

Communication and Assimilation Patterns of Two Generations of Thai Immigrants

Kandawadee Sakdisubha
Bangkok, Thailand

L. Brooks Hill
Trinity University
Oklahoma

James F. Horrell *
University of

This study investigated the similarities and differences between two generations of Thai immigrants in interpersonal and mass communication patterns. A mailed survey was administered to 372 subjects, 236 first generation and 136 second generation. Profile analysis, One-Way Anova, Chi-square, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to analyze different portions of the data. Results showed significant differences between the first and second generation Thai immigrants in all seven hypotheses. First generation Thai immigrants engaged more in communication inside the ethnic group and consumed more ethnic mass media, while the second generation had more interpersonal contact with the host country members. Contrasting with the second generation, the first generation Thais chose mass media channels over interpersonal channels to learn about the American society and people. The length of the stay in the host country also correlated with involvement in communication outside the ethnic group; the longer immigrants stay in the host country, the more they are involved in communication outside the ethnic group. Finally, the study revealed that the Thai Buddhist temple played a role, not only as a religious institution, but also as cultural and social representative to the entire Thai community.

Only recently have communication scholars started paying more attention to the

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role of communication in acculturation, although the interrelationship between these two areas has long been recognized by anthropologists and sociologists. Among communication scholars are Nagata's (1969) study of difference in interpersonal and mass communication behaviors among first, second, and third generation Japanese-Americans and Kim's (1976) use of path analysis to determine the degree of adjustment to new culture. In addition, Maniwatana (1982) studied the cross cultural communication and friendship patterns among Thai immigrants in assimilation to American society, and Kunjara (1982) studied the communication and acculturation of the Thai students who attended American universities. More recently, Kliger (1985) studied communication and ethnic community, Rizk (1986) studied the communication patterns of international students in the process of acculturation, and Corroni-Long (1986) used communication as an approach to the study of ethnicity. This trend in approaching assimilation through the study of communication coincides with a rapid growth of immigration into the United States. In 1988 Kim synthesized most of the literature related to communication and adaptation into a framework built upon systems theory.

Kim's (1976) research has most strongly emphasized the relationship of interpersonal communication and assimilation. She found that "interpersonal communication is generally considered more intense, direct, and has a detailed influence on the immigrant's adaptation to the host socio-cultural system" (Kim, 1979, p. 7). The result of interpersonal communication can lead to personal growth, the realization of one's potential, and the establishment of meaningful human relationships. The interpersonal relationship patterns represent the purposes, function, and product of the immigrant's interpersonal communication. The effective interpersonal communication also leads to better understanding of host culture and society. Brein and David (1975) explained that effective interpersonal communication is "dependent on the development of understanding between himself and his host. The degree that they are able to engender an effective flow or exchange of information will determine the extent that mutual understanding can develop" (p. 43).

Kim (1976) also added that interpersonal communication is a "major channel through which learning about the host society is transmitted to the immigrants" (p. 48). She measured the immigrant's interpersonal relationship with the members of the host society by the volume and intensity of their informal social relationship with Americans and their regular membership in organizations. This interpersonal communication activity can also be observed through the degree of the immigrant's interaction with members of the host society. A predictor of an immigrant's degree of assimilation can be found in the nature of their interpersonal networks. The immigrants who practice their interpersonal communication predominantly through an ethnic interpersonal network, i.e., ethnic organization, club, and ethnic community, are considered less assimilated than those who associate primarily with members of the host society. To support this,

Kelman (1962) suggested that the immigrants can increase their interpersonal communication by participating "in an ongoing enterprise, maintaining the self-esteem of the host, and by introducing common goals as the result of combining his effort with the hosts on a particular task" (p. 42).

In addition to interpersonal communication the importance of mass media is often addressed by researchers who study the consumption of host country media by immigrants. A 1977 study by Won about the Korean immigrants in Southern California also found the relationship between mass media and assimilation: "Those choosing American mass media were assimilators, and those adopting Korean mass media most often tended to be nativistic. Those choosing both American and Korean mass media were most bicultural" (p. 84).

Ryu (1978) also found that when English proficiency is low, the greater is the need for an immigrant to learn English through the mass media. He conducted the test among Koreans by using their recognition of basic English grammar, idiomatic expressions, slang, and vocabulary as indicators. He finally concluded that mass media, particularly television, "function as the primary neo-socialization agent of the immigrants who have not received their education in the United States" (p. 2). A similar study conducted among Asian immigrants in England (Anwar, 1978) reported that the immigrants who were classified as non-English speaking watched television almost every day. Clearly, the immigrants find it easier to follow television programs, especially those who have less or no knowledge of English. In fact, the immigrants are given the chance of using mass media to obtain information about new culture and to adjust to the new environment.

The consumption patterns of ethnic mass media are also important to the process of assimilation. Jeffres and Bur (1980) found a consistent pattern and positive relationship between ethnic mass media and ethnic factors. The audience of ethnic media who are strongly attached to their own ethnic culture are most likely to be heavy users of ethnic media.

Research Problem and Rationale

Although an increasing number of studies have concentrated on communication and assimilation patterns of Asian immigrants, none of the studies have focused on Thai immigrants, despite the growing numbers immigrating to the United States. The absence of a well defined ethnic community could be one reason for the lack of interest by other researchers in studying this group. Despite this obstacle, a need exists to study the Thai immigrant's communication patterns and how they carry these patterns into the process of assimilation. Accordingly, the present study focused on Thai immigrants in Southern California. This group of Thai immigrants was selected because they represented the largest population from which an adequate sample could be drawn. It is also the only

geographical area in the United States with easy access to the Thai Buddhist temple, the Thai daily newspapers and magazines published in and outside of this country, as well as Thai grocery stores, organizations, restaurants, movies and entertainment, and other Thai businesses. These elements help to maintain the culture and influence the degree of assimilation. However, the short history of Thai immigration limited the study to the first two generations. Since the Thais have never established a concrete community, the study will focus on the role of religion, particularly the Wat Thai as an institution where the immigrants can experience a partial maintenance of their culture. We will use the term "Wat Thai" for the Thai Buddhist temple. This term is commonly used among the Thais when referring to the Thai Buddhist temple.

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the differences in communication patterns between the first and the second generation Thai immigrants?
- (2) How do these communication patterns play a role in the assimilation process?
- (3) What are the differences between the first and the second generation Thai immigrants in selecting communication channels to learn about American society and people?
- (4) What are the reactions of the Thai immigrants toward the roles of the Thai Buddhist church?

Seven hypotheses were derived from these questions:

Hypothesis 1. The first generation Thai immigrants seek intraethnic interpersonal communication more than the second generation.

Hypothesis 2. The first generation Thai immigrants seek interethnic interpersonal communication less than the second generation.

Hypothesis 3. The first generation Thai immigrants use ethnic mass media more than the second generation.

Hypothesis 4. The first generation Thai immigrants use host country mass media less than the second generation.

Hypothesis 5. There is a significant difference between the first and second generation Thai immigrants in selecting communication channels in order to learn about American society and people.

Hypothesis 6. There is a significant difference between the first and second generation Thai immigrants in selecting communication channels in order to learn more about American society and people.

Hypothesis 7. There is a significant difference between the first and second generation Thai immigrants in their reaction toward the maintenance of the Thai Buddhist church.

Method

Respondents and Procedure

The subjects were first and second generation Thai immigrants residing in Southern California. Names were drawn from the two most useful lists available at the time of the study. They were the Thai Yellow pages and Directory, and the Wat Thai list. Because this study assumes that Wat Thai is an alternative to a clearly formed Thai ethnic community, the list of names from the Wat Thai rolls were used, despite the fact that they may only represent those who attend more regularly. Regardless of this apparent problem, this list contained more than expected, because it also includes subscribers to the newsletter who may or may not attend regularly.

Because of widely scattered residential areas, the survey was conducted by a mailed questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in both Thai and the English language. The English version of the questionnaire was for the second generation who may not be able to read Thai.

Since most of the Thai immigrants are in the first generation group, the researchers included those who were not native born, but entered this country when they were youngsters, in the second generation group. In order to obtain enough respondents in the second generation group, each addressed envelope contained two sets of questionnaires, one in Thai and another in English. Each respondent was asked to pass another questionnaire to a second generation Thai immigrant living in the same household. The questionnaire consisted of 38 multiple choice questions. These questions asked for demographic data, interpersonal communication patterns within the ethnic group and between the host country members, and the consumption of ethnic and host country mass media. The immigrants' relationship with the host country members, how they learn about American society, and the selection of communication channels in learning about American society were also addressed in the questionnaire. Finally, the questionnaire asked the respondents' attendance at Wat Thai and their reactions toward the role of Wat Thai.

In the study 600 questionnaires were mailed to the respondents in June 1986. The presidents of several Thai associations in Southern California were contacted and informed about the research. They were asked to encourage their members who had received the mailed questionnaire to fill them out. By September 1986, 372 questionnaires were returned. Of the first generation Thai immigrants, 236 completed the questionnaire, while 136 of the second generation Thai immigrants completed it. The rate of the return was 62%.

Data Analysis

Profile analysis provided the best means to address the data generated in this study and is, therefore, a primary aspect of the data analysis. In general, profile analysis is

designed to be applied in situations where multiple observations have been made on experimental units, and, consequently, the set of measurements have a dependence structure. Profile analysis properly accounts for this dependence structure. Since multiple responses (observations) were taken on each of the respondents, it was necessary to use a multivariate technique for the analysis. Following Morrison (1976), the questions that need to be asked with respect to the profiles of the data are: (1) Are the population mean profiles similar, in the sense that the line segments of the adjacent tests are parallel? (2) If the two populations' profiles are indeed parallel, are they also at the same level? (3) Again assuming parallelism, are the population means of the tests different? If the population mean profiles are not similar then questions 2 and 3 need not be addressed. In the results reported herein, no set of parallel profiles were discovered. Further, since the multivariate analysis of variance results showed significance at alpha levels of less than .01 in every case reported, the MANOVA tables have been suppressed and only the follow up analyses are presented.

The first four hypotheses were tested using profile analysis (Morrison, 1976, pp. 141-148, and 186-197, and Lunneburg & Abbot, 1983, p. 367) and multivariate One Way Analysis of Variance as test statistics. This was done to find if there was a significant difference overall between the means of the two generations. As a follow-up analysis, invariate one-way ANOVAs were performed and then the profiles of the two generations were plotted for each hypothesis to answer the question of similarity between groups and the differences between the means. The Chi-square (χ^2) test was used on the remaining three hypotheses. Finally, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was performed on the dependent variables, emphasizing the length of the stay in the United States.

Seventeen variables were used to test the hypotheses. The five variables used to test the first hypothesis were: the time the immigrants spent talking with their family members (TFAM), the time they spent talking to Thai friends (TTHF), the number of Thai friends they have (NOTHF), their participation in Thai organization(s) (ATTHO), and their attendance at the Thai Buddhist church (ATCH). These five variables were tested to find out if there was a significant difference between the two generations in the communication patterns inside their ethnic group at the interpersonal level.

The second group of variables was composed of similar variables at the interpersonal level, but outside the ethnic group. This set involved communication with host country members. The three variables were: time spent talking with American friends (TAMF), the number of American friends they have (NOAMF), and their participation in American organization(s) (ATAMO). The next hypothesis addressed the mass communication level, trying to discover the immigrant's communication pattern in using ethnic media such as newspapers, magazines, and ethnic entertainment. The time spent reading Thai newspapers expected to find a difference between the two groups,

mainly that the first generation group would show a greater use of ethnic mass media.

The fourth hypothesis addressed the immigrant's mass communication patterns outside the ethnic group. The five variables used in this hypothesis were: the time spent reading American newspapers (RAMNEW), time spent reading American magazines (RAMMAG), time spent listening to radio (TRAD), time spent watching television (TTV), and how frequently they see American movies (AMMOV). A higher score in each and every category in the second generation group was expected. The fifth and sixth hypotheses focused on the immigrant's way of learning about American society and culture and the selection of the communication channels to learn more about American society and people. Two variables used in these two hypotheses were: learning about American society and people (AMMOC), and learning more about American society and people (MOAMMOC). The Chi-square test was used on both hypotheses. Projected differences between the two generations were that the first generation would find it more comfortable to use mass media channels and the second generation would select the interpersonal channels.

The last hypothesis addressed the role of Wat Thai, trying to determine whether it serves as a religious and cultural institution or as a representative of the entire Thai community. The Chi-square test was used on the last variable, namely, maintenance of the Thai Buddhist church (MAINCH). Different reactions were expected from the two generations.

Finally the Pearson Correlation Coefficients was performed on all dependent variables tested in the seven hypotheses. The number of years the immigrants spent living in the United States (YUS) was introduced into the data analysis to emphasize the effect of the length of the stay on the immigrant's communication and assimilation patterns.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Intraethnic interpersonal communication

From the Analysis of Variance test, significance was found in all five variables (see Table 1 on next page). The profiles of the two generations were plotted using means from each dependent variable (see Figure 1 on page 10).

Three variables showing closer distance between groups are TFAM, ATTH0, and ATCH. The first variable showed that the Thai immigrants of both generations have closer patterns of communication within the family unit than communication outside the family. This variable has the smallest F value among the five variables $F(1,366)=4.93$.

The other two variables, ATTHO and ATCH, measured communication within the

ethnic group in a larger scale. Both generations have a similar profile. Their means of attending Thai organization meetings and activities were on the lowest part of the scale. Both generations did not show a high interest in joining Thai organizations, which is common among Thais who prefer communicating with people they know well.

TABLE 1**RESULTS OF ANOVA ON INTRAETHNIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION VARIABLES**

SOURCE	DF	SS	MS	F	PR » F
TFAM	1	9.11	9.11	4.93	0.027
ERROR	366	676.96	1.84		
TOTAL	367	686.07			
TTHF	1	92.77	92.77	48.78	0.0001
ERROR	367	698.02	1.90		
TOTAL	368	790.80			
NOTHF	1	209.55	209.55	130.17	0.0001
ERROR	368	592.41	1.60		
TOTAL	369	801.97			
ATTHO	1	31.08	31.08	27.93	0.0001
ERROR	340	378.48	1.11		
TOTAL	341	409.57			
ATWAT	1	41.75	41.75	28.34	0.0001
ERROR	369	543.66	1.47		
TOTAL	370	585.41			

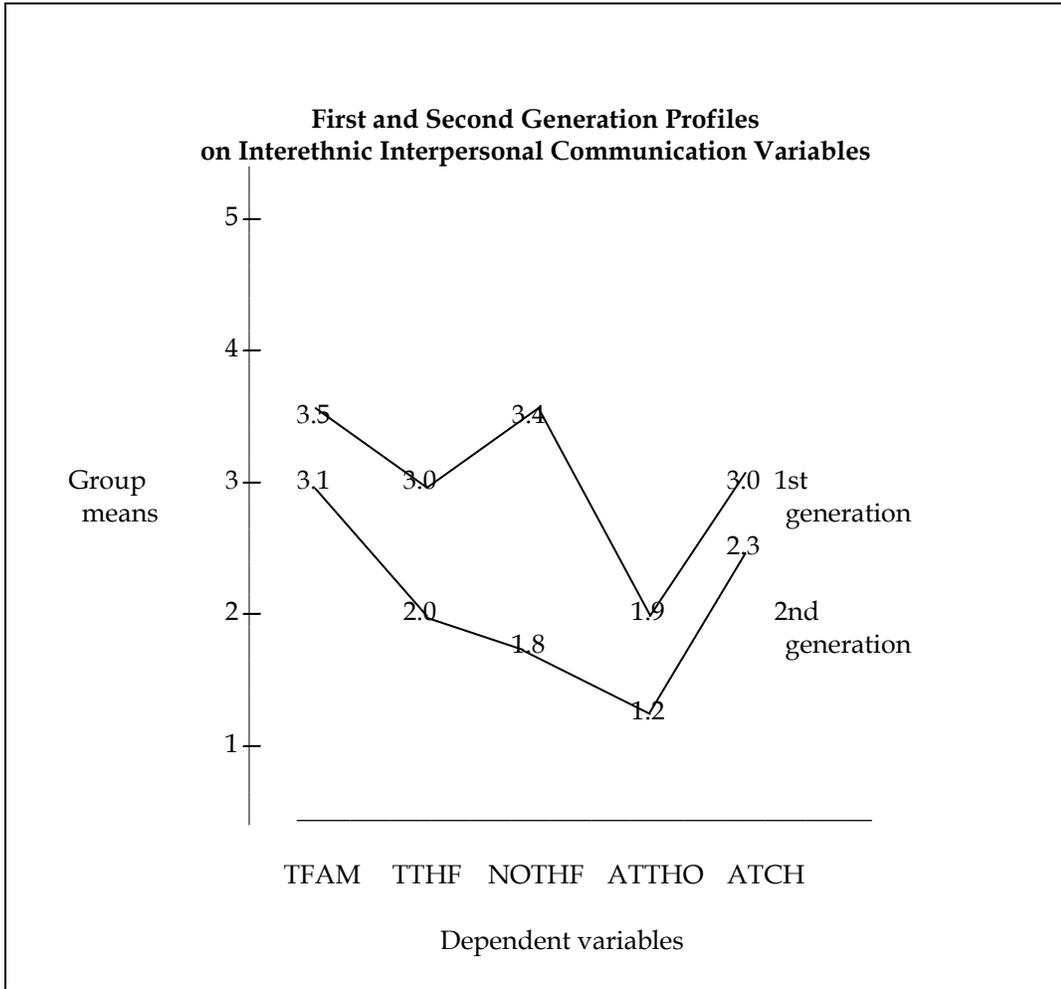


FIGURE 1

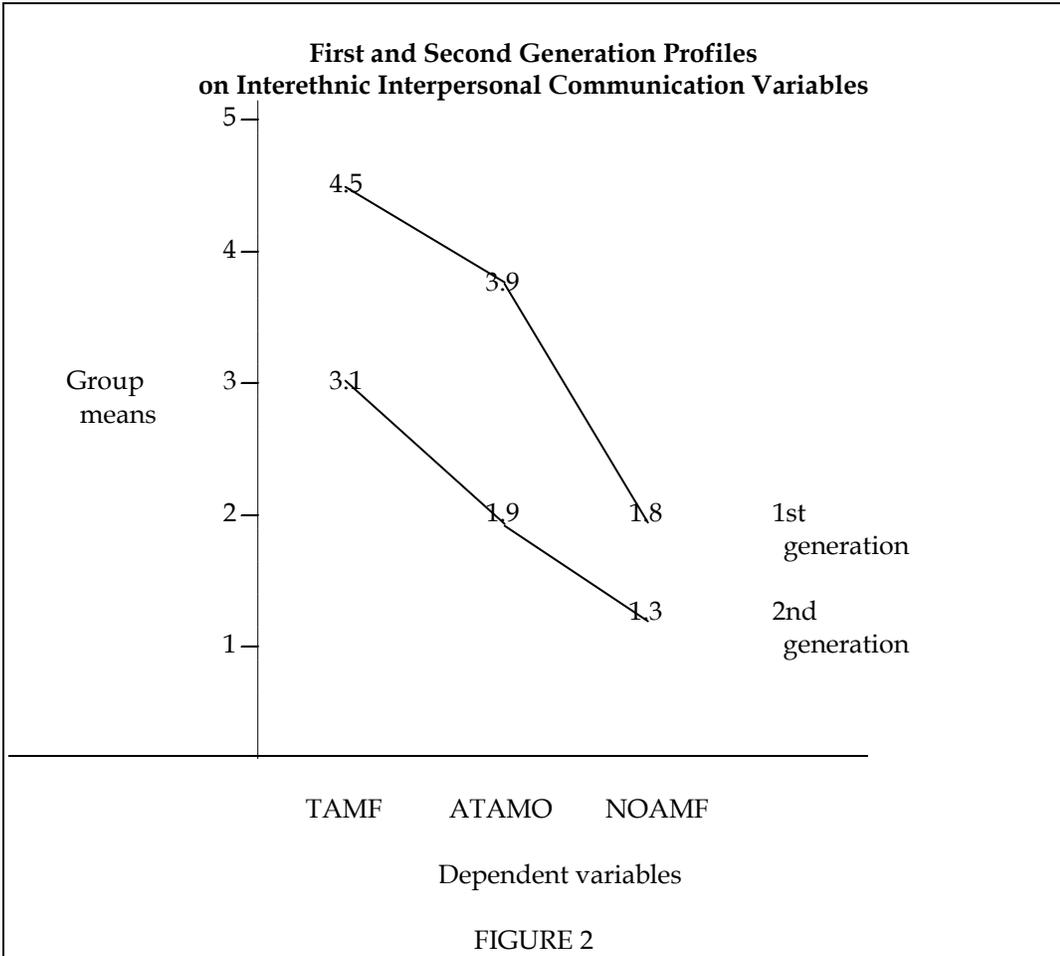
For the Thais, intraethnic communication on a larger scale and in a formal setting is much less important than intraethnic communication on a smaller scale and in an informal setting. These results also explain the lack of solidarity of the Thai community. Compared to the other oriental ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, the Thais do not strengthen their ethnic community by getting involved in ethnic organizations. The other ethnic groups use intraethnic communication to foster the flow of communication as well as to maintain their ethnic identity. The Thais, because of their individualistic character, tend to associate with a smaller group of people, preferably with people that they know. However, the attendance at the Wat Thai produced results at a higher level. Both generations still consider religion as a part of their lives.

Hypothesis 2: Interethnic interpersonal communication

Three dependent variables were tested with the two groups of immigrants. The results showed significant differences (see Table 2) between the two generations. Figure 2 (on page 12) shows profiles of the two generations of Thai immigrants .

SOURCE	DF	SS	MS	F	PR » F
TAMF	1	187.97	187.97	117.51	0.0001
ERROR	368	588.64	1.59		
TOTAL	369	776.61			
NOAMF	1	341.51	341.41	342.25	0.0001
ERROR	369	368.21	0.99		
TOTAL	370	709.72			
ATAMO	1	25.25	25.25	30.49	0.0001

ERROR	327	270.82	0.82
TOTAL	328	296.07	



From Figure 2 we can see distinctive profiles of the two generations in terms of the distance between the group means and the levels of the two profiles. The second generation Thais had a higher mean in all three dependent variables with a large distance between the first and the third variables, TAMF and NOAMF. However, a similar pattern appeared in the profile at interethnic communication on a larger scale and at interethnic communication in a formal setting. Both generations' participation in American organization meetings and activities showed a low level profile and a much closer distance between means than the first two variables.

Apparently, the higher level of the second generation's means of the first two variables is the result of their entry into the school system and the work place. This generation seeks out and is surrounded by American people. The first generation, on the contrary, is often still looking for a job inside the ethnic community which promotes intraethnic communication.

Hypothesis 3: Intraethnic mass communication

The results of the analysis of variance confirmed that the first generation Thai immigrants used ethnic mass media more than the second generation Thai immigrants (see Table 3). The pattern of their use of ethnic mass media is significantly different, particularly the use of ethnic entertainment. Although the profiles do not show direction as distinctive as the first two profiles, they represent a unique pattern for each group. (Figure 3 is on page 14.)

SOURCE	DF	SS	MS	F	PR » F
RTHNEW	1	36.96	36.96	40.60	0.0001
ERROR	329	299.54	0.91		
TOTAL	330	336.51			
RTHMAG	1	19.82	19.82	17.95	0.0001
ERROR	290	320.28	1.10		
TOTAL	291	340.10			

THMOV	1	254.95	254.95	172.80	0.0001
ERROR	359	529.66	1.47		
TOTAL	360	784.62			

The first generation group showed almost the same level of the ethnic media use in each of the three variables. The second generation group spent less time with ethnic media, particularly movies and entertainment. To further illustrate the use of ethnic media, the respondents were asked if

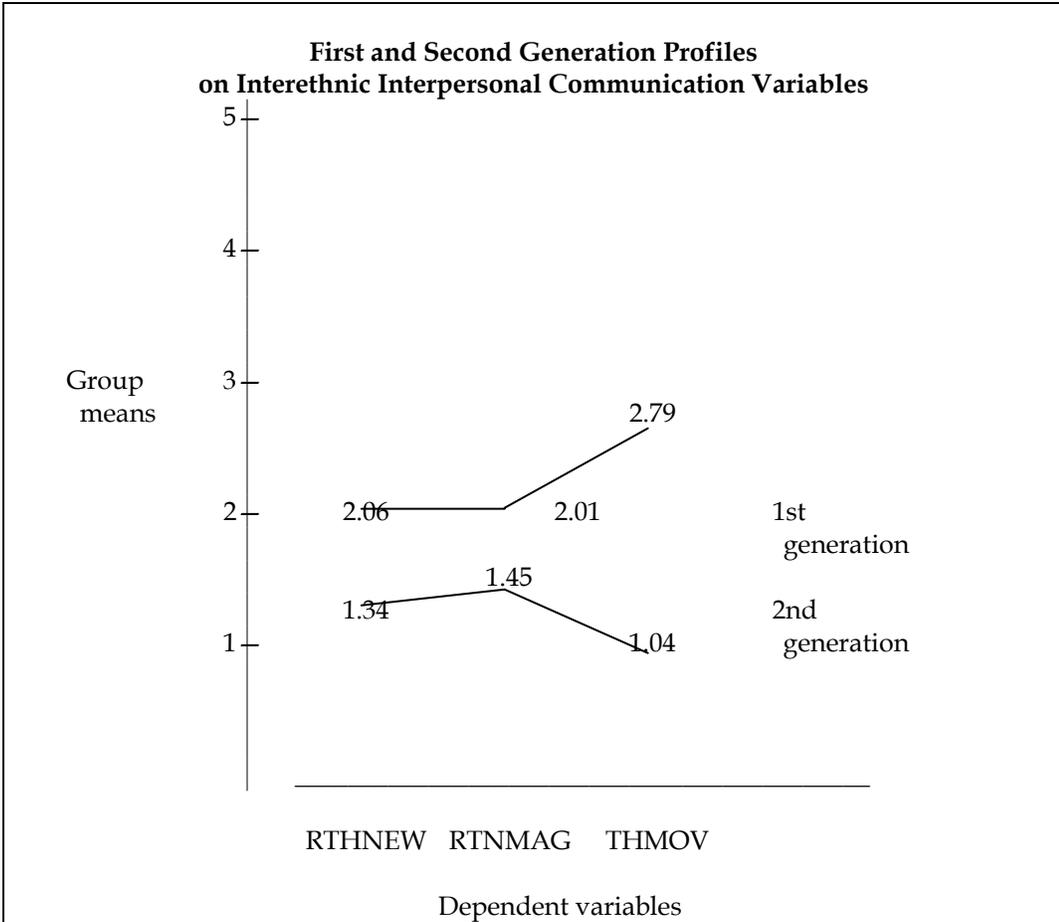


FIGURE 3

they read any Thai publications, and, if they did, they were also asked to write the names of those publications. Figure 4 on the next page arrays these results.

Figure 4 reveals that 78.8% of the first generation group read at least one of the Thai publications, either newspaper or magazines, and 51.8% of the second generation group read at least one of the Thai publications. The second group which reported reading the Thai publications presumably consisted of the Thais who were born in Thailand, who had grown familiar

Readership of the Thai Publications

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with the Thai media, and who were able to read the Thai language.

Interestingly, 21.18% of the first generation Thai immigrants did not read any of the Thai publications. On the one hand, this group of readers may not find the Thai publications to be of high quality. As reported by Paunkosoom (1980), Thais complained that the quality of the Thai newspapers published in the United States was low, the news was biased, and the writers were not competent (p. 88). The Thais who complained were those with a higher educational background. On the other hand, this group of readers may also consist of the Thais who are more advanced in the assimilation process and who have less interest in information inside the ethnic community. However, the first generation immigrants who used Thai media still outnumbered those who did not.

Hypothesis 4: Interethnic mass communication

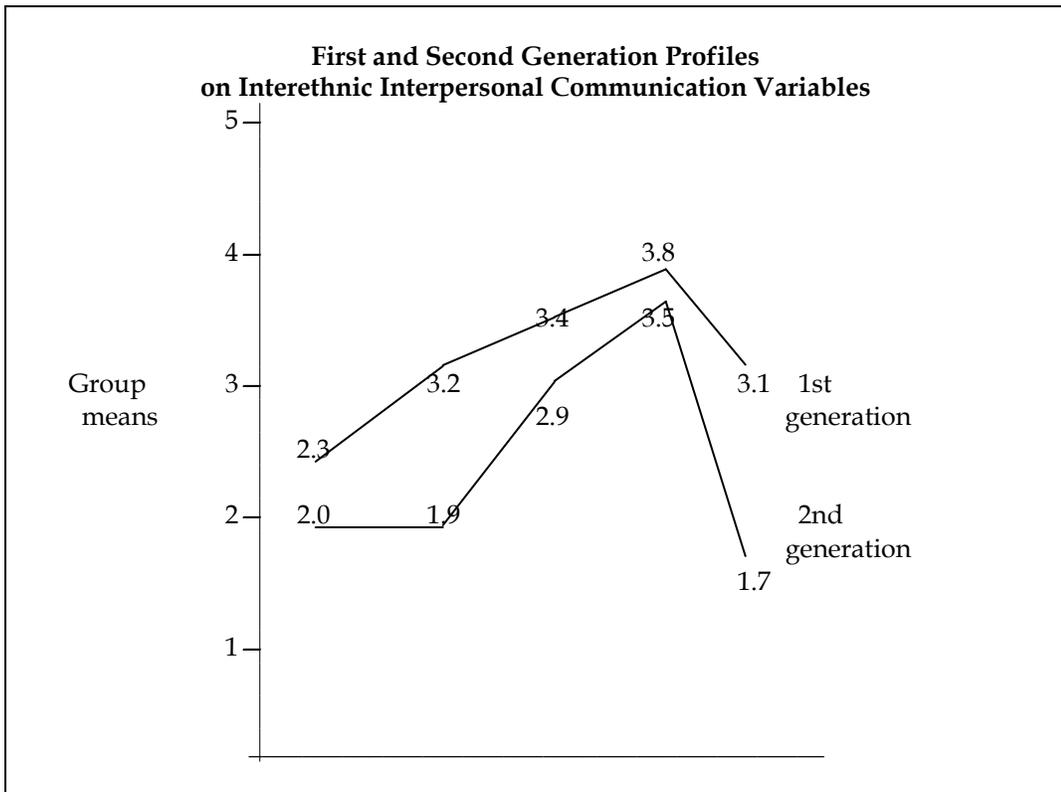
The One-way Anovas performed on the five dependent variables showed significant differences between the two generations (see Table 4). The profiles of the two generations on interethnic mass communication are shown in Figure 5 (on the next page).

TABLE 4

RESULTS OF ANOVA ON INTRAETHNIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION VARIABLES

SOURCE	DF	SS	MS	F	PR » F
RAMNEW	1	5.96	5.96	7.58	0.0062
ERROR	350	275.74	0.78		
TOTAL	351	281.71			
RAMMAG	1	128.15	128.15	143.15	0.0001
ERROR	332	297.23	0.89		
TOTAL	333	425.39			

TRAD	1	20.48	20.48	11.45	0.0008
ERROR	369	659.81	1.78		
TOTAL	370	680.29			
TTV	1	7.94	7.94	6.63	0.0017
ERROR	370	443.36	1.19		
TOTAL	371	451.31			
TRAD	1	167.96	167.96	145.95	0.0001
ERROR	364	418.90	1.15		
TOTAL	365	586.87			



RAMNEW RAMMAG TRAD TTV AMMOV

Dependent variables

FIGURE 5

The two profiles showed differences in directions and levels. Although there were a few closer distances between some pairs of the means than the others, these differences are significant, as shown in the results of the tests. The second generation Thai profile showed a higher level on the scale as the results of the larger means of all five dependent variables. The second generation Thai used more and spent more time with the host country's mass media.

A few similarities between both generations appeared in the profiles. The closer distances showed in three dependent variables: time spent reading American newspapers (RAMNEW), time spent listening to radio (TRAD), and time spent watching television (TTV). Among these three channels, newspaper, radio, and television, the latter was reported to have the highest time used by both generations. The printed media, particularly magazines, were utilized less than the other mass media by the first generation immigrants. The two largest distances between means in the profiles appear in magazine reading and attending movies. Among five media channels, moviegoing was reported least used by the first generation Thai immigrants.

The use of host country printed media was compiled from the respondent's answers in the questionnaire. Figure 6 shows the readership of American publications.

Readership of the American Publications

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The second generation Thai immigrants read more newspapers and magazines than the first generation. Of the first generation 28.38% did not read any American publications. The first generation's mean in magazine readership was much lower than the second generation's mean. Ability to read English probably creates a barrier for the first generation Thai. Those who reported reading magazines were mostly the Thais who have better occupations and who had been living longer in the United States. The second generation Thai who reported not reading any American publications (13.86%) were mostly the recent immigrants who were in a younger age group and had been living only a short time in the United States.

Hypothesis 5: Learning about American society and people

The fifth hypothesis to be tested concerned the communication channels the immigrants used to learn about the host country's society and people. This hypothesis was tested by a Chi-square test of dependence. The question which secured data for testing this hypothesis asked the respondents to select one communication channel they now used to learn about American society and people. Six choices were presented in the questionnaire. These were: talking to Thai friends, reading Thai newspapers and magazines, listening to radio, watching television, reading American newspapers and magazines, and talking to American friends. The results of the Chi-square test showed a difference at 0.05 level of significance. The obtained value of the Chi-square statistic exceeded the critical value of the Chi-square distribution ($\chi^2 = 104.463$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.05$).

For the first generation Thai immigrant the communication channel most selected was television. Of the first generations group 38.2% selected television as a primary means to learn about American society. The next two channels chosen were reading Thai publications (19.31%) and reading American publications (18.03%). Interpersonal communication channels were the fourth and the fifth choices. Only 9.44% of the first generation chose interethnic interpersonal communication with the host country members. On an interpersonal communication level these immigrants preferred communicating within the ethnic group to communicating outside the ethnic group.

They may feel more comfortable with people of the same race, since language is not a barrier. In addition, the new immigrants can learn through ethnic communication which also provides a first step toward entering the larger society.

The second-generation Thai, on the contrary, chose interpersonal contact as the primary means to learn about the American society. Out of 136 respondents, 49.26% reported communicating with American people, 22.06% selected reading American publications, and only 4.41% chose radio as a learning channel. The second generation apparently does not rely extensively on ethnic interpersonal communication or mass communication as channels by which to learn of the host culture. None of the respondents reported using ethnic interpersonal communication or ethnic publications as a means of learning.

The second generation Thai immigrants, without a language barrier, have a better chance to approach and talk to the Americans. They also have established relationships through the school system. Although they rely less on mass communication as a tool to get to know the American people, 24.26% of the second generation chose television as a learning channel. Further, although as many as 51.8% (see Figure 4 on page 15) of the second generation Thais reported reading Thai publications, they did not perceive the publications as a primary channel for learning about the host country culture.

Hypothesis 6: Selection of communication channels in learning more about American society and people

The sixth hypothesis in this study addressed the communication channels the immigrants would select if they wanted to learn more about American society and people. The respondents were asked the same question used in the previous hypothesis. However, the emphasis was on the issue of learning more about the host country's society. This hypothesis was analyzed using a Chi-square test. The result of the test showed a difference between generations at the 0.05 level of significance. The obtained value of the Chi-square statistic exceeded the critical value of the Chi-square distribution ($\chi^2 = 97.77$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.05$).

The communication channel selected by most of the first generation Thai was television (41.88%), followed by host country publications (21.79%). Compared to the previous hypothesis, the first generation's selection of television increased from 38.2% to 41.88%. However, the number of those selecting ethnic interpersonal communication decreased. Only 3.42% selected intraethnic interpersonal communication, and 10.26% chose ethnic publications. Interestingly, the use of host country communication channels changed dramatically. Interpersonal contact with the host country members jumped from 9.44% in the previous hypothesis to 19.66%. Television still maintained its popularity as a learning channel among the first generation Thai immigrants.

For the second generation group the selection shifted dramatically from television

viewing to interpersonal contact. Only 8.82% of the respondents reported using television. Interpersonal communication received the highest selection (63.24%). The selection of the host country's publications remained the same (22.06%). Intraethnic communication channels were left unselected, and 5.88% chose radio as a learning channel. The majority of the second generation group was ready to make more personal contact with the host country members.

The shift of channel selection of the first generation Thai immigrants showed a sign of entering the assimilation process. Only 13.68% of the respondents selected ethnic communication channels. More than half of the respondents who changed their selection from ethnic communication channels to the host country's communication channels chose the interpersonal contact. While television and publications gained 3.68% and 3.76% respectively, personal contact gained 10.22%. Although this selection was not the actual communication pattern the immigrants carried out, it showed that they were aware of the available channels that would move them closer to learning about the host country's society and people.

By comparing the two generation's selection of communication channels, the first generation's selection still concentrated on television and publications in order to avoid interpersonal contact. The second generation Thais are reaching the larger society by making more interpersonal communication with host country members.

Hypothesis 7: Reactions to the role of Wat Thai

The last hypothesis to be tested was the reactions toward the roles of the Wat Thai. The question asked the respondents to choose the most important reason to have Wat Thai in Southern California. To narrow down the choices, four pre-selected answers were compiled. Since Wat Thai is mainly the place where religion is carried out in Thailand, the first choice in this question was the practicing of religion. Because Wat Thai offers language instruction and cultural learning to the young every Sunday throughout the year, the second choice presented its cultural role. The third and fourth choices were from the previous discussion of the role of Wat Thai as a pseudo-community for the Thai immigrants in Southern California. In addition, another question asked the respondents to give their reason(s) for attending Wat Thai. This question also offered an open-ended option for the respondents as well as the other four closed-ended options.

The results showed a difference at the 0.05 level of significance. The obtained value of the Chi-square statistic exceeded the critical value of the Chi-square distribution ($\chi^2 = 44.29$; $df=3$; $p < 0.05$).

Among the four choices, the selection of the first generation group focused heavily on the first two choices. The religious and cultural roles of having Wat Thai had a 38.63% and a 38.2% selection from the first generation respondents. Only 10.3% of the first group responded to Wat Thai as a place of meeting, and 12.82% viewed it as a representative

of the Thai community. For this group the major reactions toward the role of Wat Thai were for religious purposes and for the socialization of the young. On the contrary the second generation Thais' selection focused upon the social aspects of the role of Wat Thai. 29.41% of the respondents selected the role of Wat Thai as a place where Thais can meet, and 31.62% selected it as representative of the Thai community. The religious and cultural roles of Wat Thai were on the lower scale of selection: 25% of the second generation Thais chose the role of Wat Thai as a place where they can practice religion, and only 13.97% chose the cultural role. For this generation Wat Thai acted more as a solid community for the Thais than as a religious institution.

The first generation Thais hold Wat Thai as a religious institution as well as a place where socialization of the later generations is conducted. Wat Thai plays a role held before modern times; i.e., a role of social provider. In the past, the Wat Thai was a place where not only religious, but also cultural and educational activities took place. The immigrants of the first generation indicated that the Thai society cannot fulfill their need to pass along Thai culture to the next generations; so, they turn to Wat Thai. In responding to this need, Wat Thai provides cultural training and education to the next generation.

Although viewed differently by the two generations, Wat Thai serves not only as a religious establishment, but also as a concrete community for the Thai immigrants in Southern California. By providing Sunday school for the young, Wat Thai acts as a community in the sense that it helps maintain and pass along the Thai culture to the next generation.

In the study of assimilation the availability of the school to teach language, particularly the written language, and culture to the young can be one of the major causes leading to the different rate of assimilation between the two generations. Those who are able to use ethnic written language are exposed more to the ethnic publications and to other activities in the ethnic community. Although the knowledge of ethnic written language and culture are not major variables to affect the rate of assimilation to the next generations, they can foster the later generations' attachment to the ethnic community, instead of fostering a breaking away from the ethnic community. In this study the second generation respondents included some who had learned the Thai language, particularly the written one, and Thai culture before they entered this country, and some who could not comprehend the Thai written language and know only a little about Thai culture. Therefore, we could probably expect greater variation in results if we had all second generation subjects who did not know the Thai language.

Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Pearson's r was calculated to find the relationship between the number of years the immigrants spent living in the United States and the other sixteen variables previously

tested. The results showed different effects on each generation and on different variables. For the first generation Thai immigrant the number of years living in the United States affected eight variables: the number of American friends they have, the time spent talking to American friends, their participation in Thai organizations, the attendance of the Thai Buddhist church, the time spent reading American newspapers and magazines, and the frequency of seeing American movies. While the other seven variables showed positive correlations, the results were not significant. Only one variable, the frequency of seeing American movies, had a negative correlation.

For the second generation Thai immigrant the eight variables significantly correlated were the time spent talking to members of their family, the time spent talking to Thai friends, the number of Thai and American friends they have, their participation in American organizations, the time spent reading Thai magazines, the time spent listening to radio. The negative correlations showed in all variables except the three interethnic communication variables: number of American friends they have, participation in American organizations, and time spent reading American newspapers.

The results showed that the longer the immigrants stay in the host country the more likely they will participate in interethnic communication. The first generation Thai, depending upon the length of the stay in the host country, talked more to American friends, participated more in American organizations, read more both American newspapers and magazines, and, more importantly, had more American friends. Since the second generation Thai immigrants had already participated in interethnic communication, the results, on the contrary, revealed a negative correlation to the intraethnic communication. The results showed that the longer the second generation Thai immigrant stayed in the host country the more they were likely to talk less to Thai friends, to spend less time reading Thai magazines, and to have fewer Thai friends.

Based on these results and those from the previous hypothesis testings, the first generation Thai immigrants engaged less in the assimilation process than the second generation Thai immigrants. However, as the length of the stay progressed, the first generation Thai became more involved in interethnic communication. The second generation Thai immigrant, who ranked higher on the scale of assimilation, not only became more active in interethnic communication as the time progressed, but also became less active in intraethnic communication and moved further away from involvement in ethnic affairs.

The length of the stay in the host country, therefore, affected the way the Thai immigrants communicated with each other and with members of the host country. The first generation Thais, however, not only were still involved in communicating within their own group, but also found themselves becoming more involved in communicating with the people outside their ethnic group. The length of stay also supports the findings

that the second generation Thais are breaking away from the ethnic community and are ready to enter the larger American society by means of assimilation.

Summary and Suggestions

The results of these tests showed significant differences between the two generations of Thai immigrants in communication patterns both inside and outside the ethnic group at the interpersonal and mass communication levels. The first generation Thai immigrant is involved more in communication inside their ethnic group than in communication outside their ethnic group. On the contrary, the second generation Thai immigrant carries on more communication with members of the host country.

The use of the host country's mass media by the first generation Thai immigrants, particularly the heavy use of television provides them with a channel through which they can enter the process of assimilation, since television is cited as a tool that functions as a primary agent of assimilation.

The two generations use different approaches, through different communication channels, to learn about the American society and people. While the first generation Thai prefer using ethnic mass media, the second generation Thai relies more on interpersonal channels with the host country's members. However, when the choices were given, both generations chose interethnic communication, although the first generation Thai chose mass communication channels over interpersonal channels.

By studying their communication patterns, we can conclude that the second generation Thai immigrant moves faster into the assimilation process. More importantly, this generation enters a more advanced level of assimilation by finding a job outside the ethnic community.

Different reactions also appear regarding the role of the Buddhist Temple on Wat Thai. For the first generation Wat Thai mainly provides religious practices and cultural learning. On the contrary, the second generation's reaction is that Wat Thai represents the Thai community. Although Wat Thai is viewed differently by both generations, it acts as a social as well as a cultural institution for the entire Thai community. By keeping its Sunday school and religious activities, Wat Thai provides the means to the socialization process that enables the Thai immigrants to maintain their ethnic community and identity.

Finally the test results of the correlation coefficients shows that the length of time that the immigrant has lived in the host country also affects the immigrant's communication patterns. The longer they stay in the host country, the more they become involved in interethnic communication, with the exception that the second generation Thai immigrant become less involved in intraethnic communication. The first generation is moving slowly into the assimilation process by means of interethnic communication. The second generation Thai immigrants are not only being more rapidly assimilated, but

also are stepping away from the ethnic community into the mainstream of American society.

The results of this study may be best applied to the Thai immigrants in Southern California. Since the Thais in this region have an easy access of Thai food, newspapers and magazines, entertainment, and, more importantly, the Wat Thai, they may assimilate more slowly than Thais located elsewhere. Therefore we need to conduct comparative studies of Thai immigrants in other regions in the United States. We, then, will have an overall profile of communication patterns of the Thai immigrants in their process of assimilation.

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