

# **An Analytical Study of Anthropological Linguistics Reflected from Luk-Isan Literature towards Isan Lifestyle\***

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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this research were 1) To study a content on Anthropological Linguistics terms reflected from ‘Luk-Isan’ literature, 2) To analyze a content of language concerning a detail of Isan lifestyle, culture, community, society, beliefs, and local knowledge and wisdom of Isan people appearing in ‘Luk-Isan’ literature, 3) To compare Isan Lifestyle from ‘Luk-Isan’ literature with those forms in current Isan community. The research methodology is commentary study with the way of analysis novel ‘A Child of the Northeast’ by Kham-Phoon Boonthawi and field-work study is exploration the way of life of Isan people in the current time at Ban Sai-Moon, Sai-Moon Sub-District, Sai Moon District, Yasothon province.

### **The results revealed that:**

1. This study intended to study these language concepts of Anthropological Linguistics through the story contexts of language usage characteristics, society, culture, the way of life, lifestyles in daily life and local wisdom from individual attitude in Isan community.
2. The main story plots had narrated the ordinary daily life on those time such as the way of life, social living, culture, the mixture of religion and beliefs, extensive knowledge of hunting and local ecology, various skills of local wisdom, and Isan culture of eating styles. As well as the inventiveness and the artistry seen in handicrafts and household appliances used in house.

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3. The results of the field study found that the way of life of Isan people has changed greatly in accordance with the progress of the world in the era of globalization. The narrative stories that appeared in the literature but not completely appearing in the current Isan community and were lost in the present Isan society. Therefore, Lifestyles and social living have been changed depending on the changes of the era.

**Keywords:** Anthropological Linguistics; ‘Luk-Isan’ literature; Isan lifestyle; Present-day Isan lifestyle

## 1. Introduction

Isan language, the Northeastern dialect of Thai language, and its divers’ Ethnolinguistic communities comprise about approximately 3 millions of the Thailand population (National Housing Authority, 2019). Their distinct identity of language, literature, music, art, traditional knowledge, and a way of life richness and diversity to Thai culture and the society. Traditions and customs of these Ethnolinguistic communities are a blend of Thai-Lao cultures, in which ‘twelve Heat and fourteen Khong’ traditions still lay at the core of the identity of most people. Isan language reflects a unique world-view with its own value systems, sufficiency philosophy and particular cultural features. A good example is a culture of conservation that guides these Ethnolinguistic communities to be stewards of biodiversity for centuries, also responsible for preserving and increasing biodiversity through their traditional land

and their identity.

Anthropological linguistics is that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and culture context, its role in forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structure. As such, it may be seen to overlap with another sub-field with a similar domain, sociolinguistics, and in practice this may indeed be so. Anthropological linguistics views language through the prism of the core anthropological concept, culture, and, as such, seeks to uncover the meaning behind the use, misuse or non-use of language, its different forms, registers and styles. It is an interpretive discipline peeling away at language to find cultural understanding. It seeks to discover how linguistic behavior patterns with respect to social groupings and correlates differences in linguistic behavior with the variables defining social groups, such as age, sex, class, race, etc.



(Foley, 1997).

As a result, heritage of Isan language might have been endangered as it gradually loses native speakers who can create countless sentences all the time (Rattanakun, 2004) but those languages have been still written in documentary work and a living heritage community. In addition, there were shifts in domains of language use in recent decades as speaking dominant languages of Thai and English, rather than Isan language, also, Isan language/dialect has many varieties, was the path toward educational, economic, and social success. An estimated 50% of Thai citizens speak Standard or Central Thai as their first language. Standard Thai is the dominant language of the country and widely spoken throughout the country as a second language, but there are no reliable data on the extent of people's bi-dialect (Kosonen et al., 2007, pp. 437-449).

There are a number of literatures works that the researcher is interested to study that was appeared as outstanding literature. The most of them is a literary work that reflected to the way of life of the Isan people, namely, "A child of the Northeast" (Luk-Isan) written by Kham-Phoon Boonthawi. The literature of "A Child of the Northeast"

(Luk-Isan) received an award for outstanding novel category from the National Book Development Board of the year 1976 and received the SEA Write Award in 1979. The story of A Child of the Northeast is a work that has been made into a movie, Moreover, was selected to be a part-time reading book for upper secondary school level. The book about Isan children has been translated into many foreign languages such as English, Japanese and French.

The researcher is interested about the story of "A Child of the Northeast" because the story plots had been focused on the way of life on community, village and family which was connected to society, culture, lifestyle, beliefs and local wisdom in order to answer the objective of this study. And this study explores the way of life of Isan people in the present time with issues emphasized in the texts. This study emphasized that the concept of Anthropological Linguistics is a fundamental feature in the construction of the novel line. Moreover, the researcher hoped that this Isan literature study will be maintained as well as an ancient Isan lifestyles and cultures, and the outstanding work of Kham-Phoon Boonthawi will be presented to next generations to know their ancient Isan history.



## 2. Research Objectives

1. To study the contents of an Anthropological linguistics terms reflected from Luk-Isan literature.

2. To analyze the contents of language concerning a detail of Isan lifestyle, culture, community, society, beliefs, and local knowledge and wisdom of Isan people appearing in Luk-Isan literature.

3. To compare Isan Lifestyle from Luk-Isan literature with those forms in current Isan community.

## 3. Methods

This work is the part of a dissertation is qualitative research by the way of documentary study and field-work as a mixed method for the analytical research methodology, drawing primarily on studies taken from Isan literature entitled 'A Child of the Northeast' story of Kham-Phoon Boonthawi as a way to analyze language features of Ethnolinguistics. And to survey the language contexts of the literature reflected to the contents of Isan lifestyles in the present time. The data collection of field-work study was conducted in depth interviews for exploration Isan lifestyles in the present time according to the language contents reflected from literature.

1. Data Collection. From the data collection, the researcher initially studies and surveys of the primary sources in literature texts of A Child of the Northeast' story in both versions of Thai and English language. Then, the data collection is to study from reference books in research literature reviews concerning to the narrated story and related documents as well as from a book database as follows:

1. Those Isan literatures such as The Legends of Northeastern Ghosts, Historical Tales of the Northeast: Phee Ba, Phee Boon, Ya Khoo Khee Hom, Animals and Insects Eaten by Northeastern People, Local Vegetables of the Northeast, The Legend of an Indian Mahout to Gui or Suay People. 2. The scope of language study in Ethnolinguistics' terms. 3. The characteristics of lifestyle, culture, community, beliefs and culture in rural areas of the Northeastern region 4. The literary works written by Kham-Phoon Boonthawi such as Thung Kula Rong Hai, Heaven Orders to Fight, Northeastern People Are for a Revolution, A Wandering Northeastern Child (Volume 1), A Wandering Northeastern Child (Volume 2), Four Awkward People in Germany, A Northeastern Boy Takes the Plane, Kham-Phoon is Afraid of Death," the lives



of Northeastern people who seek a better fortune abroad.

2. Field Study. From data collection of field-work study was conducted by depth-interview through two weeks with various information in story narratives and observation to explore the Isan lifestyles has still practiced in the present time from ten informants, 6 males and 4 females who were more than 60 years old and born at birthplace as same as Khamphoon time, at Ban Sai Moon, Sai Moon Sub-District, Sai Moon District, Yasothon Province where was the author's hometown. These questions were taken from the story narrative's contents reflected to the Isan lifestyles in various aspects namely Language characteristics, Isan culture, Isan Society and community, Isan people's Beliefs, the way of life, the local wisdom and set up them to explore their practice in the current time.

3. Data Analysis. Data collection and detailed information were used to analyze the contents of language features according to the term of Anthropological Linguistics. The results were interpreted, categorized, and displayed different results depending on the data as follows: 1. Qualitative information from literature study was analyzed as the scope of

language contents in Anthropological term and also descriptive writing was translated into English as well. 2. Interview information and receiving data from field-work study was analyzed by using descriptive analysis with approximated percentage. The analyzed data is displayed in the form of tables.

#### 4. Results

The results were shown through a various language aspect of Anthropological linguistics' term from data collection and analysis of literary works entitled Luk-Isan, A Child of the Northeast, of Khamphoon Boonthawi. The researcher has found that those language features and contents had reflected to the way of life of the Isan people appearing from narrated story as follows:

##### 1. Language characteristics of Isan

1.1 Personal pronoun relating to social status. Looked at language usage of politeness it was seen through the usage in formal or official language at the school where the teacher has explained to all student to change their speech following the official language which was so as far as their dialect. For example, a teacher had explained to teach his pupils pronouncing the word 'Khrap' (yes, sir) instead the word 'Er (เอ้อ)' (a word used of particle agreement)



in their dialect.

“When can ‘Kuo (กู)’ (I) go to school, Papa?” Khoon asked his father. “In fact, from now on, you, Khoon, do not say the word ‘Kuo’ to your parents, Yee-Soon and Boon Lai.

The word ‘Kuo’ was a 1st person pronoun that used with people of the same level; friend, age as equal as them and informal communication, and was a private conversation level. It was considered that was impolite to speak to an adult and person in their family. Usually, Isan people were respected to the other with a polite words or speech.

“Er! (เอ้อ)” That boy said and stood up. “What is Er! (เอ้อ) You come to school to learn to say “Yes”, sir! (khrap, ครับ). But the girl should say “Yes” (kha, ค่ะ) and not “Er! (เอ้อ)” Khru Thong said.

1.2 language usage in meaning  
According to the story, the language aspect of the meaning in specific term has been narrated of the scene through expression of Khoon’s mother was talking to his father about their son’s name by changing a name to other one, but his father has explained the meaning of name, has been named to him for a good thing into the specific name’s meaning.

His mother said, “I have thinking, Khoon’s Papa. Maybe we should change the boy’s name before he goes to school.” Khoon’s Father shook his head and said, “No, I named him for the Khoon tree because it is tough and strong. It can live in the forest or the field, and in hotter sun or heaviest rains. Khoon is a good name for a boy.”

“The one was held into a York or collar of the lefts was named Ai Dam (ไ้ดำ)-black, because he had a dark nose and dark circle around both eyes. The other was called Ai Dang (ไ้ต่าง)-spotted, because brown and black spots covered the length of his back from his hump all the way to his tail.”

1.3 Metaphor and simile style  
Observed at Isan dialect in the ancient time, most of language features for communication and expression in their community and daily life were addressed on the terms and meaning of metaphor and simile styles.

Auntie Khampha is so stingy that everyone calls her ‘Mrs. Pla-ra Mein (ปลาร้าเหม็น)’, a stinking pickled fish.

Whenever Auntie Khampha got fish to make ‘Pla-ra’ (pickled fish), she would put it into her mortar with the salt and then try to pound is as softly as she could. So that the villagers would not know how much ‘Pla-ra’ she was making. But the fish



and the salt did not mix enough because of the soft pounding, so every time she opened a crock of ‘Pla-ra’ after that you could smell it all over the village.

“They will go to where the earth is black with rain and fishes strike the water like crocodiles’ tails.”

It means any place where people can plant rice every year, where the fishes in the water are big. So that when they jump, it makes you think of crocodiles crashing their big tails on the water.

2. The culture of Isan people. Most of Isan cultures are common practice of their daily life and predominant things, and they passed them on generations to generations. Those cultures of Isan people are found in the novel such as values of dressing and clothing, chewing betel and smoking, tattoo on legs, and so on as follows:

2.1 Dressing and Clothing. Those styles are the value of dressing in that time, easier than the present without fashionable styles, a man wore only loincloth and a loose pant which dyed with indigo and a woman wore sarong and a loincloth rounded her bosoms.

Kham-gong ‘s silk sarong was so old that he could not even see the design in the fabric anymore but somehow that sarong looked good on her, and so did the

old ‘Phakhaowma’ (loincloth) that she wore wrapped about her bosom.

“The ‘Mor Lam (หมอลำ)’ (Isan folksong singer) wore splendid cloths. He wore Sarong, a loincloth that looked like he had never worn it before in his life, and a new white silk shirt with a round collar that shimmered in the sunlight.”

2.2 Chewing betel and Smoking. The values of chewing betel and smoking in daily life are common behavior or character of Isan people in that time that women must chew betel and a men must smoke cigarette with the rolled tobacco.

Vietnamese ladies and Isan ladies, too, do you know they have to chew betel until all their teeth are black, so they can be pretty?

“Uncle Luy (พ่อใหญ่ลุย) sat down and laughed loudly as he took the stub of cigarette from behind his ear and lit it, sucking into smoke was as smoky.

2.3 Tattoos. A story narrative of tattoos was a scene of faithfulness and a full of believes that Isan people had belief becoming a powerful and brave person.

Khoon asked his father, “if I were big, would you let me get tattoos?” “I would not forbid it,” he answered, “Tattooing had as long as became a belief in our village.”



According to Isan beliefs about tattoos, a man has tattoos give him courage, and made him afraid of nothing-not sun or rain, evil men. But a man must also restrain himself and not go looking for trouble, just because he has powerful tattoos.

“Your grandfather had the tattoo that covered his legs from his knees to the top of his thighs.”

3. Isan society, community and social reflection

3.1 Housing/Architecture. The story gives priority to community life in daily life of Isan people as such they are considered the significance of life in the sense of everyday routine.

“Every house lived in a village was like every other: they built on stilts with a ladder from the porch to the yard below and there was a granary in the house. There was a pen for oxen and water buffalos beneath the house and rice silo in on corner of the yard.”

“I am digging a privy room. You go to ask your father if he wants a privy dug at your house.” Thid Hat (ทิศฮาด) said.”

3.2 Worship of Ancestry. The way of local ceremony and lifestyle about regulations and rules must be done and practiced with strictly following such as wedding, flirting and relationship between

boys and girls.

“Khoon’s grandmother was ladling chicken ‘Lap’ (salad) from a large clay cup into a tiny bowl which placed in a tray near the flagon. She put this bowl onto a tray with some betel leaves, prettily folded and sprinkled with water for asking forgiveness of ancestor’s ceremony.”

“If it is the third way; the woman goes to the house of the man, that is worse than the man goes to the woman’s house. And grandparents’ ghosts are angrier than the bridegroom goes to the young woman’s house. In the case. If they do not sacrifice one white buffalo and one black buffalo, then that woman’s family will be ruined.” His grandmother said.”

3.5 Festivals. The story plots about local practice and community way are clearly no pattern, but it is an essential way and specific practice that has been passed down from generation to generation such as children’s play, festive traditions, celebrations and so on.

“When there were only three days left to get ready for three days of Songkran festival. Khoon’s mother took a large basket of hulled rice from their granary, to winnow and have ready. All our rice must be pounded before the first day of Songkran.





Because in those three days, whoever cannot pound rice, they will be having hilarious fun or going to the forest.”

“Khoon’s father handed a bowl of water from mother’s hand. Then, he gently sprinkled some of the scented water on his grandmother shoulder. Then passed it on to everyone to do the same.”

After that, his grandmother gave them her blessing, telling them that she prayed for Khoon and his mother and father and the little girls to live a long time. And be born into their next life in a place where the earth was black with rain and where their grandfather had also been reborn. So, that they might see him again.

4. The characteristics of Isan people’s beliefs. The colorful mixture of religion and beliefs according to the story of A Child of the Northeast, in the small village, had been seen of how Buddhism as a religion of culture has shaped and has been sharpened by its surrounding culture through the ages in a peaceful co-existence with ancient beliefs. Before Buddhism, Brahmanism mixed with Hinduism flourish over across all Isan region but prior to contact with Indian culture ancestor worship and animism prospered among the people as below:

4.1 Personal belief. The Isan community have personal beliefs through pass on and processes of social control that expressed in the form of daily activity, working, hunting, fishing and environment. The goal was to express gratitude, the prosperity of the joy of living, including a mechanism of social control.

“That tail of the civet, Khoon had never tasted the tail of the civet because his father roasted it carefully over the fire, then tossed it to the dogs.”

Isan people believed that the dog had eaten the tail of animals, they were great hunters. On night when the moon was full and they hunted an animal. They never failed to bring down at least one or more.

“When reading a book, do not lie down to read. Because you will get ringworm.”

According to that belief means if a boy or girl lie down to read a book, they easily go to asleep as well. And another point, they will lazy and do not work hard in their work in school and home.

4.2 Spirituality. In the story plots, some observations of how beliefs were capable of binding people tightly to particular place whereas they do not have any power beyond the locality was strongly evoked in the sacred things and holy objects.



The belief not only evokes very well the presence of unseen world, in the real world, but also how the spirits although seen as inhumanly powerful, made human in the way that people were associated with them.

“You afraid of ‘Phee-Pop (ผีปอป)’? (Ghoul or a type of ghost is believed to reside in a person. It likes to eat raw food and eat liver, kidneys, intestines of the possessed person. When he finished eating, he left his body. Then the possessed person dies.)” the old man asked the Vietnamese people. “Everyone is afraid of ‘Phee-Pop’, Old man”, the Vietnamese man said, “You have spelled to keep them away from my household just being a newcomer.”

“The ‘Mor-Ya (หมอยา)’ (a folklore medicine man) picked up a long big piece of string and wound one end of it about Khoon’s grandmother’s head and then prayed some more spells: “The ‘Mor-Ya’ was calling upon spirits to come down from heavens, down into this house to accept these gifts. To come down into this place and take the pain from this old woman, his grandmother. To come to this old woman and bless her with more years of life. She might live with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren for a long time.”

4.4 Belief in auspiciousness, good time and occasion, and chance. The way of life of the Isan people was closely related to the belief in sacred things, ghosts, ancestors, the sky and stars. When they would have done anything, therefore, they must be considered that these ceremonies must be held on for the prosperity of life and family. Many beliefs and ceremonies were a strategy for building unity among community, peaceful mind, and happiness. Belief in good auspiciousness and good times, had influenced to Isan people's daily life, especially, when they had performed various ceremonies, activities such as building a new house, journey, naming of children, wedding, planting rice and so on.

“You people come to me for everything: everybody who wants to become a monk, everybody who is building a new house, everyone who wants to get married, everybody who wants to name a child or who has the red eye disease, they all come to me, ‘Luang Phor (หลวงพ่อ)’ (an old venerable). If I die, then who is going to look after all these things?” ‘Luang Phor’ said and laughed quietly to himself.

“Khoon’s father sat upright and said, “Luang Phor’ this is my son. He will enter the school this year.” and then his



father told ‘Luang Phor’ the day, month, year, and hour of Khoon’s birth.”

5. The way of life of Isan people. The way of life of Isan people originally was a lifestyle of peasant society that is dependent on each other. Isan people have to learn and adapt themselves to the natural environment appropriately. The way of life of Isan people have concerned to various lifestyles following the author’s narrative as below:

5.1 Everyday life and the daily routines life of the Isan people. Isan people are people who lived a simple life, did not like chaos life, intended to earn a living. They had fought the hardships in the arid place of the Northeastern area how long will it rain every year? The daily routines life of Isan people would be looked back almost fifty years more than with an understanding and a deep concern for not just Isan area but for Isan society.

“His father has just only talked a little bite and walked off into the wood behind the house as he did every morning. On some morning, Khoon went with his father and together they relieved themselves in the companionable privacy of the woods.”

“Khoon went into the kitchen, washed his face and rubbed a pinch of salt

all around the inside of his mouth. That was the toothpaste.”

5.2 Fishing. The remarkable journey of the fishing caravan is viewed here of this case and focused on as interesting aspect of community life contributing greatly to making of the author’s narrative through its extensive and influential role in the story. The journey had spoken of issues such as particular local knowledge and primarily the villager profound resourcefulness in surviving in time of drought. The journey was a particular happening in the ordinary life and they had shown their skillful individual for fishing.

“If they would go to fish with wading their nets in a distant place. Many oxen carts will be used together, and it took about twenty days to return home.”

“Uncle Gah (ลุงกา) told the other men that “He had found a small cove nearby. It was full of weeds; it was true and even some branches. But it was also full of fishes, he could hear a lot of small fishes jumping around in there. If they took dip nets over there right now, they could scoop out piles of little fishes to make ‘Pla-Som (ปลาซึ่ม)’ (fermented fish).”

5.3 Hunting and catching animals. Looked at an excellent example of particular



in the ordinary life revealing remarkable knowledge of hunting and catching animals as well as local expertise and skills in capturing such as a small insect, frogs, green small frogs, bullfrogs and small creatures. Their ancestors held and passed on the knowledge of how those animals were available to hunt in different way and place. The detailed narrative and information explained the way to hunt and catch any animals with many their tools for hunting.

“If we get as many fish as we can prepare in one day from that lagoon,” his father said, “I will come back to this field with Thid-Joon (ติดจูน) and get those little doves, roasted and salted them for Thid-Hat (ติดฮาด). They are just the kinds he like. He asked Thid-Joon again and again to bring some home for him to eat with the whiskey.”

“Uncle Gah (ลุงกา) said, “Have a little patience, Thid-Joon (ติดจูน), you take the dogs and boys into the woods and find some wood mushrooms. Maybe you can find a red ants’ eggs for cooking a meal. And if you cannot, then, we are back to eat a smell ‘Pla-ra (ปลาฉี่)’ (a pickled fish) on the bottom of the jar.”

6. The role of local wisdom in the way of life of Isan people. Local wisdom consists of knowledge about life, environments,

livelihood, profession, elder wisdom, and food preservation etc., made visible in daily life as well as on particular area. Moreover, looked back to the narrative story that local wisdom in the ways of life is associated to beliefs, traditions, handicrafts, local invention of elder knowledge and local wisdom of hunting animals and fishing as follows:

#### 6.1 The local wisdom of ecology.

For examples of how Isan people gained knowledge of environment in most different ways can be observed in the scene where Khoon’s father has explained him finding out cicadas that he exactly knew those trees whereas have full cicadas on the tree by observing the moisture beneath tree because cicadas made a fine cool mist.

“His father knew that it is easy to know a tree that is full of cicadas because when you walk beneath that tree you feel cooler. They are all up in that tree, pissing, and it makes a fine cool mist.”

“His father told Khoon that “he would be taking along some of the ‘Yang Nong (ยางหน่อง)’ that Khoon’s grandfather had made. This ‘Yang Nong’ was poison for coating the tips of hunting arrows.”

If a man ever got shot by an arrow that had been coated with ‘Yang Nong’, that man would run only seven or eight steps,



and then drop dead on the ground, because ‘Yang Nong’ made a heart stop beating.

6.2 The local wisdom of folk medicine. The local wisdom of folk medicine was manifested through the most different ways that brought forth countless aspects of everyday life. Amongst the many particular components contributing to making of interesting story’s scenes were the particular treatment, healing, and relief of illness, pains, and healthy throughout the Isan community used of knowledge to respond to sickness and injuries among the people and animals.

“His mother stripped leaves from the stem of a special plant near the chicken coop, ‘thatched grass’ a plant which she grew for its healing power. She put it on the bench beneath it, patted the wet, cool, mass of leaf pulp onto Khoon’s chest for healing bruises.”

“The ‘Kradon (กระโดน)’ leaves, so they are a little tough,” his father said, “But it is the tough ones that are good for your blood. Tough ‘Kradon’ leaves make strong blood, so you can stay out in the sun and in the rain. Sun and rain are nothing to be afraid off.”

6.3 The Local wisdom of handicrafts and handworks. It was seen in A Child of the Northeast, the local wisdom

of handmade was revealed in the technique used in the making of many objects, its shapes and sizes, and its textures felt by handling and its laborious and artistic creation by hands. The local wisdom of ordinary local handicrafts was seen as trivial objects although passed down from one generation to next generations because of their vital importance in a particular area.

“The basket, his mother takes out the rice silo, is called ‘Ta Kra Muen (ตะกร้าหมื่น)’. Every one of ‘Ta Kra Muen’ is exactly the same size because the number of bamboo strips is the same every time. When the weaving of a basket had finished, it must be the same size as well as.”

“This ‘Tako’ tree (ต้นตะโก),” his father said” “The wood of which was lighter than that of any other tree. It is this wood from which Thid-Hat (ทิดฮาด) -the drunk man, makes sandals. And he often wears them to come Khoon’s house.”

6.4 The local wisdom in food preservation. According to the story of A Child of the Northeast, the various animals in the woods and river were caught with great effort and made preservation of food, significant aspects of the village food ways and an example of most down to various methods for making food preservation in a



small and remote village. Looked at food preservation as the obvious example of popular Isan food, it was seen through the food preservations called ‘Jaew Bong’, which significant components were explained by his mother through the detailed description and purposes of preservation ways and how one of the utter importance in the preservation was through mixing of the ingredients, time duration and shape of container.

“Why do people call it ‘Jaew Bong’?” Khoon asked his mother. “Only because they pack it into a ‘Bong’-a bamboo tube-for going on a long trip.” His mother replied.

‘Jaew Bong’ packed in a bamboo tube will stay good for many months, even a whole year. But you heat it again just be sure. How do you make ‘Jaew Bong’? Almost the same as what we just did ‘Pla-ra’ salad. Only you put in dried roasted pepper, not fresh one, and roasted onions, too.

“His mother reached for the jar of ‘Pla-ra (ปลาร้า)’ and removed the plug she made from a handle of charcoal wrapped in a rag. “Why do you have to put that rag

with the ashes in the top of the jar, maybe ashes will fall into the jar” Khoon asked, looking curiously at the little bag, “What if you used something else?” “No”, his mother said, shaking her head, “You cannot do anything else; the flies are afraid of charcoal, they hate it. If I put something else into the mouth of the jar, the flies might lay egg here.”

7. The Isan lifestyle in the present time. The researcher has studied documentary of Isan novel, A Child of the Northeast’ s story of Khamphoon Boonnthawi and surveyed the Isan lifestyle by field-work study and depth interview with ten informants at Sai Moon village, Sai Moon District, Yasothorn province, for exploring whether Isan lifestyles are still conducted in the present time as much as that time in the story narrative. The result of data information and data collection, the researcher has analyzed and described into the detailed paper with percentages chart by showing table contents and descriptive analysis as follows:

**Table 1** Showing practice in present day Isan lifestyle

| No. | contents   | Completely disappeared | rarely appeared | Still appeared in the present time |
|-----|--|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1   | dressing and clothing as protagonists in the story | 80%                    |                 | 20%                                |



| No. | contents   | Completely disappeared | rarely appeared | Still appeared in the present time |
|-----|--|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 2   | chewing betel (women)  | 90%                    |                 | 10%                                |
| 3   | tattoo covered onto his body (men)   | 90%                    |                 | 10%                                |
| 4   | the belief in a rain ceremony, to perform a 'Boon Bang Fai' ceremony for respect to the 'Phaya Thaen'  |                        |                 | 100%                               |
| 5   | beliefs in the spirits, ghosts and Ghouls  |                        | 20%             | 80%                                |
| 6   | beliefs in magical leaning, spells and spiritual ceremony  | 80%                    |                 | 20%                                |
| 7   | beliefs of astrology   | 10%                    |                 | 90%                                |
| 8   | Housing and daily lifestyle such as privacy of the woods, using the water from the bottom of well, and using a pinch of salt to rub around the mouth | 100%                   |                 |                                    |
| 9   | finding out animals and fishing  | 90%                    |                 | 10%                                |
| 10  | making fire such as making a flint to lit a fire and rice milling such as working the pedal of the stamp mill  | 100%                   |                 |                                    |
| 11  | Travels such as using the carts and riding the horse   | 100%                   |                 |                                    |
| 12  | food and cooking styles  |                        |                 | 100%                               |
| 13  | the eating characteristics such as Lap' made from raw red meat, 'Pla Daek' and 'Pla ra'  |                        | 5%              | 95%                                |
| 14  | Household equipment such as torches, the storm's lantern and a square basket etc.  | 100%                   |                 |                                    |



| No. | contents   | Completely disappeared | rarely appeared | Still appeared in the present time |
|-----|--|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 15  | Tools used to in planting rice such as yorks and plows                 | 100%                   |                 |                                    |
| 16  | equipment used to work in field such as a bamboo cylinder filled water | 100%                   |                 |                                    |

As shown in the table above, the data collection of these information show that 100% of the ancient Isan lifestyles were changed and disappeared in current Isan community but the popular Isan characteristics such as food and cooking styles, the Isan eating styles and some beliefs and as well as famous ceremony- Boon Bang Fai festival, have been maintained and conducted until nowadays.

## 5. Discussion

In view of this study according to the results, this analytical study in term of Anthropological linguistics reveals how the author, Kham-Phoon Boonthawi, brings forth the novel's rich and complex story plots through various language contents and its detailed aspects. The author, Kham-Phoon Boonthawi, presented the story plots' language as his style for narrative the story through language contexts with various aspects of Isan lifestyles and incorporated

it into the construction of the novel.

1. This study considers the particular components of those language contents that are chosen to present the characteristics of Isan conversation and expression with different styles and usage reflected to Isan community speech and their dialect in all aspects of the ordinary village life. In addition, in the term of Anthropological linguistics, most of them often are too close and too ordinary life to be presented into different communication and various styles of Isan expression and conversation reflecting to Isan community and cultural life. The Isan dialect of language styles were colored by the story narrative is also emphasized through artistic use of Isan dialect styles such as extensive use of similes, metaphors and various speeches. It was as same as Wetly (1978, p. 11) said that "it is what people say and what they do and the way in which they say and do it that tells us the most about of them."





2. In the scope of Isan culture, However, as obvious example of Isan culture, the story was made the everyday interestingly by calling attention to particulars in community and cultural life. The novel's countless close encounters with the values of dressing and clothing of Isan women who, when having monastic fairs or annual village festival, are dressed up like an angel, more beautiful and colorful which reflected to the cultural way of life of Isan people. Moreover, they also value highly their traditional way of life and cultural heritage passed down from one generation to the next with pride. Of course, it would conclude as following Tarongwit Thongsain and Watanachai Monying (2017, pp. 124-138) have studied a title of A Study of Conservative Cultural Ecology in the Works of Kham-Phoon Boonthawi. The findings reveal that regarding the 13 short stories, Kham-Phoon Boonthawi mainly presents the image of modern Northeastern people and society. In other words, the Northeastern people who journey into the capital city are patient in their spending, humble and non-materialistic.

In view of Isan society and community, the political system of centralization can be seen as a turning point in Isan social history and new modern local government.

Isan people are still seen by many as the most backward corner of Thailand, and more Lao than Thai. However, it can be seen how the Isan people have identified themselves with the central Thai through the ages as the villages in A Child of the Northeast who are truly patriotic in spite of a complicated past. According to Boas (2013) is an anthropologist, emphasized that 'cultural diffusion' is a process that is an important aspect of one culture spreading to another by changing in accordance with 'New culture' and he still believed that "There is no culture that is better or worse". The story of A Child of the Northeast was looked back almost ninety years to the 1930 or 2473 B.E. with an understanding and a deep concern for not just Isan but for Thai society and community. This view can be concluded as following Palanee Dhitivatana (1991, pp. 38-45) has studied work entitled A Comparative Study of Family Institution between Professor 'Phaya Anuman Rajadhon' s Literary Works and the Contemporary Novels. This study aims to compare the way of Family Institution between 'Phaya Anuman Rajadhon' s literary works and contemporary novels. The result show that the sort of the family characteristic, the socialization of the



family function, value system and belief system which occurred in ‘Phaya Anuman Rajadhon’s literary works and contemporary novels are similar to the others, they are not different from each other. In the other way, we can say that the relation does not change socialization, value system and belief system in the family institution.

3. Discussion about the local wisdom of food preservation, it can be stated that many ways of food preservation as food culture, cooking, and the Isan eating styles, especially such as ‘Pla-Deak (ปลาแดก)’ referring to a way of food preservation and its indispensability as a seasoning for rice, ‘Pla-Som (ปลาซึ่ม)’, and ‘Mum’, answers excellently to all ways and methods of food preservation. As Ray (2004, p. 132) said that “If the food is the same everywhere the notion of sense of place is lost, everything is the same”. As following Boonchai’s work (2002, p. 14) illustrated that the preservation of fish by making Pla Daek or Pla Ra calls for great quantity of fish, the use of salt and extensive knowledge of food preservation. In view of nourishment, how the Pla Daek liquid holds all the five groups of food substances as well as protein from the fish fat. Referring to taste preferences “many say that food

is not delicious without Pla Daek” which states its importance as a flavor in most Isan cooking. The extensive reference to the food preservation in A Child of the Northeast not only speak of nourishment but distinct geographical setting and particular way of life. Therefore, the village food way and preservation reflect the harshness of the climate, the poor and the drought. The various creatures caught with great effort in the woods and in the water, river make preservation of food significant aspect of the village food ways. According to Surapeepan Chatraporn (2005, pp. 67-82) stated that it is interesting to observe, although commonly in patriarchal society, food preparation and cooking is matter of women, how everything concerning food as well as cooking is in fact of common interest. From the hunting of food to preservation, preparation and cooking is in fact contributed to by young and old of both genders.

## 6. Suggestions

It is hoped that this dissertation will awake further interest in the scope of Anthropological and Sociolinguistic term in Isan literature and inspire other researcher on the significance of this concept in various Isan literary text and old Isan scripts.



Further studies can be contributed as example follows:

1. To study and analysis of Anthropological and Sociolinguistic term in Isan literary texts as an old Isan script from the other region separately.

2. To study and analysis of Ethnolinguistics in Thai/Isan literary texts from the other regions of Thailand separately or in a comparative study.

3. To study and analysis of Anthropological and Sociolinguistic term in the current Isan lifestyles from the other Isan

Southeast regions such as Ubonratchathani, Sisaket, Surin, Buriram and Korat province in a comparative study.

## 7. Knowledge Assets

In this study shown how these particular Isan lifestyles to be preserved, changed, and are also representative of Isan community and cultural life in the present time. From the analysis of literary data, it can be concluded and divided into the scope of anthropological linguistics and Isan lifestyles as follows:



Figure 1 The knowledge gained from this research



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