

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. The Study of Language as a Study of Culture

One of the most important reasons to learn another language is to get acquainted with another culture be it for reasons of necessity such as immigration or studies in a foreign country or for reasons of personal interest, for instance, in the literature, the customs or the religion of a different country. Language is the medium of description and communication of religious, indigenous and ideological beliefs and, therefore, functions as a means of the conservation and transmission of such beliefs. It yields a wealth of information on culture and also chronicles its changes. Everyone will agree that language is one of the most important sources of cultural information. Metaphors, idiomatic expressions and proverbs obviously refer to conditions of everyday life, religion, tradition and history. But features of the language itself, its grammar, its structure and its lexicon, also reflect cultural characteristics. The variety of Thai personal pronouns for instance reflects the Thai perception of the world as a hierarchy. It is also a linguistic representation of the different status of men and women and the importance of the principle of seniority. "In a striking way it [the Thai pronominal system] mirrors some of the more important features of Thai culture; and at the same time it provides considerable scope for the expression of individual attitudes and personality." (COOKE, 1968: 68) Another example of the representation of world views through language is the way friendly contact is established between two

speakers. While Western languages use the question word *how* or its equivalent (as in "*How do you do?*" / "*How are you?*" in English, "*Comment-allez vous?*" in French, "*Come stai?*" in Italian or "*Wie geht es Ihnen?*" in German), Thai people use the equivalent of the question word *where* as in *ไปไหน* (*Where do you go?*) or in *ไปไหนมา* (*Where are you coming from?*). It seems to be impossible that such differences are purely coincidental and do not carry specific cultural meanings. Obviously, the place which is inquired about with the question word *where* refers to more than just a geographical place, otherwise it would not be used as part of a greeting in the sense of a conventional way of stating one's interest in another person's state of being.¹

In this thesis, some features of the Thai language will be examined with regard to their capacity as being expressions of Thai cultural characteristics. Cultural characteristics are understood here as aspects of a world view whose distinctive character has developed from religion. Although statements on cultural characteristics are never of an absolute nature, because culture (like language) changes constantly, the religiously conditioned concepts of a world view appear to be less susceptible to change than other elements of a culture. By using language as a starting-point for the analysis of those cultural phenomena that are part of a world view and can be related to persisting religious concepts, it is hoped to gain more reliability and credibility for statements about a culture in general.

¹ The point I am making here is not that Thais are confined to the greeting formulas *ไปไหน* (*Where do you go?*) or *ไปไหนมา* (*Where are you coming from?*) but just that the inquiry towards a place by means of the question word *where* is a widely used and normal mode of greeting. Of course, there are other popular forms of greeting, for instance *กินข้าวหรือยัง* (*Have you eaten already?*) or *เป็นอย่างไรบ้าง* (*How is it going?*). The question *กินข้าวหรือยัง* (*Have you eaten already?*) is quite obviously conveys a friendly attitude towards another person considering that not feeling hungry is a basic requirement of any kind of well-being. The greeting refers to the traditional community culture of eating together and inviting others to one's meal. It, therefore, has a traditional, often up-country "touch" to it. The question *เป็นอย่างไรบ้าง* (*How is it going?*) is a form of greeting that has developed more recently under the influence of Westernization. It appears like an analogy of the American "How are you?" However, it is not used in order to inquire into the general state of well-being of another person. It refers to specific undertakings, projects and activities, such as holidays (*ไปเที่ยวเชียงใหม่ เป็นอย่างไรบ้าง* - *How was your trip to Chiang Mai?*) or a visit to the doctor (*ไปหาหมอ เป็นอย่างไรบ้าง* - *How was your visit to the doctor's?*) which are supposed to yield some eagerly expected results.

As source-material for information about a culture, language has two advantages. Firstly, as a living language, it is presently used and many of its basic features are familiar to every member of the language community who can speak. Language is, therefore, easily accessible, unlike, for instance, historical evidence which, especially in the case of Thailand, is rare, scattered and fragmented. Secondly, language is a set of signs and rules whose meanings are based on a common understanding of its users. Otherwise, language could not serve as a means of communication between people. Words or other linguistic devices can only be used to transport meanings and concepts if their users have the same basic understanding of these meanings and concepts and the words and linguistic devices attached to them. For this reason, language is a system of communication that binds people together (hence its important role in the development of the nation-state). Its fundamental elements are not elitist like other systems of communication, for instance music or the arts which also carry cultural concepts but are much less accessible than language because their specific set of signs is not used by the majority of people. Statements on culture deduced from language, however, can claim a certain overall consent among all the speakers of a language.

Not being a native speaker of Thai carries certain dangers. I may not be able to grasp the complexity of certain features of the language and I may be even less capable to recognize the complexity of the cultural dimension they refer to, simply because it is impossible for an outsider to completely embrace a different cultural identity. But for a foreigner it is possible to recognize and mark the points where certain aspects of a culture differ from aspects of another culture. One cannot make an absolute statement on the characteristics of a Thai house because the appearance of Thai houses has changed in history. There are also different styles according to geographical or climatic peculiarities. But it is possible to say where - and why - Thai houses tend to differ from Western houses. To single out such points of difference, my position as an "outsider" may be helpful because the mind of the stranger who is trying to get acquainted with another culture is focused on

such differences. It is not possible to gain insight into a foreign culture unless by comparing it constantly against one's own native culture and marking all the points of difference one stumbles across. It is the differences that arouse interest, generate curiosity and motivate the quest for knowledge. It seems to me quite natural that intercultural studies should be more concerned with differences than with similarities.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. The Advantages of Text Analysis

One major methodological obstacle in describing and categorizing a Non-Indo-European language is the fact that most categories and terms of description are derived from grammars that have been developed for Western Indo-European languages. "The very natural tendency to use terms derived from traditional grammar, like verb, noun, adjective, passive voice, in describing languages outside of Indo-European is fraught with grave possibilities of misunderstanding." (WHORF, 1973: 87) Especially in the case of a monosyllabic language like Thai whose structure differs vastly from that of the synthetic languages of the West many categories of traditional grammar do not apply. Thai has, for instance, no punctuation to mark sentence boundaries. There is no structural differentiation between main and subordinate clauses (as, for instance, in German). The order of postmodification is inflexible. Thai words are not morphologically structured and there is no morphological distinction between adjectives and verbs. Rutnin's (1988: 51) statement that passive voice, propositions, punctuation marks, sentence structures and subordinate clauses are foreign to the Thai language and have only recently been adopted by modern Thai writers and the educated elite may be too radical, but it is certainly true that some of the basic categories of traditional Western grammars do not always sufficiently describe linguistic phenomena of a language like Thai.

On the other hand, it is indispensable to have a standard set of terms that is useful to describe different types of languages. It is not possible to invent new categories for every language. But the categories needed have to be open and flexible in a way that allows for an adequate description of differences. I believe that in this situation the approach of discourse analysis - or *text analysis* in the case of written language² - can be of special benefit for the study of Thai texts. If one accepts Bamroongraks's (1987: 4) classification of Thai as a discourse-oriented language - and there is a lot to be said for this classification - then it becomes obvious that discourse or text analyses provide the most appropriate means for the study of Thai. For the purpose of this study, the concept of text analysis has the additional advantage that it provides a systematic framework within which linguistic phenomena can be related to cultural characteristics.

The central object of study in discourse or text analysis is the text - and not the sentence or clause as in traditional grammars. The text is understood as the ultimate linguistic entity, being more than just the addition of single sentences. The meaning of a sentence or a clause is drawn from its immediate textual surroundings, the co-text as well as from the context, the process of communication in which the text is embedded. Both co-text and context provide the interpretative framework for the text as a whole and its parts. (BROWN & YULE, 1983: 27-67) The text as a whole is characterized and determined by its function and everything that contributes to a given function of a text is part of it. "The analysis of **discourse** is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which those forms are designed to serve in human affairs." (BROWN & YULE, 1983: 1) This is one of the major arguments to leave the confinement of the sentence boundaries and use the text as a starting-point for the linguistic analysis. It is also the major argument to consider discourse or text analysis as part of the broader field of semiology.

² The terms *discourse analysis* and *text analysis* are often used interchangeably. As a general rule, discourse analysis refers to *spoken* language while text analysis refers to *written* language.

1.2.2. The Advantages of Written Narrative Texts for the Analysis

I have decided to select a narrative for my analysis because narrative texts are often intentionally directed at the broadest possible audience. Other types of texts, such as essays, treaties, law codifications or other non-fictional texts, are written for a selected and well-defined group of readers. Among fictional texts, poems and epics have a highly artistic structure that is far removed from the ordinary use of language. Modern stage plays that do indeed use everyday language, are almost exclusively translations from Western plays. Apart from that, they are only once in a while performed in a few municipal areas so that their audience is extremely small. Television plays, of course, have a much wider audience and they would indeed be a very interesting field of research. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get hold of scripts because much of the dialogue is improvised on the spot of a scene. Furthermore, the linguistic material is rather limited. There are no complex sentence structures and the vocabulary is extremely repetitive. Large sections do not contain any linguistic material at all. Instead, music, photography and other cinematic means are used to convey the emotions of the characters.

Although some narratives can be of a quite exclusive nature on account of their complex structure or their specific contents, there is always a large quantity of narratives that is intended to be read by people of all educational backgrounds, age groups and social status. A large portion of these narratives are novels. Usually, the authors of novels try to reach as many people as possible - not simply because they want to sell their product but because they feel they have something to say that concerns everyone and not just the expert. It is precisely this characteristic of a *conventionally* written narrative that makes it suitable for the purpose of my study.

Another indispensable prerequisite for my study is the *written* form of the conventional narrative. Written language depends much more than spoken language on the proper understanding of the linguistic material *alone*. It cannot, like spoken language, rely on a non-verbal context such as gestures and facial expressions. Writers have to be as clear

and unambiguous as possible in their use of the language and have to put into words what can be presupposed or conveyed by non-verbal means in a situation of oral communication. The non-verbal context of spoken language makes it difficult to use it as source material since no kind of recording, however sophisticated, is able to completely capture the authentic situation. Written texts, however, are available in their authentic form. Furthermore, accidental misuse of the language and individual or regional idiosyncrasies which are often found in spoken language are usually not found in written texts which have to comply with an overall accepted standard of language as long as their authors want them to reach the broadest possible readership.

1.3. Reasons for Selection of Kukrit Pramoj's Novel "Si Phaendin" as Data Material

From the vast amount of written narratives that could have been used as data material for my study, I have chosen the novel "Si Phaendin" by Kukrit Pramoj because it stands out as exemplary and representative in its use of contemporary Thai standard language and in its description of Thai culture. A narrative set in a foreign surrounding and mainly dealing with aspects of a foreign culture - as is the case with many more recent novels than "Si Phaendin" - is obviously less suitable for the purpose of this study since the language may be adapted in order to convey the Western "flair" of the story or to describe elements of Western culture that have no equivalent in Thai culture.

The novel "Si Phaendin" first appeared as a serial in the newspaper "Siam Rath" in the years 1951 and 1952. The story as a whole was not preconceived in the author's mind, but developed from sequel to sequel.³ It was published as a book in 1953. The basis for my thesis is the first edition of the pocket-book version of 1980.

³ "[...] เหตุว่าขึ้นต้นผมเขียน ผมไม่รู้พล็อตด้วยซ้ำไป" (จิตวา, 2535: 137)

(When I started writing, I didn't know the plot at all) [This and all subsequent quotations of Thai texts, including the quotations from "Si Phaendin" are translated by myself.]

Despite its age, the novel enjoys continuous and widespread popularity. The subject matter and the use of the language are still relevant to the life and the language of present-day Thai people. I, therefore, regard the novel as particularly suitable for the purpose of my study. The three main characteristics that are responsible for the novel's suitability are its conventional and representative character, its language and its subject matter.

1.3.1. The Conventional and Representative Character of "Si Phaendin"

"Si Phaendin" is a conventional piece of narrative prose literature. It depicts a chronological succession of events in a historical setting: Bangkok from the second half of the Fifth Reign to the end of the Eighth Reign. The story contains many references to historical events and historical persons. In the foreword to the novel, the author states that he has made every effort to keep strictly to the historical truth.⁴ The characters of the story are, in accordance with the historical setting, thought of as 'real-life' people. Ploi, the heroine of "Si Phaendin", was portrayed so realistically that she took on a life of herself and became independent of her textual surroundings. While still writing sequels of the story for publication in the newspaper, Kukrit Pramoj received letters inquiring whether his heroine Ploi was a real person.⁵ Later, readers would forget details of the novel, but still remember the *character of Ploi* and think of her as a real person. Attempts have been made to find out who Ploi was modeled after and how she might be related to the author because she

⁴ "[...] คือฉากทั้งหลายทั้งปวงที่ผู้เขียนได้นำมาใช้ในการเขียนเรื่องนี้เป็นของจริงทั้งสิ้น และได้พยายามสอบสวนให้ตรงกับความจริง [...]" (ฉีกฤกษ์, 2523: 8)

(*Each and every one of the various scenes the author has used in the writing of this story is real and every effort has been made to establish the historical truth.*)

⁵ ในระหว่างที่เรื่อง "สี่แผ่นดิน" ยังลงพิมพ์อยู่ในสยามรัฐรายวันนั้น ได้มีผู้เขียนจดหมายมาถามบ่อยครั้งว่า เรื่อง "สี่แผ่นดิน" นั้นเป็นเรื่องจริงหรือโณน และ "แม่พลอย" ตัวเอกของเรื่องนั้นเป็นบุคคลจริง ๆ หรืออย่างไร (ฉีกฤกษ์, 2523: 8)

(*When "Si Phaendin" was still printed by the Siam Rath Daily, many people wrote and often asked if "Si Phaendin" was a true story and if "Mae Ploi", the heroine of the story, was a real person.*)

appeared to be too realistic to be purely fictional. (วินิจฉัยกุล, 2535: 11-16) Many regard Ploi as the quintessential Thai person.⁶

1.3.2. The Language of "Si Phaendin"

Since "Si Phaendin" is intended to be read by many people, its language necessarily has to adhere to the common conventions of the standard language. Language "[...] is virtually the medium in which man [...] exists, defining for him his relation to his fellow human beings, his culture, even his own identity. It is unthinkable that the literary artist should cut himself adrift from the all-embracing role that language has in our everyday lives." (LEECH & SHORT, 1981: 6) Kukrit Pramoj had certainly no intention to *cut himself adrift from the all-embracing role that language has in our everyday lives*. Although not a few words and phrases of Royal language are to be found, "Si Phaendin" has obviously been written for an ordinary readership. The popularity of "Si Phaendin" up to the present day proves that the language of the novel is certainly understood by the majority of Thai people and may claim to represent a linguistic standard everyone can agree upon. Not a few readers have read the book several times - not because of its content, which they know already by heart, but because of its language.

⁶ "[...] แต่พลอยกลับรักษาความเป็น "ธรรมดา" ไว้ได้อย่างสม่ำเสมอ จนชวนให้ผู้อ่าน สิ้นแผ่นดิน รู้สึกถึงซึ่งอยู่ในใจว่า "นี่แหละ! พวกเราละ ... พวกเราคนไทยเป็นอย่างนี้แหละ!" (รัญจวน, 2535: 144)

(But Ploi always makes a point of being and staying "normal" until the reader of Si Phaendin develops a feeling deep in his heart, saying "That's it! That's us ... ! We Thai people are like this!")

It is interesting that Kukrit has chosen a woman as being the main character in a novel that is intended to be representative of Thai culture. In general, women appear as having more positive characteristics than men. The men in the story are weak, like Chao Khun Father who depends on his eldest daughter, Chit who is totally irresponsible, Un who tends to be cunning and dishonest, Oan who is hot-tempered and uncompromising, Sewi who betrays his own mother-in-law. The most positive men, Oat, Prem and Perm still come across as having not much stamina and being unable to cope with changing situations. Sadech, Ploi, Choey, Choi and Khun Sai on the contrary derive all their self-confidence from their goodness and moral integrity. They are able to keep their heads high and face any situation.

Although "Si Phaendin" has been written in 1950, its language can be considered *contemporary Thai*.⁷ A language does not age so quickly as to become obsolete within the course of only 47 years. The persistent popularity of the novel until the present day is a clear indicator that the language of the book is a reflection of a language actually used by the majority of people living now. On the other hand, the language of "Si Phaendin" is not too modern in the sense that it mirrors a short-lived fashion of writing or talking or that it has submitted so much to the influence of the English language that it might have lost some of its typically "Thai" characteristics.

1.3.3. The Subject Matter of the Novel

"Si Phaendin" is a novel about Thai culture and deals with this subject in a straightforward manner, not ironically or satirically. One serious objection concerning the usefulness of "Si Phaendin" for the purpose of my thesis may be that "Si Phaendin" only captures aspects of an elitist upper class culture. On the surface level, this is true. The story is set within the aristocracy of Bangkok. The heroine is the daughter of a nobleman and nearly half of the novel deals with her upbringing in the palace. But at a closer look, the novel deals with cultural aspects that go far beyond the close boundaries of court society. In fact, the author is only interested in those cultural characteristics that are not exclusively upper class but shared by the common people, such as Buddhist convictions and ceremonies, the reverence towards the Royal Family, Thai family values, the Thai attitude of "sanuk" and so on. Excluded from the book are cultural elements that are exclusively royal, such as the Brahmin court ceremonies. The vast majority of readers obviously identifies the messages conveyed by the novel as essentially "Thai". The novel could never have

⁷ According to common agreement, works of art are called contemporary if their creator is still alive. (see ม.ร. ปุณฺณเทสิธ :2539:170) This can be a rather awkward definition with regard to the language. The death of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj has not suddenly made the language of "Si Phaendin" less contemporary than before.

endured such popularity over a long period of time if the Thai readership would not have been able to understand it as a mirror of their own cultural identity.

The underlying theme of the book is impermanence⁸, a universal Buddhist concept that is shared by all Thai people and is a fundamental part of the Thai world view. It is not only experienced at the level of court society but also at the level of Ploi's family and thus becomes one of the most important links between the political sphere and the private sphere. But most importantly, it serves as a link between the story and its readers who can relate it to their own experiences of impermanence.

For all these aspects of its subject matter as well as its language and its popularity, the novel "Si Phaendin" may rightfully be called quintessentially Thai. When the English adaptation of the book was published in 1981, Kukrit Pramoj wrote in its foreword: "It is a Thai novel pure and simple and the Thai readers understand every statement and nuance [...]" (PRAMOJ, 1981: 4) More than that, it has been intended and regarded as a definite statement on Thai culture. In the foreword to the Thai edition, the author states that it was his wish to make a substantial contribution to the strengthening of the texture of Thai culture when writing "Si Phaendin".⁹ This aim has to be understood within the context of the time when "Si Phaendin" was first published. After the glory of the Fifth Reign, the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Reigns had all in their way contributed to the erosion of the status of the monarchy. Kukrit Pramoj felt obliged to make every effort towards the

⁸ Chua Satawethin answers the question as to what is the *theme* (ข้อคิดสำคัญ) of "Si Phaendin" as follows: ข้าพเจ้าอยากจะตอบว่าข้อคิดสำคัญของเรื่องนี้คือ อนิจจัง ผู้เขียนได้เน้นเรื่องอนิจจังทั้งเรื่องของครอบครัวและความเป็นอนิจจังของบ้านเมือง (เจือ, 2535: 71)

(I would like to answer that the theme of this story is impermanence. The writer emphasizes impermanence throughout the whole story, both in family life and in public life.)

⁹ "ถ้าหากว่าจะเปรียบเทียบเหตุการณ์สำคัญ ๆ ที่เกิดขึ้นนั้นเป็นลายโครงบนผืนผ้าลายอย่างไทย ๆ ผู้เขียนก็มีเจตนาที่จะให้หนังสือเรื่อง "สี่แผ่นดิน" นี้ เป็นลายประกอบ เพื่อจะได้ทำผ้าลายผืนนั้นให้มีลวดลายเต็มขึ้น และวิจิตรพิสดารยิ่งขึ้น" (ฉีกฤทธิ 2523:10)

(If we compare important events with the patterns of a Thai textile, the author hopes that the novel "Si Phaendin" is [like] the pattern this textile is composed of so that this piece of cloth will be full of patterns and of an even more magnificent beauty.)

restoration of the prestige of the monarchy. But "Si Phaendin" is by no means a piece of simplistic ideological writing. Instead, the author tried to capture the essence of being Thai. He was confident enough about the truthfulness of the Thai life he evoked to write in the foreword of the English adaptation: "It is my sincere hope that those friends of Thailand who do not read Thai will, after reading this book, gain a little more understanding towards us." (PRAMOJ, 1981: 5) The text on the back cover of the English adaptation shows less understatement and claims that "[...] those wishing to gain insight into the essential Thainess of the Thai will derive much valuable assistance from this book [...]" and that reading it "[...] can be a rewarding experience that instructs as it affects and entertains in its own uniquely Thai style." (PRAMOJ, 1981: back cover vol.1)

1.4. Interdisciplinary Aspects of the Study

This study is an attempt to analyze some features of contemporary Thai narrative language and look at their relation to Thai cultural characteristics. It is based on an examination of aspects of language but it is an interdisciplinary study as it does not aim at making statements about linguistic phenomena alone but also about cultural phenomena and the relationship between both. On the linguistic side, the notions of text analysis were helpful, because its "holistic" approach of looking at the function of a text and its situational context allows to include issues that lie beyond the boundaries of linguistic structure. Among them, the complex question of the relationship between language and culture stands out. It is a fundamental philosophical issue that has periodically surfaced in the history of language studies. It came, however, never even close to attract as much attention as structural linguistics. The main reason for this neglect is a methodological one: how does one define and describe the relationship between language and culture in a systematical and verifiable way? Is language, as Humboldt and Whorf claim¹⁰, the inextricable form of

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of Humboldt and Whorf see Chapter 2.

thought? No one, so far, has come up with a satisfactory answer to questions like this although everyone will agree that language does, indeed, somehow reflect or correspond with aspects of culture.

While the question of the relationship between language and culture is of philosophical nature, descriptions of culture and world view are matters of anthropology and ethnology. They ought to be discussed before attempts can be made to link features of a language to them.

Besides pointing at issues of the fields of linguistics, philosophy, ethnology and anthropology, parts of my examination of features of the Thai language may appear as belonging to yet another discipline, namely that of literary criticism. After all, a literary text serves as data material. In the course of my analysis I found, for instance, E.M. Forster's literary categories *story* and *plot* very useful to distinguish between the grammatical categories of chronology and causality. Furthermore, the analysis of the characterization of people (chapter 5) and the metaphorical aspects of the description of places (chapter 6) do include aspects of literary interpretation. Although it has often been argued that the linguistic study of literary texts would either be confined to analyze grammatical and structural aspects and neglect the aesthetic value of a text or that it would blatantly digress into the territory of the literary critic and leave the objectivity of structural studies behind, it is, in my opinion, neither possible nor desirable to strictly separate linguistic and literary analyses. As Roman Jakobson pointed out, "[...] a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms." (LODGE, 1988: 55) With the growing influence of discourse analysis, which owes a lot to Jakobson and the Prague school of structuralism, "[...] the linguist's concerns have moved in directions which are likely to bring them closer to those of the critic. If a text is regarded in objective simplicity as a sequence of symbols on paper, then the modern linguist's scrutiny is not just a matter of looking at the text, but of looking through the text to its significance."

(LEECH & SHORT, 1981: 5) What makes linguistic studies of literature so interesting is its broad perspective that transcends the confines of the specific aesthetic appearance of the literary work towards the general use of the language. "Linguistics places literary uses of language against the background of more 'ordinary' uses of language, so that we see the poet or novelist making use of the same code, the same set of communicative resources, as the journalist, the scientist, or the garden wall gossip." (LEECH & SHORT, 1981: 5-6) The key sentence that not only justifies the linguistic study of a literary text with regard to cultural phenomena but also provides such a study's perspective and the criteria for the selection of the text is *"the poet or novelist making use of the same code, the same set of communicative resources, as the journalist, the scientist, or the garden wall gossip."* This, of course, does not mean that every literary text is automatically representative of the "common code" of a language but, as far as I can see, the novel "Si Phaendin" fulfills all the important criteria to make it suitable for the study of language with regard to the culture of the language community.

1.5. Outline of the Study

The present study attempts to find out if some features of the Thai language can be related to aspects of the Thai culture in a way that would support the general idea that certain characteristics of a language correspond directly to certain aspects of the world view expressed in this language. In the first chapter, I have already explained why I consider the approaches of text analysis as suitable for this kind of examination of linguistic phenomena. I have given the reasons for my choice of data material and also pointed at the interdisciplinary implications of the study. The second chapter can be divided into two parts. It begins with a brief outline of the main linguistic and philosophical attitudes concerning the relationship between language and culture (2.2.). In particular, I shall contrast the structural approach in language studies with the more philosophical approach

of a world view of language and point out how Saussure's foundation of modern linguistics allowed a purely structural approach like Chomsky's sentence-oriented generative transformational grammar to dominate mainstream linguistics while it also gave rise to the very influential school of structuralism which was concerned with the broader issues of culture and the structure of its manifestations. I will then mention the tradition of a philosophy of language that stands in opposition to the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and revolves around the notion that the world view of a culture is a product of its language. This "dissident" view of the role of language has become famous as the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis. It can be traced back to the German 19th century philosopher of language, Wilhelm von Humboldt. One of its most recent proponents is the American linguist George W. Grace. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss issues of cultural characteristics and world view both in general and in specific reference to Thai culture (2.3.) in order to gain a clearer picture on what kind of cultural aspects that could and will be linked to linguistic phenomena.

In the following chapters, I will examine aspects of the linguistic representation of four essential components of world view in the Thai language: time structure and time-marking (chapter 3), causality (chapter 4), characterization of people (chapter 5) and description of places and space (chapter 6). The subjects of these four chapters have been chosen according to the four vital areas of information a conventional narrative text is supposed to provide: *Who does what why when and where?*¹¹ The question word *who?* refers to the personnel of the story (chapter 5), *why?* to causality (chapter 4), *when?* to time (chapter 3) and *where?* to place (chapter 6). There are linguistic means and grammatical categories to represent these four areas. They are time-marking and tense, causal coordination, means to characterize people and ways to describe locality.

¹¹The question *what?*, quite evidently, lies beyond the means of any kind of linguistic analysis since it exclusively refers to the content and not to its linguistic representation.

In the seventh chapter, I will try to relate the findings of the linguistic analysis to aspects of the Thai world view which has been described in chapter 2 as a predominantly Buddhist world view. One objection against relating features of Thai language to Buddhist concepts could be that the original language of Buddhism was Pali which is an Indo-European language with all its characteristic features as opposed to the Non-Indo-European, monsyllabic Thai. It is, however, not possible to categorize and classify linguistic material and relate it to cultural characteristics without considering how this linguistic material is actually used. Before such research is done, it is not possible to claim that cultural characteristics expressed by features of Non-Indo-European languages can, therefore, *not* be expressed by features of Indo-European languages. It is precisely for this reason that I have considered the pragmatic notion of discourse analysis of language as a *language in use* and the more interdisciplinary approach towards the study of languages as implied by the philosophical concept of a world view of language for my own study.

The last chapter contains a summary, concluding remarks and recommendations for further studies.

1.6. Review of Literature

In the literature we do not find any analysis of the Thai language with the sole purpose to find out how linguistic phenomena are related to the Thai perception of the world from a Whorfian point of view. This does not mean, of course, that the relationship between language and culture has never been considered. Valuable studies have been carried out in the field of sociolinguistics. Since discourse analysis can be of great benefit for the assessment of the relationship between linguistic features of a language and the cultural characteristics of the respective language community, I have also looked at those studies of the Thai language that deal with discourse analysis. Apart from that, some analyses of

certain linguistic phenomena, even though they have been carried out without reference to a given text or a given situation, have proved to be very useful for the present study.

One of the areas that show a clear relationship between Thai language and Thai culture is the system of pronominal reference. In his fundamental study on this subject, Cooke (1968) gives a detailed description of the complex hierarchical structure of Thai pronouns. Although Cooke claims that his study is far from being exhaustive (COOKE, 1968: 2), it seems to be the most extensive one so far.

Angkab Palakornkul (1972) has taken up the sociolinguistic aspects of pronominal reference and examined pronominal strategy in spoken Bangkok Thai. Her study is a convincing argument for the analysis of linguistic phenomena not as isolated elements but within their social and cultural context.

Pronominal reference is part of the various terms of address in Thai. They have been examined by M.R. Kalaya Tingsabadh and Amara Prasithrathsint (1989) and give an even clearer picture of the hierarchical structure of Thai society on account of the language that is the means of communication between its members. อมรา ประสิทธิ์รัฐสินธุ์ (2533) has analyzed kinship terms in Thai, an area where the relationship between language and culture becomes obvious. The author found two dominant principles in the organization of kinship terms, seniority and the female lineage. This corresponds with the general picture of Thai culture painted by Kukrit Pramoj in "Si Phaendin", the importance of age and status (they usually go together) and the dominance of the female characters of the novel.

The first study that looked at Thai language from the perspective of discourse analysis, was Hatton's A Thai Discourse Pattern. (1975). He refers to the linguists McCawley, Chafe and Lakoff ¹² and takes McCawley's claim that "the choice of pronouns

¹² Hatton specifically refers to the following works of these linguists: McCawley, J.D. 1968. *The Role of Semantics in a Grammar*. Universals in Linguistic Theory, edited by Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms. New York

_____. 1971. *Where do Noun Phrases Come From*. *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology*, edited by Danny Steinberg and Leon A. Jakobovits, Cambridge.

and verbs is dependent on features attached to the entire discourse rather than to individual lexical items" as his starting-point. (HATTON, 1975: 231) Incidentally, Hatton selects a short paragraph from "Si Phaendin"¹³ in order to look at "the matters of *old* and *new* information, anaphora, socio-linguistic presuppositions and directionality of *events* in time and space." (HATTON, 1975: 235) The reason for this study was Hatton's professional interest as a missionary in the problem of cross-cultural translation. Unfortunately, Hatton does not give any criteria for his selection of data nor does he explain the context of the passage. Nevertheless, his study convincingly proves that the "analysis of isolated sentences misses many important meaningful relationships [...]". (HATTON, 1975: 243)

Peansiri Eknyom (1982) examines informational structuring, a topic that plays an important role in discourse analysis. She discovered a Sentence Initial Noun Phrase Constraint for Thai which requires a noun phrase in pre-predicate position to refer to given information only.

Although Cholticha Bamroongraks (1987) uses a historical language as her data material, her study Sukhothai Thai as a Discourse-Oriented Language: Evidence From Zero Noun Phrases is very interesting because she acknowledges the importance of discourse analysis and thoroughly discusses the rather difficult category of "topic", its distinction from the category of "subject" and its contextualization within a sentence and within a discourse with regard to Thai. She often makes references to present-day Thai and many of her observations on Sukothai Thai can be easily applied to the contemporary variety of the

Chafe, W.L. 1970. *Meaning in the Structure of Language*. Chicago.

Lakoff, G. 1971. *On Generative Semantics*. *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology*, edited by Danny Steinberg and Leon A. Jakobovits, Cambridge.

¹³ The passage examined by Hatton is found on pp.26-27 of the pocketbook edition. It starts in the middle of a paragraph with พลอยเดินข้ามลานบ้านข้า ๆ then leaves out eight lines and goes on on page 27 with พลอยเดินผ่านต้นเขี้ยวกระแต breaks up here in the middle of the sentence, leaves out another three lines, then goes on with ทุกอย่าง, leaves out two words and then continues uninterrupted from เรียกพลอยให้หยุด until the end of the paragraph. Hatton admits to his first two omissions. (HATTON, 1975: note 21, p. 248)

language. Referring to Tsao's¹⁴ distinction between discourse-oriented languages (like topic-prominent Chinese) and sentence-oriented languages (like subject-prominent English), Bamroonkraks classifies Sukothai Thai as a discourse-oriented language. That present-day Thai is a discourse-oriented language is for Bamroonkraks a fact beyond doubt.

The subsidiary verbs ไป (to go) and มา (to come) have been examined by Suda Rangkupan (1992). Her explanations on how the subsidiaries ไป and มา refer quite elaborately to time as space are very interesting and stimulating with regard to the discussion of how the perception of time as space is reflected in the Thai language.

Three studies, although not analyzing certain linguistic phenomena, deal with the impact of language on culture as seen through the role of Standard Thai in the development of the Thai nation-state. All three studies make it clear, that the dominance of Standard Thai is a cultural dominance that weighs heavily on the many small indigenous language communities in Thailand. The superseding of minority languages is more than just the technical replacement of one language by another. It is the superseding of the minority cultures altogether. In part V of his comprehensive monograph on Linguistic Diversity and National Unity, William A. Smalley's (1994) specifically deals with this point. Diller (1991) also looks at Standard Thai from the point of view of political ideology. In his opinion, language plays such an important role in the building of the nation-state because it is not merely an arbitrary or neutral signalling system. It is "an important (or perhaps the preeminent) *component* in the type of mentality under construction." (DILLER, 1991: 89) .
 แกมสุข นุ่มนนท์ (2519) finally looks at a certain historical incident, the attempt to introduce a simplified version of the Thai language in the 1940s which was defeated because it was perceived as being detrimental to Thai culture. All three studies implicitly confirm that languages carry conceptual ideas and a perception of the things we see that are characteristic of the culture as a whole. If loss or change of language results in a loss or

¹⁴ Tsao, Feng-fu: "A Functional Study of Topic in Chinese: The First Step Towards Discourse Analysis." Ph.D.Diss. University of Southern California, 1977.

change of culture then specific cultural characteristics must be tied one way or another to linguistic phenomena.

Concerning the linguistic and philosophical attitudes towards the study of language, I have found David Lodge's (1993) Modern Criticism and Theory a most reliable compendium. However, the tradition of a philosophy of language, founded by Wilhelm von Humboldt, is not represented in this handbook. This omission is not only characteristic of the general neglect of the philosophy of language in modern theory of cognition but also of the long stagnation of the theoretical discussion on the relationship between language and culture. The conference papers collected by Harry Hoijer (1954) in Language in Culture are testimony to this stagnation. They contain some interesting historical information but on the whole they are rather outdated. It is the merit of George W. Grace (1987) to have revived the tradition of a philosophy of language by introducing the theory of reality construction into the discussion on the relationship between language and culture. Apart from that, I was able to get hold of a reprint of Humboldt's (1963) writings from the 1820s and 1830s in their original German while Whorf's (1973) thoughts are conveniently made available through John B. Carroll's collection of all of his important essays. Both authors are still authorities on matters of language and culture

The concept of world view is of crucial importance in the work of the ethnologist and anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973). This study is not the place to get into a detailed discussion of the issues involved in the concept of world view, but I found Geertz's definition of world view both convincing and practical. It also underlies the well-known discussion of the Thai world view by Pongsapich (1985). Generally, interpretations of the Thai world view still very much revolve around Embree's (1969) famous statement on Thailand as a loosely structured society. I found Phodisita's (1985) categorizing of the Buddhist fundamentals of the Thai world view, John Fiegs's (1979, 1989) contrasting of Thai and American individualism and Mulder's (1990) rebuttal of Embree's statement most convincing.