, gain power, or bargain other elements of this collection (Medvetz & Sallez, 2018). Different types of capital are used by individuals within the relative field as a tool for gaining dominance and power. The capital within the field is divided into: 'social capital' including circles of friends, groups, memberships and social networks, 'cultural capital' which is a person's knowledge, experience and connections, 'economic capital' as seen through economic assets held, 'symbolic capital' as intangible assets such as honour, prestige

relevant to a person Bourdieu, 1990; Hawthorn, 2017). In addition to this, fame and positive recognition are counted.

In the same vein with Bourdieu, Scollon indicates that when people participate in social interaction, they bring their past experiences, thoughts, beliefs, interests, and goals with them. Scollon's term 'historical body' is overlapping with Bourdieu's 'habitus' and 'capital'. This is due to the fact that historical body explains individuals' past experience which compiled over the course of one's life time. It is to note here that the historical body which nexus analysis will map out would also involve habitus concept either in terms of social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital of the MKGs in the social arena of MBKBs.

Another concept that is useful to facilitate mapping the MKGs' historical body out is "bodily capital," coined by Bourdieu (1978). The notion have been developed and applied by scholars over several decades. This concept rationalizes ways in which people invest with various costs such as time, money, and energy into their bodies, and what they expect to gain in return. In a modern world, this concept is useful and flexible for elucidating a wide range of social behaviors in mundane life. Hawthorn exemplifies; cosmetic, surgeries, makeovers, exercise, dieting, clothing choices, hairstyle, tattoos, and piercings. These efforts are recognized as capital when they are used in spaces where such appearances are valued. This social space where the accumulated bodily capital can work out is what Bourdieu terms a "field" (Hawthorn, 2017). R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2004) call this type of social space where intersections at which three trajectories come intersect, by his theoretical term, 'nexus of practice'. Historical body or habitus in Bourdieu's term provide the participants' accumulated experiences, appearances, knowledge, expectations, and interests into the social practice where all those historical body can gain any available benefits in return.

Thus far we have mentioned 'body focuses' with either Bourdieu's term 'habitus,' Scollon's term 'historical' or Wacquant's term 'bodily capital.' There are studies have investigated this focus in a modern world context. Some scholars focus on middle class individuals while some others focus on minority individual. Barber (2008) studies middle-class men who frequent salons, rather than barber shops. The author gives prominence to how the achieving a specific look benefits them in the

professional world. Black (2004) conducts research on middle-class women's and focuses on how preference for "appropriateness" in the participants' appearance underscores how work, gender, age, and class intersect through the body.

Some other works pay attention to minority groups such as obese women, gay men, and boxers as members of blue collar class. Gruys (2012) study of a plus-size clothing store illustrates the emotional and bodily techniques used by both employees and customers who encounter discrimination based on their oversize body. Toothman (2016) analyzes embodied strategies used by women to avoid fatness-related prejudice. On top of gender, race, and age, this work highlights how people are held accountable for their bodies in the workplace, frequently influencing decisions around hiring and promotion.

Those two studies elucidate body shape, size, and weight as aspects of inequality meanwhile other works inversely point out that celebrative aspects of human body. For instance, Hennen (2005) investigates gay men involved in "bear" culture where being sizable—either muscular or fat—bodies are celebrated, rather than de-valued within the wider gay community. In the same trend, Monk (2014) research on skin tone stratification and then combine perspectives on race, social class, and the body to recognize each as important, albeit inter-locking, mechanisms of disadvantage in social life.

Diphoorn (2015) analyze roles of bodily capital in the daily policing practices of armed response officers, a specific type of private security officers, in Durban, South Africa. This work argues that the masculinized bodily capital of armed response officers is a key source of their sovereign power. That means: it plays a crucial role in how they acquire and exert authority. Moreover, an analysis of bodily capital should not solely analyze the actual flesh of the body, but must include particular equipment; examples from this analysis include bulletproof vests and firearms that are presumably accounted as a part of the body.

Thus it seems to come back to the focal point which Bourdieu has pointed out that the habitus become valuable at the social space that allow some characteristics to be recognized. In Scollon term, discourse becomes fully meaningful when the discourse is located at its place (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2004). This implies that there must be some sets of processes that facilitate construction of individuals'

historical body or habitus. Thus, different identities can be produced through some strategies. The strategic processes of making the historical body and identities must be underlined by some influential ideologies. Therefore, the produced historical body or habitus can play a key role in shaping valuable bodies in a given nexus of practice. The work of Wacquant on professional boxers highlights how the boxers use their body as and *form of capital* (italicized in original) (Wacquant, 1995, p. 1). His analysis focuses on bodily capital and bodily labor among professional boxers, tracing how practitioners of a particular bodily craft (boxing), most of whom are embedded in a social setting that puts a high premium on physical force and prowess which they seriously conceive of, care for, and rationalize.

Other scholars examine human body as a resource that can be cultivated and converted into profit in fashion modeling (Mears, 2011), sex work (Bernstein, 2007), and bodybuilding (Bridges, 2009). Bridges extends the bodily capital concept to focus specifically on how bodybuilders "gender" capital, or accrue value through the embodied performance of gender. Houng (2015) investigates Vietnam's contemporary sex industry and triangulates existing frameworks of global sex work by analyzing a sex industry in Ho Chi Minh City's (HCMC's) developing economy where not all women are poor or exploited, on the other sides white men do not always command the highest paying sector on sex work. The author contributes a systematic classed analysis of both sides of client—worker relationships in three racially and economically diverse sectors of HCMC's global sex industry. These focuses of the analysis consist of a low-end sector that caters to poor local Vietnamese men, a mid-tier sector that caters to white backpackers, and a high-end sector that caters to overseas Vietnamese (Viet Kieu) men. This analysis details how sex workers and clients draw on different economic, cultural, and bodily resources to get involved in different sectors of HCMC's stratified sex industry. At last the author argues that sex work is an intimate relationship best illustrated by the complex intermingling of money and intimacy. The sex work encounters in the low-end sector involved a direct exchange of money for sex. On the other hand, sex workers and clients in the mid-tier and high-end sectors exchange money and sex at the same time they draw in relationship and intimacy to the exchange.

These studies draw from distinct empirical sites—the boxing gym, the modeling industry, the sex worker's online profile—and are centered on different qualities of the body, including height, beauty, or erotic skills. Yet they all share an interest in understanding how those qualities become resources that can be manipulated to gain other benefits. As basic as to pursue their interactional goals, gain access to economic power, enhance social capital, up-lift their symbolic power, or other things else.

We now turn to the focus of this research. The MKGs body is not a one way interpretation as unequal, celebrative, but rather complex, ambiguous, and contingent according to particularity of the MBKB settings where they handle different customers, meet them at different places, and perform various roles such as a service girl, a sex worker, and an ordinary girl. Thus far, making up the Mekong border karaoke bar girl bodies are interesting by ways that they are heavily influenced by liminality concept. They are in a 'between' space of social fields where alternative identities can be made up on the bodies as well as intertwine with ideologies that underline certain processes of building up the karaoke body, at the same time, place value to it. Thus the invested bodily capital they try to produce during throughout the course of living in the MBKB life would fit well in this specific social field.

To obtain what are processes of constructing historical body of the MKGs who spend most of their time within the MBKB Khong Chaim setting, the following section will deliberate what are mediated tools involved in the meaningful processes that they manage to sculpture their 'Mekong karaoke-fit-body.' The explanation will be divided into two main sections, the pre-Mekong karaoke period which refers to when the young Laotian girls newly arrive at a work place and the present period of the Mekong body on process. By not ignoring influences ideologies that are encoded within the MKGs' bodies and awareness on liminality of the Mekong karaoke as a social space, this section will later blend how the processes of making the Mekong karaoke girls' historical bodies, incorporated meditational means and discourses, formulate contentious identities and what ideologies lie beneath their structured bodies.

4.1 Pre-MKG Historical Body

In the Mekong border karaoke bars (MBKBs), face to face encounters are feasible when the participants all bring with them the habitus or historical body. As observed, majority of Laotian migrants are relatively young. Their ages are between 14 to 23 years old. Some of them attain grade six while most of them dropped out of primary schools before the sixth grade. Most of them had / have lovers or husbands before coming to work in Khong Chiam.

When they arrive in Khong Chiam, their young female bodies are already occupied by their economic capital that include their working skills, serving mind developed, and responsibilities towards bosses and colleagues as well as work ethics. They obviously have cultural capital like courtship knowledge, dating and marriage experiences, and more importantly linguistic capability. In terms of social capital, they are drawn into Khong Chiam by their social connections; friends, relatives, and former Mekong karaoke bar girls, or even Thai bar girl agencies.

There is a question that asks: Do they also have symbolic capital? Their working space in the Mekong karaoke bars may not allow them to have social prestige, honor, or positive recognition to Khong Chiam society as a whole, Nevertheless, we have to reckon Bourdieu's concept on how habitus is valued at a given 'field' and Scollon's concept of discourse acquires its full meaning when it properly locate in its place. Thus the MBKBs do provide some values to the karaoke girls' historical body to be fit in. This includes their non-serious or relaxing, entertaining characteristics, their joyfulness, their negotiability, and so on. The Mekong karaoke bodies are then appropriate and being valued by the MBKBs' key participants, especially their male customers.

Those examples of the historical bodies are not simple attributes that the Laotian immigrants may have but the focal point for deliberating these kinds will also shed light on how do they invest in their bodies, in other words their bodily capital meanwhile formulate particular identities upon some key ideologies resigning within the social structure where they live their mundane life.

4.1.1 Pre-MKG Body Networking

The MKG bodies networking is central to our starting point where we start to map out their historical bodies. As of this set of our ethnographic data can tell, none of the MKGs come to the MBKBs by themselves. A hundred percent of them come after being convinced by someone within the MBKB circle. This means that, in the pre- Mekong karaoke period, they are already introduced to a 'karaoke serving job' available in Khong Chiam. Although most of them do not have a full image of working as a karaoke serving girl, especially the sex work attached to the service, they do have a connector who brings them into the MBKBs. (Worathanik Photijak & Savitri Gadavanij, 2018)

As mentioned above, the main connection which a new comer normally has is her 'friend (s).' This connection, as her social capital, is a link between ordinary Laotian girls and the MBKB business in Khong Chiam. This kind of link effectively functions as fundamental resource which draws in the karaoke bodies from Lao P.D.R. into the MBKBs in Khong Chiam. Most of the time, their friend may ask other friends to come work at the same MBKBs. Commonly, this friend also play a key role in building new comer bodies to fit the MBKBs' customers' demand.

4.1.2 Pre-MKG Work Skills

All most all MKGs grow up in Laotian communities. The girls develop the 'take care' /bəə̀ŋ yɜɜŋ/ or 'service' skills based on their family and social life throughout the course of their life time in Laos. To exemplify, some girls raise their siblings, help their parents to prepare food for the family. The girls are expected to gather food, cook and of course serve food in their family. Most girls are expected to look after their family members while there are sick. After years, their bodies stock up with 'caring and serving mind'. There are social or cultural events in their communities, they are familiar with providing and serving to others. One girl we have interviewed told us "I can serve the whole village (at our village festival)". When they enter the dating relationship in their natal communities, serving food and drink is a part of dating culture which the girls are expected to provide good food and serve to their dating partner, most of Lao sub-cultures, at the girls' house.

The service skills, especially for food and drink, are experiences that the MKGs mostly bring with them. Some karaoke shops may give some training as they wants to also deliver good food, selective drinks and service standards. For example, always serve ice in provided containers, do not serve ice with bare hands, or always stir the drink with a mixing stick. The service skills the girls have partially contribute to quick and successful training. To make sure they will not upset the male MKCs, they know by their former experience that they need to ask single MKCs whether he wants ice in his beer mug or not. The girls do know how to show consideration concerning their MKCs' food, drink, conversational and service satisfaction. This set of skill allows the MKGs to perform their basic karaoke tasks, and this will pave the way to develop friendly social intercourse and possible sexual service negotiation, or even intimate relationship with their MKCs.

4.1.3 Pre-MKG Cultural Intelligence

Living in Laos and consuming Thai mass media, they effectively master both Standard Thai and Lao language skills. When they are together with their peers and the MK owners, they master Lao language in their daily life which in turn the use of Lao language subtly creates senses of social solidarity, cultural unification, and friendship within their MKGs group. When they are with their, their conversations suggest that the MKGs wisely make use of the genuine accents and varying tonal features of Lao language spoken in Lao P.D.R.

　　1)　Linguistic Skills as Cultural Capital

This is to remark that the slight differences of Lao language allows the Isan MKCs to understand their messages well meanwhile enjoy linguistic diversity once they take this action as linguistic exotics. Some MKCs even take this linguistic variety as their nostalgic observes. That means they do not hear some words for a long time. Once they hear them again, they are reminded to be people in Lao/Isan culture. They find this entertaining and happy to hear some unused words spoken by the MKGs from Laos.

They code switch between Lao language and Standard Thai language. When performing a karaoke staff's roles, they may use Thai language in order to show the standard service of the work place. Later in the singing session, after rapport

is established between them and the MKCs, they tend to code switch to their natal linguistic forms. This is the period when their language skills effectively facilitate their courtship knowledge and skills utilized with their MKCs.

2) Courtship Knowledge and Skills

The cultural courtship knowledge and skills fundamentally reside in their 'historical bodies.' Being Laotian, they by all means learn Lao courtship practices. Moreover, at their age of 14 to 20 years old, they already experience flirty chatting, serious courtship conversation, and majority of them have gone through traditional marriage. Therefore, they are not inexperienced in term of 'dating.' In fact, they know how to respond to male MKCs as they know the MKCs do not come for simple commercial sexual services. Indeed, they come for complex karaoke activities including chatting, relaxing, unserious dating, and sexual service at the end. As this fact is well-informed, the MKGs have their primordial knowledge to deal with the MKCs' expectations, facilitate the MKCs' interactional goals, and skillfully handle the flirty chats, sexual oriented communication, and probably adult dirty jokes or nasty conversations.

3) Expectations

Coming to the MBKBs, the MKGs' common goal is making money. All of them are aware of the fact that the income mainly comes from offering sexual service to their MKCs. However, some MKGs also have other extra expectations on top of earning- dating with men, getting married with Isan men, exploring life outside Laos, looking for other job opportunities in Thailand.

Our interviews with MKGs living in a small MBKB reveal that most MKGs have dependents in Laos. Most of them are required to support their family as to send remittance for younger sibling education, take care of medical cost of their parents, and more importantly to raise their own children. My conversations with Dao are good example that the MKGs have very strong hope toward making as much money they can. Dao's story emphasizes that the MKGs bring in their body, time, and any skills to the MBKBs in order to pursue their 'better life' dream.

R   /Daaw khɯɯ dây maa hét wiâk yuù thay?/

Why do you end up working in Thailand?

D   /Thaà khɔɔy bɔɔ̀ maa phǎy sɨ̀ haǎ ŋən lɨáŋ luûk? Phɔɔ̀ mɛɛ̀ hét naa phə̀n kà sáy ŋən hét. Yaam pay haǎ mɔɔ̌ kà bɔɔ̀ phɔɔ khaâ yaa. Kà mɛ̀n khɔɔy haǎ ŋən sɔ̀ŋ pay hây/

If I don't come, who's gonna feed my kids. My father and mother farm, but they also spend money on farming. Sometimes they don't have enough money for going to see doctors or buy medicine. It is me who work and send money to them.

R   /Chaâw khɔɔ̌ŋ dây sây ŋən thiî haǎ dây nɛɛ̀ bɔɔ̀? Sɨ́ɨ yǎŋ hây châw khɔɔ̌ŋ nɛɛ̀?/

Do you spend money on your own sake? What do you buy for yourself?

D   /Bɔɔ̀ dây kɨn dây thìaw khɨɨ khǎw waà dɔɔ̀k. Sɨ́ɨ tɛɛ̀ bàt təəm ŋən thoo pay haǎ luûk phuû man wâw dây lɛɛ̂w ka phɛɛŋ laǎy/

I don't spend money for having fun, only buy prepaid cards for calling my kids who can speak. This is highly expensive.

(Dao has three children. The first two grow up and converse with her on the phone, the last baby is still in a bubbling stage.)

From this expectation, Dao intensively contributes to performing a breadwinner's role for her family back in Laos. Talking to the researcher as well as a research assistant who take a MKC role, Dao discloses the same expectation for being able to afford the family's economic needs.

Another example is taken from my research assistant. Aom, a young man from a university, reports to me that a MKG who serves in his singing session shares with him that her professional goal is to be able to set up a brand name hand bags shop in Pakse. In details, Aom does share with her how to do business analysis and look for possible business in Laos, for example selling T-shirts, trading fabrics, importing Thai goods, and exporting Lao tea and coffee. From their conversations, we learn that this MKG not only focuses on making money but she has ambitious goal of saving and capitalizing her own business. Reflections on her business vision might not seem feasible as seen by Aom, however the point here is that saving for business investment is another MKG's expectation which some of them contribute to the

MKC-MKG interactions. This expectation then supports claims for building the identity of a future entrepreneur.

Another MKG who talks to our assistant tells that she wants to work for a place that allows her to have proper holidays and live separately from the employer's house.

This girl has not much economic pressure, comparing to Dao and other MKGs. Her parents work for a governmental office in Laos so that she is not expected to be a bread winner for her family. Before she comes to Khong Chiam, she used to work for a gold seller in Bangkok. There she lived with the employer's family and she mentions that 'It is hard to go out and do want I want.'

The reason she comes to work at the MBKB in Khong Chiam is for 'exploring the world outside Laos.' In Laos she got married to a boy of the same age, but their marriage does not last long. After her divorce, the parents ask if she wants to work or remarry to another boy from another village. She does not feel like to get married again, within this year, so she sets her goal to go out for work. She works in a seed factory in Laos then finds out that there is a chance to come to Thailand, she then follows her acquaintance to Khong Chiam. She first tells that at first she does not know what to do exactly in the MBKB, but people around her tells that it is not hurt or embarrassing to serve and offer sex service here because everyone does it. This MKG sets the goal for making money coupling with getting chances to meet people, men, and lives with peers instead of a spouse.

Some MKGs set a clear goal for getting a Thai husband and then settle down here in Thailand. Some successful cases convince that former MKGs could finally get rid of the sex service in the MBKBs by getting married to Isan men. They believe that being a wife to a Thai citizen is a better chance than going back to Laos and marry a boy in their villages. Some Thai-Laos couples settle down in villages along the Mekong River. Some husbands are fishermen, some are traders in the nearby towns, and some are farmers. Some couples set up noodle shops or local restaurants.

There is a case that a mixed couple, a Thai husband and Laotian wife, sets up a MBKB in another district. Although they are aware to be lured by Thai men, some of them are hopeful about being able to get married to Isan men and try to settle down in Thailand. Thus this group of MKGs contributes some linguistic elements that indicate

they not just MBKB sex workers, but they are normal women seeking to establish a good family in Thailand. Some girls express their thoughts that "We know it is hard for Thai men to take us seriously, but who knows? One day comes my luck. A good MKC may date me seriously."

As observed, our research assistants report that the MKGs who have this type of expectation normally expose themselves as /phuû sɑ̌w/ (young female) looking for the right man. What they share with the MKCs is fundamentally about work, love, preference, the future, especially stop the roles of the MKG. One assistant tells us in our knowledge sharing session that his MKG 'never refers to herself as the serving staff or sex worker but keep saying a young girl like her like a good man (like you) to date her seriously. As often says "I don't want you to be my MKCs, but my man." Occasionally she says "I am a normal woman who wants a special man, not many men per night like in the MBKB."

The assistant also tells the research team that this girl really shows him that she strongly wants to leave the MBKB. Her former marriage life was not successful in Laos and she has one child. She technically communicate with her MKCs that she is a normal woman seeking for a serious man, love, better family, and finally terminate the MBKB sex work. Therefore her expectation or life goal is intensively contributes to her discourses. In addition to the sex worker's role, she invests more in affiliation with another socially acceptable identity of a 'ordinary woman.'

Some MKGs take the MBKB work as a way to escape from occupational failures they had in Laos. This group of MKGs expects first to earn so they could recovering the situation in their life. Second, but more importantly, they also want to get away from social pressure which emphasizes their failures. The second expectation is expressed through Khait's conversations which she explains to the research team that she owned a restaurant when she was in Laos. One day the business had gone bankrupted. She tried to open a grocery shop in her village, but the demand was not high enough to sustain the business so that she quickly lost it. Those double occupational failures are strong incentives for her to leave the village. One hope is to recover the economic status and endeavor to recapitalize the business and another expectation is to get rid of social pressure she had in Laos.

It is important to note as well that their expectations are amendable. Those goals and expectations are not always stable. One may come for making money, but meeting men almost every night make them later want lovers. Some may come to explore the world outside Laos, but later they like Thailand better than living in Laos, they then set another goal for having dates with either their MKCs or local boys in the nearby villages. Some may come just to get away from failures back in Laos, but later set the goal for making better life and occupational opportunity.

Living with their peers and meeting with the MKCs have great influences on how they shift their goals. For example, Nim firstly comes to earn money and send remittance to her family. Many friends advocate her to date a MKC, she denies dating him in the first place but his revisiting to her at the MBKB makes her change her mind so she later dates him. It is not a proper dating, however she accepts the conditions that he is married and has children. Although she knows there will be no family future with him, she tells us that she is happier than before as to serve and offer sex to the MKCs. She shares with us that 'it is a good feeling for having someone special, though I know it is not possible to get married with him.

In contrast, some MKGs who date their MKCs or the local boys may later find that they are not happy with their relationship. They then shift their goal from having a special man or attachment to focus on making income and emotional detachment from those men. Therefore their expectations change over time. Some stick with monetary focus, some shift to romance, some MKGs work for fun, and some of them keep may be 2 or 3 goals at the same time. Thus what they contribute to enable the MBKB interactions really depends on what goals they set for their days.

In short, the main goal for which the MKGs work in the MBKBs is to generate income, so that they could afford their living in Khong Chiam, send remittance to their family in Laos, saving for building their future occupation, and recapitalize their lost business. The additional expectations are also significant by which each of them expresses different expectations that fit their life at a time of interactions occur. To explore life, open wider frontier of the young girls' experiences is important to some MKGs. Some may think around being loved and treated special though the specialty may not lead them to marriage. Some of them expect to be able to get rid of economic and social pressure behind and be hopeful to their life for making better occupational

success in the future. With the dynamic of their life goals and expectations, when they talk to people around them either form in-group or out-group category, they reflect their hopes in their MBKB interaction. That way we know different identities can be constructed variously upon their major and minor hopes.

    1) Social Mobility

It is common that people in every society try to improve their social, economic, and cultural status. Regarding vertical mobility, the MKGs get a chance to advocate them in terms of education. Although most of them drop out from schools, their brief education promotes them to be literate. They acquire simple calculation that is needed in their daily life. The advantage of being literate in Lao means they could learn Standard Thai very quickly, spoken language is as effortlessly spoken to their MKCs and Thai officers. I may take Noina as an example to deliberate how her education, Lao literacy in particular, allows her more chances to improve her social mobility.

Noina finished her grade 4, according to the interviews with her, she can read and write in Lao. After she dropped off from the primary school, she tells us that she applies into a seed factory for work as a seed selector. Cantaloupe is a type of fruit mentioned.

Later, Noina heard about coming to work in Thailand, so she can make more money than the in factory. She follows her acquaintance to Bangkok to work for a gold trader. Noina mentions that the income is higher of course and she has no problem with work as she is required to sell gold, take care of some cleaning jobs, her spoken Thai is fluent, but she has a problem with residence by which she needs to live in the employer's house and she is regulated not to go out as much as she wants. Noina returns to Laos again and tries to seek for a suitable job in Thailand and then she finds out about karaoke work in Khong Chiam. She estimates herself to do it well and expect good income. After living in Bangkok, she is literate in standard Thai so that singing and serving in the karaoke bar would not be difficult. More importantly, she works at night and target to spend daytime to go out and do what she wants. Thus Noina is a successful case which education supports her social mobility as she has more opportunity to change her jobs when they are not satisfied. Also it supports her to work comfortably as a MKG.

Noina reveals a good education attainment, at least to a level that she could change jobs and work places from Laos to Thailand. Dao is the opposite case. Dao dropped out from her primary school very early at grade 2. After that she helped her parents in farming and married a boy in the village. She has three children and then divorced their father. The fact that she dropped out too soon and her life after that barely involves literacy, Dao is illiterate. Thus, Dao has a problem in any jobs that needs literacy. The only choice she has is getting labor oriented jobs. Her MKG peers share with us that she used to work as dish washer in Pakse, but the income does not cover her dependents' cost, especially the last baby as she is not breast feeding. She mainly needs money to buy processed milk for her baby. As Dao tells us;

/Ŋɑɑn khɔ̌ŋ khɔɔ̀y thúk bɔɔ̀n mɑn mɯ̀ày thɨɨ sùt tɛɛ̀ dây ŋən nɔɔ̀y thɨ̂ sùt. Kɔɔ̀n nɨɨ́ hét dây kà bɔɔ̀ phɔɔ khɑà kɨn thɨɑŋ sâm. Khɑà lɔ́t mɑɑ hét ŋɑɑn kà sɨ̀ bɔɔ̀ phɔɔ/

"My job is all hard jobs everywhere. It is the hardest work with the lowest paid. At the former place I work for, it does not cover my lunch. I have to bring food from home. It is not enough for travel cost to work."

She tries to seek for another job with better pay, but in Laos she says 'I can change the work place or employers, but it does not change my duty and low paid.' While she is struggling with looking for a better paid job, her acquaintance introduces her to come to work for a restaurant in Khong Chiam. She takes a chance and expects to do the same dish washing job as she is not comfortable to read and write as taking orders from MKCs, she is incapable to do this part. She arrives in Khong Chiam at a MBKB, however the bar does not need any dishwashers. The MBKB owner asks if she could facilitate the MKCs and sometimes sing for them in the karaoke lounge, she accepts the job.

However, she is struggling with reading the MKCs' song order. The MKCs do not know that she is illiterate, so they write the song which they want then request her to seek for their requested song. Dao is blind as she is not able to read a Thai song menu. She needs someone else help, her peers, the MBKB owners, or she bother the MKCs to read it out. As we observe in our singing sessions with Dao, she

is really good at singing, chatting and serving food and drink, but when it comes to selecting the song she will always tell us to write the song code-number or point to the code in the song menu. She is not comfortable to receive any note sent from the MKCs. Dao sometimes confesses with the MKCs that she is illiterate. That way the MKCs change the way to order songs from writing name of songs to pointing to the codes in the menu. Some MKCs are not nice, they make fun of her for not knowing how to read and write. This part suffers her at the MBKB work.

Most MKGs sing by reading the lyrics on the monitor. Dao is an exemption as she sings by her memory. Although reciting the lyrics helps her to work better. Sometimes, mispronouncing words in the lyrics makes her feel embarrassed with the MKCs. Some MKCs finds the lyrics sung by Dao funny and they immediately laugh. Though they do not mean to make fun of her but Dao reports to us that this kind of the MKCs' response makes her continuously feels upset and wishes she could get away from this hardship.

Two examples above explain to us that the MKGs' social mobility mainly based on their education they acquire in Laos. The literate ones like Noina can access more job opportunities than Dao who is illiterate. Other girls are similar, their education attainment is low and most of them do not accesses good job opportunities such governmental offices or private sector in Laos. Thus labor intensive jobs such as farmer, dish washer, cleaner, and janitor are common jobs which they do before coming to the MBKBs.

Therefore the hard condition of their social mobility is in general strongly reflected in their MBKB interactions. We shall see some of them want to setup their own business. Some want to get married with a Thai man so he can assist to open up better opportunity for them. Some of them express that they want education so that they can work for a government office in Laos. That way they sustainably take care of their family. More importantly, some of them remind us that though working at the MBKB is an economic lift up but it is not a job that will help them improve their social status, the MBKB is by itself a source for which they are socially labeled and stigmatized. However, they take the MBKB as a jumping stone for making any possible vertical social mobility in their life; social, economic, cultural, and even moral upscale.

2) Dating and Sex

As mentioned before, most of the MKGs are young women but they are not virgin as appeared in the Thai men's sexual myth. The fact is that the MKGs have boyfriends are married, and some of them are divorced.

This group of girls and women experience courtships, seeking a partner, and have sexual experience before going to work in the MBKBs. Some of them work in entertainment places in Laos and offer sexual services before coming here.

There is a MKG whom we talk to during our singing session, during our female talk we informally interview how young boys and girls date in Laos, particularly the lowland Lao people. We learn that the youths get to know each other since they are quite young as in primary and secondary schools. Some who do not attend schools may date young girls/boys in the villages.

The main point is that acceptable dating practice for the lowland Lao people must be as brief as it could be. Dating or being in relationship with someone for too long without getting married is seen as insincere. Thus the boys and girls in Lao villages normally get married as soon as the parents agree to organize the wedding ceremony. Some boyfriend and girls friend get married in six months after the first dating.

There is no strict regulation upon the youth's date. Both boys and girls are free to choose a partner whom he/she likes. If one is not satisfied or once they finds they do not fit to continue to date and marriage. They terminate the present relationship and start a new one. Both boys and girls are autonomous to initiate the termination of dating.

Dating involves chatting, going out picnic, coming to help out with work at the girls' house or farm. It is reported that they have a sexual relationship before the wedding ceremony. The sooner they are found to have sexual relationship, the parents especially the girls' parents will organize the wedding ceremony as soon as they could. In case the boy's family is not ready to pay bride price, another ceremony is optionally organized. Begging pardon from the bride's parents will be organized as the social approval for them to live together as husband and wife. Therefore, the MKGs are used to dating, free to choose a person whom she wishes to spend time and develop intimate relationship with. They do have experience on

making happy chatting, exchanging personal information, and develop mutual attachment. We may say, as they work in the MBKBs, they do bring out the past experience of dating and selecting a partner skills to use when they have to choose their MKCs and decide whether they like to offer sexual service to a particular MKC or not. A MKG at a mid-level MBKB tells us that chatting with the MKCs;

/Man kɔɔ̂ bɔɔ̀ dây taàŋ kan. Lîn baàw laaw kà wâw laaw khɯɯ kan. Wâw lɯàŋ dǎy kɔɔ̂ khɯɯ kan/

It is not so different from dating Laotian boys. We speak the same language and talk about the same topics.

Another MKG who focuses more on the role of a breadwinner, especially a single mother, has different view on sexual preference. Dao projects that;

/Lam phaŋ sì ʔaw nì sɯû ʔaw kà dây. Khɔɔy bɔɔ waà sì yaàk dây phuǎ ʔîîk chàk thɯà. ʔaw kan laá laá niî lá. khɔɔy bɔɔ̂k ləəy waà mɯ̀ phuǎ niî man kin haw phɛɛŋ khwaà mɯ̀ phuû saay wáy thaà nɔɔn nam ʔîîk/

If only sex, I prefer to buy a man, but I no longer need any man as my husband. I am free for him, and he is free for me. My experience told me that a husband costs me more than having a man to have sex with.

Dao and some of the MKGs have painful marriage and they, according to what they tell us, no longer want to have husband. This is because they view sexual relationship with the husband is attached to family's commitment. They possess a negative opinion on having husbands as having someone who costs them rather than support them. This group of MKGs performs detachment towards the MKCs whom they have offered sexual service to. As observed, Dao is willing to serve the MKCs well in the singing session, make them like her and take her out for sexual service. However, Dao barely exchanges her telephone number with the MKCs. She says 'If a MKC wants to visit her again, he can come back to this MBKB anytime because I work here every day."

Therefore, this group of MKGs views sex as physical pleasure exchange. In case they offer sex to the MKCs, they exchange sex with money with no extra attachment with a man. In case they want their sexual need to be fulfilled, then

they treat sex as fair exchanges, either with paid to a man or just for free. Thus they apply the same notion as the MKCs buy their sexual services as they too can buy a man for their sexual pleasure. According to Dao, sexual need can be treated separately from being attached to family institution.

Such view on sex also reflects that some MKGs do not have faith in men. Although they express physical needs, they want to separate it from the concept of having a husband. This attitude might also suggest that they are upset with their Laotian husband. Once they are exposed to Isan or Thai men who have better economic status, some of them shift their goal from do-not-want-husband to Thai husband-wanted. Some MKGs then relegate sex into physical/sexual exchange between females and males, or exchange of physical/sexual services to money. Some MKGs look at their past broken marriage as family institutional dysfunction. Consequently, they regard their past sexual experience as contaminated body especially some women who divorced more than one time. Therefore using their spoiled body for making money has nothing more to lose. Although they realize it is not a positive thinking and even devalue themselves, Khiat affirms that;

/Khɔ̂y bɔ̀ suà pay khwaà kàw dɔ̂k. Dɨɨ khwaà kàw kɔ̀ bɔ̀ dây khɯɯ kan. Mɨɨ phuǎ lɛɛ́w kà haâŋ. Mɨɨ haán maa lɛɛ́w kà mòt/
Tɔɔn nɨî bɔ̀ mɨɨ phǎy waà haw dɨɨ. Bɔɔ̀ waà sɨ̀ hét yǎŋ kà saaŋ.

I'm not gonna be better than I was. I had husbands, I had business but I am spoiled now because of marriage and business failures. No one would see me as a good woman, whatever I do.

Some MKGs who have similar background as Khiat recognize themselves as not sexually 'pure.' They form their identity as 'a sexually spoiled woman' by their broken marriage. Once they estimate themselves with low esteem, they then feel that practicing sexual services to the MKCs is not degrading them both in terms of morale and sexuality.

Some of the MKGs of this background might view themselves negatively. However, it does not mean they do not function well in the MBKBs. They also hope for having better relationships with their MKCs. A thirty year old MKG

reveals that she likes the MKCs who have good sense of humor, understanding, and kind to her although they know that she had a husband. This kind of reflection is also confirmed by the interviews with some MBKB owners that some older men prefer to chat with the older MKGs, regardless their broken marriage and past sexual experiences. This is because the males enjoy exchanging jokes, thoughts, and cultural/social similarities with older female partners who are in the same or close generation.

This means their sexual contamination as they view themselves can be overlooked by ways in which other aspects of experience are valued by the MKCs. While the devalued body eases them to decide to sell sex, other qualifications which come together with their failures, broken relationship, and over all life experiences facilitate them to effectively serve the MKCs at the MBKBs, and of course offer sexual services to the open-minded MKCs who select them.

Dating and sexual relationship in Isan-Lao culture are valued in accordance with witty chatting or wisdom converse. The old day literary forms of *Pha yaa* and folk improvising performances inform us that dating is not purely based on physical attraction, but mainly abide by wisdom the partners can seek from each other. Thus the contaminated body is overlooked in this case. The cultural dating element of conversing witty chatting becomes more sexily arousal in some of the MBKBs' encounters.

Another case shows that the MKGs look at sex as a combination of dating relationship. As a result, for them it is acceptable that sex comes after getting to know each other, having fun, and expressing some good feelings towards each other. Then sex is mutual pleasure which a man and a woman can have. Their personal experiences tell them that sex should occur upon a woman's agreement. Thus, they probably apply this notion while they serve and negotiate selling sex to the MKC. The MBKB sex should also happen upon the agreement of the MKGs.

Purely commercial sex is also not the case in the MBKB practice since the MKG sex is not solely based on power of the male buyers. The women here view the MBKB sex similar to personal dating elsewhere in the society. Therefore, the cut-short episode of dating or flirting must be performed in order to get female's consent. Although it is undeniably commercial sex which money is significant factor for which

the MKGs make decision on selling sex, other aspects of flirting, dating are not be omitted.

With different views toward dating and sex, some of the MKGs view flirting and dating as a part of their service jobs with the MKCs. Some of them are aware of emotional detachment as they do not include themselves in successful family builders. Some of them employ their sexually used body as a means to generate income by which they accept the negative or devalue their sexual past.

Thus far, the MKG newcomers accumulate meaningful historical bodies. Culturally, they are capable in both Thai and Lao language. They come with some personal and cultural expectations. They gain their work and worldview through their social mobility, and more importantly they are experienced dating and sexual experiences before their starting time at the MBKBs. It is worthy to emphasize that all of their cultural capitals residing in their bodies can always be developed into a more valuable forms that fit with the MBKBs' interaction orders and discourse in place.

4.1.4 Young-Female-Laotian Bodies as Bodily Capital

An interview with one MKC aged 52 years old stated that "Going to the MBKBs, meeting young Laotian girls is like going abroad, but men can still stay and spend Thai baht." What can be traced here is, among other things, the Laotian girls' bodies are seen as the customers' 'domestic exotic sexual experiences.' Their pre-Mekong karaoke bodies as ordinary individual as an intersection of three elements; being young /dêk nɔ́y/, being adult female /phuû saǎw/, and being Laotian /saǎw lɑɑw/ body. These elements are fundamental to forming the Mekong karaoke bodies at work.

Our observations reveal that the majority of them are in range of 13 to 23 years old. At this young age, their body is skinny, very few of them are observed chubby, and none of them are overweight. In term of body structure, they are genuinely petite. Basically they are healthy. Consequently, their young bodies with their fair skin, long, black, and shiny hair are ideal. Appearance like this is not purely physical of course, their cultural preference on ideal femininity in Lao culture also shape the way their young Laotian female are expressed. Also, their emotional structure is partial to their appearance. They express and the people around see them

as being joyful, light-hearted, and cheerful. Those are valuable tendencies that will fit well with the entertaining karaoke atmosphere.

The young Laotian girls are recruited into the MBKBs through their social connections, arriving in Khong Chiam with some advantages of working skills, cultural assets, and physical bodies that are advantageous to be developed into the MKG bodies at work.

4.2 The MKG Body at Work

They possess some salient attributes and habits that contribute to the MBKB interactions. Some habitual experiences are later inculcated into the MKGs' identities and as they work at the MBKBs. Over a course of time, some aspects of their historical body can also be amended in response to contexts.

For instance, more concretely, they changed their body in a particular way so that they fit in the MKGs' serving and sex workers' roles. They change their interest toward their life goals so they later form various identities while working at the MBKBs, for example a bread winner, a normal woman, and a soon-to-be entrepreneur.

The MBKBs' historical bodies encompass their interactional goals, interests, skills, experiences, and personal habits that their bodies carry to contribute to various MBKB encounters. This trajectory lays out past experiences of the MKGs. This set of experience encompasses their physical attributes, sets of skills, life purposes, as well as outlooks towards sex, service work, social mobility, and unavoidable risks.

The Khong Chiam MBKBs, the MKGs, and their work place are unique. I will describe their work environment and some terms involved in their working conditions. Thus we have the same notion when given words are referred to. Then significant aspects of the historical body will elaborated respectively.

1) Working Hours

Some bars may open earlier at 4.00 PM. And some could open later at 6.00 PM. To live and work in the MBKBs, the MKGs start working approximately 5.00 PM. Thus they would be present at work around those times, depending on their MBKB's requirement. Normal operation would start from 5.00 PM to 12.00AM. In

virtual practice, although the MBKBs are not open, if the revisiting MKCs arrive at the bars and want to have some drink, chat, and take out a MKG, they will be welcomed. They welcome their MKCs whenever the MKCs arrive at the bars. Peculiarly, some MKCs come early in the morning. Some men sneak from their office at noon or came right after they finish their meeting, seminar or conference in the afternoon or early evening (Supan Srisattra, personal communication, December 28, 2015).

2) Sources of the MKGs' Income: Service Contributors without Salary Paid

Some of the MKGs are working for the MBKBs without 'salary.' They are informed about 'working as a service staff without salary payment' before they decide to work for a MBKB. On the ground that the MKGs are not hired by the MBKB owners, their actual role is fit to be called *'service contributors'* rather than 'service staff.' In common practice here in Khong Chiam, the MBKB owners convince the young Laotian girls to work for them by offering free lodging and a couple meals a day. The MKGs make money by themselves, and their main sources of income are solely paid by the MKCs as following:

(1) Drink fee

Drink fee is an alternative form of service charge. This service charge is defined by each karaoke shop and this fee is charged from the MKCs and then paid to each MKG who serves throughout the whole period of the singing session. A small scale MBKB defines its drink fee 60 baht while other bigger ones give 80-100 baht per service session (interview with a MBKB owner).

(2) The MKCs' tip

The MKGs earns some extra money from tips which the MKCs give. The tips in the MBKB setting can be interpreted by two different meanings. In the first understanding, the tip is 'service reward' from any MKCs, male or female. The second tip is interpreted broader than 'service reward.' This tip could be given as when the MKCSs has sexual satisfaction toward a MKG and give it to her in exchange with touching her body, hug, or kiss. For the MKGs' interpretation, the tip means any extra money men give regardless with or without service. There are cases in which some of the MKGs bluntly ask for the 'tip' even it is out of server time, no serving activity, and the male is not yet her MKCs.

(3) Take out charge

There are two types of the takeout charge. To offer 'temporary' sexual service which takes 1 to 4 hours and then the MKCs transport the MKG back to the MBKB, the girls charge their MKCs for 800 to 1,500 baths. This rate is approximately average. Practically, the MKGs and the MKCSs may agree on either lower or higher rate. It depends on their mutual agreement which the MBKB normally not intervene. The second take out pattern, if the MKCS takes the MKG out and stay overnight, 2,000 to 3,000 baht is charged.

(4) MKCs' gifts and/or patronage

The MKGs earn money from tips and mainly from offering sexual services to their male MKCs. The MKCs might spend 1 to 3 hours drinking, singing and chatting with the girls in the shops, and later negotiating to take out a girl to a nearby hotel or a 'local resort.' Some MKGs succeed in seeking patronage from their MKCs. Receiving gifts or cash as an extra offer from the MKCs is another way to make extra money.

(5) Take-out Etiquettes

After negotiating for the price of sexual service, MKCs and the MKG set their agreement to take out. All male MKCs are required to transport the girl back to the karaoke shops after the sexual services. Violation of this leads to satisfaction breakdown by the MKG and unsatisfactory mark on this MKC by the MBKB owner. A few of MKCs might not follow the suggestion due to conditions such as they were drunk, or were badly disappointed with the girls' sexual service (Sirikorn Asasri, personal communication, July 12, 2014; Laanna Waiyawan, personal communication, July 12, 2014). In case, he revisits the MBKB next time, he might not be welcome either by the taken girls, her peers, and the owner.

The business establishment and condition partially relegate the MKGs to practice sexual service, not by direct forces but with convincing techniques such as providing lodging and meals. The MKGs reserve the right to leave the karaoke bars as soon as they find the place unsatisfactory or when they find another better bar or job. Most cases, they can also leave when they need to go back to stay with the family in Laos.

Even though they are quite independent from the work place as there is no legal attachment to the MBKBs, while working for the MBKBs they do have risks to cope with. Regarding their sexual services, there are healthcare concerns raised by both the Share Foundation and healthcare organizations, such as local hospitals, community healthcare centers and provincial public healthcare organizations.

Their past experiences are imperative resources that they bring into the MBKB encounters. Taking on their MKGs' identity, these historical bodies partially define who the MKGs are and they attribute how they form the situated identities, alternative identities, maintain or change their situated roles, or contest their versions of constructed identities to the dominant social groups.

Their past experiences that are significant in constructing MKGs' identities include their physical appearance, linguistic skills, service mind and skills, expectations, social mobility, and risks. Some aspects of their experiences are counted as their advantages and some are casted to be their disadvantages. The next section will explain each aspect respectively.

4.2.1 Bodies of the Mekong Border Karaoke Girl

As perceived by our interviewers, the MBKB MKCs, and the Khong Chiam housewives, all agree that most of the MKGs are physically *attractive*. They explain the word 'attractive' on the basis of the young Laotian girl in good shape, fair skin, long black and shiny hair. More importantly, they are young. Such positive physical appearances do assist them to attract the MKCs for the MBKB owners and definitely for themselves. This kind of bodily appearance does play a key role in making the MKCs impressed. This is the first sight seeing that attract ordinary men passing by the MBKBs to decide to be the MBKBs' MKCs at a given bar. Nevertheless, their natural young bodies and being female, and Laotian alone is by no mean well fitted and valuable at the MBKB scenes, it is how the girls 'put more' on the their bodies that become capital and yield them all kind of benefits.

The very fundamental process to build up more attractive MKGs' bodies, the MBKB owners give importance to display the youth and beauty of the MKGs to attract the MKCs (Natedao Taotawin, 2008). They do pay attention to selection of young Laotian girls based on their attractive characteristics. The agencies, as we

interviewed, went to villages in Laos and look for someone young, cute, beautiful, and mostly slender. After they arrive at the MBKBs, the owners will then advise them how to make themselves presentable and preferable in the eyes of the MKCs both in terms of hygiene, sexual appealing, and pleasing skills that are required by most male customers. As a result, we can see most the MKGs keep their skin fair, their shape skinny, dress up sexily, and wear makeup and perfume.

Our observations can inform that both the MKGs and the owners do pay attention to taking care of their physical look. For instance, some of the MKGs take supplementary diets. A number of them have strict diet schedule. They watch food which they eat and refrain from eating oily food such as fried rice, Isan sausage, and some of them skip dinner. Although not many, a few of them avoid eating desserts and limit sugary beverages. One MKG, while serving her customers, she was invited to share them dinner, but she politely refused that;

> "Thank you for your kindness. I appreciate that you ask me to eat with you, but I am really on diet. Other days I skipped dinner very strictly, until my stomach hurt. That way I can control my weight. Please don't break my attempt down, or else I will have to restart my diet again and it will hurt my stomach again. No one likes eat-a lot- girl." (Nang, 2015)

Nang's story of her weight control reflects the process, as normal to all of the MKGs, of controlling their body to be skinny. This attribute is central to reveal their male customers' preference on the karaoke bodies. The preference then encodes also feminine notions as the MKGs are required to be skinny. This skinny body is not merely ideal as it is prominent in the karaoke bars but it is promoted because it is 'contrast' to ordinary women in Khong Chiam community such as overweighed housewives, obese senior women at home. Our interviews frequently collect the ideas from the MKCs that "If the karaoke girls look like their women at home, men do need to come to the MBKBs. We want to experience something different.

Another story told by the local healthcare staff also reports that the MKGs inject 'glutathione' which results in lightening of their skin. Some of them can afford to do so at a local clinic in Khong Chaim while some of them get supported by their

male patronages to send them to Ubon Ratchathani and bought them a package of 'whitening courses' and other 'skin care programs.'

The MKGs learn from different sites in order to improve their karaoke 'front stage' bodies. As they live, they learn techniques of bettering the 'karaoke bodies' from various media, their MBKBs requirements, their MKCs' preferences. This processes of learning how to make better karaoke bodies reveal not only the business's need but also their internal competition over winning the karaoke take out. Their peer pressure is both a source of knowledge on how to make better makeover, attractive make up, long term beauty improvement and so forth, but also a sort of career competition. The ones who successfully improve their 'front stage' bodies tend to win more karaoke takeouts. Thus this results in better money making in return.

As soon as they work and earn some money, they do budget for some skin care treatments such as removing scars, acne treatment, injecting whitening substances, and buy some dietary supplements for promoting lighter, smoother skin. For someone who has more money, they do some plastic surgery as to add filler on cheek, chin, nose surgery, and jaw surgery. It is confirmed, in our interviews and casual talk to the MKGs, that they believe their 'Laotian's nose' is too flat. Almost every one of them wants to do plastic surgery so that they can lift the nose up /dɯŋ dâŋ/.

About the jaw surgery, there are opposite views on this belief of beauty among the MKGs. The MKGs from a small MBKB view that Laotian's nice face should be slightly in a 'square- shape' and they are comfortable to remain their face square. On the other hand, other MKGs from the so called 'hi-so' MBKBs think that female's nice face should be a 'V-shape.' Such contrast reflects that the MKGs living on small scale of the MBKBs believe in their original look as Laotian girls more than the MKGs living on the 'hi-end scale' of the MBKBs. Thus their invested bodily capital varies according to their ideals of beauty. The hi-end MKGs tend to follow powerful ideologies of beauty through Thai media where the media leads them to believe in V-shape, light, and firm skin.

While it is imperative to invest in such beauty improvement, costs of beauty improvements are not always affordable to some of the MKGs. Consequently, saving the cost of beauty treatments must be thought of and come into practices with various

processes. The MKGs always look for alternative treatments which they could afford. Thus they still look young and fair to their customers.

In their daily life, they actually do what they call *villagers' spa*. It is the way in which they learn to use local herbs, fruits, and oils for promoting fair skin and healthy look. For example, Naang always asks for lime from the MBKB owner as she uses fresh lime to mix with curcuma powder which she buys from Seven-Eleven for 20 Baht. The mixed is used firstly for reducing inflammatory acne on her face, and secondly for face-masked as to brighten and smoothen facial skin. Naang's friends have other techniques for beauty treatments. One MKG buys massage oil *'Kwang rung'* brand that is purposively used for breast firming, and some of them believe that this massage oil is used for breast lifting. Other girls buy coconut oil from Seven-Eleven to use as breast massage oil, facial cleanser, body moisturizer, and hair treatment.

It is very important for them to make their body parts colorful and artistic. This way they look more attractive than other females in the community and consequently attract the MKCs. This attraction includes not only their clothing, but also their body decoration. Dao pays attention to make her finger nails colorful and artistic. She learns some painting techniques from *Youtube* and from her own experiments as she spends her free time to practice painting butterflies, red heart, and colorful swirling patterns on her nails. She also teaches other MKGs such nail painting techniques. Some of them share the nail polish colors. Every MKGs bring one or two colors together, then Dao has more coloring choices to design her artistic painting. This may cost 100 to 300 Baht if they hire a salon shop to do. Practicing nail painting by herself; using social media and their knowledge/skills sharing in the MBKBs also help them to improve their attractive look with less costs.

Figure 4.1 Painted Nails

Similarly, they do the same with their hair. Most of them have long hair and they are careful with making it presentable in terms of hygiene, styles, and healthiness. They occasionally use salon service, but not their first choice as they could still save cost by doing hair by themselves. One asks a friend to color her hair and take turns. Before going out to the receptionist area, they do their hair and decorate it with some cute clips. If the hair style is more complicated, they ask their peers to help. Again, some of them learn about stylish hair from social media.

They are always suggested by the MBKB owners that their body and beauty must be well-maintained. This is because their look and their body play a vital role drawing attention from their MKCs. Thus what is thought of as the MKGs physical appearance is fundamentally their youthfulness. This young body attracts male more effectively than the older one. Their young body is well-decorated in a colorful and artistic ways so that they look nicer in the eyes of the MKCs. Their fair and smooth skin must be always maintained as the MKCs touch, cuddle, and kiss their cheeks

during the singing session. Also, in case the MKCs take them out for sexual services, they make sure that the MKCs will satisfy with their body.

4.2.2 Work Skills and Service Mind

To express the service skills as explained above, the MKGs operate those skills upon their service mind. This qualification can be traced through their willing to serve. In doing service, the girls make sure that her MKCs get their food and drink served in time. They are resourceful for the MKCs who ask for details on ordering songs and acceptable singing practices such as, cost per song, queue, microphone flow, etc. To some extent, they have good control over unpleasant conditions caused by the MKCs, either verbally or non- verbally.

Figure 4.2 Liquor Mixing

This quality is somehow prompted before they fully trained or learned on sites. Though such service mind could be taught by the karaoke owners or supervisors, but the MKGs fundamentally retain this trait before coming to the karaoke shop. Partially, they develop this kind of service concept while they live in their family thus they make sure that their people get good accommodation. They might learn from their courtship experiences on how to make the partner feel special by being welcomed or being served. In addition, we may be able to claim that their voluntarily work for their community as in some celebrative occasions, they are volunteers and service labors who gradually form the service mind to serve on people of various occasions.

Thus, both of their service mind and service skills are by no mean out of the life skills. They arrive with readiness to do the service work, especially when it involves food, drink, friendly accommodation, good chatting atmosphere, and so on. We can also see associations between their courtship knowledge and skills with their service mind and service skills. Those are embedded in their 'bodies' and ready to be exercised to deal with other participants at the work place.

4.2.3 The Bodies at Risks

4.2.3.1 Illegal Status

Working as the MKGs, legal issues are their major concerns. Most of them violate Thailand's immigration and labor laws so that they live and work at the MBKBs with fear. A story told by a MBKB owner shows that 'being arrested on the ground that they illegally migrate into Thailand and overstay in the MBKB. Although the owner claims that her MKGs legally migrate into Thailand but our observation tells a different fact. Some of MKGs smuggle into Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. The MKGs who legally migrate with a 3-day border pass normally overstay (interview with a police officer).

They live and work in Thailand without work permit as some of them illegally migrate so they do not have proper papers to request the work permit. Some avoid applying for the work permit because of cost of processing is too expensive for them (Supan Srisattra, personal communication, December 28, 2015). Also, to process a work permit, employers play a key role in preparing papers and sign the

application for the employees. Some MBKB owners in Khong Chiam may not pay attention to process this for the MKGs. Moreover, to legalize the MKGs to work, the employers need to register them with the Social Security Office (SSO). Both the employer and employee need to contribute five percent of salary to the SSO (interviews with Share Foundation's staff).

By the fact that the MBKB owners do not fully commit to the employer's role, so they do not pay salary, register the MKGs as employers, and apply for work permit for the MKGs. As a result, when the police officers strictly reinforce the immigration and labor laws, then the MKGs are sued and deported.

While working at the MBKBs, the MKGs are generally afraid of female MKCs as there is a case that a female MKC later turned out to be a police officer. She came to the MBKBs as a MKCs and a couple days later she took police to arrest all the MKGs who do not escape in time. They are also afraid of male MKCs who look like a police officer. A high-tight hair cut man is a person who they do not want to serve since it is risky that he is a police.

Therefore, those illegal issues are the fact they have to live by when working at the MBKBs. Their fear can be detected through talking to them about hiring, salary payment, and simple question such as 'How often you go back to visit your family in Laos?' This question is simply seeks for simple answer, but for the MKGs this could trigger their intimidating experience of being 'illegal.'

By this aspect of their historical body, this could influence the ways by which they try to 'play safe' within the MBKB interactions; avoidance of non-trustable MKCs, concealing their real identity such as their real name, surname and their origin, etc.

4.2.3.2 The Bodies with Unhealthy Conditions and Diseases

The MKGs, as sex workers, are aware of their health conditions. Previously, they are educated in schools about reproductive health, STDs, and HIV AIDs. Although they are seen as often as hosts of those diseases, but they do take care of themselves on this issue.

It is unavoidable that are worried about getting infected from the MKCs, the MKGs are always informed to practice safe sex. It is risky that their MKCs could have different sexual behaviors which they could not detect while

chatting in the MBKB singing sessions. Some are afraid of forced sex, unprotected sex, and unwilling activities while having sex with their MKCs. Those of which could give them high risk of receiving the transmitted diseases.

Another concern is their mental health. While working at the MBKBs, not all entertaining activities are performed. Indeed unwanted behaviors which the MKCs perform are recognizable. For example, some MKCs are verbally rude. Some young males are not seducing but blatantly ask them for sex. The drunken MKCs could be both verbally and physically violent to them. Some demeaning words, impolite gestures, and dehumanizing acts are often delivered to them while working with the MKCs. As a result, the MKGs bear high emotional pressure and some of them occasionally suffer depression.

4.2.3.3 The Stigmatized Bodies

Stigma refers to an attribute that is deeply discrediting (Goffman, 1986, p. 3). Historically, the word stigma simply refers to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about moral status of the signifier. Goffman notes also that social settings establish the categories of persons likely to be encountered there (Goffman, 1986, p. 2). In case the MBKBs in Khong Chiam, the overall society groups the MKGs as 'unusual' as oppose to the community people who are, in Goffman's term, 'normals.

In this particular setting where the relationship between the unusual MKGs and the Khong Chiam normal reside together, the MKGs are seen by people in Khong Chiam community as low moral people. Offering sexual services to the MKCs is seen as threat to the family institution, hosts of STDs, and moral threatening.

It is a case that the MKGs are stigmatized. The relationship between the MKGs and the citizens of Khong Chiam are in out-group and in-group separations. Most of the time, the out-group MKGs are imposed to be the 'money seeker' and 'the victim.' This unusualness of the girls is obviously insisted by the in-group Khong Chiam normals as Goffman explains; "The stigmatized individual is also asked to see himself from the point of view of a second grouping: the norms and the wider society that they constitute (Goffman, 1989, p. 114).

At this point, the stigma as the MKGs historical body show not only attributes of the 'low moral MKGs' but 'a language of relationships' of which stigma

is relationship between attribute and stereotypes (Goffman, 1986, pp. 3-4). That means the stigmatized MKGs in the MBKB setting release stereotypical discourses and discredited attributes to the unusual MKGs by the normal Khong Chiam people.

4.3 The MKG Historical Bodies and Identities

Overall the MKGs advantages and risks partially inform us who they are. Each aspect of the historical bodies can be inculcated as a result of working as the MKGs. Through the processes of making their MKG bodies, we shall see how the capitals are intertwined into 'history' of their 'body.' These processes also suggest how the identities are rolled out through the processes of making unique bodies of the MKG. Through the liminal space of the Mekong karaoke, this particular setting allows the certain processes of making various kinds of identities. Whatever kinds of identities to be invested to construct, the constructed features of identities are deemed valuable and useful to draw in what they plan to achieve, may be in terms of economic improvement, social and cultural enhancement, or personal satisfaction.

In terms of physical appearance, their 'young-female-Laotian body' has been transformed. The process start at the point which their natural body is gradually transformed to be a 'sexually attractive body' and this part plays a key role in making desirable female. As their body allow them to form /phuû saǎw/ (young woman) identity, the MKGs, they are regarded as desirable /pen tɑɑ ʔaw/, adorable /pen tɑɑ hák/, and hot /pen tɑɑ chàp tɑɑ bɑɑy/, literally means 'inducing touch').

The body alone would not make them succeed their goals. Their service skills and service mind which they do without being told each day in the MBKB form the role of karaoke service contributor. Here, the word staff might not applicable as they are not paid to work as the karaoke service staff, but they exercise this historical body to enable the MKGs' sexual services. Their serving skills and service mind which they contribute to the MBKBs practice is manifested through their /saǎw sə̀əp/ (the serving girls) identities.

Their different and amendable expectations and goals influence how they contribute themselves to the MBKB interactions via their discourses. In addition to being the MKG sex workers who mainly want to generate income, they also express

various expectations and life goals and these expectations partially form different identities such as a bread winner, a normal woman, an independent girl, and a successful entrepreneur. When they find a right person whom they can express their expectations to, they process to talk about who they actually want to be. These different takes of identity convey that what they will include into the MBKB practice is related to positive or valuable self which they want to be on top of the sex worker.

To be the MKGs sex workers, they uniquely contribute various perspectives toward dating and sex. This kind of historical body advocates them to form the MBKB voluntary sex workers by ways that flirting and dating activities are expected to be performed. Thus their rapports, personal preference, and trust can be fostered. They are then treated as purely commercial sex workers who any men can buy. This flirty behavior becomes internalized into the MBKB practice so that the MKGS are referred to as sɑ̌w kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kɛ̀ʔ (the karaoke girls).

While the flirting and dating activities are expected to happen to the MBKB interaction, the MKGs make use of their Lao and Thai language skills to succeed the MBKB. Over time, their Thai language skills make them standard service contributors in the MBKBs. Lao language play a key role in making chats among them and Isan MKCs not only communicative as they speak the same language but they are also seen as domestic exotic and the Isan men's cultural nostalgic solution. This linguistic historical body empowers them to succeed both the MBKB interactional goals and the MKGs' life goals. Being addressed as /sɑ̌w lɑɑw/ is not then merged into recognitions of people especially in the automatic MBKB practice.

While the risks they face in their everyday work at the MBKB is pejoratively referred to them as 'Laotian hooker/prostitute.' This kind of word might not be used to them directly in the MBKBs by their MKCs but the local citizens living in Khong Chiam community refer to them while talking within their dominant group. An action such as / tɨɨ kɑ̀ rɨɨ lɑɑw/ (hook a Laotian hooker) is also found in social media such as on personal Facebook pages.

4.4 Historical Bodies, Liminal Identities, and Ideologies

The explanations on developing the MKG bodies from the MKG newcomers through all processes of making the embedded MKG historical bodies show us that the karaoke bodies are also meaningful ways of constructing the MKG identities. Wacquant explains that boxers must carefully manage the investment of their physical assets over time (Wacquant, 1986, pp. 62-67). Here, the MKG case has exemplified that the MKGs invest to makeover their bodies, gain service experiences, learn to cope with unpleasant conditions of the work place and people they are dealing with, especially their customers. They also face illegal status and various types of health risks, especially fatal HIV infection. Also, the moral problems and stigmas their bodies have to bear.

Taking the bodily capital of the MKG as a case, the bodies of the MKGs are not simply made up by the way an individual wants it to be. Nevertheless, the bodies are built upon some ideologies that people in the society as a whole give value to. As a result, it is such ideologies that underline the actions the MKG while they build up the bodies to fit the MBKB's values. The key notions that made the MKG bodies to appear as adorable female, sexy women, or entertaining service contributors are all made upon men's preference. The actions of treating the bodies to be sexy, skinny, adorable, or form are supported by value on the bodies defined by the MKCs. Therefore, it is rather conclusive that the MKG bodies are female's bodies for male sexual and emotional pleasure.

The bodies of the MKG might not be defined by preference of men. If it is the case that they can fully define their beauty, actions, and emotional expressions upon their personal wants. Unfortunately, they too live within the circle of ideologies where it is not avoidable for them to ignore all values that underpin the bodies fit. Therefore, the identities such as /phuû saǎw/, /saǎw səə̀p/, /saǎw lɑɑw/, and /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/ reflect different layers of disguised forms of patriarchal orientations, if not negatively say oppressions; through the MKG's age, gender, legal status, and their spatial relation with the sexual oriented entertainment place. Thus, those identities have something to do with liminal identities. As explained above, the as /phuû saǎw/ highlight the young body for men, /saǎw lɑɑw/ emphasizes ethnic

difference and may be illegal status of being Laotian living in Thailand border but more domestic exotic for the MKCs, /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/, to the first layer, it identifies their spatial relation with the karaoke; the second layer is that it underscores their low moral identity which associated with karaoke space where the MKGs launch their sex sell.

Another notion that cannot be omitted is capitalism. From tracing the processes of constructing the historical bodies of the MKGs, it is not patriarchal ideologies solely influence those processes. If we look closely at the ways in which the MKGs invest in their bodies and habits thus they fit to live and work at the MBKBs, the bodies are heavily invested with the wish to gain the most 'worthy' benefits. The body can be remodeled first in terms of volume and shape (Wacquant, 2004, p. 70). Their bodies, through the processes which the MBKB owners and customers require from the MKGs are monetary based. For example, they keep their derma-treatments, plastic surgery, inject glutathione and apply whitening substances, so that they make sure their bodies suitably remodeled to form /phuû saǎw/, /saǎw lɑɑw/, and /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/ identities as these identities are beneficial at the karaoke bars. Their bodies are invested in order to represent being /saǎw/ (adorable young female), being / lɑɑw/ (Laotian), and /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/ (adorable young Laotian girls selling sex at the karaoke bars).

Though the remodeled bodies are defined and used by men, it seems that men control how and why the karaoke bodies should be remodeled in a particular ways. The MKCs who work and generate sufficient income in Thailand go to the MBKBs and unconsciously exercise their power to the MKGs through their powerful economic, social and ethic of the service business of the MBKBs. To serve this particular group of men, the karaoke bars provide the bodies that are well fitted to the need of the MKCs.

On the one hand we could understand that the capitalized bodies unfold various aspects of disadvantages of the MKGs. That means that inequality is sustained in Khong Chiam Community and societies of similar scenes. However, Foucault (Ref) explains that power is not a top-down phenomenon, but rather diffused. The MKGs thus learn the ways in which they could invest in their bodies so that the reshaped karaoke bodies could yield them power to negotiate for their interactional goals and

monetary benefits, or social and economic patronage. The more adorable bodies they have, the more negotiating power they gain from both the MBKB's owners and their MKCs. Their benefits come from the valued bodies which they successfully made the bodies up.

Thus far we see that the bodies of the MKG has been remodeling while living and working at the karaoke bars constructing various identities. Those identities highlight the capitalist value in which the body of young female represents sexual attraction, being used as tools for men's seduction, and be somehow objectified for sex trade. Above all, all identities that are constructed through different actions and discourses; /phuû saǎw/, / saǎw lɑɑw/, and /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kὲʔ/, all come to a final point where either one of which can be utilized for generating income or monetary benefits, uplifting social and cultural status quo, and/or pursuing their personal satisfactions in term of fun, dating, sex, and marriage.

The next section will inform how the MBKBs' participants gather in face-to-face interaction. This part will analyze the second trajectory- *interaction order* and shows how interaction order or social arrangement contribute to identity work of the MBKBs' participants and how ideologies are interwoven into the processes of karaoke encounters.

CHAPTER 5

INTERACTION ORDER

As R. Scollon and S. Scollon mention every communication places us in some implied grouping of the interaction order at the same that it places the rest of the world either within or outside of such grouping. We simply cannot use language without implying the groupings of the interaction order (R. Scollon and S. Scollon, 2003, p. 45). This chapter will examine this trajectory of nexus or practice within the Mekong karaoke interaction-*the interaction order*.

The analysis will closely consider two main sessions of typical Mekong karaoke activities; *greeting session* and *singing session.* To note that within the second session, *sexual services negotiating* can occur. Each karaoke session will be analyzed according to R. Scollon and S. Scollon's interaction order concept which is derived from Erving Goffman. The later section will recapitulate conceptual tools proposed by Goffman including situated activity system (SAS), and role distance. The resources of interaction order defined by Scollon will be taken into account. Those theoretical guides will help us to understand how and why the Mekong karaoke girls maintain the encounter and how various identities are co-constructed within the karaoke encounters. Specifically, it will show us whether and to what extent the MKGs have controlled over their decisions, or whether they are controlled by their customers.

In analyzing the MBKB interaction order, I will address each unit of activity as a 'session' in regard to Goffman's definition. As he stated "I call the natural unit of social organization in which focused interaction occurs a focused gathering, or an encounter, or a situated activity system (Goffman, 1961, p. 8)." Focused interaction occurs when people effectively agree to sustain for a time a single focus of cognitive and visual attention, as in conversation, a board game, or a joint task sustained by a closed face-to-face circle of contributors (Goffman, 1961, p. 7). A karaoke session, in

this sense, refers to a period of time which the karaoke participants come to face-to-face interaction. Thus they share their mutual interest and accomplish reciprocal interactional goals, stick to their roles and contribute their actions to maintain their situated activity systems.

It is worthy to note that the Mekong border karaoke session in some cases may not be completed due to the following possibilities. First, the participants lose their mutual interest before a given session is accomplished so that the session is not successfully maintained such as a girl might find a male customer does not meet her personal interest or sexual preference. She then denies serving that male customer. Second, one party violates norms of the MBKB participation, for example a drunk customer coming in and only insists to take a girl out for cheap sexual services. In such a case, the customer is not following the norms of 'welcoming', 'singing', and 'take out' rules. Acceptable processes should be a completion of welcoming session which he is welcomed and then invited to the singing session, get acquainted with a girl and he can then proceed to take a girl out for sex.

A session of karaoke activity can be completed when both parties have pleasantly transitioned the present session to the next one. After they succeed their prior session they then agree up on a move to the next one. For example, when the *greeting session* is initiated and maintained for a period of time, the karaoke participants can shift as they agree to get into the karaoke lounge. At this point, the *greeting session* is completed. Thus they spatially transformed and launch other karaoke activities in the *singing session*. Later, both parties already eat, drink, sing, and chat. They may agree to launch the sexual service negotiation and then spatially transform the *singing session* to the next *sexual service negotiating session.* Normally, the success in the prior session does promote accomplishment in the later sessions. Hence the male customers can decide at which session they want to terminate their karaoke activity, by norms the male customers are expected to follow those steps and complete all three karaoke sessions.

While we look at the processes of how the MKGs and their MKCs mutually sustain their karaoke service encounter, the concept of liminality is also included. This MBKB service encounter itself is also a 'be-twixt and between' space where the participants encounter various kinds of 'mysteries' or 'difficulties' (Turner, 1969).

While maintaining their key roles of the karaoke girls and the customers in a given karaoke session, both parties may try to transform their key roles to other roles and construct other identities other than the karaoke staff, karaoke sex worker, and the customers. By following a particular interaction order, the MKG's contentious identities should be emitted in the interactions. As a karaoke session is liminal, each karaoke session is a space where self-in-between will be constructed.

5.1 Key Analytical Terms

The coming section will map the second component of nexus analysis of the Mekong karaoke interaction, *the interaction order*. In so doing, I would like to start the analysis by recapitulating key terms which I will utilize throughout the analysis. The concept of *interaction order* used in this nexus analysis is introduced by Erving Goffman and later adopted by R. Scollon and S. Scollon. As they state that 'We make use of Erving Goffman's general term *interaction order* to talk about any of the possible social arrangements by which we form relationships in social interactions' (R. Scollon and S. Scollon, 2004, p. 13).

In 1983 Goffman identified 5 units of interaction order. Those are person, contact, encounter, platform of event, and celebrative social occasion (Goffman, 1983). Later in his career, Scollon (2004) concludes that there are 11 units of interaction order. The analysis will draw upon three significant units of karaoke service encounter including the singles, withs, and conversational encounters.

To look at how each of the SAS is maintained, the analysis will identify various units of the interaction order and show the ways in which the participants rely on concepts of face work, line, impression management (Goffman, 1959), and role distance (1961). We shall see how those concepts also situationally facilitate the participants in terms of constructing, negotiating, and representing their multifold identities. The processes of sustaining the SAS will enable us to interpret whether the MKGs are autonomous agencies or the ones who are struggling with asymmetrical relationships in their mundane life.

5.1.1 Line and Face

According to Goffman, people in any social encounter assess one's self and other people in a particular group setting. Thus one may take part in verbal and nonverbal actions that are projective for one's particular point of view, known as *line*. The line concept is the positive social value claimed by one and is defined as their face (Goffman, 1972).

In some situations in which there are more than one representation of self-involved, this notion of multiplex faces may bring about either harmony or hardship. Goffman explains that when a line and internal image of a person's self are harmonious, a person's said to *have*, *be in*, or *maintain* a person's face (Goffman, 1972). Feeling of security and contentedness result from feeling as though a person is in face. Consequently, feelings of confidence set in when one can maintain face successfully, within conditions and resources available in a given encounter.

Goffman views face as an emotive representation of self so discontinuity in the maintenance of face brings about negative feelings and tension. In case discontinuity between information and perceived line emerge, the situation as that person is *in the wrong face* (Goffman, 1972). Similarly a person can be *out of face* (Goffman, 1972) when he/she fails to have a line ready for portrayal. This means one should have knowledge on how to 'save face' of the other participants. Among these cases of failed face, extensive shame and threaten feeling occur. If negative feelings are exhibited, further damage ensues.

Central to Goffman's notion of face, he addresses particular set of societal rules and etiquette that connected with how to interact with others and respect their faces. The goal of social encounter is to maintain face, and social relationship etiquette includes not destroying the presented face of anybody in the group. The individual's priority is to work on a particular image for a person's self and maintain the face.

When peoples' place in interaction is solidified, whether voluntarily or not, they act accordingly avoiding people and places that would bring conflict or threaten face. On the ground that people invest themselves in ideas and ideas are what are vulnerable to offenders, people must often sacrifice justice when put in the face of danger in order to save face.

In short, when people establish themselves and interact with others, Goffman concludes that human nature involves systematic self-regulating participants that are socialized through rituals to hold certain values and abide by particular standards of behavior. Ultimately, human nature is not natural, but a "ritually organized system of social activity" (Goffman, 1972, p. 342).

5.1.2 Impression Management

Goffman investigates a social establishment by applying the dramaturgical metaphor. People normally cooperate in creating impression while they are in social encounters. They do not only have mutual dependency which evokes special relationships of friendship among the participants, but also seek to control or at least influence other participants' perceptions.

It could be that the most influential strategy for which impression management is brought into the social interaction, by the participants is self-representation. Goffman is interested more in ways people, karaoke participants in this case, create an image of themselves and their activity and how this constructed image might be discredited. Also, what techniques can be employed to prevent potential disruption? Those are for pursuing what Goffman calls "to save their own show" (Goffamn, 1959, p. 212).

Goffman considers some major forms of performance disruption—unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, faux pas, and scenes. These disruptions, in every day terms, are often called "incidents" (Goffman, 1959, p. 212). When an incident occurs, the reality sponsored by the performers is threatened. The persons present are likely to react by becoming flustered, ill at ease, embarrassed, nervous, and the like.

Goffman identifies sources of embarrassment and dissonance people should avoid while making impression; "unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, and faux pas are sources of embarrassment and dissonance which are typically unintended by the person who is responsible for making them and which would be avoided were the individual to know in advance the consequences of his activity (Goffman, 1959, p. 210)."

Some situations are called "scenes," which means an individual acts in such a way as to destroy or seriously threaten the polite appearance of consensus, and while

he may not act simply in order to create such dissonance, he acts with the knowledge that this kind of dissonance is likely to result. The common sense phase, "creating a scene," is apt because in effect, a new scene is created by such disruptions (Goffman, 1959, p. 210).

In order to prevent the occurrence of incidents and the embarrassment consequent upon them, it will be necessary for all the participants in the interaction, as well as those who do not participate, to process certain attributes and to express these attributes in practice employed for saving the show. These attributes and practices will be reviewed under three headings: the protective measures used by performers to save their own show; the protective measures used by audiences and outsiders to assist the performers in saving the performers' show; and, finally, the measures the performers must take in order to make it possible for the audience and outsiders to employ protective measures on the performers' behalf (Goffman, 1959, p. 212).

According to Goffman, the participants can employ defensive strategies, for example select loyal and disciplined participants, as in Goffman's term *team mates* and tactful audience, spare plans for the case of a disruption, beware of the information available to the audience etc. The audience counterparts may utilize protective strategies to help the participants to save the show. For instance, they respect the backstage privacy; employ *tactful inattention* when needed as they pretend that a disruptive fact does not last. For this they are motivated e.g. by the identification with the participants or the desire to avoid a scene. But the performers need to facilitate for the audience to be tactful; they must be sensitive to the 'hints' that indicate the audience's discontent with the show and if they are to misrepresent facts, they must follow certain 'ethics' (Goffman, 1959).

5.1.3 Role Distance

Goffman defines *role* as it consists of the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position (Goffman, 1961, p. 85). Sometime when people are performing their role, there is a basic assumption of role analysis that each individual will be involved in more than one system or pattern and, therefore, perform more than one role. Each

individual will, therefore, have several selves, providing us with the interesting problem of how these selves are related (Goffman, 1961, p. 90).

Goffman provides a concept that explains situations when people occasionally detach one's self from the forming role. This might be due to contingency of the situation, conflicts, or uneasiness that happens within the interaction. He points out that 'the concept of role distance provides a *sociological* means of dealing with one type of divergence between obligation and actual performance (Goffman, 1961, p. 115, italicized in original). The concept of *role distance* is concluded 'the term role distance was introduced to refer to actions which effectively convey some disdainful detachment of the performer from a role he is performing (Goffman, 1961, p. 110).

Summarily, this section will take on useful concepts which Erving Goffman's face-to-face interactional focus including situated activity system, situated role, situated identity, face work, line, impression management, and role distance. Then the analysis will also pay attention on the extended concepts which R. Scollon and S. Scollon have provided. Those of which include perceptual spaces, interaction initiation, control, pattern, and significant aspects of the karaoke encounters.

Relying on those conceptual tools, later in this section I will then lay out the dynamics of karaoke participants in social arrangement to understand how they learn the normative rules, embrace their situated roles, construct, negotiate, and represent who they are, so that we can see how the karaoke interaction order facilitates the participants to manage their senses of self while align with major norms in the karaoke world in which the participant currently live.

Before describing the interaction order, I should start with an introduction of normative roles required in the Mekong karaoke sessions. This way we have some pictures of the MBKB session in mind. Therefore, identities, roles, rules, expectations, and relationships of the participants in the Mekong karaoke shops will be explained. Later, I will elaborate details on how the interaction order contributes ways in which the participants construct, maintain, and perpetuate the larger social structures through various units and resources of the Mekong karaoke interaction order. The MKG's identities are key issues to link the micro aspects of a "ritually organized system of social activity" of the MBKBs to the macro reality of Khong Chiam community.

5.2 Normative Roles in Karaoke Sessions

5.2.1 Learning the Roles of the Mekong Karaoke Owners

Basically, the karaoke owners play two main roles in a karaoke session. Those roles are a karaoke supervisor and a conflict controller. The owners supervise the service girls at work. Thus they regularly appear at the receptionist area to check if the girls are ready. They also ensure that the karaoke is saved from some problematic customers, or unexpected legal checks by police officers. For example, an owner at a middle rank karaoke shop was sitting with her karaoke girls in front of the shop. It was around 5PM and that was still early for the karaoke service. The shop was already open and five girls were ready at work but there was no customer yet. The owner found one girl did not finish with her make up. She was trying to blush her cheek. Lipstick was not yet applied. She was inattentively talking on her phone rather than trying to finish make up and be ready at work. Consequently, the owner launched a reminding conversation with her as the following excerpt will show.

O=Karaoke owner

M= Mot

N=Noi

O: /Naaŋ mót khan luûk khaâ maa kà faàw ʔɔɔ̂k pay háp nɛɛ là/

/Khan saâ pən ləəy pay haân ʔɯɯn môt déʔ Bɔɔ dây lɛ́ʔ luûk khaâ/

Mot! If a customer arrives, you need to be hurry to go welcome them.

If you are late, they will pass our shop and go to another, (then) you

will get 'NO' customer.

M: /Thaà yú nɨ̂ɨ là ʔɨ̈ɨ mɛɛ/

/Khàn maa hɔɔ̂t wen paan nɨ̂ɨ khɔɔ̌y nɨ̂ɨ là sì lɛɛn pay háp kɔɔ̀n muu/

I am waiting for a customer, mom. If he arrives that early, I'll run to

welcome him before any others.

N: /Yaà pay sɨà man ʔɨ̈ɨ mɛɛ/

/Khɔɔ̌y hɛ̌n man khaa tɛɛ̀ wâw thɔ là sàp/

/Mɛɛn tam ruât maa chàp man kà bɔɔ̀ chák lɛɛn nɨ̌ dôkʔ/

Don't believe her, mom. I see her obsessed with chatting on her phone.

Even if the police came, she won't realize to run away.

O: /ʔə hét kʰɯɯ haw pʰɔɔ́m nɛɛ mɛɛ́

Khan khaa tɛɛ̀ wâw nam pʰuù baàw man kà bɔɔ dây háp lɛɛ́w luûk

khaâ/

(Alright, make yourself ready. If you only keep chatting to your

boyfriend, you won't welcome any customer.)

M: /ʔóy hày man maa kɔɔ̀n tʰóʔ luûk khaâ/

/Khɔɔ̀y sɨ̀ faáw lɛɛn pay háp/

/Líp sà tík kà hây pən tʰaa hày kà dây tuâ waà, man sì yaâk yǎŋ/

If a customer comes, I'll run to welcome him. I'll have him apply

lipstick for me. That's not gonna be difficult.

O: /Lɛɛ̂w dɔɔ̂k jàŋ dɨɨ khák/

The finished is the best.

M: (Hung the phone up and quickly finished with her blush on and lipstick.)

This very first session, the owners need to prompt every girl to appear perfectly beautiful to the eyes of the customers. The MKGs should appear ready-to-serve the MKCs. The conversation above shows that Mot did not meet the requirement so the owner reminded her to function better by reminding her to welcome a customer, Mot understood that she was not ready since she did not finish applying lipstick. Chatting on the phone obstructed her to finish lips coloring. If a customer arrived, Mot would not be seen as unready to be chosen. Therefore, the owner played a supervisor's role here to ensure that all girls were ready for the greeting session.

In a singing session, the owners supervise overall karaoke services. More importantly, the owner is a key person who resolves conflicts which are caused by the customers, invaders, or sometime by the girls. Frequently, some male customers are drunk during the singing session. They then start to mistreat the girls or did not pay for the karaoke services. In such cases, someone will have to report to the owner. He or she needs to intervene and resolve the issues. Some effective solutions are withdrawing the girls, either the violated one or the problematic one, from the session. In a serious case, the customers are pushed out of the shop. The serious quarrels are reported to police and the police will take the drunken men out. Sometimes invaders

come to the shop and threaten the girls. Customers' wives may come after their husbands and try to take them home. One interview reported that a wife was very angry and poured hot tom yum soup over a service girl's head. Such case, the owner quickly came to the scene. The girl was taken away and the invader was asked to leave.

In a sexual service negotiating session, though the negotiating activities are practiced privately, but the owner still undertake the supervisor's role. The girls are advised to inform the owner some details, for example that where is she going to, with whom, and for how long approximately? These details help the owner to plan the service within the karaoke shop, so the shop is not under staff. In case the customer does not send the girl back to the karaoke shop or they are violated, or simply left then the owner know where to pick up.

5.2.2 Learning the Roles of the Mekong Karaoke Girls

In karaoke sessions, the karaoke service girls perform different roles. Basically they perform a receptionist role at a greeting session. They function as a service staff and an escort in a singing session. Then when the negotiation of sexual service begins, they perform a sex worker's role.

To acquire those roles, the girls are not systematically trained to be karaoke service girls. Most of them are told that their job is to serve food and beverage in the shop, but real job description is never made explicit. If their real job is not openly discussed, there are questions of how exactly do new recruits take on the role? How do they learn it? How do they learn to act and interact? How do they learn the contours of the interaction order? The next section will give explanations to those questions respectively.

The new service staff gradually form the 'serving girl identity' and undertake their 'karaoke girl roles' by being supervised by the owners, observing experienced colleagues, and adjusting their acts to the customers' requests. To elaborate, most new girls do not start to work as soon as they arrive at the karaoke shops. They have several days or a week to observe how this karaoke shop is operated. They take time to learn names of food and drink, karaoke system, karaoke singing services, staff

policies and so on. Some new girls who cannot accept to work in the karaoke environment normally depart within less than two weeks.

Specifically, the new girls implicitly learn how to interact with the customers by 'on job training.' It means that they look and learn from the more experienced girls working in the shop. The owners may teach them how to serve food and drink, exchange coins, and select songs, but it is more normative to them to learn these as practices from recurring activities in the real time karaoke sessions. To ensure that the unspoken subtlety of such apprenticeship learning occurs, the karaoke owners pair a new girl to work with more experienced girls. After a while, the new girl observes and learns to behave, express, and perform karaoke serving girl's roles in presence of the customers.

To exemplify, Noina came to work at a small karaoke shop in Khong Chiam. She was 18 years old when she started to work at the shop. Noina said she learned many tricks and trends from Dao. Dao was the more experienced one working here for six months. Dao was cheerful, outgoing and more senior than other girls in the shop. There was a lesson which Dao and Noina discussed with the owner while having snacks at the back of the karaoke shop. Noina was a new comer, thus the owner pair Dao and Noi together by suggesting a customer take two of them to attend a singing session. While having snacks, they discussed how to perform better in a singing session.

D= Dao

N= Noina

M= Mother (the karaoke bar owner)

D: /Mɛê nɔɔ́y man yaŋ yaàk ʔaay khɛɛ̀k yù. Hɔɔ́ŋ pheŋ hân dɨɨ lɛ̀ʔ kèŋ lɛ̀ tɛɛ̀ waà nàŋ kay chaàk luûk khaâ chák faâk thɔ̀ŋ/

M: /Too kà yàp ʔɔɔ̂k hâay man pay nàŋ kây kây/ (Look at Noina)
Why didn't you move away and let her sit closer to the customer?

N: /Khɔɔ́y khaa tɛɛ̀ hɔɔ́ŋ pheeŋ, thɨɨ̀a naâ khɔɔ́y sɨɨ̀ nàŋ kây khwaà nɨɨ là waǎ/
I was attentively singing. The next time I'll sit closer, ok?

D: /Nàŋ thəəŋ tâk man phûn luûk khaá hɛɛ̀ŋ mák sɨɨ̀a kuu loôt/
Sit on his lap, he likes it. Believe me.

Their conversations reveal how the owner and Dao critiqued her performance and then suggest how to practice it better. In this case, Noina should reduce her 'body distance' by sitting closer to the customer. The owner explained that sitting too far from the customer might indicate that the girl did not like the customer. Focusing solely on singing might make the customer felt that they are disconnected. This is because singing in the karaoke, a singer keeps looking at the monitor in order to follow the lyrics more than people around them. To prevent body distance and disconnection in a session, there are common suggestions for the girls singing for their customers that they handle a microphone by one hand, but leave another hand on his lap, sit close so their legs touch the customer's legs, or simply lean against their customer.

Noina also told that she learned how to sustain a fun karaoke singing session from Dao. "Dao sang very well. She did not always follow the lyrics. Whenever she can, she changed the lyrics and made them funnier. I did the same and it was fun. The customers also like it.' They just could not stop laughing."

Asking Dao, how did you learn how to twist the lyrics and entertain the customers? Dao told our interviewer:

I saw it on Facebook. Someone shared it. The lyrics said 'Please pass my message to him (whisper my message at his ear.)' Someone changed it to 'Please pass my message (slap him on his ear.)' I liked it and started to sing the twisted version in the karaoke lounge, and my customers found it was funny. One of my customer said 'If you asked someone to slap his ear, he will also ask someone to slap your butt!' Ah he actually asked me. 'Let me slap your butt...hahaha.' He quickly spanked my bottom. That was when I screamed and ran away to the toilet. When I came back, they were still laughing at me and trying to spank my bottom again.

Dao also mentioned that she actually learned how to make the customers happy from what the customer asked her to do. She told:

Sometimes a man just finished his hectic life at work. He came here and did not even want to talk. He told me all big bosses came today. His head was spinning. He asked me to serve him very, very, very, cold beer. I didn't even know how to make beer as cool as he wanted. I can't put too much ice. He said don't worry if he did not talk much. I sang some slow-slow (melodious) songs for him and sat by his side. That's all he wanted tonight. He ordered food for me. I sang for him. He seemed very sleepy after several bottles of Leo. I asked him to leave before he was too drunk. He simply agreed to leave and said sorry to me for not chatting. I said sorry to him for serving not chilled beer. He said 'that's fine.' he will come back another time and check if I serve him north pole-lion (chilled Leo beer) and next time he will talk more. He didn't leave me any tips but I didn't bother to ask for it. He looked terrible already. (Dao laughed at the end of this story.)

Dao and Noina reported that karaoke lessons happen every day in the shop. At the beginning Noina did not know how and when to toast the customers to drink beer. She would say 'cheers!' any time she wants. As Dao gave an example; "ʔɨ̀ nóy mɑn bɔ̂k luûk khaâ yók man bɔ̀ bə̀ŋ déʔ waà khaw hét yǎŋ yú Luûk khaâ chàp may puam waà sì hɔ̂ŋ pheeŋ yók yók man waà Luûk khaâ kà bɔɔ̀ huǎsaa yók lɛɛ́w khǎw kà hɔɔ̀ŋ peeŋ sə̌y." (Laughed)

(Noina cheered (our) customers, but she didn't look carefully what the customers were doing. He grasped the microphone and was about to sing. She said 'Cheers! Cheers!' so no customers cared to drink as she cheered it, they just continued to sing.) (Laughed)

Therefore, Dao commented that Noina should have considered when it was appropriate to toast the customer to drink or else her cheering act was not responded. Also, it could interrupt the customers 'ongoing actions' and they might feel annoyed. Thus, Noina learned to observe when and also how to cheer the drink to the customers from Dao. Noina affirmed that she learned from Dao to do better jobs such as to cheer

the drink and entertain the customers. She eventually knew how to sustain suitable small talk, support the customers' chat, avoid embarrassing the customers and avoid resisting when the customers touch her body in the singing session. Like other karaoke girls, she slowly acquired what were things to do, how to conduct those activities properly, and learned to follow various unspoken rules of the karaoke interactions.

In terms of learning the contour of interaction order, we can take Noina's case as an example. When Noina was still new at the karaoke work place, she violated the rule for 'the customers select their girls' once. It is known in the karaoke that the customers have privilege to select their service girls. The karaoke service girls are not prioritized to select the customers. One night Noina was drunk. In her third session of service, she picked a customer whom she knew from the last time and dragged his arm to a corner and had him seated and then managed to start the food and drink order. She started chatting with him because she knew him already. The man was not happy with the session. He gave two reasons. The first is Noina was already drunk so that he did not want her in his singing session. Second, he reported to owner that he heard there were new women who just arrived at the shop. He also wanted to know the new comers. Responsively, the owner immediately apologized him and quickly took Noina out of his session, and invited him to select a girl of his choice. The next day Noina was sober. She was verbally warned by the supervisor that her act last night was seriously not acceptable for two reasons. Firstly, the customer supposed to have his chance to select his girl. She must not remove his chance. Doing so was not fair to other colleagues to be equally selected by a customer. From such incident, though Noina was drunk, but later she learned not to violate the karaoke norm of 'the customers are privileged to choose the girls.'

In conclusion, the normative roles of the MKGs are to be ready to serve their customers, pay attention to the customers, and ensure the customers are entertained. Noina and other girls who just start to work at a karaoke bar in Khong Chiam form their karaoke girl identity and learn their karaoke girls' roles and then interact properly by learning from their supervisor's advices and warnings, colleagues' examples and comments, their customers' requests, and social media applications such as Facebook, Line, and Wechat, etc.

5.2.3 Learning the Roles of the Mekong Border Karaoke Customers

Most karaoke customers are local men. They learn how to be a karaoke customer by three main practices. The first is by obtaining karaoke experiences from their acquaintances. Those could be their friends, colleagues, or relatives who go to karaoke shops before. Then they learn directly from being a karaoke goer themselves. The second practice is that they observe the interactions in the karaoke sessions especially in the karaoke lounges. The third is to directly obtain instruction from the karaoke girls.

In the local community, it is unavoidable to hear about karaoke going experiences. In work places, noodle shops, and food stalls, people frequently talk about the Mekong karaoke shops and girls. For example, Mr. Sii is working as a local healthcare volunteer. He told that his first time karaoke experience was told by his friends who went and took a girl out to a local hotel. From his friends' stories, he learned about karaoke service girls and processes of taking a karaoke girl out. He told our interviewer that;

I= Interviewer

S= Mr. Sii

I: The customers are both local men and tourists. How do they find out where and how to go to a karaoke shop for the first time?

S: It was not hard to find out. Everyone talked about karaoke. To me, my friends told me that there was one shop. There were many beautiful girls. They were young and cute. They did good job serving drink. Some were shy, but some were so talkative. He told me that night he spent 600 in the karaoke shop but about 2,000 to take a girl to an hourly-hotel. I asked him which hotel he took the girl to? He didn't tell me. He said 'you may leak my secret to my wife.' He was sure that she had 3,000 baht to buy his secret from me and I could have that amount of money to go the karaoke myself. (Laughed)

I: Two, three thousand baht for going to a karaoke each time? Is that expensive?

Sii: It is god damn expensive for us! Sorry! But no men go karaoke every day. We go when we have special budget.

Other karaoke goers have similar experience as Mr. Sɨ̆. They hear about going to karaoke shop and taking the girls out before their first time going to a karaoke themselves. Thus information they receive from their people normally provide them ideas about how to be a border karaoke customers, what kind of activity they can do in the karaoke and what are common rules for interacting with the girls at the karaoke shops.

Then when it comes to the first time experience, Mr. Sɨ̆ explained that it is common for everyone who go somewhere the first time, they look at other people and figure out how to do things. He gave an example of going to a hospital in comparison to going to a karaoke shop;

I= Interviewer

S= Mr. Sii

Sii: Villagers don't come to a hospital often. Some villagers are new and know nothing about hospital services. So they need to look at other people standing in the queue and later learn to wait in the queue just like other people do. Same way, going to a karaoke shop for your very first time you need to look at other tables. You will see examples. What are they doing? How many girls they take? And, sorry for my language, how far the girls allow the man to touch her?

I: What if you enter the karaoke when there are no other customers? You are the first customer of the day and unfortunately it's your first time.

S: Well ask the girl. Don't run away or she will run after you. (Laughed)

In addition to observing other customers, they learn from the karaoke girls who are selected to serve in their singing session. Nok shared with the interviewer that there were a small group of customers coming from Khonkaen. They were university students who came to Ubon Ratchathani for their exploring trips. Nok said that this group never went to a border karaoke shops where there were sexual services available. They came to explore the karaoke experience for the first time. Nok reported her experience with this group that;

They asked all the time. They asked about everything. They asked me about the juke box, the coins, my hometown, my language, and my food in Laos and here in Khong Chiam, my customers, my sexual services, other girls' prices, and our future plans. I introduced them that here the customer share with us food and drink. I asked them "Whether that is ok to you brothers?" Their answer was yes. One boy said, 'you can eat whatever you want as long as you answer our questions.

Therefore the girls play a crucial role in detailing expected activities in the karaoke shops. They are the most informative so the customers can obtain information about preferable activities and acceptable behaviors that can be done in the session. For example, the girls have their customers seated, and then offer him the food and drink menu, urge him to order snack, food, and drink first, and follow by giving him the song menu, explain to him how to order the songs, how much it costs to sing one song, what's kind of coin is accepted by the karaoke juke box, etcetera.

Those participants' normative roles are all necessary in sustaining the Mekong karaoke sessions. Also, those roles explicate layers of different stakeholders' beneficial purposes. For instance, the customers performing males being served roles, they accomplish their entertaining goals such as fun, relaxation, and discretion. The girls performing the karaoke serving roles will get tips, rewards, income from selling sex, and may be extra/long-term financial supports from some customers. The karaoke girls who achieve good performance, the owners also support them by providing free lodging, meals, and ground transportation. In case the karaoke sessions are run smoothly and it lasts long enough, the girls have time to advocate the customers to drink more so that the owners can sell more beverages and encourage them to sing so the owners can sell more coins.

So far, we learn how the MBKB owners, the MKGs, and the MKCs learn their normative roles. Overtime, the owners learn to embed their roles as the supervisor and conflict controller. The MKGs learn to perform the receptionist role, the serving contributor, and later the karaoke sex worker. The MKCs lean how to be a prospective customer by asking the MKGs, listening to their acquainted people, and directly observe the other MKCs at other tables.

The coming section will explain the interaction order in all three of the Mekong karaoke typical sessions. We shall see in details: What are units of the interaction order? What are significant concepts and resources available for maintaining a situated activity systems? In case some sessions are not successful, then what are factors that lead to failures? What happen when things go wrong? More importantly, how the face, line, impression management, role distance, and some significant resources of interaction order contribute to the MKGs' construction, negotiation, and representation of variegated identities.

5.3 Interaction Order in the Greeting Session

The first MBK encounter happens outside the karaoke bar. It is a space where the Mekong karaoke serving girl identities are first formed. Late evening, the MKGs are present at the front of the shop so that the passing people and prospect customers can see. Once the customers arrive at this space, the social arrangements between the MKGs and their customers initiate.

The interaction order in karaoke greeting session is assembled out of three main types of interaction order. These types are what Goffman calls 'singles' and 'withs.' Occasionally, the 'conversation encounter' is also formed to facilitate this session.

The 'singles' social arrangement refers to 'a person who is by himself or herself in a social space among others' (R. Scollon and S. Scollon, 2003, p. 62). The girls in their singles karaoke arrangement are still in charge of being the karaoke serving girls but this allows them to loosen their serving and accompanying duties with their customers. In the Mekong border karaoke setting, the service girls are gathering in front of the karaoke shop in the evening. One of them is still by herself so she is not engaging with her service friends, the karaoke owner, or the customers. Thus their common practices are when they sit on a marble bench in a relaxing posture. As it is important for them as the serving karaoke girl, they usually pay attention to their beauty and freshness so they keep themselves look 'good' especially when they are not occupied by either the owner or the customers. They normally take a chance to improve their look. Some girls may recheck her makeup; add some more

eye shadow, brush on, or lipstick, and put on decorative hair clips. Some girls might browse their Facebook page or checking their social media applications such as Line, We chat, Messenger, etc.

The male customers can be in the 'singles' arrangement when they are by themselves smoking in a provided smoking area outside the karaoke shop. They take a break from their singing session and hang around outside the loud karaoke lounge. This opportunity can be free from karaoke singing and chatting activities. They might just take a breath at a silent corner, smoke, or rearrange their attires. Some might take this chance to check their belongings in the pockets. After a while, they will go back to the singing session or negotiation for sex services.

The 'withs' are initiated when the girls socialize with their friends, and when the service girls welcome their customers in front of the shop. The first pattern of the 'withs' happens among the girls themselves.

To the girls, they are guided by the owners, their colleagues, and former customers that they need to look not just beautiful but also 'sexy.' Learning from being told, they dress up with short, tight and obviously sexy attire. At the front, we can see them trying to look sexy in the eyes of the customers. Some girls have their friends to finish make up, brush eyes shadows, and decorate their hair. Then they apply lipstick, and lower their low-cut blouse and get comments on how they look from their friends. This type of interaction order also indicates that their duty is to showcase their readiness for the evening karaoke services. More importantly, they should attract the customers by ways they look beautiful and sexy.

The second unit of the 'with' occur when the contributors are the girls and their customers. Once the customers enter the receptionist area, one or two girls will come to greet and take them into the karaoke singing session.

5.3.1 Right of Initiation

In this session, we will describe the 'take in' interaction order as opposed to what happens in the sexual service negotiation session as the 'take out.' Most of the time, the take in interaction order gives the right of initiation to the girls. Therefore the girls greet, launch some small talk, and show consideration to take the customers into the karaoke lounge. She needs to, in some ways, show the customers that he can choose the serving girls other than herself too. For example, a brief utterance *'Yaâk nàŋ nam phuu dǎy kɔ̂ ʔə̀ən ʔaw dây.'* (You can call the girl(s) whom you want to sit with.) Sometimes the girl concisely asks: *'Mák phǎy kà ʔaw phuu nân dəə̂'* ('Please pick the one whom you like).

Generally, experienced customers know that to play by the karaoke rule, the priority should be given to the girl who comes to welcome him. Most men follow this girl into the karaoke singing session. In some cases, the men excuse themselves to select another girl and basically give good reasons so that he does not upset the girls. The customer may say 'You have many friends here, can I talk to one of them.' Indirect expression like this indicates that he wants to choose another girl so a proper response from the welcoming girl must be 'Okay, you may call one of them,' or 'tell me which one you'd like to talk to, I'll call her for you.' Thus all girls have the shared knowledge that the customer has the right to choose.

5.3.2 Sense of Time

The girls will save time spent on this session. Although they look relaxed before the customers arrive, as soon as the customers appear they express, sense of urgency, enthusiastic sense. The quicker the girls take the customer inside, the shorter time for the customers to glimpse for another service girl. Also, the singing session which is the money making and relationship developing can start. The girls may answer some questions posted by their customers, but it is normally not longer than 15 minutes for running this session. The 'withs' interaction order gives times for both the girls and customers to check each other out. They make sure that both of them will go to the singing session with the one they have first impression for. Some cases, the girls and customers already know each other. So when they come together, the

greeting is completed very quickly. In 2 to 3 minutes, the customers will be seated inside the karaoke singing lounge.

In a small karaoke bar by the Khong Chiam Bridge, Dao was very active to approach a customer each day. She told our interviewer that she had many dependents and needed more remittance than other girls. Thus each customer parking his vehicle in front of the shop, she would eagerly welcome and convince him to launch a singing session. For the girls, their chances of making income should be initiated as soon as possible.

(A quiet New Year eve 2015, three karaoke girls gathering in front of the shop after their quick dinner in front of the shop. A truck turned in and a man came out. All three girls recognized the man. He was a revisiting customer coming to karaoke shops in this town in the last two years. As soon as he opened the door, Dao reached him and welcomed him as her karaoke shop's customer.)

D= Dao

C= Customer

G= Karaoke girl

1	D:	/Sà wàt dɨɨ khaâ Sàbaaydɨ̌/
		(Hello (in Thai), Hello (in Lao).)
2	C:	/Sàbaaydɨ̌/
		Hello. (Smiled and then turned back to lock his truck.)
3	D:	**/**Maa chàk khɔn? Maa tɛɛ phû dɨaw bɔ̂?/
		How many people coming? You come alone?
4	C:	/<u>Phuu dɨaw lɛɛ́w</u> châw khəəy hěn khɔɔ̌y maa kàp muu yuù bɔɔ?/
		Alone! Have you seen me coming with other friends?
5	D:	/Bɔɔ̀ chak thɨ̀ɨ/
		Nope! Not even once.
6	C:	/Thaǎm hét yǎŋ sàn/
		Why do you ask then?
7	D:	(Laughed and grasped his left arm)
8	C:	/Câw thaǎm hét yǎŋ?/
		Why do you ask? (He pulled his arm back, knowingly smiled, and looked closely into her face near his left shoulder)

9   D: Bɔɔ̀ thaǎm kà dây maɑ maɑ nàŋ nam phuu saǎw niî.

                  Fine, I won't ask. Come sit with ladies.

                  (She slightly dragged him to come in and had him seated at the round table where two other girls were sitting)

10   G: Châw kɨn bɛɛ yǎŋ?

                  What kind of beer you'd like to drink?

The interaction above shows that Dao actively went to welcome the customer. This eagerness expresses that the karaoke girls' role at the beginning of the session is to include the just-arrive men as their karaoke shop's customer as soon as they can. She immediately launched her greeting quotes in both Thai and Lao language. The Thai quote presents that the karaoke service was officially open. The Lao quote represents their Laotian girls' identity which the local karaoke customers basically look for as their domestic exotic. Therefore, expressing *"Sàbaaydiǐ"* also communicate that there are Laotian service girls available here. Although this customer knew already, but to exhibit Laotian identity is a part of the Mekong karaoke attractions.

Every girl needs to know the amount of customers so that they can serve food, drink, and help the customers to identify numbers of the service girls to serve on their session. Dao asked 'how many people are coming? In this case, the customer knew that Dao and the girls at this shop recognized him. He was sure that all girls knew he normally came here alone. Thus he started to play with a normal question which any karaoke girls ask when their customer arrived. Once Dao found her frequent question was not necessary, she immediately stopped bothering him with that question. Then she suddenly changed the verbal interaction to somatic action as she pulled his arm to the table. Her action conveys that this is the beginning of a typical singing session. She immediately asked him to order beverage. Assuming that the greeting session between them had completed. His greeting session was transformed to the chatting/singing session, although he was seated outside the karaoke singing lounge.

With the revisiting customer, Dao and other karaoke girls quickly initiated greeting, and quickly took the customer into the shop. This is because the karaoke customers are likely looking for a shop where they do not know the girls or there are

new service girls. A successful greeting session will define whether the revisiting customer will stay in the shop or not? Dao reported that sometimes they were a bit slow to welcome the customers. The customers just greeted them and went to another shop. The customers simply claimed that they came with other friends and they were waiting at the next shop. Therefore, it is very important for the girls to be fast and pro-active to take the customer into the shop and shift their greeting session to the karaoke singing session.

In case the greeting session is not sustained well or not transformed into the next session quick enough, the customers can change their mind. For example, they do not select the girl who comes to welcome him. In the worst case, they leave this shop and find another shop.

5.3.3 Impression Management in the MBKB Greeting Sessions

The greeting session is significant since at their front stage. It is the social arrangement which provide space and time for the participants to construct their identities, exercise their karaoke roles, and maintain the whole karaoke service encounter. To accomplish that, both parties pay attention to impression management and intensively deliver in this session. This is because the girls here have the right to decide whether or not they would serve the customer.

In front of a mid-ranked karaoke shop in December, a customer's truck arrived. As soon as the truck completely stopped, two service girls stood up to welcome men coming out of the truck. One enthusiastic girl walked quickly to greet the customers at their truck. She pulled the car's door for the driver. Four men of their late forties came out. They wore casual office work attires. Two of them wore dark slacks and light color polo-shirts. Other two men dressed with slacks, shirts and jackets with their governmental organization's logo on the jackets. One of them carried a bottle of alcohol. They were still chatting with each other while gathering near the truck. When they saw the service girls gathering in front of the shop, a couple men smiled at them.

Such arrival reveals some important points that the customers can make themselves impressive by the karaoke service girls. The customers' importance is shown by the truck, the office attire, the bottle of alcohol, and their smiling faces.

5.3.4 Role Distance in the MBKB Greeting Sessions

Role distance can occur in the greeting sessions. Some MKCs are not welcome due to their past record at the MBKB. For example, a MKC was badly drunk and violated the MKGs or some MKCs may arrive at the MBKB late at night after they got drunk from somewhere else. In this case, the MKG who come welcome would detect danger or uneasiness which the MKCs may be projecting. In this case, the MKG would show the MKCs that she is not taking a customer. Although the MKCs acknowledge that is a lie, it is common and widely used by any MKGs. They put a huge gap between themselves and unwanted MKCs, technically by telling a lie. Once another MKC arrives at the MBKB, she can return to perform an active serving and karaoke sex work roles.

Sometimes, the MKGs may find her MKC is hesitating whether to go inside the singing lounge or not. The MKC's hesitation makes her feels uncertain. During waiting for the MKC to decide, sometime they even pick their phone and reply the messages while the MKC are checking out other girls or waiting for a group of his friends to arrive. When the MKC directs his attention to her again, then they continue to maintain and complete the greeting session. There are more role distances occurring in this greeting session. Those two are a couple of examples.

In short, the significances of interaction order of the greeting sessions are the overall unit of greeting session is the MBKB 'service encounter' and there are 3 main units of interaction order: 'single' and 'with' and 'conversational' contributed to this umbrella of interaction order. In general, the MKG has the right to initiate the interaction. Consequently they instruct and control the time of interaction.

When the MKGs are by themselves or in a 'singles' unit of interaction, they distance physical arrangement away from the service tasks and her MKCs. In the 'withs' unit, the MKGs move toward the MKCs. The messages are delivered to each other by both parties. In this session, the MKGs have undivided attention toward the MKCs but the MKCs have divided attention towards different girls.

5.3.5 Conclusion

Thus far we have learned that different forms of interaction order occur in the greeting session; singles, withs, and conversational encounters are formed in such a way that brings together the MKGs and their MKCs. The single encounters appears to show that the MKGs loosen their active roles being the MBK service staff, but they do act partially to maintain their service roles and /phuû saǎw/ or /saǎw lɑɑw/ identity as they keep themselves presentable. The 'withs' and 'conversational' encounter bring the key participants together and the conversations between them allow them to fully embed their MKCs and MKGs roles. The MKCs embrace their MBKB customers and they prompt themselves to act as the MBKB participants while the MKGs arrive the point which they have to perform their service roles by welcoming the MKCs, showing consideration, and expression willingness to serve, etc. Also, the /phuû saǎw/ and/saǎw lɑɑw/ identity is formed as they initiate their talk with the MKCs in both Thai and Lao language, and moving their young feminine body toward the MKCs.

In the conversational encounter, there must be impression management happening among the two parties. The MKGs are trying to invite the MKCs into the next session while the MKCs inquire about their topics of concerns. In general, the MKGs are trying to influence the MKCs interest in this session by showing their youth, cheerfulness, willingness, and warm welcome to the customers. They do avoid to embarrass the MKCs whom they may not like to service by indirectly deny the MKCs and suggest him/them to select someone else. The right to select the MKGs is reserved for the MKCs to conduct.

This option may suggest the right of consumers in the capitalist system where they can choose their good. The /phuû saǎw/ and /saǎw lɑɑw/ identity which is formed here is some treated as being their 'good' to be selected by the buyer. This interpretation is totally pessimistic if the MKGs are idle and only wait to be selected. The interaction order does not allow the MKCs selection of the MKGs to be an absolute right over the /phuû saǎw/ or /saǎw lɑɑw/ 'bodies. As a matter of fact, the MKGs do select their MKCs and reserve the right to deny serving one whom she does not feel comfortable to serve.

Once the MKCs are present, it is a rule that the MKGs as a receptionist must move toward the MKCs in order to show their willingness, readiness to serve. This move allows the MKGs to have the right to initiate the conversation. More importantly the serving identity is formed and expressed though showing the MKGs' physical appearance, physical co-presence and arrangement of the MKGs and MKCs, and initiation of the interaction by the service provider- the MKGs.

The sex worker identity is introduced through visual expression, being chosen by the MKCs. The girls filter and reserve the right to turn down the MKCs. The /phuû saǎw/ and /saǎw lɑɑw/ identity is basically expressed through their 'front stage' in which the MKCs can check out as soon as they arrive at the MBKB. The MKCs show that they are beautiful, cheerful, open to be flirted, etc. Once they initiate the talk in Lao language, the /saǎw lɑɑw/ identity is projected. When the MKCs offer the MKCs to select the serving girls and invite the MKCs into the karaoke, their serving identity is performed. By all expressing all those identities together, the karaoke sex worker is introduced to the MKCs.

5.4 Interaction Order in the Singing Session

In the singing session, the main unit of interaction order is 'conversational encounter.' It is when the MKGs lead the MKCs into the singing lounge. The first part of the interaction is more like a service encounter in which the MKGs offer food and drink menu. Thus the MKGs usually initiate the interaction. When the MKCs are selecting their food and drink, the MKGs go get the song menu and microphones. As soon as the MKCs order drinks and food, the MKGs will eagerly manage to get the order to be prepared, and served in a timely manner.

When the drinks are ready at the table, the MKGs will quickly serve beer or liquor which the MKCs order for themselves. Some MKCs order non-alcoholic drinks for the serving girls too. They normally start their conversation and get to personal details of each other at this moment.

Common enough, both the MKGs and the MKCs make up myriad names to use while chatting in the singing session. Some MKCs may use real nick names, but the MKGs normally have their myriad name to use while they are working in the

MBKB. Sometimes the names they give to the MKCs are not the same with that they are called by their peers. Therefore, forming untraceable identities is basically processed at the very beginning of the conversation.

The following conversational encounter will show processes which the MKGs and the MKCs work on concealing their real identities. The excerpt is an interaction between two MKCs in their early fifties and two MKGs, one is 24 years old and another girls is 19 years old. It was the time when they sit down on a singing table, after ordering food and drink, but before the singing activity begins.

C1 and C2 refers to the MKCs

G1 (24 years old) G2 (19 years old) refers to the MKGs

1 C1 /Chaâw sɨɨ yăŋ?/

What's your name?

2 G2 /Chaâw hàn dɔ̀ sɨɨ yăŋ?/

What about your name?

3 C1 /Khɔɔ̌y thaǎm châw bɔɔ̀ mɜɜ̀n hàɤ châw thaǎm khɔɔ̀y/

I'm asking you. You are not supposed to ask me (You should have answered).

4 G1 /Man bɔɔ̀ mɪɪ sɨɨ̀ mɪɪ tɛɛ̀ ŋɔɔ ŋɔɔ/

She doesn't have a name. What she has is only curves.

(The speaker played with synonyms of the word 'sɨɨ̀' which means 'name' and 'straight' and in the later sentence she matched it with its antonym 'ŋɔɔ ŋɔɔ' which means 'not straight or curves.' Literally said; She has no name/ is not straight. She has only curves.)

5 C2 /Khɔn chàŋ dǎy bɔɔ̀ mɪɪ sɨɨ̀/

You have no name? What kind of man!

6 G1 /Bɔɔ̀ mɪɪ sɨɨ̀ mɪɪ tɛɛ̀ ŋɔɔ/ (laugh)

I have no name, only curves. (The G1 laughed and all customers laughed, the speaker smiled knowingly)

7 C2 /Khɔɔ̀y dây yɨn waa châw sɨɨ nók mɛɛ̀ bɔ?/

(I heard you were called 'Nok,'right?

8	G1	Dây yɨn phǎy ʔəə̂n waa nɔ́k
		Who did you hear calling me Nok?
9	C2	Muù châw hân lɛɛ̀
		Your friends indeed!
10	G1	ʔəə̂n nɔ́k kà dáy (raise voice at the last word)
		You can call me Nok.
11	C1	Tɔ̂k lɔŋ waa sɨɨ̀ nɔ́k?
		So you name is Nok?
12	G1	ʔəə̂n yǎŋ kà dây waà tɛɛ̀ châw ʔəə̂n khɔɔ̀y
		You can call me with any name as long as (I know) you're addressing me.

From this dialog, we can see that the major function of all turns contributed by these MKGs is to make her name ambiguous. When C1 asked for her name, she returned asking the same question to the customer (Line 2). This turn delays the exact answer that she did not want to tell yet so she did not tell the customer as he ask the first time. The customer then repaired his turn by emphasizing that he was asking for her name. At the end of the turn, he slightly reprimanded the girl for not answering his question (Line 3). However, the MKG friend intervened by playing with synonyms of the word 'name' and 'straight' and its antonym 'not straight, curve' (Line 4). This turn plays various roles in sustaining the SAS by saving the MKG friend's face. She tuned seriousness posted by the customer down by putting hilarious sentences. These sentences helped to orient attention of the customers from a 'name' to other meanings. Also, it created a sense of impression management which she successfully made the customers laugh. She exhibited also valuable karaoke girls' skill by making fun talk with the customers. This turn also draws in participation from the second customer (C2) as he expressed his exclamation (Line 5). The G2 can then join the ambiguous synonyms punch line (Line 6). This turn again attempts to redirect the focus of talk from a 'name' to 'curves.' The C2 then indirectly insist that there is a name that the C2 MKG can be addressed. He proved that her name, as being called by her MKG friends, is Nok. The second endeavor of the first customer (C1) to identify her name comes in Line 11. He tried to get confirmation on her exact name from the C2 MKG.

Nevertheless, the C2 MKG did not really confirm that her name is Nok. In Line 12, she only allowed the MKCs to call her Nok and whatever name the customers may call her. Two customers tried many times to retrieve her real nick name, but the two MKGs tried to conceal their identity with any possible turns to make ambiguous identity, and the last sentence even made the name unknown. Therefore, the encounter ends with the fact that her real identity (nick name) remained ambiguous, or even unknown to the customers. Thus the SAS was successfully sustained by all participants meanwhile the MKGs succeeded to conceal their identity by not telling the customer their nick name, but let the MKCs address her by using any myriad name.

Information that is normally concealed by the MKCs is their professions. Similar to forming a myriad name, their occupation is normally twisted. One might be a teacher from a secondary school in the adjacent districts coming occasionally to Khong Chiam MBMBs. They normally tell the MKGs with other occupation such as trader, freelancer, electrical technician working for a company, etc. The fact that they are teachers normally revealed when they become regulars of the MBKBs. After a while, some MKCs exposed their real identity with real name and occupation, but this is not common. Concealing their name and profession is better for saving their fame, and prevent conflicts with their wife. This is for the case that the MKCs get attached with the MKGs and their wife found out.

As the singing session lasts approximately 2-4 hours, there is plenty of time to talk about different topics which the MKCs and MKGs may think of and bring them out to share. Our observations find that the famous topics are called 'not serious stories.' That means the MKCs come to the MBKB for relaxing, entertainment, music, and major of them end their MBKB visiting with sex service. They do not want to discuss any serious topics. If the political, religious, or economic issues are brought up, those will be treated in a funny or sarcastic ways. They make jokes out those kinds. The most famous topics, if we ask the MKGs, are about food, daily life, traveling, relationships, and romance, Lao-Isan culture, traveling, song, music, some life experiences, making fun of people in their work place, jokes, dirty jokes, etc.

When snacks or/and food are put on the table. The MKGs and MKCs start eating. To follow the rule of male-patronage, the MKCs are expected to share the food

and drinks with the MKGs throughout the session. This part is unique. In comparison with other types of restaurant services, the waiter/waitress is not supposed to share the customers' food. The main task is to provide service. Our interviews with some MKCs, some customers do not like this rule but they know this is the common practice that is happening here in the MBKBs. They do comply by spare the budget for treating food and drinks to the MKGs.

The eating, drinking, singing, and chatting co-occur. Both of the MKGs and MKCs take turns to sing. Sometimes they stop singing pay more attention to chatting. As they converse and sing, the MKCs normally initiate touching the MKGs' body-hand, legs, thighs, rub their back. This is not the rule that the MKCs should start first. Sometimes the MKGs start leaning against the MKCs or hold the MKCs' arms. It depends how their conversation goes. If they like each other, the touching and processing to reduce social distance from a stranger-customer-acquainted and then a flirty partner will be processed quickly.

In terms of space, the karaoke singing lounge is well equipped with karaoke devices including the karaoke juke boxes, microphones, song menu, computer in case that karaoke bars provide technological support for accelerating song selection and canceling the unwanted songs. Songs and music make people feel relaxed and happy. This part also supports good mood the MKCs desire as they set their goal for relaxing or having fun. Alcohol makes the MKCs relaxed. Some well-cushioned sofas also support them to feel comfortable. Long sofas let them share the same seat and easily slide their body to each other. The good company of the MKGs also allows them to feel happy with both the services and the atmosphere of the place. Therefore, the arrangement of the place, well-equipped karaoke services, the MKGs accompaniment, music, singing concurrently contributes to 'making the MKCs relaxing, fun and happy.'

While having conversations, the MKGs and MKCs have long hours to discuss many things, exchange different life experiences with each other. This action provides the space and time for the MKGs to also express who they are. On top of being the serving girls as they are doing the tasks right now, they can talk about themselves as mother to their children, daughter with obligation, relate themselves to the MBKB owners as employees, talk about their past experience as a rural girl, telling their

beauty fantasy as a young woman, and expressing themselves as a new entrepreneur and a future millionaire in Laos and so forth.

This singing session is a very good space for them to talk about who they are, other than the */saǎw sɔ̀ɔp/*-serving MKGs and */saǎw laaw/*-the MKG sex worker. In this session, it is important to both the MKGs and the MKCs to not make each other feel bad or lose their face. While talking, the MKCs try to follow up with the girls' opinion, preferences, and other things. If the MKCs threaten her face, the MKG might take a role to distance herself to maintain the session. She can walk out for a while, leave to the toilet, or excuse and directly tell the MKCs about what she does not like to be treated. In case the role distance does not help, she could leave the session without getting her *drink fee*.

On the MKCs' side, the men also need to make friendly conversations. Although they know the MKGs do offer sex service, but the MBKB does have the hidden rule about 'make the girl like you' or else your chance of taking a girl out for sex service is decreasing. Some cases are even not possible. Therefore the MKGs and the MKCs have mutual interactional goal for making good conversation that enables good feeling toward each other, develop trust, and foster sense of intimacy. If these kinds of feelings happen, then there is high possibility for both of them to start negotiating for sexual service after closing the singing session.

During the session, the MKGs will try to impress the MKCs by serving food well, taking care of what the MKCs want, contribute good talk, allow to touch her body, hug or kiss. They normally refrain from using cell phone while they are with the MKCs. Not always the case, but good session of talking and singing has no cell phone involves in their interaction, except when they decide to exchange telephone number or social media ID.

Shortly, the singing session facilitates conversational encounter between the MKGs and their MKCs. The time is about 2 to 4 hours long. The arrangement of the place is supportive for making the MKCs feel relaxed, fun, and happy with both karaoke service and the girls. The rule for the session is both parties should contribute to make good talk and impression toward each other as this part leads to sexual service negotiation as it the ultimate goals for most of the MKCs. Role distance is needed when MKGs feel uncomfortable. In case the role distance that the MKGs use

is not effective, the session might fail. Thus both parties normally pay attention to make a good session. If the MKCs wants to proceed to 'take out', then he realizes he must make the MKGs like him as well. This is because there will be no sexual service if the MKGs do not like the MKCs, regardless if he offers money. The major rule of the interaction order here is, sexual service is not solely treated on monetary base.

5.5 Conclusion

The interaction order unit in the singing session shows that the most significant unit is conversational encounter. In this session, the MKGs and the MKCs are together in the singing lounge. The MKGs usually initiate the conversation, though that is not always the case.

As they converse and sing, the MKCs may initiate touching their body-hand, legs, thighs, rub their back. The topics they talk mainly include 'unserious' topics, according to the MKCs. Thus, food in Lao-Isan culture, traveling, song, music, some life experiences, making fun of people in their work place, jokes, dirty jokes, etc. The major identities are actively performed /saǎw səə̀p/ as they serve, /saǎw lɑɑw/as they talk in Lao, and /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/ as they work at the karaoke bar, those identities partially promote sex worker's roles.

During the conversation, as the topics widen, the MKGs have chances to insert other identities such as young women, daughter, wife, Laotian, life navigator, future entrepreneur, normal woman, kids, sister, employee. During the singing session, the MKGs try to maintain in line with the MKCs, save the MKCs' face, be polite and follow the MKCs' wants. They impress the MKCs by serving food and drink well, contributing good talk, facilitating singing and performing for the MKCs sometime. In case the encounter does not go well, role distance occurs to sustain the conversational encounter.

The major rule of the interaction order is; sexual service is not solely treated on monetary base. In case the MKGs do not feel a connection, they tend to deny sexual service requested by the MKC. This is because there will be no sexual service if the MKGs do not like the MKCs, regardless the customer's power to select the girls and the money to buy.

The next chapter will analyze discourse as it empirically occurs in the local contexts of the MBKBs and the Khong Chiam community. This section will look closely what are pronouns used by the participants and what are the attributes of those being referred to by particular pronouns in certain situations.

CHAPTER 6

DISCURSIVE PRACTICE OF OTHERING BY USES OF PRONOUNS

6.1 Introduction

Social categorization of identity can be realized through the use of pronouns in the interaction. Pronoun selection is a grammatical tool social participants use to show how they locate themselves and manage social relationship with others. The first-person pronoun addresses the speaker; the second-person pronoun addresses the listener, and the third-person pronoun relates other people or things that are not present at the time of talk. These functions of pronouns seem simple, yet using pronouns do some identity work by binding significant cultural meaning, social values, and encode power relation into processes as the participants purposively select one to use in a given interactional context.

Therefore the selection of pronoun and processes of using pronouns are not solely an issue of language, rather they abide by social and contextual context of use. van Dijk (2003) exemplified that pronouns may be markers of dominance or politeness. Talk of social members in virtual contexts might instantiate, either covertly or overtly, one form of social relation, and that could be of dominance, politeness, assistance or solidarity (van Dijk, 2003).

Scholars from different fields have investigated pronouns in texts and context of use and agree on the findings that the use of pronoun is by no means neutral in mediating cognition, culture, society, politics. In addition, pronoun plays a key role in the process of social categorization by which people subjectively classify others as members of their own group (in-group) or as members of another group (out-group) (Allport, 1954; Hamilton & Trolier, 1986; Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oaks,

Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Wilder, 1986; Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990, p. 475).

It is quite common that perceivers come to view in-group members (us) as more similar to them while view out-groups (them) as relatively less complex, less variable, and less individualized than are in-groups. Pronouns have ability to imply the in-group or out-group status of people, collective pronouns such as we, us, and ours or they, them, and theirs are likely to be especially powerful influences in social cognition and perception. The referential pronouns are linked to the cognitive categorization of people into one's in-group or out-group (Perdue, Gurtman, Dovidio, & Tyler, 1990).

A central function of pronouns is anchoring language to specific speakers in particular contexts and in signaling the reciprocal changes in the roles of participants through their performance of, and engagement in, interactional communication Bamberg, De Fina, and Schiffrin (2006). Through management of these linguistic realizations, a speaker may utilize pronouns to express affiliation with mainstream or 'naturalized' positions (Fairclough, 1992). Some members of a dominant group may unconsciously give off controlling self over the minority group meanwhile a member of the minority group may also try to distance her from being labeled as the derogative 'them'.

Through the process of using pronouns, the discursive processes shall unfold asymmetric power relations conveyed through daily rituals. To some extent, pronouns used in a given social interaction connotes social segregation by grouping sense of the in-group and out-group which unavoidably attach various attributes of both the social categorization of the in-group and out-group counterpart.

To emphasize, pronouns are parts of linguistic signs at referential level identify speakers both in regard to their interactional roles or gender, as Silverstein (1976) points out that those linguistic signs also direct to elements of the speech situation like time and place. While van Dijk (1994) founds that '*topics*' play a key role in making 'US' and 'THEM' (capitalized in original). The overall social cognitions about the immigrants or refugees under his analysis, the 'them' indexes socio-cultural difference, deviance of established, and competition for scarce resources.

The MBKB discourse setting is different from other former studies. There is potential that looking at pronoun choices as well as discursive processes of utilizing Thai and Lao pronouns could lead us to discover diverse social cognitions while the participants work on their identities. What would be the salient aspects of the interlocutors' socio-cultural difference, deviance, and competition once they are identified in their daily interactions as 'us' and 'them'?

The Thai-Laos bordering community of Khong Chiam has its dominant discourses. Those can be shown through the interactants' social categorizations. As the aforementioned importance of pronouns may suggest, by looking at the choices of pronominal words we shall see how the Khong Chiam residents are stereotypically grouped and attributed. This section will trace the process which the participants in the MBKBs interact with each other. The pronouns, coupled with other discursive features, create the discursive context that the MKGs position themselves within and in response to identities given them.

The following section will examine significant pronouns that are selectively utilized and what are attributes assigned to those selections? Also what are other discourse features that are associated with the utilized pronouns within the processes of making the MKG's identities? This analysis shall provide us with how the MKG's are constructed by people in the MBKB setting. The used pronouns will also imply the historical body- their roles, expectation, ideologies, of the participants, as well as the process of utilizing a given pronoun in a particular context will give us idea on how and why they purposively 'select' a pronoun.

In the Khong Chiam community, dichotomy of in-group versus out-group social categorizations, as managed through the use of inclusive and exclusive pronouns, can be realized through various forms of face-to-face encounter.

1) The dominant group members speak to their dominant in-group (D-to-D encounter) such as the police talk to the healthcare staff, housewives talking to each other at a noodle shop, and the Khong Chiam housewife talking to the researcher.

2) The dominant group members speak to the minority group members and vice versa (D-to-M, M-to-D encounter) as when police officers talk to the girl, a housewife swears at the MKG in front of a karaoke bar.

3) The dominant group members talking 'about' the minority group members and vice versa (D-about-M & M-about-D encounter) for example at the car wash, at the noodle shop, mechanic place, the karaoke girls talking about nurses, the MKGs talking about the invading housewives.

4) The minority group members speak to their in-group minority members (M-to-M encounter) as when Dao talks to Noinaa, Khiat sharing her failures in life with her peers in their TV session, Naang telling a new comer not to attach with a single customer.

It is important to note that the D-to-D encounter can be classified as the D-about-M encounter since some contents of the talk involve to minority group members through some pronouns. In the same manner, the M-about-D can be the same as M-to-M encounters as when the minority talk within their *safe space* they do mention dominant group.

Another note is about language variation of Thai and Lao and Isan languages. In the MBKBs, the majority of speakers pick either Lao or Isan dialect over standard Thai language. As a result, pronouns used in the MBKB interactions are Lao language and Isan dialect. Also speakers in the MBKB community are presumably capable in speaking all three languages, for instance the MKGs and their MKCs may greet each other in standard Thai then switch to use Isan when establishing rapport between each other, and then when join the singing session, the MKGs are more likely to speak with her Lao accent, rely on her Lao syntax and lexical choices.

Some standard Thai pronouns such as the first pronouns: /phǒm/, /dichǎn/, and /thân/; the second pronouns /thân/ and /khun/; the third pronouns /thân/ (Iwazaki and Inkhaphirom, 2009) are not commonly used by the karaoke speaker as the karaoke interaction is deemed informal or even intimate. Standard Thai language provides informal pronouns that might be used in karaoke interactions. Speakers use "chǎn" for "I" when conversing with inferior. Male speakers use /phǒm/. /nuǔ/ when it is used as a first person reference term by young girls and less frequently by young boys and it is used as an addressee reference term by their older conversational partner. The use of /nuǔ/, however, is not restricted for reference to children (Ibid, p. 60).

The authors also discuss significance of using kin terms in Thai language. Kin terms are another personal reference term available in Thai to refer to a speaker,

addressee, and third-persons. Particular kin terms are used not only in the virtual family structure, but also one's own uncle (or more generally a middle-aged man) can be referred to as /luŋ/. Similarly /paâ/ (elder aunt) and /phɨ̂/ (elder sibling) are used often in the same way. Also noteworthy is the fact that the kin terms referring to members older than SELF (capitalized in original) play the role in the first- and second-pronouns. The use of kin terms instead of pronouns creates a decidedly more informal and friendlier atmosphere (Ibid, p. 58).

In Lao language, Kongmanee (1999) identifies some commonly used Lao pronouns such as /khɔɔ̂y/ as the first-person pronoun, and /câw/ as the second-person pronoun. When inferior speakers speak to seniors, they use /nɔɔ́ŋ/ as the first-person pronoun to express politeness. The senior speakers also address / nɔɔ́ŋ/ as the second-person pronoun to create friendly context of talk. A third-person pronoun commonly used among speakers is /lɑɑw/ (him/her/them), a plural form of the third-person pronoun /khǎw câw/ is used.

By considering the first form of encounters occurring in Khong Chiam, we will look at the language which the dominant group members speak to each other, for example a housewife talking to another housewife, a police officer speaking to the healthcare staff, housewives talking to each other at a noodle shop.

The first interaction to look at is conversation among the working women in the community. The topic of talk is about relationship of old men in Khong Chiam community and the MKGs from the MBKBs, another topic on spending habits of the men who spend his familial money for the MKGs.

6.2 Dominant Group Members Talk

6.2.1 Housewives Gossips

These are the encounters between the housewives talking to the researcher as she assumingly interprets that the research is one of the Khong Chiam housewives. Late morning, there is an aunt coming to wash her pick-up truck. The aunt finds that there is a couple of senior Isan man and a young assumedly Laotian girl sitting and chatting to each other in intimate manners. The researcher is there as another customer of the car wash. She sees the researcher and decides to initiate conversations

in a gossipy manner as she assumes this female customer a housewife. According to her assumption, the aunt calls attention from the researcher and initiated housewife's comments toward the gathering of the man and the girl.

Excerpt 6.1

A = the aunt

R = the researcher

1   A: /Naá câw hěn bɔɔ̀ thàw ɲuù nii̵ phə̀n phaa saǎw nɔɔ́y maa laâŋ
lɔ́t phii̵a kan ɲuù kây kây khɔɔ̌y nii̵/

            Auntie, do you see that? This old man took the young girl here with him to get his car washed. They touched each other and they were so close to me.

2   R: /Hěn ɲú khà/

            Yes, I see.

3   A: /Hěn phə̀n yɔɔ̂k kan wâw kan hěn lɛ́ɛw là khít lu̵u̵ǎ tɔn mii̵a laaw
yuù baân/

            /Nɛɛw phuû nùm man bɔɔ̀ ʔaw dê mii̵ tɛɛ̀ thàw phuù thàw nii̵ dé
maa nàŋ hây khǎw ʔaw tii̵n kaày kà mii̵ hɛɛŋ/

            /Wúy pen taa ʔaw mây sii̵âp pay thaaŋ phûn/

            /Khít hěn mɛɛ̀ tɛɛ̀ kɔɔ̀n tɛɛ̀ kiî̵, lá yá nùŋ kà pay tìt nam khǎw
khɔɔ̌ŋ khɔɔ́y nàn/

            /Khɔɔ́y pay hěn yuù haân thu̵u̵à nu̵ŋ/

            /Nam tii̵, ʔii̵k nɔɔy nu̵ŋ kà sì thu̵û̵k mɛɛ ɲiŋ, ɲaân khǎw càp/

            I saw them sweet-talk each other, I sympathized his very own wife staying at his house. Because young men wouldn't want her, only the old man wants. He's happy just because the young girl crossed her leg over him. I want to beat him with a long stick. It reminds me of my mom in the old days. My father also had a relationship with a young girl like those men. I saw him with a girl one time at a karaoke bar. My mom followed him there and hit him hard. She almost shot him but she was afraid of getting arrested.

At the beginning, the aunt calls attention and quickly establishes rapport with her newly known conversational partner by addressing /nɑɑ́/ (younger auntie) (Line 1) The second person pronoun /nɑɑ́/ used by the auntie exhibits inclusive 'us' as she establishes a kin term with her listener. Though it is culturally general to Isan residents to address an unknown conversational partner by using a kin term, this word 'younger auntie' is utilized encodes that the addressed person is an in-group member in this interactional context.

Assuming the listener as a family member, she refers to herself by selecting the word /mɛɛ̂/ (mother). The kin term pronouns 'mother' and 'younger aunt' are used in this local encounter in order to form sense of the 'in-group' by insisting 'kin term.' Therefore, those kin term pronouns used by the aunt strategically establishes social cohesiveness with her listener by highlighting familial sense in the talk. By this process, the auntie can set a platform for gossiping about the old man and the young girl.

In Line 2, the assumed housewife responded to the establishment of the auntie by acknowledging that she can also see the same situation which the auntie found it is so irritating, and she then wants to gossip. The established pronouns allow the listener to understand the sense of forming in-group member of Khong Chiam housewive. We are able to conclude so because the ongoing conversation between them presumably shares the Khong Chiam housewives painful experiences caused by the old Isan man and young Laotian girl.

Occasionally the aunt switches to use the first-person pronoun /khɔɔ̂y/ (I) which is neutral and more individualistic. When she assigns general Isan pronoun to herself, she manages to show politeness and autonomy of the newly known conversational partners. Thus this referential management of pronouns shows us that the aunt remains polite at the same time she wishes to impose sense of in-group member towards her listener. By doing so, the listener is included to the Khong Chaim housewives, and by the way that the listener does not deny being addressed as 'aunt' the speaker feels comfortable to go on talking on the emerged topics.

In addition to *the mother* and *the younger auntie*, she sees the listener feels fine with being addressed as a family member. She then continues to include the listener into her housewives in-group with more inclusive pronoun /hɑw/ (we). By so

doing, the listener is tied into the same group of the speaker, the Khong Chiam housewives.

On top of using the kin term and inclusive pronoun, the aunt also addresses herself with the place and direction within which she belongs. For instance, the first pronoun "ɑaw phuû ɲuù thɑɑŋ bɑân" (we- who stay home) is used to refer to herself, not only as a wife but it indicates the place which the wife belongs. In this context, the housewife is at home. Being at home supplements that a proper place people belong is at the house, as opposed to the MBKBs. The directional indexed pronoun /thɑɑŋ nɨ́/ (this way) is used to emphasize her 'this way' (the way to the house) as oppose to (that way- the way to the MBKBs).

1) Positioning the Husband: Indexing Sense of Belonging

Another pronoun used by the aunt highlights sense of belonging. The pronoun /câw khɔ̌ɔŋ/ (I-the owner) is used when the aunt talking about her and husband who is in relationship with some MKGs. In this context, the wife legitimates herself over her husband. At the same time, she claims housewife's power to control over her misbehaved husband, meanwhile distances the MKGs as the out-group members of those who do not belong to 'her family' and their MKG identities are alienated off the boundary of societal 'family institution' in a larger scale.

This possessive term (I- the owner) which the aunt uses as the first pronoun is selected in relation to the third pronoun /phuǎ khɔ̂y/ (my husband), /phuǎ too/ (self-husband), and /phɔɔ́ mɨŋ/ (the children's father). A married couple with a child may call each other /phɔɔ̀/ and /mɛɛ̀/ even without the presence of their child (Iwazaki & Inkhaphirom, 2009, p. 58). By utilizing those possessive pronouns, she indexes that the third-person pronouns belong to 'her.' By claiming the husband (referred to by the third-person pronoun) belongs to the wife (referred to by the first-person pronoun), these third-person pronouns highlight the sense of belonging between husband and wife and relates her husband to her children. As a result, these third-person pronouns indirectly legitimate the family institution. In such action, the wife partially includes her husband into the in-group of family members by using the possessive pronouns. At the same time, she pushes away the MKGs who are in relationship with the husband as 'excesses' of the husband and wife relationship and excluded from the legitimate 'family institution.'

2) Positioning the MKCs as Out-group Members

The auntie's talk exhibits that the 'them' which refers to the aunt's husband has the sense of belonging since the wife includes him into 'her family' and family institution. The MKCs are in general being referred to as 'them' and highlight this group as being 'old.' The pronouns 'them' /phə̀n/, /khǎw/, and 'him' /phə̀n/, /laɑw/, /khǎw/ are used for referring to the MBKB goers in general. These terms are neutral and polite to use in Isan communicative culture. However, those terms are related to other characteristic as they are being referred to the MKCs. These MKCs are also indexed by other third pronouns 'the old man' /thàw/, /phuu thàw/, /thàw loôt/, /thàw sɨ̀ sîp haà sîp/, /khɔn ɲày sɨ̀ sîp haà sîp/. Although the MKCs are being referred to using different pronouns, the housewife absolutely sees the general MKCs as out-group. More importantly, the characteristic that is emphasized involves aging.

While including the researcher into the in-group housewives and include her husband into the family institution and refers to general MBKB goers and members of the out-group, the aunt specifically distance the MKGs with numerous pronouns. For instance, the MKGs are referred to as being them /khǎw/, it /man/, kids /dèk nɔɔ́y/, young girls /saǎw nɔɔ́y/, little young girls /phuû saǎw nɔɔ́y nɔɔ́y/, and women /mɛ̂ ɲiŋ /. Among those pronouns, but the core characteristic of the selected third pronouns are centered on 'being young' and 'being female.' More frequently, the MKGs as an out-group is mentioned as kids, young girls, and little young girls. Less often, they are also being referred to as 'women.' In a more pejorative sense, the MKG in this context is mitigated into 'it' which is firstly not polite and secondly this pronoun lower the referred person into category of objects or animals.

This point is important to note that even though the housewives and the MKGs are in the same gender category, but this encounter shows that gender is not the key which binds them into the same social category, female. In fact, the social classifications of in-group and out-group are more likely competitive and even hostile. This is because the MKGs are not included into the in-group on the ground that they are seen as 'excess' to their family institution. Also, the MKGs are seen as the competitive young girls who are threats to their family. As this encounter suggests, the MKGs is the source in which their husbands waste income on them. Also, the

MKGs are segregated as the out-group, as processed by the housewife, based upon 'ageism' rather 'gender.' Other contents from her talk also suggest that the MKGs are seen having low morals as they get involved with other women's husbands.

Shortly, the first and second pronouns used in the housewives encounter show that the aunt tries various ways in which she could establish the sense of in-group members. It is selective that she uses the third person pronouns conveying the sense of belonging and family legitimation when referring to her husband. By doing so, another third person is segregated into the out-group members. Those are the general male MKCs and the MKGs.

3) Attributes of the Khong Chiam Housewives

As soon as the aunt finds the bothering manner triggered by a couple of the old man and a young girl, she quickly manages to establish rapport with the researcher and proceeds to talk to her as one of the in-group members. It is not by chance that there is only the research sitting at the waiting area of the car wash, but the aunt does check out whether the researcher would be possible to talk her topic about the MKGs and the Isan old man relationship.

The researcher is another mature female, aged about 30-40 years old. By the context, the researcher is in her mature age so that she could be assumed to have a spouse. In general, most of community ladies get married and have children by this age. She owns a car and she is sitting here and reading, she looks presumably well educated. Other items on her body such as casual clothing with blue jeans and simple designed local cotton shirt, a wristwatch, and silver earrings also index a middle class working lady attributes. Based upon such information or *front stage* (Goffman, 1969) which the researcher gives off, the aunt could decide that addressing the research as she were a Khong Chaim housewife should be fine. The researcher, as the aunt thinks, shares some Khong Chiam middle class housewives.

Therefore, the physical look of the housewives is normally involved being in their mature age 30 years old and above. The aunt herself is in her late forties. Thus, their physical appearance is of hardworking women. She looks aged, dark and dry skin. Since working in the papaya plantation, the aunt has some scars and burnt skin on her face plus obvious wrinkle on both ends of the eyes. She is skinny, but in her gardening clothes with dark old pants and long sleeves gray shirt do

not make her look bright but blue. This physical look is almost every aspect opposite to the MKGs sitting with the old man. I will then deliberate the MKGs attributes sooner.

From the ongoing conversation, the aunt explains herself as a hard working lady who earns for her whole family. At the end of the conversation with the assumed housewife, she told about her work that her money which supposed to be invested in buying fertilizer for the papaya plantation. However, this amount of money is taken by her husband to spend in meeting the MKGs at local restaurants and the MBKBs. Consequently, MKGs are often evaluated by the housewife that they are professional lack and they only pick her family's income through getting an affair with her husband.

The shared attributes of the aunt as the Khong Chaim housewives as appears in this encounter is that the housewife is as mature, hardworking women and she generates income for family. More importantly, she supervises how money of the family is spent. In any infortune cases, she watched if her husband spends money on the MKGs which is considered 'waste' or they call it 'the family pocket is picked.'

Some contents in the conversation also explain the housewife's roles. In addition to generating income and supervising whether the income is effectively contributed to the family livelihood, she also supervises her husband behaviors. As she shares that her husband once gets attached with the MKGs and he spends an amount of money on them. The wife expresses her supervising role by searching for him while he is meeting with the MKGs. On top of supervising her husband, she also prevents the MKGs not to get involved with her husband by cutting their communication. There are also other cases; our interview with a karaoke supervisor reveals that a wife seeks for her husband at a MBKB. When she finds the husband having food with the MKGs, she pours warm Tom Yum soup on a MKG's head and spills some on her husband. It is told that she wants to embarrass the husband and threaten the MKGs, so they are afraid to serve her husband for the next time if he comes.

In short, the attributes of in-group Khong Chiam housewives include aging married women who are mature and working either in agricultural sector or governmental office. They generate income by themselves and contribute their

income to their family. Aforementioned choices of pronoun also suggest that the housewife, husband and their children reside in their house and belong to the family institution. Therefore she supervises how the husband spends money and watches the husband's affairs. The MKCs in general is regarded as out-group; especially the old men are obviously bias based upon 'ageism' their aged characteristic as oppose to the ageist 'young/small MKGs.'

4) Attributes of the Out-group MKGs

The MKGs are set in contrast to the housewives as described above. This 'out-group' is imposed as young, immature, adorable, sexually unclean, and low morals. In detail, they are referred to 'them', grammatically distancing them in the first place. This is by putting them as the third-person who is not present at the time of talk. Secondly, the third person pronouns such as kids, small girls, young girls, very young girls, are addressed based on bias against maturity. These ageist notions are attached to almost every pronoun that the aunt refers to the MKGs. Her emphasis also marks the mismatched in terms of ages between the old men and the young MKGs.

Other interviews support that the MKGs are overall adorable females, due to that they are young, although this notion is hostile to the housewife, their body is still slim. Their skin is smooth and fair. Also they spend time and attention to skin care more than the busy housewives may do. To be adorable to older males, they are selective about saying only good things, especially to the men who are in relationship with them. They take care and improve their beauty as much as possible.

Although they are physically adorable, they are regarded as sexually contaminated. Due to their sexual services, the MKGs are viewed by most people as highly risky, in terms of STDs and HIV AIDs transmission. This type of label is not separable from being young and adorable MKGs. With their attractive looks, they are normally adored by ordinary people. Some of the MKCs may claim that they only go to the MBKBs for chatting with the MKGs, singing and relaxing, not taking the MKGs out for sex. Even though, meeting with the MKGs at the MBKBs is seen as sex services oriented and the MKGs are risky STDs transmitters.

On the ground that the MKGs' karaoke service jobs as well as sexual services provide them opportunity to meet with men, some of them attempt to get either intimate or patronage relationships with their former MKCs. The latter conduct

is viewed that they have low morals because these attempts generally lead to adultery between someone's husband and the MKGs. This is then concluded that they sexually misbehave and threaten the healthy family relationships of the community women. The housewives see the MKGs as not wanting to work hard so that they do not earn enough for themselves. As a result, they prefer to ask for money from men rather than work hard by themselves. Asking men for extra money to cover their living cost and remittance is the idea that the MKGs are heavily condemned.

6.2.2 Khong Chiam Working Women Gossips

The next interaction takes place in a local noodle shop located by the Mekong River. It is lunchtime, so working people from governmental offices in Khong Chiam are out for lunch. A group of 3 working women seated at a marble top concrete round table. They are in their late thirties.

Excerpt 6.2

W1= the first woman

W2= the second woman

2-a) 1 W1 /Haă ɲaâk nɔ́ʔ ŋən nì, hét ŋaan càŋ muù haw haă cɔn thàw kà bɔɔ mɨɨ kêp way kà sɨɨăn/

It's so hard to earn money. Working like us, we work till we get old but still have not enough for retirement.

2 W2 /Bàt sum nân khăw khɨɨ haă ŋaày thɛɛ́ sàn/

But those girls (The speaker direct to the truck) <u>they</u> easily seek for money!

3 W2 /Sà măy kɔɔ̀n phuû thàw khâw wát mɨɨ bɨɨâ mɨɨ wàt tham bun bɔɔ rɨ́ caâk thaan/

In the old days, old men went to temple to make merit. They donated money to the temple.

4 W1 /Phăy waà ɲăŋ sà măy nɨ̂ khăw kà hét thaan khɨɨ kan/

Noticeably, these days, <u>they</u> also donate their money.

W2 /Khăw kaa laa ʔo kèʔ thaan phuû saăw nɔ̂y tɨ̌/

They go to karaoke bars and donate money to <u>young girls</u>.

W1   /Hěn hěn yuú bɨɨ̂a phuù thàw haà lɔ̂y bɨɨ̂a dèk nɔ́y haà phɑn/

I agree with that. Old people get 500-baht pension but young girls get 5,000 baht.

W2   /Thɔɔŋ sà lǔŋ nɨ̀ŋ phûn lɛ́ɛw khan khǎw dây khɔ̌/

Or even a 3.75 gram-gold necklace weighing, if that's <u>they</u> ask for.

W1   /ʔɨɨ̀ phɔɔ̀ kà hây khan luûk laǎn waà laaw kà thɨɨ̌ăŋ duuây kham phráʔ phút/

<u>My dad</u> also did that. When his <u>children</u> complained about that, <u>he</u> talked back to us and used Buddhist principles as an excuse.

This group of women uses pronouns 'I' /khɔɔ̂y/ and 'we'/muù hɑw/, literally mean a group of ours). Each of them addresses the listeners who are in the same category of Khong Chaim working women with the second-person pronoun 'you' /câw/. These pronouns indicate that they respectfully refer to each other since they use polite and neutral pronouns 'I' and 'you.' Those pronouns also show that they are individually independent. At the same time, the inclusive 'we' (Line 1) is also used and it significantly includes the women into a group of 'hard-to-find-money' group. This characteristic, attach ed to the selected pronouns, is opposite to the out-group mentioned by the third-person pronouns such as 'them,' /khǎw/, 'little young girls' /phuû saǎw nɔ́y/, 'that group'/sum nân/ and 'this group'/sum nɨ́/.

The out-group MKGs are referred to with third-person pronouns them, little young girls, that group, and this group. Again the 'little young girls' encode that the MKGs is frequently bias on the basis of 'age' and 'maturity.' Also, the inclusive 'we' used by the dominant group members in this situation distance the out-group MKGs to be 'that group' and 'this group.'

Once the MKGs are mentioned as the 'this/ that group of young girls,' the men who are key demanders for the MKGs are put into the out-group of 'old men.' Therefore the pronouns referred to the MKCs from this talk are 'him', them', 'father',

and 'old men.' Among those, the words that associate with 'ageism' as being old are more frequently used by the working women.

1) Attributes of the Khong Chiam Working Women

The group of women comes to have lunch at a noodle shop along the Mekong River talking to each other about the senior men going to pay for the MKGs at the MBKBs. The content of the talk concerns with inappropriate spending of the old men as some of them pay their money including their retired pensions on the MKGs. This group of working women physically appears to be women working in governmental office in town. They wear light shirts, black skirts, and wristwatches. One of them wears a small thread of gold necklace with a tiny, framed Buddha image. Another woman wears a bunch of silver brace lace. All of them wear makeup.

Their conversation allows us to learn that they focus on monetary topic in which they emphasize how hard they work to earn money in comparison with the MKGs. It is quite common in Khong Chiam that ordinary women would claim themselves as hard working persons, or professionals as oppose to the unprofessional and unaccepted jobs at the MBKBs. The contrast points between the working women and the MKGs earning is the women are professional, but do not earn much while the MKGs do not work seriously but earn a lot from the MKCs, either by selling sex or developing patronage relationship with their MKCs. Considering the way the MKGs earn money, we can discern by the working women's attitudes that they do not regard the MKGs' tasks as 'work.' They portray themselves professional while placing the 'money seekers' identity upon the MKGs.

2) Attributes of the Old MKCs

The contrast characteristics of the in-group working women who are the speakers are not necessarily opposite to the out-group male MKCs on the basis of their gender. In fact, this working women's conversation emphasizes that the most MBKB MKCs are old men. They oppose the out-group more on the attribute of 'age' rather than gender. Thus the old men MKCs who develop intimate or patronage relationship with the MKGs are seen as 'the old men' practicing inappropriate romance behaviors with 'little girls' who mainly request for gifts or money.

Again, these attributes are similar to the MKCs as appears in the talk of the housewives. The old men who meet the MKGs, especially the ones who have

intimate relationship with the MKGs are seen misbehave according to their 'age' not 'gender' as they are male. According to the working women's attitude, proper activities for the aged or retired men should be going to the temple, practice meditation, and make merit, not going out to spend money to meet the young MKGs. In a sarcastic way, one of them mentions that 'today old men make merit by giving his pension to the MKGs (instead of giving to monks or charity).'

  3) Attributes of the MKGs

  The MKGs are depicted by the working women again as 'young girls.' Significantly, their major behavior is begging for money and gifts from the old male MKCs home they have relationship with. As one of the women say *'The old man's pension is 500 baht, but the young girl's pension is 5,000 baht.'* This means that the MKGs usually request for a considerable amount of money from the old men. It is even much more than the old man's pension. Another woman says *'It is a piece of gold necklace, if the MKG asks for a gift.'* Thus, the gifts which the MKGs ask from the old men are usually an expensive gift. That way they could turn it into money and spend it as they choose, either to cover their cost of living here in Khong Chaim, to send the money to Laos as remittance, or bring the gold back to Laos as a gift to their family members.

  Therefore the working women look at the out-group MKGs as young girls who do not really do any hard work but seduce the old men in the community for money and expensive gifts. As a result, the old men inappropriately spend money on the girls rather than properly make merit as it used to be in the past. On the ground that they ask for money from other people without professional work, the MKGs are out-group polarized by the ways in which the working women work hard on their profession.

  The next interaction is a conversation of an employer who is an auto-technician and his male teenage employee.

  Excerpt 6.3

  T=technician

  E= employee

  1 T /Mɯŋ sì pay sǎy wɔɔ̀ŋ/?

       Wong, where are you going?

2   E   /Pɑy se wên/

Seven-Eleven

3   T   /Bɔ̀ɔ mɛɛ̀n dɔ̂ɔk mɯŋ sɨ̀ pɑy háp phuû saǎw maa kɨn khâw yaà maa tuǎ/

/Bɑk pɔ̂ɔp nɨ̀ ʔaw tɛɛ̀ phuû saǎw bɔ̀ɔ ʔaw wɨ̀ɑk ʔaw ŋaan/

That's not right. You are going to pick a girl up for lunch. Don't lie to me.

Ghost! You only care for your girl, but not responsible for your work.

(The shop keeper turns to another customer and continues to say)

4   T   /Mɛɛ̀ man tuǎ kháp, thoo maa sàŋ ʔɔ̂ɔk pɑy háp ɲaam dǎy kà dây/

/Phɔm pen naay caay ŋən khaa hɛɛŋ man/

/Man ɲaŋ bɔ̀ɔ hét nam phɔ̌m man hét nam mɛɛ̀ ɲɨŋ kɔ̀ɔn/

As if the girl were his mother! She can call to order him to pick up whenever she wants. I'm his employer who pays him wage. He doesn't follow me but he gives priority to the girl.

The conversation between the auto-technician who is the employer of the teenage employee reveals that the employer skips addressing himself with a first-person pronoun. He calls his employee with a rather rude word but with a sense of familiarity 'you' /mɯɯŋ/, and a swearing word 'you the ghost' /bàk pɔ̂ɔp/. This manner can be explained that although the employer is delivering his inquiries with the sense of familiarity, but the over tones attached to pronouns which he uses to refer to the teenage employee and his MKG are deemed excluded. In their conversation, the MKGs are referred to by some third-person pronouns including 'girls' /saǎw/, /phuû saǎw/, 'his mother' /mɛɛ̀ man/, and 'women' /mɛɛ̀ ɲɨŋ/. When the employer turns to talk with another customer, which is the researcher, the employer refers to the employee as 'it' /man/.

These pronouns used by the employer reveal that not only the MKGs are excluded but also the boy who is in relationship with the MKGs. Thus, to some degree, the boy's dominant group status is mitigated. The use of the employer's third

pronouns in this context discern that not only the MKGs is excluded to the 'them' categorization, but the dominant group members who get involved with 'them' also lessen their dominant group members' status.

4) Attributes of the Employer and Employee

The employer, the auto-technician in this context, shows that he is a working man. He is professional and responsible as he opened his own garage. He hired some younger technicians to work for him, as appears in this context, and there are two employees. In terms of attitude, the responsible employer is not in favor with the employee's sexual behavior as he takes his lunch break and some work time to go out to see the MKG. The employee counterpart is depicted as a boy with less priority of work and personal time management. He is out for lunch, but regularly comes back to work late because he spends time dating his MKG during the workday. By his attachment to the MKG, he is regarded as a deficient employee who does not dedicate his time for work. The employer is certainly not happy with his sexual behavior that has negative impacts on his tasks.

5) Attributes of the MKGs

By this context, the employer regards the MKGs as influential to teenage boys in Khong Chiam. This is one of other examples in which the male teenagers get attached to the MKGs and try to date them. Because going to meet the MKGs at night at their MBKBs is costly. The cost is not affordable for the poor teenagers so that they try to meet the MKGs in the day time when the girls are not at work. Therefore, the attributes of the MKGs as seen by the employer is a distraction and has negative effects on his employee and his work.

The next section will move to consider how the pronouns are used in the encounter between the dominant group members and the minority one talk to each other.

6.3 Dominant Group Members and Minority Group Members Talk

Excerpt 6.4

P= police officer

G= karaoke girl

1 P /Nɔ̂ŋ ʔə̂y câw khɔ̌ŋ raán yuu bɔɔ̀/?

Girl! Is the owner home?

2 G /Bɔɔ̀ yuù caâ tɛɛ̀ paâ yuù/

/Muàt cà khuy kàp paâ bɔɔ̀ khá/ (Spoken in Thai accent)

No, she is not home but the aunt is here. Would you talk to the aunt?

3 P /Rɨɨak hây nɔɔ̀y ʔɨɨ nɔɔŋ niî wîŋ nɔɔ̀y réw/

Call her please. Can this girl quickly run to (call) her?

(The girl leaves to call the aunt.)

4 P /Phuû saǎw ɦaan yuù nǎy kan mɔ̀t/? (Spoken in Thai)

Where are all the bar girls?

5 G /Pay haán səɔ̌m suǎy câw khɨɨ maa tɛɛ̂ wen thɛɛ̂ mɨɨ̂ niɨ́/?

They went to a salon shop. Why do you come so early today?

6 P /Kɔɔ̂ waâ cà maa haǎ phiɨ̂ lék bɔɔ̀ daây maa thiɨ̂aw rɔɔ́ŋ phleeŋ bɔɔ̀   daây maa truàt maa tɔɔn nǎy kɔɔ̂ daây mɛɛ̀n bɔɔ̀ phuû saǎw/?

I come to see Lek. I don't come here for singing or official check so I can come any time. Is that right, girl?

Occupational titles in general are not as often used as kin terms and names in place of pronoun, there are some that employed as a second-person or to a lesser degree as a first-person reference term (Iwazaki & Preeya Ingkhaphirom, 2009). This interaction shows that while the MKG addresses the police officer with his Police Sub-Lieutenant position /muuàt/, and 'you'/câw/. They do regard the police officer by his official position, and use a polite and neutral to address him. However, the police officer does not address himself with any first-person pronoun while addresses the MKGs with various second-person pronouns such as 'sister'-/nɔɔŋ/, /ʔɨɨ nɔɔŋ/, and

'girls'-/saăw/, /saăw saăw/, /phuû saăw/, and the third-person pronoun 'bar girls'/phuû saăw haán/. It is noticeable that the police officer does not talk to the MKGs in official manners though he is actually in charge of taking the researcher to introduce at the MBKB. It is his official hours. The terms that he uses to address the MKGs share is out of official context. They are also treated by the officer as the 'serving girls' by the way he calls them 'sister' which is a common way for customers to call the 'service staff.' Moreover, the officer uses the third-pronoun 'bar girls' to refer to the MKGs who are not present yet at the bar. This use of pronoun also reveals that the officer regard the MKGs in general by their work place, the MBKBs.

1) Attribute of the police officer

The police sub-lieutenant appears to the MKGs as the officer in charge thus they address him with his casual title. Although on the day he goes to the MBKB he dresses with his casual attires; pants, white inner t-shirt, and a gray jacket. This police officer is the one that they know he is in charge of supervising all MBKBs in Khong Chaim so he always recognized as a police on duty regardless which time he comes to the MBKBs. Although the police sometimes behaves with a casual manner, addressing the MKGs with their 'service staff identity' or 'the bar girls' as same as other customers may call them, he is still recognized as the legal controller in the MBKBs.

2) Attribute of the MKGs

Within this encounter, the MKGs are depicted by the officer as 'serving staff' and 'bar girls.' The police officer emphasizes indirectly that the MKGs are supposed to be present at the MBKBs by his question; *'Where are all the bar girls?'* Therefore in relation with the legal supervisor, the MKGs are addressed and portrayed based on the work place where they currently work for. The MKGs are also expected to be at their place at the MBKBs. The 'bar girls' used by this officer reveals also that the MKGs only belong to the MBKBs, may be not at other places in the community where the officer could not supervises.

3) The MKGs Talking to the Researcher during Dinner at the MBKB

Excerpt 6.5

N = karaoke girl 1

R = Researcher

H= hospital staff

P = karaoke owner

D = karaoke girl 2

1   N   /Thŏŋ yaaŋ phə̀n bɔɔ̀ yaâk sây dɔɔ̂k hɛɛ̀ŋ bàk thàw hɛɛ̀ŋ bɔɔ̀ yaâk sây/

Comdom? They don't want to use. Especially the old men really don't want to use.

2   R   /Ɂâw pen ɲǎŋ phə̀n bɔɔ̀ yaâk sây/?

Oh! Why don't they want to use?

3   N   /phə̀n bɔɔ̀ yaân tìt loôk phə̀n yaân man bɔɔ̀ khák/

They are not afraid of infection but afraid that it won't be the most sensual.

4   R   /Thaà luûk khaâ bɔɔ̀ yaàk sày thŏŋ yaaŋ phuû saaw hét nɛɛw dǎy/?

In case the costomers don't want to wear condom, what can the girls do?

5   N   /Kɔɔ̂ bɔɔ̀ hây/

Then we don't allow (sexual intercourse).

----

5   P   /Luûk laà Ɂaw nɛɛw kɨn pay pəə̂t nɛɛ̀/

Dear, take this food to prepare (open and take the food out of plastic bags).

6   D   /Caâ phuuâk phɨ̆ɨ maa càk khɔn cá/

Okay. How many people are coming?

7   H   /Sɔɔ̆ŋ khɔn tɛɛ̀ kàp Ɂaa caan nɨ̆ɨ là, phuuâk câw haǎ khâw maa suù kan kɨn loôt/

Two, it's me and the teacher. You guys can prepare the food and eat together.

8   R   /Haán nân bɔɔ̀ pəə̂t bɔɔ̂ mɨɨ̂ nɨ́/

That bar is not opening today?

9   N   /Bɔɔ̀ naǎ càk nɔɔ̀y phuû saǎw kà sɨ̀ Ɂɔɔ̂k maa nàŋ naa haán/

I don't think so. In a while, the bar girls will come out to the front.

The second encounter happens between the researcher and the MKGs while having dinner at a small MBKB. This conversation shows that when the MKGs are talking to the dominant group members, they address themselves as mitigate and polite first-person pronouns such as 'I' /khɔ̂y/ /nuǔ/ /nɔ́ŋ/ /naaŋ/. Among those, /khɔ̂y/ is neutral 'I.' The other two words /nuǔ/ and /nɔ́ŋ/ are 'I-the sister' which is a mitigated form of I usually used by younger female. The latter one is 'I-female.' This word is a neutral and polite pronoun used by some Isan and Laotian female speaker. To be used by Laotian speakers, this pronoun is less often used than /nɔ́ŋ/. To address themselves and a group, they solidify themselves by referring to their in-group of MKGs by using inclusive pronoun 'we' /phuâk khɔ̂y/, /muu khɔ̂y/.

To address the researcher and her teams, the MKGs select friendly kin term /phɨ̂/ and /ʔaa chaan/ as they know that one of the team is a lecturer from a university. Though there is polarization of the in-group MKGs and the out-group research teams, the pronouns used in this context are friendly, polite, and neutral. This could be because the researcher teams are already well informed and they realize there will be no serious threats happen during the encounter.

The research assistant, who is more senior, addresses the MKGs with a kin term 'dear daughter'-luûk laà/. The need for cooperation results in selecting more inclusive pronoun to use to address the MKGs. The MKGs also respond by expressing some respectful kin term pronouns such as 'sister' and neutral 'you (plural).' There are differential marks on the in-group MKGs and the out-group researcher and assistant. That is 'we'/phuuâk nuǔ/, /phuuâk khɔ̂y/, phuuâk haw/ and plural 'you' /phuuâk câw/, /phuuâk phɨ̂/. By using those opposite group of pronouns, they tend to look at us as a group and reckon themselves as a group. These pronouns may also show their solidarity against the out-group research team.

This conversation also reveals the several types of third-persons whom we refer to. The first group is the MKGs' MKCs that they refer to by using general word 'customers' /luûk khaá haán/, and 'them' /phə̀n/. Similar to other encounters, they also refer to their customer as 'the old man' /bàk thàw/. The mixed pronouns between

the 'general customers' and the 'old man customers' also expose that in fact their customers are mixed ages. There are both adult and old men going to meet them at the MBKB. Unlike the conversations of the housewife and working women, those emphasize more on the 'old men.'

Another group of third parties being referred to is men who are in relationship with the MKGs. For this type of person, the MKGs call them with intimate meanings such as 'her boyfriend' /phuû bɑ̀ɑw mɑn/ and 'her husband' /phuuǎ mɑn/. These pronouns unfold that the MKGs do develop some romance with men, especially young men, in the nearby villages. Thus they mention their customers by general male customer, the old males, and the some intimate men of theirs.

4) Attributes of the researcher and research assistant

The researcher and the team are a group of mixed professionals from the local hospital. The researcher is introduced to this group of MKGs about 4 months ahead of this encounter. To keep good relationship and also to observe the MBKBs' activities, the researcher goes to this small MBKB almost every day in the last 2 months. The researcher is also known as a language lecturer who is interested in Lao language so she would like to talk with any people coming from Lao P.D.R. Thus, the researcher is a known teacher who comes to join their dinner and help cooking in the kitchen sometimes, talking to them as a known visitor and give advice if some of them may ask, for example about food allergy, smoking law, dating in metropolitan society, etc. The research assistant in this context is a senior nurse in her fifties. She ran voluntary healthcare programs on the service staff working in the MBKBs before. To this MBKB, she is recognized as a friendly hospital staff. The MBKB owner and some of the MKGs used to be her patient at her licensed clinical service in the town of Khong Chiam. These two dominant group members are then seen by the MKGs as not threatening to their MBKB work.

5) Attributes of the MKGs

This encounter reveals the attributes of the MKGs as the friendly serving staff who are not at work. They are presented by associating to their work place. Hence they are pulled closer to the dominant group members who are researcher. Thus they are more likely a group of young girls gathering and chatting about their daily life; healthcare, sex, relationships with their men both in Thailand and in Laos. Although

they dress up as the working MBKBs' staff already, but the way they gather for dinner with the known visitors are casual and they express themselves as normal young girls who wish to have good relationship with their men. Some of them talk about ending the MKGs' jobs and setting up her own business.

There is slightly contrastive between the way they dress and the present they belong at the MBKB. This encounter shows that they are in the MKGs' attire present themselves at the MBKB in the working hours but relax and rather distance themselves to other roles than the MKGs.

6) The MKGs Talking to Their MKCs

Excerpt 6.6

L1 = karaoke customer 1

L2 = karaoke customer 2

G = karaoke girl

1   L1   /Sɨ̌ baân câw yuù săy sɨ̌/

Sii, which town is you home town?

2   G   /Khɔ̂y yuu......../

My home town locates….

3   L1   /Yuu săy kɔ̀ʔ/

Where then?

4   L2   /Câw pen khɔn thɑy lɯ̆ khɔn lɑɑw/

Are you Thai or Laotian?

5   G   /Khɔn lɑɑw ʔaây ʔaw nám khɛ̆ŋ mɑɑ tɯ̀ɯm bɔɔ̀/

I'm Laotian. Do you want more ice cubes?

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6   L1   /Yɑɑ̀ ʔaw nám khɛ̆ŋ lɔŋ lɑǎy dəə̂ lɑɑ̀, bɨɨa ʔaây sì cɯ̂ɯt/

Don't put too many cubes in there, my beer will be tasteless.

7   G   /Caâ phɔɔ sum nɨ̂/ /Sɨ̀ɑ ʔaw nám kɔɔn bɔɔ̀/

Okay. That's enough. Papa, do you want some ice?

8   L2   /Bɔɔ̀ khaâp phɔɔ lɛɛ́w/

/Kɨn nâm kɔɔn câw lɛɛ́w naǎw nɔɔ́ŋ lɑɑ̀ sɨ̀ hày kɔɔ̀t kɛɛ̂ naǎw nâm kɔɔn bɔɔ̀/

I drink with your ice and feel cold. Will you allow me to hug you for relieve the (ice) cold?

The next encounter presents chats between the MKCs and his MKG in a singing session. The pronouns which the MKG refers to herself are various when she is serving a couple of customers. The MKG uses different pronouns 'I' including /nuǔ/, /nɔɔ́ŋ/, /khɔ̂y/. The pronoun /nuǔ/ is a diminutive form of 'I' used by a girl. The pronoun /nɔɔ́ŋ/ is a polite and neutral pronoun in Lao language used by females (Boonmee Kongmanee, 1999). The pronoun /khɔ̂y/ is a neutral 'I' that could be interpreted as it has more sense of autonomy. More frequently, they would start addressing themselves with /khɔ̂y/ and later when they are familiar with the MKCs and the MKCs address them with diminutive forms then they follow by switching /khɔ̂y/ to /nuǔ/, /nɔɔ́ŋ/, or /phuuâk nuǔ/. This way they reduce distance between themselves and their customers and allow friendly or intimate meaning to form.

The MKCs are referred to by different pronouns. Those include 'you' 'brother' (both Thai and Isan words), papa, rich papa /sìɑ̀/, and honey /thîɪ̂ rák/. The switching among those pronouns explains that the MKGs, in general, estimate the MKCs by their age, their friendliness, and their preference to be called with a particular pronoun. The example above shows that they address the MKCs with the word *brother*. Later, when the customers are drunk they calls the MKG /thîɪ̂ rák/, then the girl call him /thîɪ̂ rák/ as well. Some adult males are happy to be called /paǎ/. The MKGs always respond to the MKCs' request.

The third-person pronouns utilized during this talk mention the 'housewives.' The wives of the MKCs are indirectly referred to by using the term 'the one at home' /phuû yuù baân/ and 'the chief'/phuû kɑm kàp/, /phuû baŋ kháp bɑn chɑɑ/. The MKGs also mention the housewives with possessive pronouns such as 'your wife' /mɪɪɑ câw/. The MKCs directly refer to their wives with some possessive pronouns; 'my wife' /mɪɪɑ khɔ̂y/ and 'my relative' /phîɪ̂ nɔɔɔ́ŋ khɔ̂y/. Both the third pronouns and the possessive pronouns referring to the housewives show that the MKGs and MKCs realize the existence of the housewives. The ways in which they selectively use the indirect or direct reference when they talk about the housewives depend on the degree of acceptance which both the MKGs and the MKCs agree on.

Another encounter between the MKGs and their MKCs reveals the use of the third-person pronouns by which the MKCs are generally referred to as 'them' /phə̀n/. However, sometimes the MKCs are amusingly referred to upon bias again their economic status. This talk, some of the MKGs mention other MKCs as 'rich papa' /sɨ̀ɑ dɨ̀/, and 'broke papa' /sɨ̀ɑ khɑ̂t/. Briefly, the nice papa is meant the senior MKCs who can afford the MBKBs, while the broke papa means the ones who cannot afford the cost of MBKBs and MKGs.

The MKGs in general are recognized by their affiliation with their MBKBs. The 'this MBKB's girl' is used by the MKCs and the MKGs. From this conversation, the origin of the MKGs is also mentioned by using the third-person pronouns 'the Northern girls.' Interestingly, the MKCs are interested to check out where his MKG is from. The former talk reveals that the MKCs ask whether the MKG is 'Thai' or 'Laotian'?

These uses of pronouns by the MKGs and the MKCs suggest that the first and second-person pronouns polarize them into two groups; the first is older male customers and another group of young Laotian MKGs. Thus we can see the dichotomy of the old (brother, papa, nice papa, broke papa) versus the young (sister, dear, this MBKB's girls). Also, it seems matter to the MKCs that they have in mind the MKGs supposed to be Laotian so they check out the 'you' is Laotian or not. Other pairs of opposition are based on ethnicity Thai versus Laotian.

(1) Attributes of the MKCs

The MKCs as appears in both encounters are obviously older. The first group is men in their late thirties. They are addressed by the MKGs mostly with the word brother, either Thai or Lao pronouns. They have wives and one of them has children. Thus his wife is mentioned occasionally in their conversation. He honestly expresses himself as attached. However, he exposes to the MBKBs generally for fun with a male friend. His friend is a bachelor. Thus he claims that he accompanies his friend to date a girl. In fact, he is directly dating the MKGs during the singing session. The married man is a staff at a local hospital. No MKGs know his work since he does not mention his work, and forms a false name to use while meeting with the MKGs at the MBKB. His friend does the same. They come to the MBKB by his truck. He

informs his pregnant wife that there is over time job to do for the hospital tonight. He will be home later than usual.

Thus, like this case, the married man normally finds a chance to meet the MKGs at the MBKBs. They come with their vehicle, but conceal their real identity especially their work and their real name. They date the MKGs using false names and assumed identities.

(2) Attributes of the MKGs

The MKGs in this conversation are basically younger. They are comfortably refer to themselves as sister, we-sister while address their MKCs brother and papa. They are depicted as being Laotian girls and bar girls. This situation, they perform more than the service staff, but in more roles of the 'normal young Laotian girls dating males.' Consequently, some conversation among them shows that the customer asks if he is allowed to hug the girl who put more ice in his beer mug. Such encounter, the MKGs are transforming from normal karaoke service staff to be a young girl on a date.

6.4 Dominant Group Members Talk

1) A Hair Dresser Talking to the Researcher at a Salon Shop about MKGs and Local Boys' relationship

Excerpt 6.7

R = Researcher

S = Salon

1   R   /Ɂâw hĕn phɔ̀n maa nam kan maa thaà phuû saăw laaw tɨ̀ sàn/

Oh! I saw them coming together. He was waiting for the Laotian girl, right?

2   S   /Mɛɛ̀n baàw wɛɛŋ mák saăw laaw nam fâw nam sɔ̀ŋ/

Right, a little man is in love with a Laotian girl. He picks up her all the time.

3   R   /Phuû saăw khăw maa hét ŋaan khăw kà mák baàw mɨɨ fɛɛn yuù bɔɔ̂/

The Laotian girls come to work. Do they also date and look for boyfriends?

4 R /Waà mɛɛ̀n tɛɛ̂ hét ŋaan yaàŋ dɨ̀aw bɔɔ̀ yaâk mɨ̀ɨ phan thá/

      I thought that they don't want to be bound.

5 S /Mɨ̀ɨ mɨ̀ɨ bɔɔ̀ ʔɨ̀t baàw thay baân baân haw kàʔ mák khǎw khà naât/

      No, our village boys are really fond of them.

6 S /Waà thɛɛ̂ man kà bɔɔ̀ dây ʔaw cay phuû baàw dɔɔ̂k phuû baàw nɨ̂ɨ là ʔaw cay man/

      Actually, they (the girls) don't really care for the village boys. It is the boys that care for them.

The encounter between the researcher and the hairdresser at a salon shop located in Khong Chaim town reveals a wide range of third-person pronouns. While the first-person and second-person pronouns are not varied, only neutral 'I' and 'you' are used, but the third-person pronouns numerously used.

To refer to the MKGs, the hairdresser and the researcher have pronominal varieties to select from. For instance, she uses 'they-them' /khǎw/, 'girls' /phuû saǎw/, 'Laotian girls' / saǎw laɑw/, 'the girls- they' /phuû saǎw khǎw /, and 'it'/mɑn/. Those pronouns are expressed that the hair dresser thinks of the MKGs as being 'dating girls' 'Lao girls' and minimized person 'it.' On top of distancing the MKGs by general 'them-they,' characteristic of young and Lao is highlighted.
The hairdresser also refers to the male teenagers with different pronouns, for example 'them' /phɔ̀n/, 'boys' /phuû baàw/, 'village boy' /phuû baàw thay baân/, 'little man' /phuû baàw wɛɛŋ/, 'new boy' /bàk mày/, and 'it' /mɑn/. Those pronouns present that the 'boys' in the community are involved with the MKGs.

    (1) Attribute of the Village Boys

    The village boys who the hairdresser talks about are from the villages within Khong Chiam town. They are about 13 to 20 years old. From our interview with other MKGs, most of the boys finish their secondary school. Some are not attending any school but residing with their parents in their villages. Some of them work in the town of Khong Chiam, for example motorcycle fixing shops, garages,

barbeque restaurants, and ice delivery. The boys may go to the MBKBs once in a while to get to know girls and then look for someone who is interested in dating with them. They develop romantic sexual relationships with the MKGs in the day times since the MKGs work at nighttime. Their dating would happen in local noodle shops, picnics in the tourist sites near Khong Chiam, and the boys' house while the parents are at work.

(2) Attributes of the MKGs

The MKGs whom we see at the salon shop is around 16 to 17 years old. She looks skinny but bright. Her skin is fair and her hair is shiny. Most MKGs who date the village boys are basically around this age. They are in the same age rages. The MKGs normally date someone who is a little bit older. Some cases they also date the boy of the same age. From what we see, the MKGs pays for salon by herself, but the boy takes her here and will send her back to the MBKB where she currently work for. Thus, the MKGs dating the village boys do not rely on him on the matter of money, but romance and facilitation he may be able to offer such as a ride. Some days the MKGs do not work, then they hangout far outside Khong Chiam. Thus the MKGs have sometime for themselves to get rid of being only with the MKCs, or stay in the MBKB all day and night long.

2) Dao Talking to the Researcher during Dinner at a MBKB

Excerpt 6.8

D = karaoke girl

R= Researcher

1   D   /Man kà khɯɯ kan là caan/

It's the same, teacher.

2   R   /Khɯɯ nɛɛw day nɔɔŋ waà/

How? You think so?

3   D   /Phuuâk phuu saay mák khaw kà mák khaaw dɨɨaw/

Men love is very short.

4   R   /Tɛɛ̀ŋ ŋaan kan lɛɛ̂w kà saw mák bɔɔ̂/

Once he gets married, he doesn't love anymore?

5   D   /Khan tɛɛ̀ŋ lɛɛ̂w man mɨɨ nɛɛw saŋ kan loôt déʔ bɔɔ̀ dɔn dɔɔ̂k tɛɛ̀k maâŋ/

> After getting married, there must be something make them hate
> each other. Not so long, they break up.

When the researcher talks to Dao during our early dinner at the MBKB, she skips addressing herself and address the researcher with her position, 'teacher' /cɑɑn/. The researcher also skips to address herself with any first-person pronoun since she does not want to highlight her outsider status. The researcher calls Dao 'sister' /nɔɔ́ŋ/ so that the talk is made friendly. This encounter shows that the researcher as one of the dominant group members and Dao as the out-group member is only realized through Dao's use of pronoun 'teacher.' The first-person pronouns are skipped by both speakers.

It is more interesting when she talks about relationships with men she tends to dichotomize herself as a member of female in-group against male out-group. The pronouns which she uses to refer to the men include 'group of males' /phuuâk phuû sɑɑy/ and 'them' /khǎw/. Dao groups her former husband and men in general into the 'group of males' and 'them.' Moreover, the reflexive pronoun 'each other' which she mentions men and their wives are used to tell bad ending story. The pronouns which Dao uses, especially to refer to the males, emphasizes the men as the out-group even more strongly than the researcher.

(1)   Attributes of the Researcher

For this casual talk during dinner with Dao, the researcher dresses like a cook and comes to the MBKB for help. Thus, the scene is made to be a friendly talk during the meal. The researcher asks the MKG just some simple questions. By the look of the researcher at the time of talk is more like some working with them.

(2) Attributes of the MKGs

Dao, the MKG is 21 years old. She has three children back in Laos. One is actually a baby. Thus Dao is a new mom who leaves her little baby at home with her parents. Physically, Dao is attractive. Her skin is fair and her hair is long black. Her face is round and this part she argue that she is a real Lao beauty with round face. Basically, Dao is very active in helping with the tasks in the MBKB. She sometimes helps supervise other junior MKGs in the bar while the owners are not present.

Personally, Dao has broken marriage life. The former husband in Laos divorced her and left her with three children. She does not tell who the former husband is and what is he doing after the divorce. Fundamentally, we know Dao as a new mom who come to work at the MBKB for raising her children. With such background, Dao deeply does not really like men, at least by the time she talks to the researcher.

6.5 Minority Group Members Talk

Dao talking to Noina about chatting over the phone

D = Dao

N = Noi

1	D	/ʔɨɨ nɔɔ̂y mɯŋ pay haǎ ʔɨɨ mɛ̀ɛ laaw ʔəə̂n/
		Noi! Go to see mom. She's calling you.
2	N	/Mɯŋ khɨɨ bɔɔ̀ pay ʔəə̂n tɛ̀ɛ kuu nɨɨ bɔô/
		Why don't you go see her? Does she only call me?
3	D	/Mɛ̀ɛn lɛ̀ɛʔ ʔəə̂n tɛɛ̀ mɯŋ phɔ́ʔ waà kuu bɔɔ̀ dây ɲaâk nam tɛɛ̀ lɔm phuû baàw khɨɨ mɯŋ/
		Of course! Only you are called because I'm unlikely, not busy talking on the phone with boys.
4	N	/Caŋ mɛ̀ɛn mɯŋ bɔɔ̀ lɔm phuû baàw khan mɛ̀ɛn bɔɔ̀ lɔm mɯŋ kà lɔm nam tɛ̀ɛ phuuǎ kàw mɯŋ tɨǐ kuu bɔɔ̀ sɨɨà dɔɔ̂k waà mɯŋ bɔɔ̀ lɔm phuû baàw mày/
		Oh! Really you are not chatting on the phone with boys? If not, it must be your ex-husband always on the phone. I don't believe that you don't chat with boys.
5	D	/Lɨɨâŋ khɔɔ̌ŋ kuu/
		My sake!
6	N	/Wəəy wəəy Lɨɨâŋ khɔɔ̌ŋ kuu ŋən mɔ̀t mɯŋ yaà maa yɨɨm ŋən kuu tɨɨ̀m bàt dəə̂ hây phuu baàw sɔɔ́n mɯŋ hân sɨɨ́ hây/

Oh! Oh! It's your business. If you need to add credits to your phone, don't bother borrow my money then. Ask your (many) boys to top it up for you.

Dao is commenting Noina about chatting over the phone with her Isan boyfriend while the owner of the MBKB is calling her. In the conversation, Dao and Noina address each other with 'rude but solidary' pronouns 'I' /kuu/ and 'you' /mɯɯŋ/ and call each other name with title /ʔɨɨ/ which is used among the same age group and close friends. Both the first-person and second-person pronouns used by both of them are deemed their solidarity ground. There is sense of equality, friendship, and sameness among them.

The third-person pronouns which they use allow us to see two groups of people in their daily life. The first is the owner of the MBKB who they refer to by calling 'mother' /ʔɨɨ mɛ̀/ and 'her' /laɑw/. These third-person pronouns seem to be included into their in-group by using kin term and 'her' in a way that they refer to the senior.

The second group of out-group members whom they mention is the 'village boys.' These boys are mentioned differently. For example, they mention 'boys' /phuû baàw/, 'Huaymaaktai village boy /phuû baàw baân huuây maàk tây/, ex-husband /phuuǎ khàw/, new boy /phuû baàw mày/, and extra boys' /phuû baàw sɔ́ɔn/. These boys are referred to as men in a relationship with Noina. The relationships is ranged from boys in general, boys from a given village, a new boyfriend, ex-husband, and multiple or extra boys. These pronouns reveal that the MKGs, Noina is one of many cases, can get involved with the village boys and develop relationship from acquaints, boyfriends. The former lover is then regarded as the 'ex-husband.'

(1) Attributes of the MKGs

Here we take Noina as one of the MKGs who have romance with the boys from the nearby village. Noina had got married when she was in Laos. Her marriage did not last long. It was about a year, she told. She does not have any child yet. After they departed, Noina came to Pakse trying to find a job. She got a job a noodle shop and worked there for about 6 months. Later, her friend suggested her to go to Bangkok and find a job. It was suggested by her older friend to work for a gold

shop. The duty is to sell gold at the shop. While working here, she had to live with the boss's family. Noina found it was not convenient to live and work at the same place every day. She barely went outside. Thus she told, it is not convenient and I have no freedom there. She then wants a job that allows her to have her holidays and pick her work days by herself.

She went back to Laos but later found a chance to come to Khong Chiam. She said she can work here, no one knows about her real karaoke job. More importantly, she could spend her time dating with boys and hang out with friends. As we learn from Noina, she is happy with job at the MBKB much more than selling gold in Bangkok. Thus Noina is the MKG who wants holidays and wants to select her work days by herself. She still wants to date boys and probably look for better marriage life than the one she left in Laos.

6.6 Conclusion

From those conversations, the processes of using third person pronouns used to indicate the 'OTHER' are as various as /khǎw/, /man/, /sum nân/, /sum níî/, /phuuâk nán/, /phuuaâk níî/, /mɛɛ̀ ɲiŋ/ /dèk/, /dèknɔɔ́y/, /phuu saǎw/, /phuû saǎw nɔɔ́y/, /saǎw laaw/, /saǎw haán/, /saǎw kaa raa ʔoo kè?/. All those pronouns refer to the MKGs but each pronoun highlights different significant attributes of the MKGs. These attributes are key to the MKG's identities. Some of these identities are obviously discriminatory. It can be grouped the pronominal choices into five categories of othering. Each category highlights different aspects of othering. Those categories include 1) distanced other pointing to a group other than the speaker's team, 2) gendered other focusing on being MK female 3) ageist other considering their underage attributes, 4) racial other indexing being Lao girls, and 5) spatial other associating to their work space and time, karaoke roles and activities.

1) The Demonstrative/Distanced Other

In terms of making 'them,' some pronouns including 'that group' /sum nân/, 'this group' /sum níî, 'those persons' /phuuâk nán/, 'these persons' /phuuâk níî/ as a single pronoun her, a plural pronoun them, structurally locates the MKGs in those interactions. These pronouns are used in reference to the young Laotian girls who

come to work in the MBKBs and seek to develop a patronized relationship with senior men in Khong Chaim community.

According to Khong Chiam housewives, those referential pronouns are associated with some major characteristics. In general it refers service staff working at the MBKBs. However, these words do not simply refer the 'service staff' but connote other qualities or characteristics which the karaoke service staff share in common, as viewed by the people in Khong Chaim community. On top of being the karaoke staff, they seriously seek romance, either short term or long term relationships with working men, especially old men in the community for their own living purposes, for instance covering their living cost here in Khong Chiam and sending remittance to their family in Laos. Moreover, some of them expect to permanently settle in Thailand with their prospect senior partners.

As it is believed by the housewives that they search for patronized relationships from senior men in the community, they are basically seen as 'threat' to the housewives' family in various aspects. The major ones include monetary, mental and reproductive health, and moral threat. For example, the MKGs are viewed as the cause of financial problems as they strategically seduce men for money; mental health problems as resulted from unhealthy relationships among the husbands and wives, reproductive health problems caused by having sexual intercourse with the MKGs; moral problems as the MKGs and the husbands' relationships closely involve verbal bad deeds, stealing, sexual misbehavior, and alcohol consumption.

In terms of monetary threat, the MKGs are typically seen as /phuû ɲǐŋ hɑǎ ŋən/-the money seeker. In search of money, the MKGs target older men who are financial stable. The strategically seduce 'the old men' to get attached to them so they can request for subsidies or other valuable items such as gifts and gold. Subsequently, the family's money, spent by the old men, is leaking to this group of girls. The housewives view this phenomenon as their economic lost. Thus they say the major characteristic of the MKGs is attaching the MKGs' seduction to the money leaker and consequently they are the family's financial threat.

The housewives and ordinary residents of Khong Chiam view the MKGs as their community's moral threat. In meeting the MKGs at the MBKBs men normally drink alcohol, lie to their wives or lie to the MKGs, and end up with sex outside

marriage. In some cases, the meeting and buying the MKGs' sexual services later lead to romance or patronized relationship between the men and the girls. These relationships are seen as affairs. In this sense, the MKGs are deemed as having low morals. Their work at the MBKBs as well as their sexual services, romantic relationship they develop with men are the source of Buddhist precept violation. Presumably, four out of five precepts are violated; refrain from stealing, lying and verbal misconducts, having improper sexual relationship, and consuming intoxicates.

Mental health and reproductive health threat is highlighted by other housewives in the community. Other interviews and observation support that they are suffering when their husbands get attached to the MKGs. This type of threat is seen as results of unhealthy relationship between the husbands and wives, financial issues and immoral behavior which involve meeting with the MKGs. For example, the wife beating her husband mentioned in the above table shows that they quarrel each other due to unwanted relationship between her husband and the MKG.

Many cases show that the wives suffer when they have to cope with their husbands and the MKGs dating / meeting. Most wives feel they cannot fully trust their husbands once the husbands meet the MKGs at the MBKBs, especially if the husbands take the MKGs out to hotels or restaurants. This take out indicates that they have sexual intercourse and they possibly develop longterm relationship. Another interview with a housewife at Khong Chiam hospital tells us that she suffer complicated mental health problems caused by her husband having affair with the MKGs in the last 3 years.

In terms of reproductive health risks, the housewives believe that the MKGs are transmitters of sexual transmission diseases (STDs) and HIV. As a result, they are afraid of the MKGs existence in Khong Chiam community. This intimidate feeling occur as consequences of their husbands have either occasional sexual intercourse or the long term sexual relationship with the MKGs, the housewives believe they are put at high reproductive health risks by the MKGs and their husband.

In short, in referring to the MKGs by using the pronouns 'her/ them' /khǎw/, 'it/ them' /mɑn/ and grouping them by utilizing 'that group' /sum nân/, 'this group'/sum nîî/, 'those persons'/phuuâk nân/, and 'these persons'/phuuâk nîî/ is by no mean neutral. The use of those pronouns virtually encompasses some negative

attributes. Those words indicate a group of the MKGs who stereotypically viewed as various kinds of community's threats, especially the housewives who are indirectly affected by the persistence of the MKGs in Khong Chiam.

2) The Gendered Other

The MKGs are frequently referred to in the interactions as 'woman' /mɛ̀ɛ ɲǐŋ/, /phûu ɲǐŋ/, 'girl'/phûu saǎw/, /phûu saǎw nɔ́ɔy/. These pronouns are used to mention their biological sex but these pronouns have overtones. Therefore, they are not simply used to refer to 'female' third parties, but connoted that these 'females' are 'other females' excluded from the speakers' group.

Indeed these gendered pronouns ascribe some negative quality of the MKGs. In a pessimistic sense, the 'females' mentioned in the MK interactions are competitors of the housewives. As opposed to the housewives who are hard-working, moral, and physically aged, and they confined to the household, the MK females are seen as lazy workers, having low morals, and physically young.

As perceived by the Khong Chiam community, the word /saǎw/ and /saǎw nɔ́ɔy/ do not simply mean they are young so they are conclusively attractive; slender, firm, fair skin, cute, beautiful, lovable, cheerful, talkative, and so on. Those words in fact connote 'more desirable females,' probably 'sexually appealing females,' and 'discrete females.' Those connotations hint aforementioned threats so that they are problematic group of residency exists in Khong Chiam. The more the MK females are recognized as more desirable, sexily appealing, or interesting; the housewives feel uncertain in terms of their spouse relationship and family stability.

Therefore, the gendered third party such as females, girls, and young girls are not neutrally brought up but rather encoded the competitive attributes which are regarded to be harmful to family life, communal morale, and norms that the community should hold.

3) The Immature Other

Another attribute that shows communal bias towards the MKGs is age, in an abstract sense we may call 'maturity'. Some pronouns that are very often used in the MK interactions highlight this aspect of 'THEM.' The third person pronouns, kids /dèk/, small kids /dèk nɔ́ɔy/, girls /phûu saǎw/, and young girls /saǎw nɔ́ɔy/ are used to point to their 'immaturity.' This attribute is seen bias due to believes that one a

person is young, he/she is inexperienced and not always follow the society' norms. He/she can be inconsiderate about things and behaviors. Thus the immature one is prone to doing things wrong, including misbehaving, violating the social norms, moral, and does not consider other people's peace of mind. The immaturity tends to make them do what they want rather than have concern for those aspects of the community. These views might be how the immature MKGs are negatively recognized and they are simply associates with the social wrongs.

4) The Racial Other

In addition to the gendered other described above, the third person pronouns used in the MK interactions also focus on racial difference. Although the Isan culture and Lao Lum culture are similar and some people living in Isan closely relate to people in Laos, but the difference between being Lao and Thai/Thai-Isan is underlined through differentiating the 'Lao-ness' from the speakers who are contemporary and politically Thai. The quality of the Laotian girls /saǎw laɑw/, as the speaker thinks of, is exotic, unequal to the speakers in terms of economic, socio-cultural, and political aspect.

By being referred to as Lao people, the community unconsciously makes pejorative sense of the MKGs. They are deemed domestic exotic as they are from another country. They are poorer than working women in Isan, assumed by the talk of working women at the noodle shop, thus they always find short cut to earn Thai baht by seducing old men. They are seen as less modernized than Isan-Thai people, not well educated, and culturally backward. If less but not least, there is demeaning perception on Laos' political communism as opposed to Thai liberal democratic. Being people coming from Laos P.D.R. bunches those of negative attributes into their Lao identity, of course realized through the use of the pronoun which marks 'racial other.'

The pronoun that includes Lao-ness in the talk is not genuinely identification of geographical origin or their 'nation state', but also attaches many subordinate characteristics to the racial highlighter of being 'Lao.'

5) The Spatial Other

Some third person pronouns direct our attention to characteristics of the MKGs' work place. The pronouns such as 'bar girls' / phuû saǎw haán/, 'karaoke

girls' /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kɛ̀ʔ/ are not only a spatial indicator to concrete MBKBs per se, but the conclusive attributes of spatial, temporal, and interactional relationship that the MKGs involve. There is no exception if some of them do not always live in the bars but rent their rooms outside. They are still grouped into this category. Indeed, the karaoke roles and activities, space, and time are the key elements for which the speakers underline.

Subsequently, the MKGs' major identity is associated with their work place and this is how Khong Chiam people identify them by using the third person pronouns that signify 'spatial other.' To elaborate, when the MKGs work in Khong Chiam, they work mostly at nighttime, very late at night. For the community people, nighttime work at restaurants or entertainment places is not seen as good jobs. Some ordinary people may think of such places as 'inauspicious.' The MKGs however use the MBKBs as their meeting or dating point so that they can meet with their male clients. They also have to eat, drink, sing chat and later develop positive attitudes with their clients. The karaoke space thus means the space where it provides proper conditions for the girls to commit the aforementioned threats. It means they have chances to negotiate for their sexual services.

Once the word 'karaoke' is closely related to those activities, the term 'bar' /hɑǎn/ is a place where it allows many precepts violation, or deviant behaviors such as having alcoholic beverages, lying as for making up false identities and concealing who they actually are in other social settings. Some MKGs may steal the customers' money, take some valuable things when are drunk. Some husbands may lie to their wives, relatives, and other people about their meeting with the girls at the MBKBs. More importantly, the MBKBs heavily draw male customers, either single or married men, to have sexual misconduct, sex outside marriage, and adultery. If a girl is too young, they do commit illegal sex with the underage female.

In summary, the 'bar' /hɑǎn/ and 'karaoke' /kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kɛ̀ʔ/ are the locative expression included in the personal pronouns which refer to the MKGs. Silverstein (1976) emphasizes that language users point to their roles not only as interlocutors, but also to their location in time and space and to their relationship to others. The third person pronouns in this sense provide the numerous negative attributes to the MKGs as the 'spatial other.'

This section concludes that the pronoun choices of the first, second, and third pronouns in different MK interactions can categorize the interlocutors into main oppositions which are the 'US' and the 'OTHER.' As elaborated above, the first person pronouns and second used by the housewives obviously show that fictive kin term terms are usefully applied for purposes of making alignment so she form the sense of inclusion. The byproducts of making the 'US' in the interactions are differentiations of the 'OTHER' which is abundantly factored up on the major attributes such as the third person-MKGs' generic, gendered, immature, racial, and spatial other. Those 'othernesses' ascribe negative characteristics such as different forms of threats, harmful MK females, inconsiderate immature, Lao the other, and inauspicious karaoke other.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Social actions and discourses have dialectical relationship with the structure of the society as a whole. If we wish to comprehend social reality and its structure, we then need investigate discourses that are part of social actions. Identities are one of many social constructions and realities in our social world. They can be socially constructed in relation to available discourses in the society which have certain rules, norms, or orders of action, and underscored by ideological forces of the society.

The incentive for conducting this research concerns the social issue of the young Laotian girls who are working in the MBKBs. In Khong Chiam, the MKGs are continually defined as /yɯɯà/ (victims) in one discourse and /phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən/ (money seekers) in another with the latter is the more dominant discourse. These discourses raise persistent questions on what are the identities of the MKGs? Do the MKGs accept the identities constructed and imposed by the others, or do they attempt to negotiate or resist them? Through their daily social life in the MBKB setting, do they strategically work on their karaoke-fit identities, do they conform with influential ideologies in the MBKB setting, and does liminality confine the ways that they develop the karaoke bodies and identities. Also, how does discursive practice exhibit the social life of the MKGs as well as unfold the social structures encoded within their daily ritual of the MBKB action.

Both social interaction and discourse analysis are context sensitive, thus the researcher is aware of the contingency of the MBKB context. The researcher brought in the concept of liminality to explain the context in which MKG's social interaction and discourse take place. Liminality can help to shed light on how the in-between state of the MBKB setting influence the identity work of the participants both in the processes of how they build up their historical bodies, how they maintain the interaction order of karaoke encounters, and how they work to construct their own contentious identities as well as to cope with the liminal identities foisted upon them.

7.1 Summary of Findings

In the quest to understand identity, we argue that its construction is realized through social action and discourses of the MKGs. This thesis has traced the MKGs' kaleidoscopic views of identity construction. In answering two research questions: What are the identities of the MBKBs' participants and how are they strategically constructed within the Khong Chiam interactional contexts, this thesis has adopted Nexus Analysis which focuses on the processes of building the participant historical bodies, the social arrangement-interaction order, and discourse in place-language used in actual context. The historical bodies of the MKGs are investigated based on their past experiences and processes by which they develop their bodily capital to form valuable self that fits well in the liminal space of Khong Chiam MBKBs. Critical Discourse Analysis is applied to investigate the processes of how the participants manage influential ideologies which are always interwoven in their interactions and discursive practice of othering. Through examining those processes, ideologies are decoded.

Discourse studies maintain the society with particular ideologies and such ideologies serve to legitimate some discourses to render it a superior status so that it becomes a powerful force in the society.

The Khong Chiam community is a unique space in time where it is always 'in between' in terms of its geography, located at the confluence of two major rivers- the Mekong and the Moon River. Its geographical assets also provide Khong Chiam with abundant natural resources. In terms of economy and development, it has gone through processes of transforming from a quiet border town to a tourist destination in the era of globalization. It has become a node and link, geographically and financially. As a result, people, capital, goods, and other things conveniently flow. Such economic development makes Khong Chiam a transforming town. Unfortunately, social problems ensue. As aforementioned, smuggling, illegal immigration, karaoke sex trade, healthcare risks have emerged and appeared to be on the rise.

MBKBs can contribute to a few social issues namely illegal immigration, human tracking and illegal sex trade. The practice of karaoke sex trade in Khong Chiam is distinctive partially because the MBKB place is a liminal space where their

bodies, roles, discourses, and social actions are also 'in between.' For instance, the MBKBs look like a restaurant, but provide singing lounges. More importantly, the field work could tell that the MBKB businesses rely heavily on sex work. The MBKBs may look like a professional service work place, but almost all of them do not hire service staff. The MKGs are not paid employees, but they generate income directly from the MKCs-drink fees, tips, take-out charges, gifts or the MKCs patronage. Based on these conditions, the MKGs who rely on offering sexual services invest in their bodies to generate income as well struggle to gain more acceptable identities. They are spending their time to sustain the karaoke encounters, karaoke normative roles and norms; they also try to overlook the miseries and difficulties facing them in this place.

Literature reviews provide background of the Khong Chiam community, the MBKBs, and important topics related to the MKGs are trafficking, exploitation (Molland, 2012), labeling and stigmatization (Natedao Taotawin, 2008; Kanokwan Manorom, 2009; Rattanaphon Tangthanaseth, 2011), marginalization (Kanokwan Manorom, 2009; Watcharee Srikham, 2012; Sangsawan, personal communication, October 13, 2014), and dehumanization (Khuanruthai Jangjumras, 2000, 2001; Natedao Taotawin, 2005). The literature reviews point out knowledge gaps both in terms of methodology and area. It is conclusive that social research on topic relating to the MKGs needs more diverse perspectives and the ground breaking study of karaoke bar girls suggests further investigation of identity construction by karaoke bar girls in different regions. The MBKB in Khong Chiam is considered worthy for knowledge extension.

Numbers of theories are triangulated as to enable the researcher to address salient points features of MKG social interaction and discourses surrounding them. Critical Discourse Analysis framework concerns power relations and ideological discourse arising from the interactions in MBKBs and Khong Chiam community. Nexus analysis has mapped out the participants' historical body, investigated their interaction order and analyzed discourse in place. These main theoretical frameworks are supported with analytical tools from sociocultural linguistic approach, concepts of bodily capital, situated activity system, and discursive practice of othering. Based on those tools, we look closely at the discourses within social interactions which the

karaoke participants actually practice in their face-to-face interactions in regard to answering the proposed research questions.

To answer the first research question; what are identities of the MBKBs' participants and how are they strategically constructed within the Khong Chiam interactions, the analysis of the historical body of the pre-MKG's bodies encases the girl, young woman, and Laotian identities. These bodies are central to formulate bodily capitals of the present-MKGs historical body. They make sure that the successfully built karaoke bodies are well-fit and valuable for the MKCs who are influential to define what identities and attributes of the MKGs should be like. With their superior economic power, they have the right to define 'what' and 'how' the MKGs' historical bodies should be invested.

There are processes showing how the pre-MKG identities of /phuû saǎw/ (young woman) and /saǎw laɑw/ (Laotian girl) are developed with different strategies such as spending a lot of money to transform their body so that it conforms to the males' idea of beauty. Some notions of beauty are brought to practices; firm and thin body, fair and smooth skin, long shiny black hair and colored hair arranged in stylish ways, fancy coating of nail enamels, wearing perfumes, and firm breasts. Some diets are taken to promote female health and calories are controlled for good shape. Over a course of time, those practices get inculcated so they are able to form adorable girls and desirable females as to promote sex appealing to their MKCs. The processes of improving 'femininity and beauty,' in the first place, facilitate them to develop ideal attributes of the MKGs including /pen tɑɑ hák/ (adorable), /pen tɑɑ ʔaw/ (desirable) and /pen tɑɑ chàp tɑɑ bɑɑy/ (sexy/ hot) to the MKCs. Those attributes then result in reshaping their present-MKG identities.

The MKGs also get serving skills and service mind developed to be /saǎw səə̀p/ (serving girls) identity. On top of that other identities are also realized through the processes by which they form the karaoke bodies. Their expectations and personal life goals convey different components of identity. While working at the MBKBs, it is not only the identities of serving girls and sex work are highlighted; in fact they also attempt to construct positive or valuable selves that are acceptable to a larger society. Although other contentious identities are not as obviously constructed in comparison

to the serving girls and karaoke sex worker, non-stigmatized identities such as a bread winner, typical woman, future entrepreneur, and lover are found in MKG discourse.

Their dating and sex experience become internalized into the MBKB practice. The MBKBs have provided time and space for a brief flirting or even dating episodes. Within this liminal period, the MKG identity is constructed in relation to their physical confinement of karaoke bar so they are referred to as /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kèʔ/ (karaoke girls). Their native language skills are effectively used while they work so their /saǎw lɑɑw/ (Laotian girl) identity is valued in the bar because Lao lady is seen as exotic in the eyes of Thai MKCs. All those identities highlight people's recognitions of the MBKB practices that involve meeting, flirting, and having sexual intercourse with the /saǎw sǝǝ̀p/ or /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kèʔ/ who is also the /saǎw lɑɑw/.

Those identities are valued by their customers; however they are the identities or bodies at risks. Their historical body is still demeaning based on attached attributes. The risks they face in everyday life include legal, health, emotional, and moral aspects. They are stigmatized based on their sex work. Therefore the *normals* living in Khong Chiam community refer to men having sex with them as /tɨɨ kà rɨɨ lɑɑw/ (hook a Laotian hooker). Such discourse is not found in the MBKB interaction, but the dominant group members use this discourse on his social media, on personal Facebook pages.

Within the liminal space of the MBKB setting, these bodily capitals/ identities invested over the course of time are valued by the patriarchal and capitalist notions. The male customers' preference, emotional satisfaction, and sexual pleasure outside marriage are based on their economic superiority over the MKGs. This is how asymmetric power relations between the MKGs and their MKCs are intrinsically sustained through the processes of building the MKGs' historical bodies.

To answer the second research question of how the MKGs discursively construct, negotiate, and represent their contingent/contentious/strategic identities, the interaction order analysis has mapped the MBKBs service encounter. This overall social arrangement is composed of various units of interaction order including singles, withs, and conversational encounter. Fundamentally the MKG and MKC construct

their identities based on certain normative roles and different processes which they utilize in order to sustain a given situated activity system.

In the greeting session the MKG has the right to initiate the interaction. Most of the time, they define the length time of service session. The beginning of the interaction is identified by interactive physical movement. The interaction begins when the two move closer together. The 'singles' interaction unit occur when the MKGs or the MKCs are by themselves. This period of time, they relinquish the /saǎw səə̀p/ roles but still maintain their /phuû saǎw/ (young woman) identity. Even when they are alone they always keep themselves /pen tɑɑ hák/ (adorable), /pen tɑɑ ʔaw/ (desirable), /pen tɑɑ bəə̀ŋ/ (attractive- literally means worth looking). Sometimes the singles allow them to perform other roles such as 'mother' as a MKG quickly calls her child when she is not in the service session. Some may release the 'lover' roles by picking up a phone or chatting with a lover on Line. This situated activity system seems to allow them to practice roles distance and release seriousness of the MBKB serving girls' life.

The interaction order unit in the singing session shows that it is the most significant unit in the conversational encounter. In this session, the MKGs and the MKCs are together in the singing lounge or VIP singing rooms. The MKGs usually initiate the conversation. As they converse and sing, the MKCs may initiate physical contact by touching their body, hands, legs, thighs, or rub their back. The topics they talk about mainly include 'trivial' topics, according to the MKCs. Thus, food in Lao-Isan culture, traveling, song, music, some life experiences, making fun of people in their work place, people's relationships, jokes, and dirty jokes are common topics. The major identities are /saǎw səə̀p/, /saǎw lɑɑw/, /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kè?/, those identities intensively promote sex worker's roles.

During the conversations, as the topics are wide, the MKGs have chances to assert other identities such as young women, daughter, wife, Laotian, bread winner, life navigator, future entrepreneur, normal woman, /dèk nɔɔ́y/ (kids), sister, and employee. During the singing session, the MKGs try to agree with the MKCs, save the MKCs' face, be polite and follow the MKCs' wants. They impress the MKCs by serving food and drink, contributing to good talk, facilitating singing and performing for the MKCs sometime. In case the encounter does not go well, role distance occurs

to sustain the conversational encounter. This might involve politely refuse to deliver food to that MKC, leaving the table to the toilet, asking the other MKGs in join the session, or shifting the topics.

The roles and rules which the MKG and MKC follow as well as the processes by which they attempt to maintain their encounters are not simply performed. In fact, those interaction orders are backed up with the same patriarchal ideologies which the men should be served. Their overall physical and emotional satisfaction through entertainment and, eventually, sex must be the core concern of the karaoke interaction. Then, satisfaction of the male customers may not come about unless they are treated as superior in terms of social status, age, and more importantly economic security. The interaction order in the karaoke service encounter is thus partially sustained by anchoring the importance of patriarchal and capitalist ideologies.

The discourse in place analysis answers the second question by explaining the processes of using particular pronouns in the MBKB interactions. Within processes of utilizing pronouns in the interactions, the in-group members are identified through the use of kinship terms and using inclusive pronoun 'we' who belong to family institution especially husband and wife relationship. The typical women in Khong Chiam ascribe to their use of inclusive pronoun 'we' by hints of hard-working and professional women identities. The MKCs are attributed as 'salary men' and they normally get complimented by the MKGs to be /paǎ/ and /sɨǎ/ which exhibit their secured financial status. This financial superiority is the source of power which allows men to control over the MKGs' historical bodies, karaoke interaction order as well as discourses in the MBKB setting. Although they seem powerful, but they do not have total control of discourses occurring within the MBKBs. Often times the MKCs are referred to with ageist bias as the 'old man' by both ordinary women of Khong Chiam and the MKGs.

The processes of othering construction in the MBKB encounters are managed based on four aspects of othering. The MKGs are made 'other' on the basis of age, gender, ethnic origin, and the spatial place to which they belong. These aspects are sometimes overlapped with each other.

7.2 Discussion

For decades, we have witnessed common practices along the Thai-Lao border in which Lao girls migrate into Thailand in order to work in establishments known as karaoke bars. The bar provides a legal facade for the shady sex service business. Khong Chiam during 2014-2017, despite the junta government declared eradicating policies on sex trade practiced in the Mekong border towns, some karaoke shops are still in operation. There must be significant social, cultural, and economic aspects that sustain the MBKB business while the involvement of the MKGs is still active.

Some findings on historical body confirm previous studies by Natedao Natedao Taotawin (2005, 2008), Kanokwan Manorom (2009), Rattaphon Phonphipit (2003) that the MKGs possess some disadvantaged characteristics since they are being marginalized, stigmatized, being seen as the outsiders on the basis of their citizenship, ethnic background, and gender. They have faced multiple risks that result in unequal status especially their illegal immigration and prostitution law violation. Their social status is mitigated as poor, benign, and unethical. As a result, they are often pejoratively referred to by the local Khong Chiam community in which they live but do not belong to. Therefore they inevitably cope with disparaging interactions in their mundane Khong Chiam life.

Partially, the MKGs' life experience is that of victims of human trafficking and exploitation as proposed by Molland (2012). Participant observation from this study affirms that the MBKBs liminal space is not a legal work place. The MKGs contribute their labor to serve for the MBKB owners without pay. Fundamental rights and welfare are not covered by the owners or any Thai organizations / authorities. Consequently, they are not registered employees thus they are not entitled to benefits such as health insurance, or social security.

The MKGs live within the MBKBs and rely on the MBKB owners in patron-client arrangement. They express recognition of patronage by discourses of kinship such as mother-daughter, aunt, and elder sibling. The MKG relationship with the owner is that of patron-client, hidden under the façade of kinship outlined by the use of kinship terms of address. By calling the owner-mother and consider them 'daughter,' MKGs may create for themselves an illusion that they are living with

relative in a cozy and warm atmosphere. However, such interpretation deprive them of rights and benefit to which they would otherwise entitled had they position themselves as employee.

The historical bodies of the MKGs in Khong Chiam found that the girls want to improve their life. The ongoing process of building historical bodies reveal that they want to invest in any possible ways to improve their condition and ensure they can get better jobs after the 'liminal' period in the MBKBs. By conveying contentious identities, socially acceptable identities such as mother, daughter, lover, ordinary woman, future entrepreneur, have implied that they do have strong expectation to transform the stigmatized selves to those positive selves. Their life in the MBKBs as they are facing today is a liminoid (Turner, 1969) which they purport to change by acquiring an acceptable social status.

Those contentious identities then counter the finding by Rattanaphon Tangthanaseth (2011) which concludes: the MKGs in Chiangkhong district do not want to learn because they believe they cannot. In contrast, MKGs found in this study attempt to improve themselves and push their limits. The expectations and life goals of the MKGs in Khong Chiam indicates that many MKGs want to save money for setting up a business and they take a chance to do some relevant research by asking/consulting with some of their customers who have trading experiences. One MKG invested her time to practice English with her MKCs.

Also, the contentious identities are not in accordance with former studies which conclude that karaoke girls are victims of human trafficking and women exploitation. In fact, the karaoke girls manage to negotiate or even resist processes of trafficking and exploitation by using their young and desirable body to increase their negotiating power. The more beautiful and sexually desirable their appearance gets, the more power they have over MKCs. Also, sexual attraction can eventually generate the highest amount of income. The young and attractive MKGs may also manipulate their sex appeal to negotiate lover relationship with their young village boys, attracting boys and requesting what she wants him to do for her. For old MKGs, their life and family experience and Lao language skills also empower them to form good relationship or even intimate relationship with the MKCs. This then leads to patronage with financial and intimate support. Those contentious identities do not

only facilitate them to comfortably work with their MKCs but also empower them to negotiate for better choices in different situations.

Their linguistic skills, Lao and Thai fluency are effective in making good singing sessions as they talk to their MKCs both in Thai and Lao language. Their linguistic capital increases the karaoke value on their bodies as well as effectively sustains the situated activity system of the MBKB and increase emotional satisfaction through skillful entertainment. Wacquant (2004) found that the bodily capital of boxers are heavily invested on building muscle, strength, and fighting spirit, the karaoke bodily capital are centered around building feminine, adorable, and sexy young girls and service mindset. These bodies fit into sustainable patriarchal ideologies such as polygamy in which men can have more than one wife or sexual partner. Men have power to define what and how the entertainment bodies should be like. In the MBKB case, the girls are required to be young, adorable, desirable, and sexy. Other skill sets of the MKGs such as serving, facilitating, singing, and entertaining the MKCs are inculcated. These skills are central to explain the ways in which capitalist ideologies are interlocked within the karaoke interaction order. When the karaoke participants follow the rules of the social arrangement and maintain the karaoke normative roles, those actions allow the girls to generate income while they yield the men emotional satisfaction and sexual pleasure.

Also not many studies focus on discourse constructed genuinely by this problematic group. Thus knowledge gap allows this thesis to shed light on the originality of their discourse, action, and life experiences.

The historical body of the MKGs informs us that there are not only the dominant versions of the 'victims' and the 'money seekers' exist, but also the contentious version of identities are constructed and co-exist such as bread winner, future entrepreneur, normal woman and so on. Though those of which are not yet recognized by the society as a whole, they are there and ready to invite anyone interested in making the non-stigmatized identities to be known.

The historical body also suggests that the non-stigmatized versions of identities are made unseen due to *risks* that give them vulnerable identities such as the illegal migrants, illegal workers, HIV and STDs transmitters, and women of low morals. Once the society selectively highlights those negative identities, the

alternative identities are consequently not voiced. This socially biased treatment of identities then maintains asymmetric power relations between the dominant group members and the out-group MKGs. As a result, the MKGs' life in their MBKB liminal space remains in the liminality by which they cannot overcome mysteries and difficulties.

The interaction order shows that the arrangement in the MBKBs facilitates flirting and dating activities through different units of encounters, including the singles, withs, and conversational encounters. Through long hours of singing, chatting and facilitating and flirting in the session, the interaction order allows display of both foregrounded identities such as /phuû saǎw/, /saǎw sə̀əp/, /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kɛ̀ʔ/, karaoke sex worker and also backgrounded identities, to name a few, mother, daughter, bread winner, normal woman, etc.

The discourse in place, the process of othering by the uses of pronouns illustrate that the in-group members' identities are associated with positive or acceptable attributes while the out-group members-the MKGs are attributed with various aspects of negative selves. The pronouns referred to the MKGs are labeled based on various discriminating resources including ageism, gender, race and citizenship, spatial relationship with the MBKB, and their sex work. They are referred to as 'it, her, they, them, /dèk nɔɔ́y/ (kids), /mɛ̂ yɨŋ/ (woman), /phuû saǎw/ (young women), /saǎw lɑɑw/ (Laotian girls), /phuû saǎw haán/ (bar girls), /saǎw kɑɑ rɑɑ ʔoo kɛ̀ʔ/ (karaoke girls), etc. Apart from standard Thai pronouns (Iwazaki & Preeya Ingkhaphirom, 2009), the pronouns used to refer to the MKGs and the processes by which the speakers associate them with negative other are more diverse than the standard Thai language has mentioned. As Lao and Isan language plays an important role in the MBKB interaction, the pronouns /khɔɔ́y/ (I) and /châw/ (you) (Khongmanee, 1999) are more frequently used by the MKGs and their MKCs.

Such a dichotomy of positive in-group and negative out-group returns to support the public discourses in Khong Chiam. The victims and money seekers identities are distinguished. However they are both the stigmatizing views of the Mekong karaoke girls. The key point is that both views are stigmatizing in essentially different ways. Most of the local people simply look at the MKGs as /phuû yǐŋ haǎ ŋən. The locals relate this discourse to various negative social impacts happening in

the local Khong Chiam, for example family financial shortage, unhealthy relationships, and STDs and HIV spreaders, moral degraders.

Succinctly, the Khong Chaim MKGs' identities which are constructed, communicated, and circulated in the local community, are not just the main public discourses of 'money seekers' or the 'victims' but the MKGs also construct contentious identities. This point is another side of the story which the local community does not yet understand. It is not surprising that the MKGs are acted on and interacted with on the basis of the public discourse. The contentious identities are not recognized. They are unable to get rid of the liminal stage of the MBKB. Therefore their contentious selves will never be voiced. And because of this, the injustice remains unresolved as the ideological patriarchy and capitalism still underpin the processes of making othering selves. In fact, it is their background identities that show the human side of the MKGs. If we wish to change such social practice as Nexus Analysis proposes (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), then all the stakeholders need to recognize their identity mosaics as well.

7.3 Further Studies

This thesis promotes the idea that other contributive studies concerning the MKGs can be an investigated, for example, identity construction in Lao P.D.R. entertainment places. Thus we may see similarity or differences of the identity construction. Additionally, investigation of connection between technologies, social media and other texts relevant to the bordering karaoke practices can be interesting so we may see other identities arise or other ideologies that influence the makeup of the MKGs' identities.

At the end, this study concludes that the MBKB interaction in Khong Chiam is the liminal space where the MKGs construct, negotiate, and represent their fluid identities by emitting contentious identities through discourses and actions deployed within the unique Mekong border karaoke service encounters. Through discursive practices and social actions, the MKGs' identity construction unfolds that injustice remains through the process of making selves, liminality of identity is sustained thus the MKGs are confined within the liminal space of the MBKB where both patriarchal

and capitalism effectively underline the discourses and actions. Therefore egalitarian society is hardly achieved unless the stakeholders take into account and tackle to change the MBKB discourses and actions so the MKGs' identities can be transformed to the post liminiod.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Khong Chiam Town

APPENDIX B

Interactions and Pronouns used in the MBKBs

Table B1 The Pronouns Used in MBKB Interactions

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
a) D-to-D					
1) A house wife talks to Rose, as a carwash customer, whom she meets when she is waiting for her pick-up truck to be washed	ข้อย (I) แม่ (I) เฮา (I) ผู้อยู่บ้าน I (as a housewife) ทางนี้ I (as a person staying at home) เจ้าของ (I)	น้า (Auntie) เจ้า (you)	The MKGs: เขา He เด็กน้อย (young girls) สาวน้อย (maiden, young girls) ผู้สาวน้อยๆ (very young girls) แม่ยิง (women) CUSs เพิ่น (them) ลาว (he / him)	reflexive กัน (each other) Possessive ผัวโต (my husband) ของข้อย (my husband) พ่อมึง (your father)	a)"น้าเจ้าเห็นบ่ เฒ่าๆ อยู่นี่เพิ่นพาสาวน้อยมาล้างรถ เฟียกันอยู่ใกล้ๆ ข้อยหนิ" a) "Auntie, you do see that? This old man took the young girl here with him to get his car washed. They touched each other and they were so close to me." b)"เห็นเพิ่นหยอกกันเว้ากัน เห็นแล้วหละคิดเหลือตนเมียลาวอยู่บ้าน.... แนวผู้หนุ่มมันบ่เอาเด้ มีแต่ผู้เฒ่านี้เด้ มานั่งให้เขาเอาตีนนอนก่ายกะมีแฮง วุ้ย เป็นตาไม้เสียบไปทางพุ้น คิดเห็นแม่แต่คราวแต่กี้ ระยะหนึ่งกะไปติดนำเขา ของข้อยหั้น ข้อยไปเห็นอยู่ร้านเทื่อหนึ่ง นำตี เหลือน้อยนึงกะสิถึกแม่ยิง ย้านเขาจับ" b) : I saw them sweet-talk each other, I sympathized his very own wife staying at his house. Because young men wouldn't want her except the old man. He's happy just to be touched by the young girl. I want to him with a long stick.

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
			เฒ่า (old men) เฒ่า (old men) เฒ่าโลด (very old man) เฒ่าห้าสิบสี่สิบ (an old man in his 40s or 50s) คนใหญ่ สี่สิบห้าสิบ (an old man in his 40s or 50s) เมียลาว (the old man's wife) ลาว (he or she/ him or her) เขา (he) เขา (he)		It reminds me of <u>my mom</u> in the old days. <u>My father</u> also had a relationship with a young girl like <u>those men</u>. I saw him with a girl one time at a karaoke bar. My mom followed him there and hit him hard. She almost shot him but she was afraid of getting arrested."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
2) Working women talked to each other at a noodle shop at lunch, referring to an assumed karaoke girl who came with her old man	ข้อย (I/ me) หมู่เฮา (we)	เจ้า (you)	ผู้หนุ่ม (young men) **The MKGs** เขา (they) ผู้สาวน้อย (young girls) **CUSs** อีพ่อ (father/dad) ผู้เฒ่า ผู้เฒ่า (old people) ลาว (he)	ซุมนั้น (those people/ those girls) ซุมนี้ (we/us)	a) ญ1 "หายากเนาะเงิน เฮ็ดงานจั่ง<u>หมู่เฮา</u>หาจนเฒ่ากะบ่มีเก็บไว้เกษียณ" Woman 1: " It's very difficult to make money. Having a career like ours, <u>we</u> have to work until we are old but we wouldn't be able to save money to spend after we retire." ญ2 "บัด<u>ซุมนั้น</u>(บุ้ยใบ๋ไปทางรถกระบะ) <u>เขา</u>คือหาง่ายแท้ชั่น" Woman 2: "But for <u>those girls</u>, it is easy for <u>them</u> to make money (pointing or signaling by means of the lips and gestures)." b) ญ2 "สมัยก่อน<u>ผู้เฒ่า</u>เข้าวัด มีเบี้ยมีหวัด เฮ็ดบุญบริจาคทาน" Woman 1: " In the old days, <u>old men</u> went to temple to make merit. They donated money to the temple." ญ1 "ใผว่าหยัง สมัยนี้<u>เขา</u>(ผู้เฒ่า)กะเฮ็ดทานคือกัน" Woman 2: " Noticeably, these days, <u>they</u> also donate their money ." . ญ2 "เข้าคาราโอเกะ ทาน<u>ผู้สาวน้อย</u>ตี๊" Woman 2: "They go to karaoke bars and donate money to <u>young girls</u>."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
					ญ1 "เห็นๆ ยุ เบี้ยผู้<u>เฒ่า</u>ห้าร้อย เบี้ย<u>เด็กน้อย</u>ห้าพันพุ้นเนาะ" Woman1: " I agree with that. <u>Old people</u> get 500-baht pension but <u>young girls</u> get 5,000 baht." ญ2 "ทองสลึงหนึ่งพุ้นแหล่ว คัน<u>เขา</u>ได้ขอ" Woman2: " Or even a gold necklace weighing 3.75 gram, if that's what <u>they</u> ask for." ญ1 "<u>อีพ่อ</u>กะให้ คัน<u>ลูกหลาน</u>ว่า <u>ลาว</u>กะเถียง(ด้วย)ความพระพุทธ Woman 1: "<u>My dad </u>also did that. When his <u>children</u> complained about that, <u>he</u> talked back to us and used Buddhist principles as an excuse."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
3) An auto mechanic talked to Rose, his customer, at his garage	ผม (จขร) (I) ข้อย (หนุ่มร้านซ่อม) (I)	มึง (you) บักปอบ (Asshole)	ผู้สาว (girlfriend) สาว (girlfriend) แม่มัน (her mom) แม่ยิง (girls/women girlfriend)	กัน(หนุ่มร้านซ่อมกับสาวคาราโอเกะ) (each other)	จขร "<u>มึง</u>สิไปใสหว่อง" Jakhorn : "Where are <u>you</u> going, Wong?" หว "ไปเซเว่น" Wong : " I'm going to 7-11" จขร "บ่แม่นดอก มึงสิไปรับ<u>ผู้สาว</u>มากินข้าว อย่ามาตั๋ว" Jakhorn : "That's not true . You are going to pick up <u>your girlfriend</u> for lunch. Don't you lie to me." จขร "<u>บักปอบ</u>หนิ เอาแต่<u>สาว</u>บ่เอาเวียกเอางาน" Jakhorn : "You, <u>asshole</u>. You only pay attention to your <u>girlfriend</u> but you don't care about your work." จขร "แม่มันตั๋วคับ โทรมาสั่งออกไป รับยามได๋กะได้ ผมเป็นนายจ่ายเงิน ค่าแรง<u>มัน</u> <u>มัน</u>ยังบ่เฮ็ดนำ<u>ผม</u> เฮ็ดนำ<u>แม่ยิง</u>ก่อน Jakhorn : " Mom, he lied to me. His girlfriend can call him anytime for a pick-up. I'm his boss and I pay <u>him</u> to work. He doesn't listen to <u>me</u>. He only cares about his <u>girlfriend</u>.

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
4) A male customer (Peter) talking to the research assistant about karaoke experience	ผม (I)	คุณ (you)	ผู้สาว (young girls) พวกเขา (they)	ร้านนั้น (that karaoke bar) สาวร้านนี้ (girls at this karaoke bar)	อ "<u>คุณ</u>ปีเตอร์มาอยู่ไทยกี่ปีแล้วครับ" A : " How long have you been in Thailand, <u>Khun</u> Peter?" ป "<u>ผม</u>มาไทย อายุ 19 อยู่ 30ปี" P: " <u>I</u> came to Thailand when I was 19 years old. I have been here for 30 years." อ "ชอบสาวแบบไหนครับ" A : "What kind of young girls is your type?" ป "<u>I</u>....อ่า ถ้ามี<u>เด็ก</u>ใหม่มา ก็ออฟ<u>เด็กใหม่</u>ก่อน" (หัวเราะ) P: " <u>I</u> Ummmmm If there's new <u>girls</u> here, I'd choose to sleep with <u>new girls</u> before others. (laughing)" อ "ชอบร้านไหนครับ" A : " What kind of karaoke bar is your favorite?" ป "<u>ร้าน</u>ส่วนใหญ่เอาเปรียบ แพง ดีหน่อย ร้านตรงข้ามกึ่งแก้ว" P : " Most karaoke <u>bars</u> like to take advantages on their customers. They charge a lot of money from their customers."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
b) D-to-M, M-to-D					
1) The police talking to the MKGs in front of a karaoke bar when the police officer took the researcher to meet with the karaoke owner	(ละประธาน) ข้อย (I) พี่ (I) แม่ (I) หนู (I) ข้อย (I)	MKGs น้อง girl อีน้อง (girl) น้อง (girl) สาวๆ (young girls) ผู้สาว (young girls) หมวด Police, Lieutenant) เจ้า (you)	เด็ก (young girls) เด็กมัน (the girl) ผู้สาวร้าน (girls) น้องๆ (young girls) สาวๆ (young girls)	ป้า (Auntie) พี่เล็ก (sister Lek)	ตร "น้องเอ้ย เจ้าของร้านอยู่บ่" Police : "Hey girl, is the owner here" ส "บ่อยู่จ้า แต่ป้าอยู่ หมวดจะคุยกะป้าบ่คะ (สำเนียงไทยปนคำลาว" Girl : " She is not here, Lieutenant. Would you like to talk to Auntie instead? (talking with a Thai accent mixed with Lao.)" ตร "เรียกให้หน่อย อีน้องนี่วิ่งหน่อยเร้ว" Police : " Can you summon her to talk to me? You girl please run quickly." ตร "ผู้สาวร้าน อยู่ไหนกันหมด" Police: "Where are all the girls gone?" ส "ไปร้านเสริมสวย เจ้าคือมาแต่เวนแท้มื้อนี้ สาวๆ ก็บ่ทันมาเทื่อ" Girl : " They have gone to the beauty parlor. Why are you here so early?. The girls still haven't come back" ตร "ก็ว่าจะมาพี่เล็ก บ่ได้มาเที่ยวร้องเพลง บ่ได้มาตรวจ มาตอนใดก็ได้ แม่นบ่ผู้สาว"

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
					Police : " I'm here to see Sister, Lek. I'm not here to have fun and sing karaoke. I'm not here to perform my duty either, so I can come here whenever I want. Am I right, girl?
2) the MKGs talking to the researcher/ assistants during dinner at a small karaoke bar	ข้อย (I) หนู (I) น้อง (I) นาง (I)	พี่ (you) เจ้า (you) พวกข้อย (we) หมู่ข้อย (we)	เพิ่น (they) ลูกค้า (customers) บักเฒ่า (old men) ผู้สาว	ซุมนี้ (these men) ผู้บ่าวมัน (her boyfriend) ผัวมัน (her husband) ลูกค้าร้าน (bar customers)	น "ถุงยาง <u>เพิ่น</u>บ่อยากใช้ดอก <u>บักเฒ่า</u>แฮงบ่อยากใช้" N: " A condom, <u>They</u> do not want to use it. It's even worse with <u>old men</u>. They hate to use it. ร "อ้าวเป็นหยัง <u>เพิ่น</u>บ่อ้านบ้อ?" R : " Why? Are <u>they</u> not afraid of getting HIVs?" น "เพิ่นบ่อ้านติดโรค เพิ่นย้านมันบ่อคัก" N: " They are not afraid of getting HIVs, but they are not afraid of having fun sex." ป "ถ้า<u>ลูกค้า</u>บ่อยากใช้ถุงยาง <u>ผู้สาว</u>เฮ็ดแนวใด" P: "If a <u>customer</u> doesn't want to use a condom, what do you <u>girls</u> normally do?"

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
3) The healthcare staff talking to the MKGs	ข้อย (I) น้อง (I) หนู (I)	ลูกหล่า (dear) เจ้า (you) พี่ (sister) คุณพี่ (you) อ้าย (he) พวกพี่ๆ (you) พวกเจ้า (you)	พวกหนู we พวกข้อย (we) พวกเฮา (we) เพิ่น (they)	สาวร้านนี้ (girls at this karaoke bar)	ป "<u>ลูกหล่า</u> เอาแนวกินไปเปิดแหน่" P: "<u>Dear</u>, can you please unpack the food bags?" ด "จ้า <u>พวกพี่</u>มาจักคนจ้า" D: "Sure! How many of <u>you</u> are here today?" ป "สองคน แต่กับ<u>อาจารย์</u>นี่ล่ะ <u>พวกเจ้า</u>หาข้าวมาสู่<u>กัน</u>กิน โลด" P: " Just two of us. This <u>ajarn (teacher/lecturer)</u> and I" <u>You guys</u> just eat ahead." ร "ร้านนั้นปิดบ้อมื้อหนิ" R : " Is that karaoke bar closed today?" ด "บ่หนา จักหน่อยผู้<u>สาว</u>กะสิออกนั่งหน้าร้าน" D : "No it's not. <u>Girls</u> will come out and sit in front the bar soon."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
4) a) The MKGs talking to their customers	หนู (I) น้อง (I) ข้อย (I)	เจ้า (you) พี่, คุณพี่ (you) อ้าย (you) ป้า เสี่ย (papa) ที่รัก (darling, honey)	ผู้อยู่เฮือน (wife/housewife) ผู้บังคับบัญชา (boss/supervisor) ผู้กำกับ (police/superinten dent)	เมียเจ้า (your wife) เมียข้อย (my wife) พี่น้อง(ญาติ) ข้อย (my relatives)	ต "สีบ้านเจ้าอยู่ใสสี" T : "Where is your hometown, Si? น "ข้อยอยู่ (ลากเสียงยาว)" N: " I'm from……….. (drawled languidly)" ส "อยู่ใสเกาะ (อยู่ไหนนะ) S : "Where?" ต "เจ้าเป็นคนไทยหรือคนลาว" T: " Are you Thai or Lao?" น "คนลาว" N: " I'm Lao." ล "อ้าย เอาน้ำแข็งมาตื่มบ่" L : Brother, would you like to add some more ice?"
4) b) The MKGs talking to their customers (3 senior males from Ubon)	หนู (I) น้อง (I) พวกน้อง (we)	ป้า (papa) เสี่ย (papa) เจ้า (you) หล่า (dear) น้องหล่า (dear)	เพิ่น they ผู้สาวร้านนี้ (girls at this karaoke bar) สาวลาวเหนือ (Northern Lao girls)	คนไทย (Thai person) คนลาว (Lao person) เสี่ยดี (เสื้อดี) (nice papa) เสี่ยขาด (เสื้อ ขาด)	ล "อย่าเอาน้ำแข็งลงหลายเด้อหล่า เบี่ยร์ป้าสิจืด" L : " Don't add too much ice, dear. My beer will be tasteless." น "จ้า พอบ่ซ้ำหนิ เสี่ยเอาน้ำก้อนบ่" N: "Ok. Is that enough. Would you like some ice also, papa?" ล2 "บ่ค้าบๆ พอแล้ว กินน้ำก้อนเจ้าแล้วหนาว น้องหล่าสิให้กอดแก้ฤทธิ์น้ำก้อนบ่" L2: "No, thank you. I've had enough ice. When I drink beer with your

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
				(broke papa)	ice, I feel cold. Will you let me hug you to get warmer?"
c) D-abt-M, M-abt-D					
1) A hair dresser at a salon shop talked to Rose, as her customer.	ข้อย (I)	เจ้า (you)	เขา (they/ these girls) สาวลาว (Lao girls) ผู้สาว (young girls) ผู้สาวเขา (young girls) มัน (him) เพิ่น (they/them) ผู้บ่าว (หนุ่ม อีสาน) (Isan village boys) บ่าวไทบ้าน	กัน together บ้านเฮา	ร "เอ้า เห็นเพิ่นมานำกัน มาถ่าผู้สาวติซั่น" R : "Oh I saw them come here together. Is he here to pick up his girlfriend?" รสส "แม่น บ่าวแวงมักสาวลาว นำเฝ้า นำส่ง (ตามรับ ตามส่ง)" RSS : "บ่าวแวง is in love with the Lao girl. He's always with her to take her to here and there. รจ "ผู้สาวเขามาเฮ็ดงาน เขากะมักบ่าว มีแฟนอยู่บ้อ ว่าแม่นแต่เฮ็ดงาน อย่างเดียวบ่ออยากมีพันธะ" R : "Young girls are here to work. Are they interested in being a relationship with any guy? I assume they only want to make money but not having a relationship with someone." รสส "มีๆ บ่อึด บ่าวไทบ้าน บ้านเฮากะมักเขาขนาด" RSS : "That's not true. A lot of them have boyfriends. And village boys like these girls." รสส "ว่าแท้ มันกะบ่ได้เอาใจผู้บ่าวดอก ผู้บ่าวนี่หละ(เน้นโดยลาก เสียง) เอาใจมัน" RSS: "Actually, the girls do not really take care of the boys. The boys

Interaction	The 1ˢᵗ Person Pronouns	The 2ⁿᵈ Person Pronouns	The 3ʳᵈ Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
			(village boy) บ่าวแวง (young boys) บักใหม่ (Mai) มัน (he)		themselves have to take care of <u>them</u>. (emphasizing by drawling languidly)"
2) Dao talking to the researcher	ข้อย (I)	อาจารย์ (teacher) น้อง (she)	พวกผู้ชาย (ผู้ชายลาว) (boys) (Lao boys) เขา (they) มัน (they)	กัน (each other)	ด "มันกะคือกันล่ะ<u>จารย์</u>" D : "They are the same, <u>Ajarn</u>" ร "คือแนวใด <u>น้อง</u>ว่า" R : How do <u>you</u> think they are the same in <u>your</u> opinion? ด "<u>พวกผู้ชาย</u> มัก<u>เขา</u>กะมักคาวเดียว" D: "These <u>boys</u>, <u>they</u> like the girls temporarily." ร "แต่งงาน<u>กัน</u>แล้วก็เซามักบ้อ" R : "They married <u>each other</u> and then they got divorced?" ด "คันแต่งแล้ว <u>มัน</u>มีแนวซัง<u>กัน</u>โลดเด้ บ่ดนดอก แตกม้าง!" D : "After they married, <u>they</u> couldn't get along well. They hate <u>each other</u>. And then they broke up not long after that happened!"

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
d) M-to-M					
1) Dao talking to Noina about chatting over the phone (They are about the same age.)	กู (me)	มึง (you) อีดาว (Dao) อีน้อย (Noy)	อีแม่ (เจ้าของ ร้าน) (mom) (the bar owner) ลาว (เจ้าของร้าน) she (the bar owner) ผู้บ่าว (boyfriend/boys) ผู้บ่าวใหม่ (new boyfriend) ผู้บ่าวซ้อน (หนุ่มๆ) (second boyfriends) (boys)	ผู้บ่าวบ้านหมาก ใต้ (Young boys from Maak Tai Village) ผัวเก่า (ex-husband) ผัวเก่ามึง (your ex-husband)	ด "อีน้อยมึงไปหาอีแม่ ลาวเอิ้น" D: "Noi, go to Mom. She summons you." น "มึงคือบ่ไป เอิ้นแต่กูนี่บ้อ" N : "Why don't you go to her? Why me?" ด "แม่นแหละ เอิ้นแต่มึง เพาะว่ากูบ่ได้ยากแต่ลมผู้บ่าวคือมึง" D: "Yeah! She only summons you because I don't spend too much time talking to a guy like you do." น "จะแม่นมึงบ่ลมผู้บ่าว คันแม่นบ่ลมมึงกะลมนำแต่ผัวเก่ามึงติ๋ กูบ่ เชื่อดอกว่ามึงบ่ลมผู้บ่าวใหม่" N : "That's quite rich coming from you. If you don't spend too much time talking to a boy but you talk with you ex-husband. I don't believe that you don't talk to your new boyfriend." ด "เลื่องของกู" D : "That's none of your business." น "หวายๆ เลื่องของกู เงินเหมิดอย่ามายืมเงินกูตื่มบัตรเด้อ ให้ผู้บ่าว ซ้อนมึงหั้น ตื่มให้" N : "Oh that is none of my business? When you don't have money to top-up your phone, don't you borrow it from me. Just ask for money from your second boyfriend."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
2) Noina (junior) talking to Naang (senior) about body preference, nails, lotions	ข้อย (I)	เจ้า (you)	ลูกค้า (customers) ผู้ชาย (men) หมู่ (other girls) อีดาว (Dao) ผู้อื่น (others)		นง "เล็บอีน้อยคือบ่โกบ (งุ้ม)" Nong : "Why are Noy's fingernails not curved?" นน "เล็บเจ้าโกบ ของข้อยมันบาน บ่งามคือหมู่ดอก" NN : "Yours are curved but not mine. Mine are flare" They are not beautiful like others." นง "มึงก็ไว้ยาวๆ แล้วก็แต่งเอา ทาแล้วก็แต้มลาย" Nong : "You can grow them longer and trim them. Then just paint them." นน "นี่เด๊ อีดาวมันเฮ็ดให้ งามบ่" NN : Look at my fingernails. Dao painted them for me. Aren't they beautiful?" นง "ใส ก็เบิ่งดีได๋หละ" (จับต้นแขนน้อยหน่าลากเข้ามาใกล้เพื่อดูเล็บ) Nong : Let me see. They are not bad (touching Noina's arm pull it closer to see her fingernails.)" นง "อีหยังแขนมึงคือแข่น(แน่น)แท้" Nong : "Why is your arm so firm?" นน. "แข่นแหละข้อยจ่อย และน้อย(อายุน้อย)กว่าผู้อื่นอยู่นี่เนาะ" NN : "My arms are firm because I'm thin and young (younger than) other girls." นง "ลูกค้าเขาบ่มักได๋ แน่นๆ ผู้ชายมักอยากบายอ่อนๆ"

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
					Nong : "<u>The customers</u> might not like it. <u>Men</u> like soft arms." นน "ไปบายบ่อนอื่น แขนมันจ่อยเนาะ" NN : "Then they have to touch somewhere else not my arms. They are thin." นง "จ่อยแข่งแหย่ง บ่อนได๋เป็นตาบายแหน่<u>มึง</u>" Nong : "Yeah you are so thin. Where should they touch <u>you</u>?" นน "นมนี่เด้" (เหวี่ยงตัว ส่ายนมใส่นาง หัวเราะพร้อมกัน) NN : "My boobs! (Swinging her boobs to her and laughing together.)"
3) Naang talking to the owner about the trip to Laos to visit her children	ข้อย I	เจ้า (you) มึง (you) อีแม่ (mommy/ mother)	อีพ่อ (daddy/father) เพิ่น (they) ผู้สาว (girls)	พ่อแม่ข้อย (my parents)	ม "<u>มึง</u>สิไปจักมื้อ กะว่า" M. "How long do you think <u>you</u> will be gone?" น "จักสองอาทิตย์ไปเอาบุญนำ" N: "About two weeks. I plan to join a festival when I'm there." ม "<u>ผู้สาว</u>ยังน้อย ฟ้าวกับมาแหน่" M : "There are few <u>girls</u> here. You should hurry to come back." น "บ่หน้อยดอก<u>อีแม่</u> สองสามคนยุ นั่งกองกันอยู่นี่ กะยาด<u>ลูกค้า</u>กันซื้อๆ" N: "I don't think so, <u>Mommy</u>. 2-3 <u>girls</u> are still a lot. If there are more, they take the same <u>customers</u>."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
					ม "ยาดก็ดี <u>ผู้สาว</u>ยาดกัน เพิ่นแฮ่งมัก" M : "If they want to take the same customers, that's great. Customers love being in the middle of attention of many girls." น "ลูกค้าหลายใผกะมัก <u>เจ้า</u>กะมัก <u>อีพ่อ</u>กะมัก" N: "If there are a lot of customers, <u>you</u> are happy. So is <u>Daddy</u>." ม "หั้นหละ ฟ้าวคืนมาแหน่ M : "That's right but please hurry to come back." น เมื่อดนๆ เคิกหาเงินเด้" N : "If you are gone for so long, you won't have much time to make money." ม "<u>พ่อแม่ข้อย</u>บ่ให้อยู่ดนดอก" M : "My <u>parents</u> won't let me stay home for so long."
4) Dao talking about feeling detachment with a new comer (Nim had married and returned to the karaoke to work after her devoice.)	ข้อย (I)	เจ้า (you) เอื้อย (I/me/you) น้อง (sister)	เขา (he) เพิ่น (he) มัน (he) ผัว (husband)	ลูกเขา(their children) เจ้าของ (myself)	ด "ป้า<u>กัน</u>ดนแล้วบ้อ" D : "how long have <u>you two</u> been divorce?" น "<u>เอื้อย</u>นี่บ้อ กะป้ามาเดือน" N: "<u>Me</u>? About a month" ด "กะบ่ดน <u>เอื้อย</u>เป็นหยังจั่งป้า" D: "Not so long! Why did *you* get divorce?" น "มันบ่คือเก่าหั้นแหละ" N : "He is just not the same."

Interaction	The 1st Person Pronouns	The 2nd Person Pronouns	The 3rd Person Pronouns	The Other Pronouns	Example
					ค "จั่งใดว่าบ่คือเก่า"
					D : "Why is he not the same?"
					น "ตอนมามัก<u>เอื้อย</u> <u>เพิ่น</u>กะว่ามักหลาย อยากพาเฮ็ดพาส้าง ตั้งหลักปัก ฐานอยู่ไทยนี่โลด บัดเอาไปแล้วผัดขี้ล้าย บ่คือว่า ใจฮ้ายมาผัดฆ่าผัดตี"
					N : "When he wanted to date <u>me</u>. <u>He</u> said he liked me so much and that he wanted to build a family with me. But when I agree to be with him. He did not keep his promise. He even abused me."
					ค "หั้นแล้ว นี่กะยากแต่นำบอก<u>เจ้าของ</u> ว่าอย่าไปหัวซา<u>ลูกค้า</u> มัก<u>เพิ่น</u> หรือ<u>เพิ่น</u>มามัก กะบ่แม่นแนว"
					D: "That's why I keep telling <u>myself</u> that I should be interested in my customer. Whether I like them or the other way around. It's not ok."
					น "แม่นความ<u>น้อง</u>ว่าหั้นแหละ"
					N : "<u>You</u> are definitely right!"
					ค "มาอยู่นี่หั้นได้แต่เอา<u>ผัว</u>แต่จะต้องบ่ได้<u>ผัว</u>"
					D : "If you work here, you can have a <u>sleeping partner</u> but you can't have a <u>husband.</u>"

BIOGRAPHY

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