BRILL

Thai Rap Songs Through the World Englishes Approach: Code-Switching and Nativization

Ekkarat Ruanglertsilp
Assistant Professor, English and Foreign Languages Department,
Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia, USA
ekkarat.ruanglertsil@hamptonu.edu

Abstract

This study examines the English elements and nativized English features present in recent Thai rap songs. The source data comes from a Thai rap playlist called *Thai Rapper* on the online music platform Spotify. All English units found in the lyrics were manually counted and classified. The results diverged from most studies of Thai-English code-switching in Thai media in that, among the English elements considered, sentences were employed most frequently. Among nativized English features, semantic shift was most frequently employed. I argue that the local and global English identity flows (Pennycook 2009) index a shift in the Thai rap community toward assimilation of their Thai hip-hop identity into global street culture, a phenomenon becoming more prevalent among today's Thai youth.

1 Introduction

The rapid increase of English usage in Thai mass media, such as in television shows and music, has been observed in multiple studies of the past decade. However, studies on English in Thai rap in particular are scarce. The current

study seeks to address this gap by exploring the types and frequencies of English elements embedded in Thai rap songs as well as how nativized English is adopted within the lyrical discourses. The current findings are also compared to those of Onkhao and Tipayasuparat (2018), and Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan (2013), two of the relatively few studies looking at Thai-English code-mixing in contemporary Thai music. These studies, as well as the current study and other relevant works, have revealed an influx of English into Thai pop culture. This is a somewhat ironic phenomenon since Thai media regulations require limited foreign language usage and because of the associations of English with colonialism and corporate multinationals (Phillipson 1992). Phillipson (1992) recognized English as a form of linguistic imperialism wherein it, as the dominant language form, is considered prestigious and, therefore, superior to others. More recently, Snodin (2014) argued that the influence of English is drawn, for instance, from capitalism and globalization. To illustrate with an example from Thailand, American English became the dominant English variety in Thailand through U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam War. Subsequently, Thais realized the potential benefits that the English language could bring to their businesses and careers. Today, people of all classes in Thailand, ranging from government leaders to bar girls, use English to acquire technical skills, advance career positions, and improve their socio-economic circumstances. Even though Thailand has never been colonized by a western country, it has fostered a rise in a unique variety of English (Glass 2009). Like other languages today, Thai has been taking on certain English language characteristics, such as the lexical and semantic, resulting in the localized phenomenon of Thai-English code-switching and nativized English. This Thai variety of English occurs more frequently in the spoken domain than in its written counterpart (Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan 2013). Nevertheless, according to Watkhaolarm, as cited by Glass (2009), Thai English is in its early stage of development, and English is yet to be infused into the Thai identity. That is, English has never been considered a lingua franca or associated with colonialism, and therefore, it is considered a language of others.

One factor that contributes to the rise of English to the world lingua franca is globalization. McIntyre (2020) defined globalization as "the strengthening of worldwide interconnectedness in terms of society, culture, economy, politics, spirituality, and language," and with this interconnectedness came the need to connect the world linguistically. English fulfilled this need. With globalization, English brought economic development at the transnational level, a growth in competitive global markets, increasingly global popular culture, and greater mobility of the world population. English is now part of the everyday lives of many individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This fact also applies to countries where English is not a main language, but functions as

either a second language or has a supranational role. To demonstrate, in many countries where English does not serve as an official language, road signs often include both the local language and English. English has also made its way into many pop cultures, resulting in song lyrics, product names, and band names with English elements (Galloway and Rose 2015, 11).

This study aims to fill the gaps mentioned above by not only adding more texture to the existing literature on the Thai variety of English in contemporary Thai music, but also exploring the phenomena of Thai-English code-switching and nativized English features in a fairly new genre of music in Thailand, rap (and particularly that of 2018–2019). One may argue that the focus of code-switching studies has shifted to translanguaging, which views bilingualism and codes-witching holistically (Macswan 2017). However, given the focus of the current study on the different types of English elements, it is critical to distinguish the subcategories of translanguaging practice–intrasentential and intersentential switching. This study also seeks to identify the nativization processes in recent Thai rap songs and their purposes. Additionally, Thai rap has recently seen growing political activism worth exploring. For example, it has addressed a number of political controversies surrounding the Thai government, with controversial lyrics challenging the Thai military junta and dictatorship (Regan 2018; Beech 2019; Kaewjinda 2018). In sum, this study aims to answer two research questions: 1) How is English employed in recent Thai rap lyrics? 2) What types of linguistic nativization are present in Thai rap lyrics?

It is important to differentiate rap from hip-hop as there is often confusion on whether the two terms can be used interchangeably. Kitwana (2005) explains that when hip-hop first started in the 1970s and 1980s, rap was one aspect of the culture that also included break-dancing, graffiti, and DJ-ing. The confusion of the two terms seems to have stemmed from the younger generation joining hip-hop culture with no familiary with these additional aspects. For the scope of this study, I consider "Thai rap songs" as situated with global hip-hop culture, using the term to refer to my data and to discuss my findings.

2   Literature Review

2.1   *World Englishes and the Integration of Languages*

Yano (2003) recognized Kachru's three circle model (1985) as the standard framework for World Englishes studies. The model has been used extensively as a tool to raise awareness of the variety of Englishes around the world through three overlapping circles: the "inner circle," "outer circle," and "expanding circle" (Galloway and Rose 2015). Kachru (1985) claimed that the inner circle

is norm-providing; the outer circle is norm-developing, in that "new" varieties of English are developing their own norms independent of the inner circle; and the expanding circle is norm-dependent in that it follows the norms of the inner circle. Thailand belongs to the expanding circle, suggesting that certain linguistic styles in Thai rap songs may be adopted from the English varieties within the inner circle. Linguistic variations of Englishes are the result of language contact leading to the transference of sounds, lexical units, and structures from one language to another. Linguistic contact also fosters multilingual communities where code-switching is common practice (Galloway and Rose 2015). Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003) claimed that, while code-mixing is the switching of linguistic elements under the clausal level, code-switching occurs above the clausal level. Code-switching, however, is uncommon in Thailand. Thomason (2001) provided a similar definition, stating that code-switching refers to intersentential switching, which occurs at sentential boundaries. Code-mixing, on the other hand, refers to intrasentential switching, which occurs within a sentence. Examples of code-switching and code-mixing are given in (1) and (2), respectively.

Code-switching or intersentential switching of English and Greek Cypriot (Gardner-Chloros 2009, 2):

(1)   **This is a long story.** Itun mesa se ena mikro xorio, …

          This is a long story. They were in a little village, …

Code-mixing or intrasentential switching of Yiddish and English (Thomason 2001, 132):

(2)   When I come in, I smell the **kugel** (kugel – type of pudding).

Although the distinction of code-switching and code-mixing has been made in the relevant literature (Kannaovakun and Gunther 2003), recent publications (Onkhao and Tipayasuparat 2018) dealing with the two phenomena tend to adopt the term "code-switching" to refer to both code-switching and code-mixing, and the terms, "intersentential switching" and "intrasentential switching" to differentiate the two practices.

2.2   *Nativization of English*
According to Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003), when a language comes into contact with English, multiple common features of language change can be observed, including "Englishization," a phenomenon in which a local language assimilates features of English. On the other hand, "nativization" occurs when

the change occurs in English instead of in the local language. Scholars in the field, such as Kachru (1985), Cheshire (1991), Bobda (1994), and Shim (1994), discovered that nativization of English shares multiple common characteristics regardless of the local language. Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003) provided the following features of nativization:

1. **Truncation** takes place when an English word is loaned into another language and is shortened. For example, the Korean word "super" [ˈsupər] is a shortened version of the English word "supermarket", while Thai "com" corresponds to English "computer" (Shim 1994).

2. **Hybridization** occurs when English nouns and adjectives are combined with another language's units. For example, "the word 'liberal' in English, when it is used with -*hata* (libolol-hata), means 'to be liberal', with -*han* (libolol-han) it means '(x) who is liberal' and with -*hake* (libolol-hake) it means 'liberally'" (Shim 1994).

3. **Conversion** takes place when a word changes part of speech. To illustrate, the English noun "drama" is converted to a verb in Thai, i.e., "to drama." It should be noted that most Thais use English adjectives as verbs in Thai.

4. **Semantic shift** takes place when the meaning of a borrowed English word changes in the other language. To illustrate, the English word "condominium", or/ˈkʊndo/ in Korean, refers to membership housing at resorts (Shim 1994).

5. **Reduplication** occurs when an English word is repeated consecutively. Word categories such intensifiers, numerals, and quantifiers go through this process. For example, in Cameroonian English, one might hear, "there are many many Cameroonians who can no longer make ends meet" in which "many" is reduplicated (Bobda 1994).

2.3 *English in Thai and Transnational Media*

Studies focusing on the Thai variety of English in the media have looked at topics such as code-switching/mixing (Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan 2013) and language nativization (Kannaovakun and Gunther 2003). Both studies investigated how English influences Thai within Thai mass media, be it in pop songs or television shows. Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan (2013) examined which English elements and nativized characteristics were adopted as a composing tool in Thai pop lyrics and discovered that English at the intrasentential level was employed most frequently. Of the above nativization features, reduplication was found to be most frequently used, which they explained as resulting from lyricists' aims to foster a sense of playfulness. Reduplication may also be employed for the sake of melody and tempo (2013, 504). Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003) examined 100 hours of Thai television

programming randomly sampled from five genres, namely, drama, talk/variety, academic, game, and sports. They found that intrasentential switching is most common in sports programming, with single nouns being used most frequently and that nativized forms of English in Thai television shows were most often instances of truncation, semantic shift, reduplication, conversion, or hybridization.

Onkhao and Tipayasuparat (2018) explored the common types and functions of linguistic units of Thai-English code-mixing in popular Thai rap songs. Forty songs with more than 100,000 viewers were selected from YouTube for analysis. The authors found that single full sentences occurred most frequently (comprising 45.88% of all English items). Their results contradict those of Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan's (2013) study which found that the most frequently mixed English items occurred at the lexical level in order, as argued by the authors, to create rhyming schemes essential to a song's structure. Additionally, they asserted that the infusion of English units into Thai rap lyrics demonstrated the spread of English through artistic expression and how language can foster a social identity.

Chairat (2014) examined Thais' attitudes toward English code-switching in Thai songs to discuss whether the practice could be an effective pedagogical tool for English-language learners. The research subjects were 50 Thai individuals (25 adolescents and 25 middle-aged adults). The researcher employed a questionnaire to survey participant attitudes toward the infusion of English words into Thai songs. Two of the participants were interviewed: a teenager with high English proficiency and a middle-aged adult with limited English. Chairat's findings revealed that middle-aged participants have less-positive attitudes toward those who listen to Thai songs with English elements. However, the responses of most adolescent participants indicated belief that those who listen to Thai songs with English elements are knowledgeable and from higher socio-economic classes. In contrast, both groups of participants agree that Thai songs with English elements sound annoying and convey inconsistent meaning in the lyrics. They also agree that Thai songs with English elements allowed listeners to enhance their English proficiency. Therefore, Thai songs with English elements have the potential to be accepted as effective learning material for English-language learners if the songs contain accurate English structures.

Among the many studies on English use in media of other languages, Raedts, Dupré, Hendrickx, and Debrauwere (2015) is especially interesting as it involves the use of English in the media of five countries with different official languages. Here, the authors studied the presence of English in 1,539 primetime television commercials from five countries in Europe: Belgium,

France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. They reported that 53.1% of the televised commercials featured English utterances. In the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium specifically, they found commercials with English words that have already been included in the local lexicon. However, very few commercials were completely in English; most commercials contained a combination of English and the local language. As they were targeting "non-native English speakers," these commercials did not incorporate full written or spoken English sentences. The data also showed that the commercials with English contained fewer than five English words on average, and advertisers did not use English to report product information. Of the commercials, 35% contained an English product and/or brand name, while 20% contained English brand slogans and advertising messages. The authors concluded that use of English is prevalent in Western and South European primetime televised commercials, and that English is often employed in advertising for culture-free products.[1]

Omoniyi (2006) examined the English of Nigerian hip-hop lyrics at the phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discursive levels, finding sociolinguistic features such as phonological variation, code-switching, cross-referencing, nicknaming, colloquialisms, and reinterpretation. Notably, Nigerian rap songs differ from those in the mainstream in their use of Pidgin rap, a localized variation. Regarding code-switching features, the entirety or a portion of a lyric line can be rapped in a different language from the rest of the song. To demonstrate, a Nigerian rap song can have a chorus in Yoruba while other verses are in a mixture of Pidgin English, Yoruba, and Standard English. Additionally, Nigerian rap artists employed a device called cross-referencing to authenticate the (re)appropriated rapping content through intertextuality.

2.4 *Communities of Practice*

In addition to the review of English in the media of other languages, it is important to examine another framework, Communities of Practice, to discuss how a language is used in a community with shared interests.

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the concept of the community of practice as the foundation of a social theory of learning, defining it as a group of individuals who engage in an ongoing activity and who share a common endeavor. Book clubs, church congregations, and bowling teams, for example, are communities of practice. This concept has since been incorporated into sociolinguistics as a way of conceptualizing language and gender (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). The integration of communities of practice into

---

1 Culture-free products are products that are low in cultural context. For example, consumer electronics are culture-free because they are used universally.

sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology values the identification of social groups not only by shared abstract characteristics (i.e., gender and class) or co-presences (i.e., within a neighborhood or workplace), but in shared practices (Eckert 2016, 1). For instance, a white working-class Italian-American woman does not simply adopt her manner of speaking from her broader social categorizations of working class, Italian-American, and woman, but from her daily experience as an individual who integrates the three in addition to other memberships. Her experience is informed by her participation in activities and communities of practice specific to her positionalities, as well as in the social order. These communities of practice allow her to foster an identity and the linguistic practices to construct this identity (Eckert 2016, 2). Following this, individuals who engage in a Thai rap performance may be considered as building a community of practice in which they adopt certain linguistic styles that are common among community members and different from other communities.

3   Methodology

3.1   *Source of Data*

The data of this study is from a Thai rap playlist called *Thai Rapper,* created by the user Surin Thianwan, on the online music streaming platform Spotify. This playlist was chosen because it has the highest number of followers (500) among the platform's Thai rap playlists of 2019, indicating greater popularity. Moreover, Spotify is widely used among Thais. This playlist contained 70 rap songs released in 2018 and 2019 by a wide range of artists. Such variety contributes to a wider perspective on how the Thai variety of English is employed within the Thai rap industry as a whole, above a simple focus on the language idiolect of any particular rapper. From the 70 songs, the 20 most popular were selected for further study. Among Spotify playlists, songs placed toward the top of the playlist tend to be more popular among listeners, based on the number of plays and total viewership of the music video on YouTube. Narrowing the sample set in this way, allows for a more focused analysis. The top 20 songs had counts ranging from 90,000 to 4,500,000. Their durations range from about 3 to 5 minutes, while the total number of words in the songs is 9,417 words. Of the 9,417 words, 142 English elements were identified and categorized as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Three songs contain no English elements ("A Walk to Remember", [klân tɕaɪ], and [lóp]). Table 1 below provides a list of the songs and artists analyzed here.

TABLE 1   List of Songs and Artists

Song Title	Artists
1. A Walk to Remember	Illslick
2. Stoned	Illslick
3. TMRW	Lazyloxy
4. [tɕʰìːap]	P-Hot, Way-G, & Dreamhigh
5. [tɔ̀ŋ kaːn tɕʰǎn mǎɪ]	Chitswift featuring Og-anic
6. [kɔ̀ʔ sà wàːt hàːt sà wǎn]	Gavin D & G Gerrard
7. [kʰam wǎːn tʰîː tʰɤ̀ː mâj ʔaw]	Uma featuring Tossakan
8. [jɔːm plɔ̀ːj]	Cyanide featuring Lazyloxy
9. [lôːk tʰîː mâɪ miː tɕʰǎn]	Ben Bizzy
10. [klân tɕaɪ]	Wonderframe featuring Fucking Hero
11. You Kno	Youngohm
12. [tʰaːŋ kʰɔ̌ːŋ tʰɤ̀ː]	Gavin D featuring Fixxd & Youngohm
13. [kʰon diːaw baːŋ tʰiː]	Youngohm
14. [ʔâːj pʰaː maː kʰǎw pʰaː paɪ]	Og-anic & Lumplearn Wongsakorn
15. Gucci Belt	Diamond MQT featuring Youngohm, FIIXD & Younggu
16. [tɕʰúː tɛ̀ː tʰɤ̀ː mâɪ rɔ̂ːp tɕʰɔ̂ːp tɛ̀ː tʰɤ̀ː mâɪ rúː]	Wonderframe featuring Kangsom
17. [kʰon tʰîː tʰɤ̀ː mâɪ kʰɤ̀ːj mɔːŋ]	Youngohm & Og-anic
18. [lóp]	Gena Desouza featuring Diamond
19. [dâɪ máɪ]	Twopee Southside
20. Microphone	The Old i$e (CD Guntee & Dawut)

3.2   *Data Analysis*

I created a coding chart to systematically classify English lexical units and nativized English elements from the discourse of rap lyrics (see Table 2). The instances of English elements within each song were manually counted for further analysis. Repetitions of elements were also tallied. As shown in the

TABLE 2   Classification of English elements employed in Thai rap song lyrics

Type of English element	Number of occurrences	Occurrence percentage (%)	Repetitions	Repetition percentage (%)
Word	48	33.80%	127	48.47%
Phrase	20	14.08%	36	13.74%
Clause	14	9.85%	16	6.10%
Sentence	60	42.25%	83	31.67%
Total	142	100%	262	100%

transcription process in (3) below, the first line is the original verse of the song in IPA; the second line is the word for word gloss; the third line is the English gloss; and the fourth line is the song title and its artist(s). For instance, the underlined portion demonstrates an example of code-switching at the sentential level and is manually counted as one occurrence of an English sentential element. This English sentence also belongs to the chorus, which is repeated multiple times throughout the song. As this sentence is uttered repeatedly five times in the song, it counts as five repetitions of an English sentential element.

(3)   Yàak   mi: fæn   There is a chance in love island
         want   have   girlfriend/boyfriend   There is a chance in love island
         "If you want a girlfriend/boyfriend, *there is a chance in love island.*"
         ([kɔ̀ʔ sà wàːt hàːt sà wăn] – *Gavin D, D Gerrard*)

English words used by Thai monolinguals as part of the Thai lexicon were considered borrowed words and were excluded from this study. Gumperz (1982) defined borrowed words as "the introduction of a single word or short, frozen, idiomatic phrases from one variety into the other." Here, this group comprised words for which there is no equivalent in the Thai language, or in some cases, those for which the equivalent exists but is not frequently used by Thai speakers. Examples include words such as "lipstick", "plug", "computer", etc.

4 Findings

4.1 *Types of English Elements from Rap Lyrics*

As demonstrated in Table 2, switching at the sentential level occurred most frequently, at 60 sentences (42.45%), followed by the lexical level at 48 words (33.80%), the phrasal level at 20 phrases (14.08%), and the clausal level at 14 clauses (9.95%). At the lexical level, English nouns were the most frequently switched, with a total of 19 words (46.34%) in the data. At the sentential level, simple sentences were the most frequently switched, with 56 (93.33%) instances found in the data. Since word- and sentence-level elements were found to be the most frequently switched English elements in the song lyrics, I'll take a closer look at these elements below. Classifications for these are given in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

4.2 *English Words in Thai Rap Songs*

As shown in Table 2, there were 48 word-type elements, comprising 33.80% of all English elements, with nouns being the most employed word class in the data. The number of occurrences for nouns was 19 (46.34%). After nouns, the next most frequently employed word classes were: 10 verbs (24.39%) and 7 fillers (17.07%). These amounts are given in Table 3. The findings revealed no usage of auxiliary verbs or connectives. Parts of speech are based on the English word classes.

Examples of the lexical-level switching with an English noun and an English verb can be observed in (4) and (5), respectively.

(4) *Attitude* tʰɤː diː ʔà pʰiːaŋkʰê: tʰɤː dɤːn kʰôːt tɕà hôːt
tɕà bɤːn mŭːan súp taː

Attitude your good particle just you walk very will hot
will burn like sooptar

"You have a good *attitude* when you walk. You are very sexually attractive, like a superstar."

([tɕʰú: tè: tʰɤ: mâɪ rɔ̂:p tɕʰɔ̂:p tè: tʰɤ: mâɪ rú:] – Wonderframe Featuring Kangsom)

(5) kêːw tʰîː jùː naɪ muː: ʔaw kʰûnma: *sip* yeah
Glass that at in hand bring up sip yeah

"*Sip* the glass that is in your hand"

(*Gucci Belt* – Diamond MQT featuring Youngohm, FIIXD & Younggu)

TABLE 3   Classification of English words employed in Thai rap songs

Type of English word	Number of occurrences	Occurrence percentage (%)
Noun	19	46.34%
Verb	10	24.39%
Adjective	4	9.75%
Adverb	1	2.43%
Filler	7	17.07%
Total	41	100%

4.3   *English Sentences in Thai Rap Songs*

Three types of English sentences were classified in the Thai rap lyrics: simple, compound, and complex. There were 60 English sentence-type elements, comprising 42.25% of all the English elements. Compound-complex sentences were not found, and certain English sentences were employed ungrammatically in the lyrics. As reflected in Table 4, simple sentences were most frequently employed, with 57 (95.00%) such instances occurring in the data, followed by two compound sentences (3.38%) and one complex sentence (1.66%).

Examples of English sentences being incorporated with Thai rap lyrics are given in (6)-(8).

TABLE 4   Classification of English sentences employed in Thai rap songs

Type of English sentence	Number of occurrences	Occurrence percentage (%)
Simple	57	95.00%
Compound	2	3.38%
Complex	1	1.66%
Total	60	100%

Simple Sentence:

(6) yàak   mi: fæn   *There is a chance in love island*

Want   have   girlfriend/boyfriend   There is a chance in love island

"If you want a girlfriend/boyfriend, *there is a chance in love island*."

([kɔ̀ʔ sà wà:t hà:t sà wǎn] – Gavin D, D Gerrard)

Compound Sentence:

(7) yàak   tɕà   tìd   jù: kɔ̀ʔ   getting high myself and I hate you

Want   will   stuck   at   island   getting high myself and I hate you

"I want to get stuck on an island. *I'm getting high myself and I hate you*."

([tʰa:ŋ kʰɔ̌:ŋ tʰɤ:] – Gavin D featuring Fixxd & Youngohm)

Complex Sentence:

(8) kʰíttʰǔŋ tʰɤ: tʰúk wan rɔ: tʰɤ: jù: troŋ   *I got my mind*
                                                      ní: *thinking 'bout*
                                                             you lately

Miss   you every day wait you present here I got my mind
                                                     thinking 'bout
                                                     you lately

"I miss you every day. I'm waiting for you here. *I got my mind thinking 'bout you lately*."

(TMRW – Lazyloxy)

The sentence in (8) is categorized as a complex sentence based on the framework of lexicality. That is, it has two lexical verbs, "got" and "thinking", where the latter is a non-finite verb. The sentence is therefore composed of more than one clause. On the other hand, according to van Gelderen (2010), sentences which include just one lexical verb and one or more auxiliaries are simple sentences.

The English sentences found in this study are largely common expressions (e.g., "I love you", "I hate you", "Your wish is my command") rather than novel sentences (e.g., "I'm so fucking stoned", "Ya know we keep it low, bro"). The higher instances of English sentences reflect Thai rap artists' intention to appeal more to the global hip-hop culture, which often features interplay of English and local languages at the sentential level (Pennycook 2009). This switching also indexes and reauthenticates Thai rap songs as part of the global street culture identity. These findings further support Grosjean's

(1982) argument that code-switching is a tool to emphasize and foster group identity and solidarity. Code-switching can also be used to add authority and demonstrate the expertise of the speaker. Therefore, the Thai rapper identities through code-switching are reified with the global hip-hop culture.

4.4   *English Clauses in Thai Rap Songs*

English clauses are defined in this study as a unit of grammatical organization below the sentence and are syntactically and semantically incomplete. That is, they form only a part of a complete sentence. There were 14 occurrences of clause-type elements, comprising 9.85% of all the English elements. An example of an English clause in the Thai rap songs is given in (9).

(9)   fâw rɔː   tʰɤː   jù   troŋ ní   *if you're ready*   maː   sìʔ
       wait   you   present   here   if you're ready   come   particle
       "I'm waiting for you here. *If you're ready*, come over."
       (*TMRW* – Lazyloxy)

4.5   *English Phrases in Thai Rap Songs*

English phrases are defined in this study as a group of two or more words that function as a meaningful unit without a finite verb. They are not considered complete a clause or sentence. There were 20 occurrences of English phrases, comprising 14.08% of all the English elements. An example of an English phrase within a Thai rap song is given in (10).

(10)   *In my cup*   fiːl   diː   bɛ̀ːp   Dirty Coke
       In my cup   feel   nice   like   Dirty Coke
       "*The drink inside my cup* tastes good like Dirty Coke."
       (*Microphone* – The Old i$e, CD Guntee & Dawut)

4.6   *Classification of Nativized English Words in Thai Rap Songs*

As shown in Table 5, the inclusion of English words was classified into five categories based on their nativized characteristics: truncation, hybridization, conversion, semantic shift, and reduplication. Table 5 below provides the numbers of occurrences, frequencies, and percentages of each characteristic.

Truncation is a nativized feature in which a word is shortened without changing its meaning or syntactic category. When truncated, a word becomes

part of localized English and is more commonly used. There were 3 such instances in the data (20.00%), as exemplified in (11) and (12).

(11) Attitude tʰɤː diː ʔà pʰiːaŋkʰêː tʰɤː dɤːn kʰôːt tɕà hɔ́ːt

tɕà bɤːn mǔːan *súp taː*

Attitude your good particle just you walk very will hot

will burn like sooptar

"You have a good attitude when you walk. You are very sexually attractive like a *superstar*."

([*tɕʰúː tèː tʰɤː mâɪ rɔ̂ːp tɕʰɔ̂ːp tèː tʰɤː mâɪ rúː*] – Wonderframe Featuring Kangsom)

As observed in (11), the term [*súp taː*] is truncated from the full word "superstar" in English, which means a high-profile and successful celebrity.

(12) jím hâɪ sàk níd sòŋ *sík* hâɪ sàk nɔ̀ːj

Smile for little send sig for little

"Give me a smile. Give me a bit of a *signal*."

(*Microphone* – The Old ISE)

As observed in (12), the term [sík] is truncated from the full word "signal" in English, which means a sign, gesture or sound that conveys information.

TABLE 5   Nativized English characteristics of English words in Thai rap songs

Nativized characteristic	Number of occurrences	Occurrence percentage (%)	Frequency	Frequency percentage (%)
Truncation	3	20.00%	6	24.00%
Hybridization	1	6.66%	1	4.00%
Conversion	2	13.33%	2	8.00%
Semantic shift	6	40.00%	13	52.00%
Reduplication	3	20.00%	3	12.00%
Total	15	100%	25	100%

Hybridization is the nativized process of combining one part of a word in one language with another. The data shows one instance of a hybridized word, comprising the lowest percentage, 6.66%, in the Thai rap lyrics. An example is given in (13).

(13) kʰon   ʔùːn   ʔìt tɕʰǎː   tʰɤː   nâːduː   kôː   hěn   kʰǎw   *lɔ̀ːkul*
      People other   envy   you   much   inter- seem he   hand-
                                                jection   some-
                                                                          cool

"Everyone must envy you because he is handsome and *cool*."
([*tɔ̂ŋ kaːn tɕʰǎn mǎɪ*] – Chitswift Featuring Og-anic)

As observed in (13), the hybridized word [lɔ̀ːkul] derives from a Thai adjective [*lɔ̀ː*], which means handsome, and an English adjective, "cool".

Conversion is the nativized process in which a word is transformed into a word of another part of speech. The data included two conversions (13.33%). An example is given in (14).

(14) tʰɤː   mâɪ   tôŋ   sǒn tɕaɪ   ay   tɕà   *drama*   tʰam maɪ
      You   no   must care   filler will   drama   why

"You do not have to care. Why *dramatize* it?"
([*tʰaːŋ kʰɔ̌ːŋ tʰɤː*] – Gavin D Featuring FiixD, and Youngohm)

As observed in (14), the English noun "drama" is converted into a Thai verb in a Thai interrogative structure. The grammatical element of the term has changed, but not the form.

Semantic shift occurs when the original word meaning gains a new contemporary meaning. There are seven incidences of semantic shift, comprising the highest percentage (40.00%). An example is given in (15).

(15) *Attitude*   tʰɤː   diː   ʔà   pʰiːaŋkʰɛ̂ː   tʰɤː   dɤːn   kʰôːt tɕà   hɔ̂ːt
      tɕà   bɤːn   mǔːan   súp taː
      Attitude   your   good   particle   just   you   walk   very   will   hot
      will   burn   like   sooptar

"You have a good attitude when you walk. You are very *sexually attractive* like a superstar."

([*tɕʰúː tèː tʰɤː mâɪ rɔ̂ːp tɕʰɔ̂ːp tèː tʰɤː mâɪ rúː*] – Wonderframe Featuring Kangsom)

As observed in (15), the English verb "burn" means to cause or to be destroyed by fire. However, it is employed in this context to mean being sexually attractive. Instances of semantic shift may correlate with artists' creative motives. For instance, "burn" is shifted in meaning to connect with the English adjective "hot" based on a sense of rising temperature present in both words.

Reduplication is a linguistic phenomenon in which a word is repeated consecutively. In the data there were three instances of reduplication, comprising 20.00% of nativized features. An example is given in (16).

(16) Way-G   hɤ̀ːj   *tɕʰiw*   *tɕʰiw*   mâɪ   tɔ̂ŋ   kʰrîːat
     Way-G   interjection chill   chill   no   must   stress
     "Way-G, hey, *relax*, do not stress."
     ([*tɕʰìːap*] – P-Hot, Way-G, Dreamhigh)

As reflected in (16), the reduplication of the English verb "chill" is emphatic. Unlike English in the Inner Circle, which relies on the tone of one's voice to convey urgency, intensity, or emphasis, tonal Thai language relies on reduplication to emphasize meaning. It is also employed as an antonym to the Thai verb [kʰrîːat], which means "stress".

5 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 *English Elements Employed in Thai Rap Songs*

In the data, English sentences were the most frequently switched elements, followed by words, phrases, and clauses. respectively. Regarding sentential-level switching, simple sentences occurred most frequently, followed by compound and complex sentences, respectively. These results are relatively consistent with those reported by Onkhao and Tipayasuparat (2018) who also found that English mixing at the sentential level occurred most frequently (43.88% of all the English elements), followed by phrases, words, alphabets, incomplete sentences, and short forms, respectively. They asserted that the higher usage of English sentences in Thai rap songs is due to the artists' desire to employ narrative/descriptive English and Thai to convey their meaning. This is opposed to employing English words for meaning, which plays a peripheral role in the songs. Nonetheless, the results reported are inconsistent with other studies of Thai-English code-mixing in modern Thai media. Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan (2013) claimed that the practice of sentential switching is rare in

the Thai society because of its monolingual status. Other studies of Thai-English code-mixing (i.e., Kannaovakun and Gunther 2003; Samingkaew 2001; Preechaamornkul 2005; and Janhom 2011) also reported that English is most frequently used at the word level.

Although Thai rap songs in this study most frequently employed English elements at the sentential level, there was no evidence of African American vernacular English (AAVE) morphosyntactic features, such as absence of copula, absence of -s in present tense or third person, or use of "ain't" for "didn't" (Wolfram and Schilling 2015). One may argue that the English sentences deployed in Thai rap songs merely index the global flow of mainstream American English (MAE), but not the AAVE variety, which is the staple variety utilized in the original American rap songs. Furthermore, phonological features of English words in the Thai rap songs, such as /r/-lessness (e.g., rap [læp] –/r/ does not occur syllable-finally in Thai) and fricative consonant deletion (e.g., sex toy [sɛk tɔɪ]), occurred most frequently. These findings further support the idea of how transcultural flows and World Englishes in global Hip-hop can form new cultural identities in many countries. This type of music is a global subculture that has been adopted and localized in numerous parts of the world. It is now considered a multimodal cultural formation which includes not only MC-ing (rapping), but also break dancing, graffiti, and DJ-ing. Countries in East and Southeast Asia are witnessing cross-influences and collaborations by rap artists, leading to English mixing with local languages. For instance, Hong Kong DJ Tommy's compilation, *Respect for Da Chopstick Hip Hop,* is a typical example of the global/local interplay of external and regional references (Pennycook 2009, 328). The Thai rap artists in this study are also young individuals who use linguistic varieties different from older speakers. Therefore, the expected audience of the rap songs are also young people who tend to use language in a similar fashion. This observation corroborates Chairat's study (2014) in which Thai adolescents adopt more positive attitudes toward Thai songs with English elements.

Another example of dynamic flow can be observed from (17) below. Japanese MC Zeebra plays with different rhymes in Japanese Katakana script, used for words borrowed into Japanese (e.g, "dynamic" and "titanic"). He also plays with the production of a final mixed rhyme combining Japanese/dʌɪ/ (big) and English "panic" (/dʌɪpanɪkkʊ/ – "big panic" – to rhyme with/dʌɪnamɪkkʊ/ – "dynamic") (Pennycook 2009, 332).

(17)

Lyrics	Transliteration	Translation
のっけからダイナミック	nokkekara	From the very beginning,
まるでタイタニック	**dainamikku**	it was dynamic,
想像を超える大パニック	marude **taitanikku**	just like Titanic, and an
	souzouwo koeru dai	unimaginable, big
	panikku	panic

Similar to the Japanese rhymes above, the dynamic flow of Thai rap songs is portrayed through the current data of word play in Thai and English in (18) below. The term /loːleː/, meaning "to be hesitant" in Thai, is transformed by rearranging its syllables to become "lay low" in English.

(18)

Lyrics	Transliteration	Translation
tʰâːtʰɤ̌ː okay no need to **loːleː**	Ta tur okay no need to **lo lay**	If you're okay, no need to **hesitate**
You need to **lay low**	You need to **lay low**	You need to **lay low**
(TMRW – Lazyloxy)		

Eastman and Roberta (1993) claimed that language display is a linguistic strategy in which members of a particular group lay claims to attributes associated with another, signifying messages of social, professional, and ethnic identity. Language display is also a means to facilitate the change of a functional monolingual to an intellectual, the provincial to the international. By employing linguistic associations with a specific social, ethnic, socioeconomic, or political group, people can demonstrate their desires or sympathies, regardless of whether they are feigned or genuine. For instance, the use of "worker language" by President Bush is believed to have won more election votes. Japanese individuals believe that by deploying an English lexicon, they will appear more modernized.

Regarding lexical-level switching, nouns were the most frequently used word class in the study, followed by verbs and fillers, respectively. This result is in agreement with other similar Thai-English code-mixing studies such as Samingkaew (2001), Amornsupornsart and Chitladaphitak (2004), Preechaamornkul (2005), and Janhom (2011). This study found quite a few instances of English verb infusions. This may be due to how Thais often omit

the subject in their Thai utterances. This is still intelligible in the Thai structure, given that there is sufficient context between speakers. Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003) claimed that English verbs often replace Thai verbs to put an emphasis on the action of the sentence subject. The most frequently used noun and verb were "baby" and "love" in the current study. This is because most themes from the data involve notions of love and sex. There was also a wide range of English profanity in the lyrics, which suggests the artists' attention to their work within global hip-hop culture. This is consistent with Pitchler and Williams' (2016) assertion that features of the hip-hop linguistic style can be considered an authenticating tool kit.

5.2   *Nativized Features of English Words in Thai Rap Songs*

The findings demonstrated that of the 48 English words found in the Thai rap songs, only 15 words (31.25%) were nativized. The other words (68.75%) are mainstream American English words (e.g., "midnight", "surprise", etc.) employed without any nativization. The results suggest a rise in the dynamic flow of linguistic and cultural harmonies within the global hip-hop identity. Fewer nativized English words also suggests that it is unnecessary for English words to undergo any lexical modification to be integrated with Thai. This finding is in agreement with Kannaovakun and Gunter (2003), and Janhom (2011).

The most frequent nativized features found in this study were semantic shift, followed by reduplication and truncation, respectively. This differs slightly from other Thai-English code-mixing studies. In Likhitphongsathorn and Sappapan (2013), reduplication occurred most frequently, followed by truncation and semantic shift with the same number of occurrences, then, conversion and hybridization, respectively. Kannaovakun and Gunter (2003) found truncation to be the most common nativized feature, followed by hybridization then conversion. The frequent occurrence of semantic shift appears to be a tool of Thai rappers for creativity and expression. This is in keeping with Eckert's (2018) notion of communities of practice, defined as a group of individuals who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor. The switching of Thai and English in this study is a linguistic practice that occurs in the course of the community's engagement in their joint practice. The Thai rap artists thereby develop ways of doing things, values, and views in the larger social order.

This study of Thai Rap Songs through the World Englishes approach demonstrates that English has become more than a foreign language in the Thai society, which is situated within the expanding circle. Although Thailand is characterized as a monolingual society by scholars based on evidence that

code-switching has mostly occurred at the lexical level in the past, I argue that members of the Thai rap community have reinvented their work with more complex English elements to authenticate their new identities within global street culture. This study demonstrated recent changes in the capacity of Thai to accept English elements through language contact and global identity flow in the artistic domain, specifically in the Thai rap community. As with many qualitative studies of a sociolinguistic nature, the findings of this research are not intended to represent all of Thai rap or other natural or functional domains. Future research may investigate a larger sample of rap songs and examine Thai rap listeners' perceptions toward Thai-English code-switching and nativization in songs.

References

Amornsupornsart, Pornpat and Rattana Chitladaphitak. 2004. *A study of English-Thai code-mixing in Thai stars*. Master's thesis, National Institute Development Administration.

Beech, Hannah. 2019. "A Rap Challenger to the Thai Military Junta." The New York Times. Accessed February 15, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/15/world/asia/rap-video-thailand-liberate-p.html.

Bobda, Augustin. 1994. "Lexical Innovation Processes in Cameroon English." *World Englishes* 13, (2): 245–260.

Chairat, Patrapee. 2014. "English Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in Thai Songs." *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication* 19 (22): 1–29.

Cheshire, Jenny. 1991. *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eastman, Carol M., and Roberta F. Stein. 1993. "Language Display: Authenticating Claims to Social Identity." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 14, no. 3: 187–202.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 1992. "Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21, no. 1: 461–488.

Eckert, Penelope. 2016. "Communities of Practice." *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Elsevier: 1–4. https://web.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/eckert2006.pdf.

Galloway, Nicola, and Heath Rose. 2015. *Introducing Global Englishes*. Routledge.

Gardner-Chloros, Penelope. 2009. *Code-Switching*. Cambridge University Press.

Glass, Tom. 2009. "Why Thais write to other Thais in English." *World Englishes* 28 (4): 532–543.

Grosjean, François. 1982. *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Harvard University Press.

Gumperz, John J. 1982. *Discourse Strategies*. No. 1. Cambridge University Press.

Janhom, Watcharee. 2011. *English-Thai Code-Mixing in Thai Health Magazine*. Master's thesis, Srinakharinwirot University.

Kachru, Braj B. 1985. "Standards, Codification, and Sociolinguistic Realism: the English Language in the Outer Circle." In *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*, edited by Randolph Quirk and HG Widdowson, 11–30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaewjinda, Kaweewit. 2018. "Thai Government, Knocked by Rappers, Responds with Own Tune." AP NEWS. Accessed November 1, 2018. https://apnews.com/81e0ac97bc924176a1b0791d3c80961b.

Kannaovakun, Prathana, and Albert C. Gunther. 2003. "The Mixing of English and Thai in Thai Televisions Programs: Characteristics, Attitudes, Perceptions, and Motivations." *Manusya Journal of Humanities* 6, no. 2: 66–80.

Kitwana, Bakari. 2005. *Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop: Wankstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, and the New Reality of Race in America*. Civitas Books.

Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge University Press.

Likhitphongsathorn, Teeratorn, and Pattama Sappapan. 2013. *Study of English Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in Thai Pop Songs*. FLLT conference proceedings by LITU (Language Institute Thammasat University) 2, no. 1: 1494–1505.

MacSwan, Jeff. 2017. "A Multilingual Perspective on Translanguaging." *American Educational Research Journal* 54 (1):167–201. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216683935.

McIntyre, Dan. 2020. *History of English: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge.

Omoniyi, Tope. 2006. "Hip-hop Through the World Englishes Lens: A Response to Globalization." *World Englishes* 25 (2): 195–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0083-2919.2006.00459.x.

Onkhao, Thanawat, & Tipayasuparat Nakonthep. 2018. *A Study of English Code-Mixing in Thai Hip-Hop Songs*. (2018) Retrieved from https://rsucon.rsu.ac.th/files/proceedings/nation2018/G4-NA18-076.pdf.

Pennycook, Alastair. 2009. "Refashioning and Performing Identities in Global Hip-Hop." In *The New Sociolinguistics Reader*, edited by Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski, 326–340. Red Globe Press.

Phillipson, Robert. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

Pichler, Pia, and Nathanael Williams. 2016. "Hipsters in the Hood: Authenticating Indexicalities in Young Men's Hip-Hop Talk." *Language in Society* 45, no. 4: 557–581.

Preechaamornkul, Thanutcha. 2005. *Code-Mixing of English and Thai in Thai Television Music Programs*. Master's thesis, Chiang Mai University.

Raedts, Mariet, Natalie Dupré, Jef Hendrickx, and Sophie Debrauwere. 2015. "English in Television Commercials in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain." *World Englishes* 34, no. 4: 576–599.

Regan, Helen. 2018. "How a Rap Video Could Become the Fault Line of Thailand's Long-Awaited Elections." CNN. Accessed November 4, 2018. https://www.cnn .com/2018/11/03/asia/thai-rap-junta-intl/index.html.

Samingkaew, Nareerat. 2001. *Code-Mixing in Thai Daily Entertainment News*. Master's thesis, Thammasat University.

Shim, Rosa J. 1994. "Englishized Korean: Structure, Status, and Attributes." *World Englishes* 14 (1): 225–244.

Snodin, Navaporn. 2014. "English Naming and Code-Mixing in Thai Mass Media." *World Englishes* 33 (1): 100–111.

Thomason, Sarah. 2001. *Language Contact* (1st ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Van Gelderen, Elly. 2010. *An Introduction to the Grammar of English: Revised edition*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Wolfram, Walt, and Natalie Schilling. 2015. *American English: Dialects and Variation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Yano, Yasukata. 2003. "World Englishes in 2000 and Beyond." *World Englishes* 20 (2): 119–132.