

# Attitudes towards Thai Regional Dialects among Students Who Have Studied Linguistics and Those Who Have Not Studied Linguistics

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## Abstract

The question examined in this research is whether knowledge of linguistics can make students more objective in their attitudes towards speakers of regional dialects. Data was collected from 236 undergraduate students who had completed two courses in linguistics and 192 who had never studied the subject. In this research the matched-guise technique was utilized. Respondents evaluated guise speakers on five characteristics: friendliness, intelligence, morality, physical attraction and wealth, using a 5-point scale. Although both groups of students made more positive assessments of speakers who used standard Thai, those who had studied linguistics reacted significantly less negatively to regional dialect users, i.e., Thai Southern and Northeastern dialect speakers, especially in terms of friendliness, morality, and physical attraction.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Thai Dialects, Linguistics, Objectiveness, Matched-guise Technique

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## 1. Introduction

Linguistics is the scientific study of language in all aspects such as sound, word, sentence, grammar, idiom, meaning, learning, etc. It is different from the traditional study of language in which the grammarians made distinction between “good language” and “bad language”, “correct form” and “incorrect form” and mostly looked down upon those that deviated from the prescribed norm.

Modern linguistics goal is to be as objective as possible. Sinha (2011) said that linguists make a distinction between acceptability and appropriateness. A sentence is acceptable if it follows the grammar. Appropriateness is concerned with style. Two acceptable sentences “Don’t make a noise” and “Will you please, keep silent?” are perhaps appropriate in different contexts. Linguists should describe the structure of language objectively and systematically but not prescribe rules.

Because of the objective and descriptive view of language, most linguists believe in linguistic equality. They assert that all languages and all varieties of a language are valid systems with their own rules and conventions. Linguistic courses and many linguistic text books, especially in the general or introductory ones, therefore, state clearly about this core concept of linguistics. Sapir (1921, 234), a famous linguist, said that “*When it comes to linguistic form, Plato walks with the Macedonian swineherd, Confucius with the head-hunting savage of Assam*”, which means all languages are equal.

In day-to-day living, however, people seem to have different attitudes towards different languages and different varieties of a language. Positive and negative attitudes towards languages are often influenced by the process of standardization in language. (Garett 2010) The non-standard ones tend to be associated with low-status groups in society as shown in many researches on attitude towards languages. To take the case of Thailand, Chanyam (2002) found that the respondents from four parts of Thailand evaluated Bangkok, the standard, guise speaker most favorably as being of higher status. Northern and Northeastern speaking respondents rated the Southern guise quite low. Southern speaking respondents rated the Northern and Northeastern guises similarly low.

A well-cited definition of attitude was given by Allport (1954) as “A learned disposition to think, feel and behave towards a person (or object) in a particular way.” This definition stated that attitudes are learned, rather than innate. Media, parents, teachers, and people around us can have some role in the development of our attitudes.

Since Academic socialization can influence a students’ attitudes, I, therefore, wished to study whether linguistics can elevate the students’ attitudes towards speakers of non-standard dialects.

In this research, the matched-guise technique was used to measure attitude. Attitudes of the two groups of undergraduate students were studied; those who had studied linguistics and those who had not were compared.

The hypotheses of this study are:

1. Both groups, those who have studied linguistics and of those who have not, have better attitudes towards standard dialect than towards regional dialects.
2. There is no difference in attitudes of those who have studied linguistics and of those who have not studied linguistics towards standard dialects.
3. Those who have studied linguistics have a better attitude towards regional dialects than those who have not studied linguistics.

## 2. Literature Review

The attitudes towards a language can be measured both directly and indirectly. In the direct approach, people are simply asked questions directly about a language and its related phenomena.

MacKinnon (1981), for instance, asked his respondents sixteen questions in a questionnaire about Gaelic in Scotland. The question included the following: *Do you think that the Gaelic language is important for the Scottish people as a whole? Should Gaelic speakers be allowed to use Gaelic when dealing with public authorities? Would you yourself welcome more opportunities for adult education in Gaelic?* From these questions, the respondents knew that they were being asked about their attitudes towards the language.

One of the disadvantages of the indirect approach is the social desirability bias in which the respondents answer the questions in the ways that they believe to be socially appropriate but not what they really think. Cook and Sellitz (1964) said that people in the USA, for example, have a tendency to reply in ways that make them appear well-adjusted, unprejudiced, rational, open-minded, and democratic.

The indirect approach, which is generally seen as synonymous with “the matched guise technique”, is, on the contrary, the approach in which the respondents are not asked overt questions about a language. This technique was developed by Lambert et al. (1960) to evaluate the attitude of Canadians in Montreal towards both French speakers and English speakers.

Garrett (2010) summarized that with the matched-guise technique, respondents hear a recording of a single speaker reading the same text a number of times. Each reading differs from the others in one respect that the study focuses on. If the focus of the study, for example, is a regional variation, the text will be read in a number of regional dialects. Respondents are not told that the speaker is, in fact, the same person. They are asked to listen to each speaker and rate him or her in attitude rating scales. If they rate each speaker differently, it is not the speakers that are different. The respondents rate each speaker differently due to the accent. Although they are aware that this is an attitude-rating task, it is an indirect

approach because the respondents are not exactly aware of what they are rating. The attitudes obtained from the matched-guise technique are therefore attitudes toward languages or accents to which the respondents are listening to, although the respondents think that they are evaluating the speakers.

There are many studies on language attitude that use the matched-guise technique. Lambert et al. (1960) evaluated the attitude of Canadians in Montreal towards both French speakers and English speakers. Two groups of Canadian students, English speaking and French speaking, listened to four bilingual speakers reading passages in English and French and rated the speakers on fourteen traits; height, good looks appearance, leadership, sense of humor, intelligence, religiousness, self-confidence, dependability, entertainingness, kindness, ambition, character and likeability on six-point scale. At that time in Montreal, English was much more prestigious than French because French speaking Canadians were a minority in the country. The study found that both English speaking Canadians and French speaking Canadians evaluated the English voices more favorably than French voices. Lambert and his colleagues explained that minority groups sometimes take on the stereotyped values of majority groups.

Nineteen years later, Genesee and Holobrow (1989) examined whether there had been any change in the language-based stereotypes in the study of Lambert and his colleagues. There had been some socio-political change in Quebec including the introduction of Bill 101 in 1977, in which French (the majority language of Quebec) became the only official language. Genesee and Holobrow found that respondents gave higher solidarity ratings than previously to their in-group, but still rated Quebec French speakers the same on the status traits. They explained that stereotypes can be strongly resistant to change. It may be 'easier to change perceptions of in-group solidarity than perceptions of in-group status and that the former can be achieved through actions with high symbolic values, such as language legislation' (Genesee and Holobrow 1989, 36).

Palikupt (1983) conducted an attitudinal study of Central Thai and Northeastern Thai using the matched-guise technique. There were two groups of respondents; central Thai speakers, and Northeastern Thai speakers. The result was that central Thai speaking subjects had significantly better attitudes towards their own guise speakers than Northeastern guise speakers in all characteristics except kindness and honesty. In contrast, Northeastern Thai speaking subjects had a better attitude towards their own guise speakers than central Thai speakers in all characteristics except intelligence and leadership. Palikupt's study showed that language loyalty and own-group pride played an important role in attitudinal evaluation.

Chanyam (2002) studied the attitudes of students at four campuses of Rajamangala Institute of Technology using the matched-guise technique. Each campus is located in different parts of Thailand which people speak different dialects. Chanyam used six stimulus voices from three bidialectal speakers; Northern Thai and standard Thai, Northeastern Thai and standard Thai, and Southern Thai and standard Thai. Chanyam found that the respondents evaluated standard Thai (which she referred to as "Bangkok

Thai”) speakers most favorably on personality characteristics and status but evaluated least favorably in the aspect of amiability. The speakers of Northern Thai and Northeastern Thai were rated higher in their friendliness. Although the Northeastern respondents rated their own dialect speakers higher than the speakers of other dialects, the Northeastern guise speakers received a generally low evaluation from other groups.

Jaralvilai (2013) modified the matched guise technique to study the attitude of university students towards language use of lecturers. The sample was comprised of undergraduate students and graduate students in Thailand. The data was collected by online questionnaires consisting of 4 fictive situations on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) in which lecturers informed or answered their students. The samples were asked to imagine being one of those students and to evaluate each lecturer's character traits such as politeness, friendliness, social status, physical attraction and wealth.

The findings show that students have better attitudes towards lecturers who use a formal style of writing, call their students by given names, or use final particles according to their own gender rather than to their students' gender. Students have better attitudes towards female lecturers using male final particle to male students than male lecturers using female final particles to female students. Students have better attitudes towards lecturers who call themselves /ʔa:cʰa:n/ than /kʰru:/ or /d i ʔ cʰǎn/ or /pʰǒm/. Lecturers calling themselves /kʰru:/ are rated being the most friendly. Undergraduate students rate their lecturers higher than graduate students in general. Moreover, there is a greater difference in the evaluations of lecturers with different styles of language use for undergraduate students than graduate students.

Tomioka (2009) studied the attitude of 849 Northeastern Thai people toward Northeastern Thai and Standard Thai according to age using questionnaires. He found that young Northeastern Thai people, although they have a more positive attitude toward their own dialect, have a more positive attitude toward Standard Thai. In contrast, elderly people have a more positive attitude toward their dialect than Standard Thai. Their positive attitude toward Northeastern Thai related to solidarity, feeling expression, while the positive attitude toward Standard Thai related to politeness, delivering a clear and specific message, and formality.

That Standard Thai related to politeness and formality was also found in the study of Attitude toward Southern Thai. Somprach, Wilaiwan and Kowit (2017) collected data from 1,400 primary and secondary students in 14 schools in the Southern provinces and found that although the students held a positive attitude toward the use of their own dialect and regarded it as a practical mean of daily-life communication, they use the dialect less. The students believed that Standard Thai was more polite than Southern Thai and was more appropriate to be used in a formal context. Even outside class, it was believed to be impolite if a teacher talked to his or her students using Southern Thai.

Jaralvilai and Yang (2017) studied the attitude of undergraduate Thai students majoring in Chinese and undergraduate Chinese students majoring in Thai toward Thai and Chinese speakers. The guise speaker was a female Chinese graduate student who was studying for a Master of Arts in Thailand. She was judged by 3 Thais who had listened to her voice as a native speaker. The sample comprised of 210 undergraduate students. It was found that Thai respondents evaluate a Chinese guise speaker more favorable on every characteristic but Chinese respondents evaluate a Thai guise speaker and Chinese guise speaker equally. Thai guise speakers are evaluated more favorable on social skills and morality by both Thais and Chinese, while Chinese guise speaker is evaluated more favorable on power, social status, and physical attraction. Contrary to the hypothesis, Thai respondents with and without Chinese ancestry do not rate any guise speaker with a statistical difference.

### 3. Research Method

In this study, a text was read twice by 3 male speakers in their early 40s who were balanced bidialectal in standard Thai and one of these regional dialects: Northeastern Thai (Nakhon Phanom sub-dialect), Southern Thai (Nakhon Sri Thammarat sub-dialect), and Northern Thai (Chiangmai sub-dialect). They read the text once in a standard Thai accent and once in their own regional accents. The speakers were told that they were free to change some words to be those really used in their regional dialects. The text in standard Thai used as a stimulus and its English translation is as follows.

“แล้วพระวิญญาณก็พาพระเยซูไปที่เปลวเพลิงแห่งแ่งเพื่อให้มารมาลองใจพระองค์หลังจากพระเยซูอดอาหารมาเป็นเวลาสี่สิบวันสี่สิบคืน พระองค์ก็หัวจัด มารจึงมายั่วพระองค์ว่า ‘ถ้าเป็นลูกพระเจ้าจริง ก็สั่งหินพวกนี้ให้กลายเป็นขนมปังสิ’ พระเยซูตอบว่า ‘พระคัมภีร์เขียนไว้ว่า ‘ชีวิตที่เที่ยงแท้ไม่ได้ขึ้นอยู่กับขนมปังเพียงอย่างเดียว แต่อยู่ได้ด้วยคำพูดทุกคำที่มาจากพระเจ้า’” (Matt. 4: 1-4, Easy-to-Read Thai New Testament)

*“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, ‘if you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread’. Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matt. 4: 1-4, New International Version)*

The reason that biblical text is used as the guise is that it sounds exotic to the majority of Thais who are Buddhists and it sounds clear that the guise speaker reads it. The subjects would evaluate their speakers only by their language, not the content of the text.

The text had been used once in one of my other researches (Jaralvilai and Yang 2017). And the guise speakers, 3 male speakers in their early 40s, are the same persons as the guise speakers in this

study. I used the text and the guise voices again in this study because it had worked well as a research instrument. Each of the guise voices was approximately half a minute long.

From this point forward, the six guise voices from the three speakers will be referred to as the following:

NE	(North-Eastern dialect)
CNE	(Central <sup>2</sup> dialect spoken by the North Easterner)
S	(Southern dialect)
CS	(Central dialect spoken by the Southerner)
N	(Northern dialect)
CN	(Central dialect spoken by the Northerner)

428 undergraduate students were asked to be samples of this study. All of the students were studying at Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus. 236 of the students had taken two courses in linguistics (Introduction to Linguistics and Linguistics & Its Application), the other 192 had never studied linguistics.

The students in the first group, those who had studied linguistics, were selected by purposive sampling. There were approximately 250 students in each academic year at the Kamphaeng Saen Campus that required to take linguistics courses. The students in the second group, those who had not studied linguistics, were selected by convenience sampling. I asked the students about the courses they had taken. If they had not taken a linguistic course, I asked them to participate.

The data was collected from a large number of students at the same time in a classroom. They were asked to listen to the six stimulus voices and to evaluate the speakers on five characteristics:

friendliness, intelligence, morality, physical attraction, and wealth on the basis of their voices, as if they were evaluating someone during a telephone call, without knowing that there were in fact only three speakers. The guise voices were presented to the students; NE, CS, N, CNE, S, CN so that the guise voices from the same speaker were not next to each other and no filler voice was needed.

The students had to rate the guise speakers from 1 to 5 score. The 5-score was associated with the most positive characteristic of each pair whereas the 1 score was associated with the most negative characteristic. The 5-point semantic differential scales are: friendly vs unfriendly, smart vs stupid, good vs bad, rich vs poor, attractive vs unattractive.

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<sup>2</sup> Although I use the term “Standard Thai” throughout the paper, I do not use the abbreviation S for “Standard” because it can be confused with the S for “South”. I use C (for “Central”) as an abbreviation to refer to standard Thai instead. As central Thai dialect is the base for forming standard Thai, the terms can sometime be used interchangeably.

The descriptive statistics used in this research were percentage, proportion, and mean. When the attitude scores towards the same speakers who read in standard dialect and regional dialect were compared to see if the respondents evaluated a speaker reading two dialects differently, a two-tailed unpaired t-test was used. When the comparisons were between 3 regional dialects, ANOVA with Turkey HSD was used. The significant P- value was set at <0.05

## 4. Result

### 4.1 Better attitudes towards standard dialect than towards regional dialects

Although the same speaker read the text in two accents; that of standard Thai and that of their regional dialect, the respondents evaluated them differently. The guise speakers were rated higher when they spoke in standard Thai than when they spoke in their own regional dialects. All of the differences are considered to be statistically significant as in Table 1 and Figure 1 (From this point forward, a star symbol in a figure represents statistically significant difference).

	standard dialect			regional dialect		difference			
	guise	$\bar{x}_1$		guise	$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	df	t	p (1 tailed)
Linguistics N = 236	CNE	3.66	>	NE	3.12	0.54	235	12.03	<0.001
	CS	3.46	>	S	3.31	0.16	235	3.45	<0.001
	CN	3.75	>	N	3.55	0.17	235	4.77	<0.001
No Linguistics N = 192	CNE	3.65	>	NE	2.97	0.67	191	13.80	<0.001
	CS	3.41	>	S	3.16	0.25	191	4.47	<0.001
	CN	3.87	>	N	3.48	0.40	191	8.50	<0.001

Table 1 Differences of mean attitudes towards standard dialects and their counterpart regional dialects given by linguistic background of the respondents



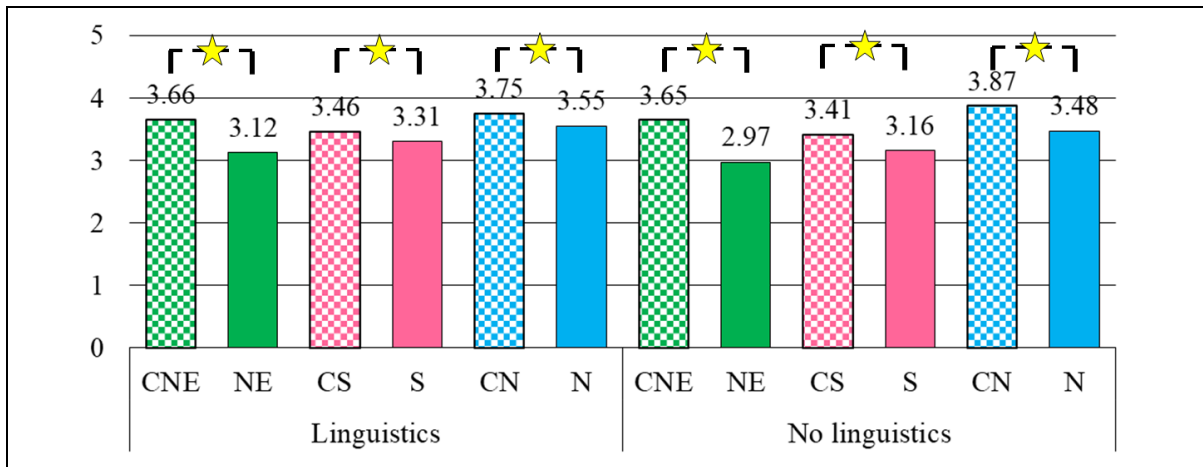


Figure 1 Differences of mean attitudes towards standard dialects and their counterpart regional dialects given by linguistic background of the respondents

To see which regional dialects are evaluated more favorable, I did not compare the raw mean attitudes but compared their transformed mean attitudes using the mathematical rule of three. First, to find the ratio of the full 5 scores to each mean attitude towards standard dialects ( $\frac{5}{\bar{x}_1}$ ). Then, the mean attitude towards its counterpart regional dialect was calculated by the formula ( $\frac{5}{\bar{x}_1} \times \bar{x}_2$ ).

It was found, as shown in Table 2 that both groups of students had the same pattern of attitude. They evaluated the Northeastern guise speakers clearly least favorable and the Southern guise speakers were rated a bit more favorable than the North guise speakers. ANOVA was used and the p-value told us that there was at least two group means that are statistically significantly different from each other.

	standard dialect		$\frac{5}{\bar{x}_1}$	regional dialect		$\frac{5}{\bar{x}_1} \times \bar{x}_2$	F	p
	guise	$\bar{x}_1$		guise	$\bar{x}_2$			
Linguistics	CNE	3.66	1.37	NE	3.12	4.28	42.61	<0.001
	CS	3.46	1.45	S	3.31	4.79		
	CN	3.75	1.33	N	3.55	4.72		
No Linguistics	CNE	3.65	1.37	NE	2.97	4.07	36.28	<0.001
	CS	3.41	1.47	S	3.16	4.64		
	CN	3.87	1.29	N	3.48	4.48		

Table 2 Transformed mean attitudes toward standard regional dialects given by linguistic background of the respondents

However, ANOVA cannot tell us which specific groups were statistically significantly different from each other. To determine which specific groups differed from each other, I used a Tukey HSD as a post hoc test, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, and found that there was no statistically difference between the mean attitudes toward S and N in both groups of respondents. This means both groups rated

standard Thai most favorable, Northern Thai and Southern Thai second favorable in parallel, and Northeastern Thai least favorable.

Similar findings were reported by Chanyam (2002) that students from the Nonthaburi Campus of Rajamangala Institute of Technology, which were assumed to represent the speakers of standard Thai, rated standard Thai most favorable, Southern Thai second favorable, Northern Thai third favorable, and Northeastern Thai least favorable. The only difference is that in Chanyam’s study the mean attitudes towards dialects were significantly different from each other.

	pair	Transformed Mean			Tukey HSD Q statistic	p
		NE	S	N		
Linguistics	NE and S	3.12	3.31	-	10.46	<0.01
	NE and N	3.12	-	3.55	8.80	<0.01
	S and N	-	3.31	3.55	1.67	0.393
No Linguistics	NE and S	2.97	3.16	-	8.78	<0.01
	NE and N	2.97	-	3.48	6.32	<0.01
	S and N	-	3.16	3.48	2.66	0.058

Table 3 Tukey HSD test for each mean attitude towards regional dialect comparison

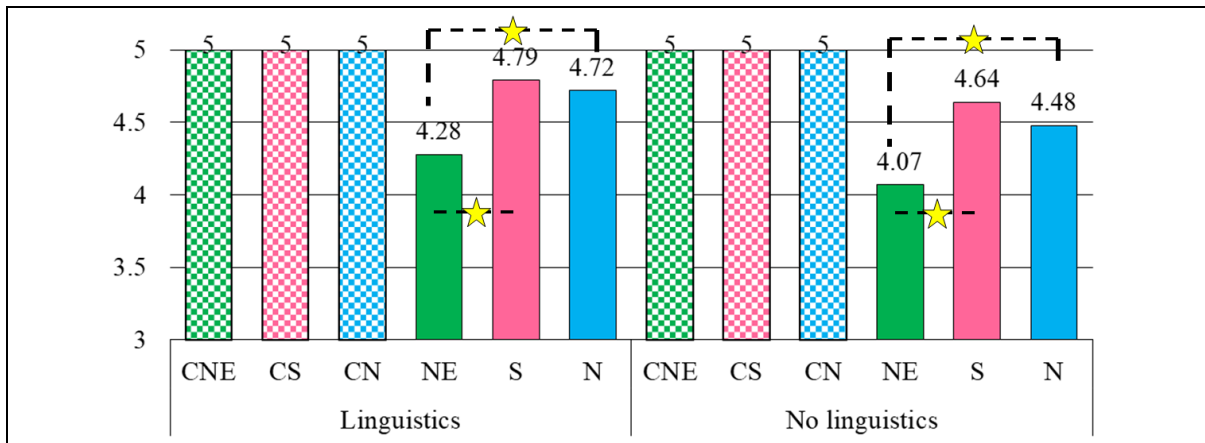


Figure 2 Transformed mean attitudes towards standard regional dialects given by linguistic background of the respondents

#### 4.2 No difference towards the standard dialect

I hypothesized that there is no difference in attitudes of those who have studied linguistics and of those who have not studied linguistics towards the standard dialect. The results shown in Table 4 and Figure 3 partly supports this hypothesis. The respondents with linguistics background evaluated two from three standard dialect guise speakers; the Northeasterner and the Southerner, equally to those without linguistics background. They, however, rated CN speakers less favorable than the respondents without a linguistics background.

	Linguistics N = 236		No Linguistics N = 192	difference			
	$\bar{x}1$		$\bar{x}2$	$\bar{x}1 - \bar{x}2$	df	t	p
CNE	3.66	=	3.65	0.01	426	0.26	0.80 (2 tailed)
CS	3.46	=	3.41	0.06	426	0.92	0.36 (2 tailed)
CN	3.75	≠	3.87	-0.12	426	2.25	0.02 (2 tailed)
		<					0.01 (1 tailed)

Table 4 Mean attitudes towards then standard dialect spoken by regional dialect speakers given by respondents who have or have not studied linguistics

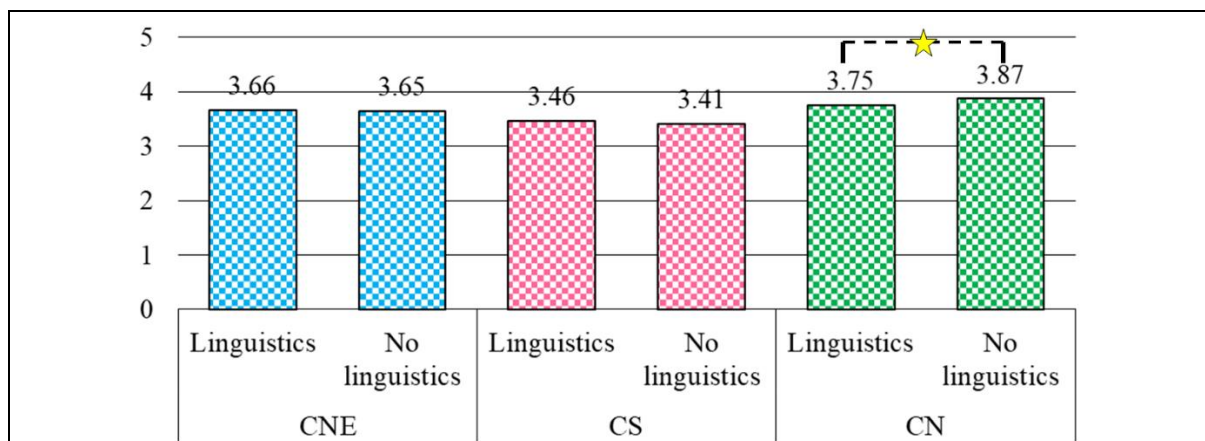


Figure 3 Mean attitudes towards the standard dialect spoken by regional dialect speakers given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

The result regarding the five characteristics shows a similar pattern to the overall results. The standard dialects spoken by the Northeasterner and the Southerner were evaluated by both groups of

respondents without a significant difference between them regarding all characteristics of the speakers. The speaker of the standard dialect who is a Northerner, however, was evaluated as more friendly and morally better by the respondents who had studied linguistics than those who had not studied linguistics. The results are shown in Table 5 and Figure 4.

		Linguistics N = 236		No Linguistics N = 192	difference			
		$\bar{x}_1$		$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	df	t	p
CNE	friendliness	3.51	=	3.51	0	426	0.02	0.98 (2tailed)
	morality	3.42	=	3.49	-0.07	426	0.95	0.34(2tailed)
	physical attraction	3.81	=	3.76	0.05	426	0.60	0.55 (2tailed)
	intelligence	3.95	=	3.90	0.05	426	0.73	0.47 (2tailed)
	wealth	3.61	=	3.57	0.04	426	0.48	0.63(2taile)
CS	friendliness	3.17	=	3.07	0.1	426	0.84	0.40 (2tailed)
	morality	3.34	=	3.45	-0.11	426	1.21	0.23 (2tailed)
	physical attraction	3.42	=	3.31	0.11	426	1.39	0.16 (2tailed)
	intelligence	3.85	=	3.78	0.07	426	0.93	0.35 (2tailed)
	wealth	3.53	=	3.42	0.11	426	1.46	0.15 (2tailed)
CN	friendliness	3.66	≠ <	3.89	-0.23	426	2.32	0.02 (2tailed) 0.01(1tailed)
	morality	3.59	≠ <	3.84	-0.25	426	2.93	<0.01(2tailed) <0.01(1tailed)
	physical attraction	3.53	=	3.65	-0.12	426	1.56	0.12 (2tailed)
	intelligence	4.15	=	4.15	0	426	0.03	0.97 (2tailed)
	wealth	3.82	=	3.53	-0.12	426	1.56	0.12 (2tailed)

Table 5 Mean attitudes towards the standard dialect regarding each characteristic given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

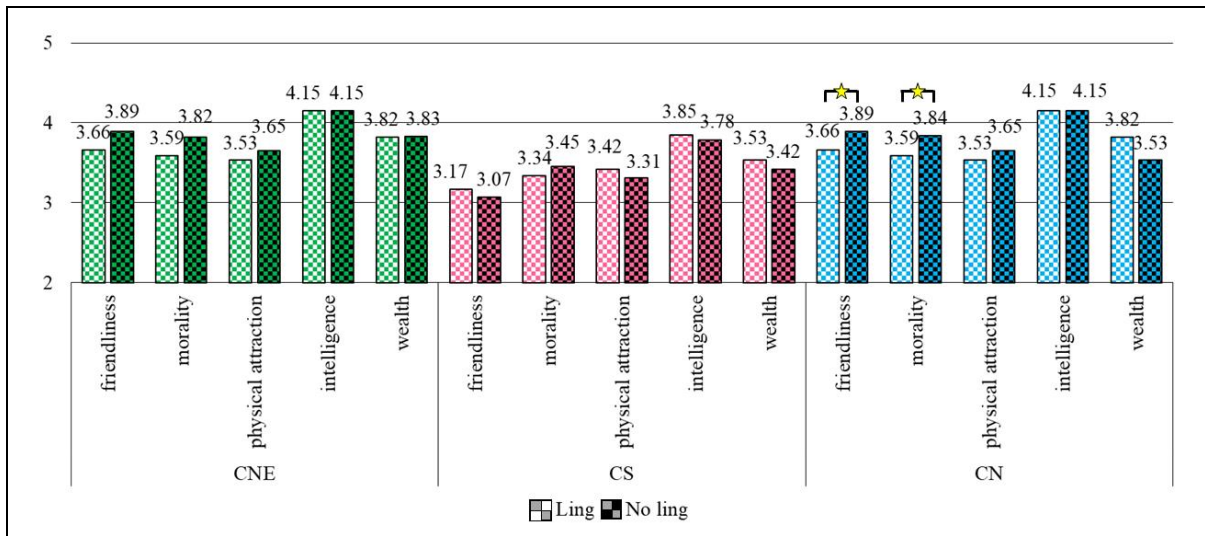


Figure 4 Mean attitudes towards the standard dialect spoken by the three speakers of regional dialects regarding each characteristic given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

### 4.3 Better attitudes towards regional dialects by linguistics

As linguistics is claimed to be a scientific and objective study of language, I hypothesize that students who have studied linguistics have a better attitude towards regional dialects than those who have not studied linguistics.

After comparing the mean attitude of the two groups of the respondents, I found that the results partly support my hypothesis. Two from three dialects, e.g., Northeastern dialect and Southern dialect, were evaluated better by the respondents with a linguistics background than by the respondents without a linguistics background. But in the case of the Northern dialect, the result is in contrast. The respondents with a linguistics background did not evaluate Northern dialect more favorable than those without a linguistic background as in Table 6 and Figure 5.

	Linguistics N = 236		No Linguistics N = 192	difference			
	$\bar{x}_1$		$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	df	t	p (1tailed)
NE	3.12	>	2.97	0.15	426	2.98	<0.01
S	3.31	>	3.16	0.15	426	3.23	<0.01
N	3.55	≤	3.48	0.07	426	1.64	0.051

Table 6 Mean attitudes towards regional dialects given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

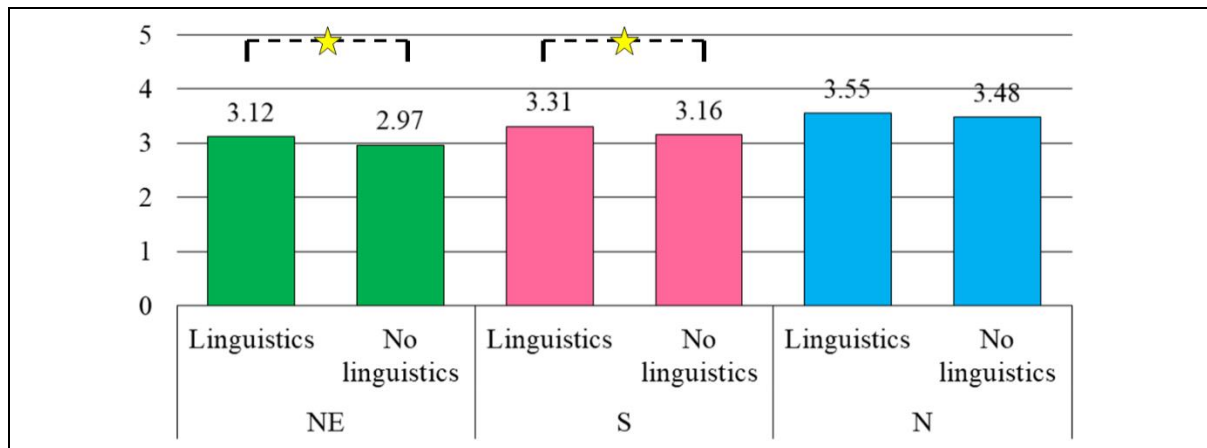


Figure 5 Mean attitudes towards regional dialects given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

The respondents' attitudes towards Northeastern dialect and Southern dialect are in the same pattern. Table 7 and Figure 6 show that the students who had studied linguistics evaluated NE and S better than the students who had not studied linguistics regarding three of the five characteristics of the speakers, e.g., friendliness, morality, and physical attraction. The Northern dialect speaker was evaluated insignificantly different regarding almost all characteristics by the two groups of respondents except those with a linguistics background evaluated the Northern speaker friendlier than those without a linguistics background did.

		Linguistics N = 236		No Linguistics N = 192	difference			
		$\bar{x}_1$		$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	df	t	p (1tailed)
NE	friendliness	3.41	>	3.12	0.29	426	3.04	<0.01
	morality	3.50	>	3.29	0.21	426	2.89	<0.01
	physical attraction	2.92	>	2.74	0.18	426	2.49	0.01
	intelligence	3.17	≤	3.10	0.07	426	0.89	0.19
	wealth	2.61	≤	2.61	0	426	0.06	0.48
S	friendliness	3.91	>	3.60	0.31	426	3.51	<0.01
	morality	3.81	≤	3.67	0.14	426	1.74	0.04
	physical attraction	2.87	>	2.70	0.17	426	2.26	0.01
	intelligence	3.32	≤	3.20	0.12	426	1.60	0.06
	wealth	2.63	≤	2.61	0.03	426	0.30	0.38

		Linguistics N = 236		No Linguistics N = 192	difference			
		$\bar{x}_1$		$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$	df	t	p (1tailed)
N	friendliness	4.10	>	3.90	0.20	426	2.67	<0.01
	morality	4.06	≤	3.97	0.09	426	1.05	0.15
	physical attraction	3.01	≤	2.97	0.04	426	0.63	0.26
	intelligence	3.71	≤	3.68	0.03	426	0.39	0.35
	wealth	2.86	≤	2.86	0	426	0.06	0.48

Table 7 Mean attitudes towards regional dialects regarding each characteristic given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistics

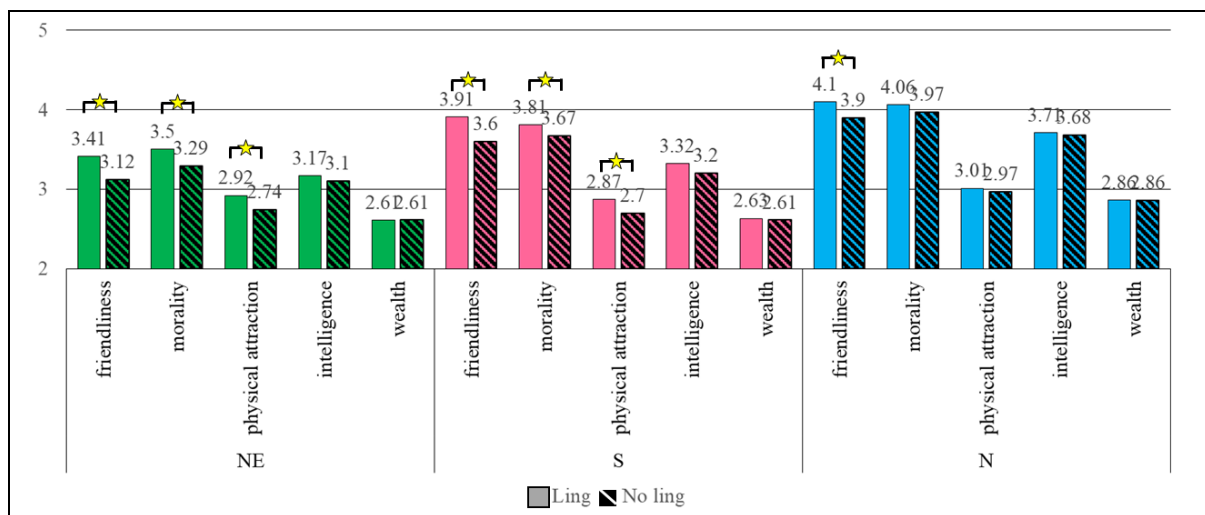


Figure 6 Mean attitudes towards regional dialects regarding each characteristic given by respondents who have and have not studied linguistic

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

It was found in the overall result of this study that Thai students have better attitudes towards standard Thai than regional dialects, even though they are in fact spoken by the same guise speaker. This result generally agrees with those in previous studies by Chanyam (2002), Tomioka (2009), Somprach, Wilaiwan, & Kowit (2017).

Among the three regional dialects, the Southern dialect is rated highest, the Northeastern dialect and the Northern dialect are similarly rated lower without significant difference. This is also consistent with the result from the study by Chanyam (2002) that the students from Nonthaburi campus, which represented Central Thai speakers, rated Southern Thai dialect more favorable than other non-standard dialects. Although I did not mean to use the native language (or hometown) of my subjects as an independent variable, Kamphaeng Saen which was the place I collected data for this study, was located also in the central part of Thailand.

Although both groups of students have better attitudes towards standard Thai than the regional dialects, they have the same attitudes towards standard Thai. Standard Thai spoken by Northeastern guise speakers and by Southern guise speakers are rated by the two groups without significant difference. There is, however, an unexpected exception with the standard Thai spoken by the Northern speaker. Students who have not studied linguistics rated it better than those who have studied linguistics especially that the speaker is rated friendlier and morally better.

Students who have studied linguistics have better attitudes towards regional dialects. They rated the Northeastern speaker and the Southern speaker as friendlier, morally better, and more attractive than those who have not studied linguistics do. It could be inferred that linguistics can elevate the students' attitudes towards regional dialects, although not in all characteristics of the speaker. Again, with an exception of the Northern dialect, students with a linguistics background do not rate the Northern dialect better than those without a linguistics background.

The characteristics that are not affected by the objectiveness of linguistics are intelligence and wealth. It can perhaps be explained that these two characteristics are the matters of facts more than attitudes.

Intelligence, despite a vast difference, come together with education. According to the data from the 2010 Population and Housing census from the National Statistical Office, the population aged 15 years and over in Bangkok, where standard Thai is mainly spoken, and have average years of schooling at 10.8 years which is much higher than the population in other parts of the country; 7.2 years in the Northeastern part, 7.8 years in the Southern parts, and 7.1 years in the Northern part. (National Statistical Office 2011) The result of the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) in 2017 for G.6, G.9, and G.12 students also support this. Students from Bangkok clearly got the highest scores in all subjects. For example, Average scores of the English test for G.12 are 39.65 for students in Bangkok, but only 24.36, 26.49, 28.84 for students in the Northeastern part, Southern part, and Northern part, respectively. (The National Institute of Educational Testing Service 2018)

The average monthly income per person in Bangkok is clearly higher than those of other parts of the country. In 2011, the average monthly income per person of the population in Bangkok was 11,829



Baht, whereas the average income of a Northerner was 4,398 Baht, that of a Southerner was 6,811 Baht, and that of a Northerner was 5,678 Baht. (National Statistical Office 2012)

The advantages of Bangkok in the aspect of education and wealth as mentioned above might be known to Thai people in general as a fact. This must be the reason that the objectiveness of linguistics does not change how its learners see the speakers of regional dialects regarding their wealth and intelligence. A similar situation was found in the work of Genesee and Holobrow (1989), in which respondents rated the French guise speaker higher on in-group solidarity than they did before French became the only official language in Quebec but rated the speaker the same on status. The perception of some traits is strongly resistant to change than the perception of some other traits.

There are some limitations to this study that should be addressed.

- 1) Only one male guise speaker in his early 40s was used for one regional guise dialect as a tool.
- 2) This study did not collect the demographic data of the students, for example, gender, major field of study, and native dialect. This information may help to discuss the result deeper.

Studying should not be just getting more knowledge but improving our worldview and ethic. Studying linguistics is initially proved in this study that it can improve its learners' attitudes toward language and language speakers, which means all of our human friends. I would like to suggest that other researchers conduct deeper research for a better understanding of the influence of linguistics toward the language attitudes with respondents' demographic data as independent variables. The influence of linguistics as a major field and as compulsory courses should be compared and they may use both direct and indirect ways to elicit attitudes from their respondents. In case of the indirect way with guise speakers, guise speakers with both genders and various ages should also be used as independent variables. A better understanding of the influence of linguistic on this aspect may promote peacefulness among human beings.

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