Male-female communication among the Hmong of Missoula

Aza Hadas

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MALE-FEMALE COMMUNICATION AMONG
THE Hmong OF MISSOULA

By
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B.A., University of Montana, 1976
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1979

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6-5-79

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The male-female communication of the Hmong in Missoula, during the summer of 1978, is described. Three broad categories were investigated: (1) sex role and stereotypes, (2) verbal behaviors, (3) nonverbal behaviors. Several specific behaviors under each category were focused on. These behaviors were selected following the categorical organization of Eakins & Eakins (1978).

Five Hmong women and three Hmong men, as well as several Americans who were working with the Hmong, were interviewed by way of a "guided interview", a qualitative methodology technique. The interviews were supplemented by limited observations.

The findings about the behaviors and perceptions of the Hmong respondents are described and compared to those of white, middle class Americans, as described in the American male-female literature.

Because of the short endurance of the study, its pilot nature and its breadth rather than depth, the results obtained have not justified the making of general statements and therefore have remained mostly descriptive. Critique of the study and several implications and suggestions for further research are also included.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Professors Joyce Frost, Wesley Shellen and William Wilmot, Department of Interpersonal Communication; and Professor Frank Bessac, Department of Anthropology, University of Montana, for their encouragement and advice.

I am indebted to each for a particular consideration. To:
Joyce Frost, for "lateral thinking" and endless patience;
William Wilmot, for his sense of organization;
Wesley Shellen, for his ability to see order in the chaos and simplicity in the complex;
Frank Bessac, for generously "making time" to share his knowledge and analytical talent.

Special thanks to Suzanne Bessac, who, by giving of her expertise and insight, broadened my understanding tenfold.

Finally, many thanks also to Diana Danielson, and Cecelia Stratton, but especially to the Hmong men and women, whose names I cannot mention, but without whose friendship and many hours of their time, this paper would not have been possible.
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RATIONALE

Anthropologists have long maintained that cross-cultural comparisons provide us with insight into our own behaviors and motivations. The presence of the Hmong in Missoula present a situation which allows not only for the study of another culture, but also for "Garfinkeling". "Garfinkeling" is the breaking of the cultural behavioral rules on purpose by the researcher, and is the best way we know of now, of becoming aware of our own, taken-for-granted rules. Rule-breaking becomes inevitable when two systems of behavior, such as the Hmong and the American, meet.

Most of the Hmong people in Missoula came from Thailand about three years ago. They have learned some English and became somewhat acquainted with the local culture. They have not, however, been here long enough to have given up their ethnic communication patterns. The time, therefore, seemed to be right for a study of their male-female communication.

The emphasis on male-female communication is selected for a number of reasons. First, the topic is of interest to many people in this country. Second, the male-female communication among the Hmong, have not yet been studied. Other reasons are with the author herself. She
has an interest in the topic of male-female communication, she has been a student of both interpersonal communication and anthropology, for a long time she has had an interest in the people of the Far East, and, like the Hmong, she has come to the U.S., from another country and another culture.

Since the communication between males and females among the Hmong has not been investigated yet, one needs to "discover" what's there. A pilot study, using a participant observation methodology seemed the most appropriate approach. Later, the results of the pilot study may lead to statements of hypotheses.
CHAPTER ONE

THE HMONG

Origin

The Hmong are mentioned for the first time in Chinese records from the year 2700 B.C., where they are referred to as Miao, which may have meant "barbarians". Discussing their origin, Bernatzik (1947, p. 9) quotes Bon Eickstedt as saying: "The Miao may have originated in the Steppe, where Tibet, Mongolia and old China touch." Bernatzik also mentions a Hmong legend which talks about a territory covered completely with snow and ice, where day and night alternate every six months.

For some unknown reason, the Hmong moved south to where China is now. They were farming in the river valleys of Hunan, Kweichow and perhaps some others, when the Chinese arrived and took over the country, supposedly in prehistoric times.

The Chinese, powerful and proud of their own culture, as well as highly organized with a king and a state system, were in the habit of imposing the Chinese ways on conquered minorities. They were not successful in doing so with the Hmong, who prided themselves of being Hmong or "Free Men". Bernatzik (1947) quotes Savina who had read
that 4,600 years ago, the Chinese Hoang Ti invented the weapons of war in order to subjugate the Hmong tribes.

In order to escape harassment, the Hmong moved into the mountains. Chinese records tell about hundreds of years of the Hmong struggle for freedom and independence. Finally, the last Miao king, Sonom, surrendered in 1775 to the Chinese. (Bernatzik, 1947) The Hmong, then, moved deeper into the mountains and most of them have remained mountain dwellers to this day.

Migrations

The slash and burn agricultural method which the Hmong used (see the section about "Modes of Subsistence"), depleted the soil of its nutrients in three to ten years. This meant that a village had to move ever so often in order to find another jungle area suitable for clearing. Such practice may have been one of the reasons for the constant migration of the Hmong southward. Other reasons suggested by Bernatzik (1947) are persecution, high taxes, poor harvest caused by plant disease, and no harvest due to war and epidemics. Epidemics were believed to be caused by evil spirits and the shaman always ruled to move away quickly.

Moving mostly in remote mountain jungles, the Hmong were not aware of crossing state borders and so, in the beginning of mid-nineteenth century, scores of Hmong clans

Bernatzik (1947) pointed out that in almost all cases the Hmong resettled in high terrain, between 3000-6000 feet. In Indochina these mountains were covered with tropical monsoon jungles. Suggested reasons for this preference are tradition, familiarity with conditions, and not being wanted by the valley people (Savina, quoted in Bernatzik, 1947) or lack of resistance to malaria and the other tropical diseases of the valley, as Bernatzik himself believes.

In the 1960's, the Hmong in Laos were compelled to take part in the wars between the Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao Government. According to Kunstadter (1967) the rumors said that the Hmong men Faydang and Toubi Li Fung, grew up together in Xieng Khoang, in an old and influential family. As adults, they became rivals. Faydang was one of the founders of the Pathet Lao which used Faydang for the purpose of winning Hmong support and for organizing affiliated lineages into military units. The Royal Lao government promoted Toubi Li Fung for supposedly similar reasons. As a
result, the Hmong were divided and found themselves fighting each other.

Kunstadter (1967) wrote that in the past, minority and tribal populations could solve the problems of pressure from lowland forces simply by fleeing higher into the mountains or further into the jungle, but modern military technology means that there is nowhere to hide, and recent political development means that wherever they go, the tribesmen and minorities will be the target for political influence from one or the other side of the Loatian struggle.

When the Pathet Lao won the war, there was no place for the Royalist Hmong to hide. Those who went back to the jungle were often caught and killed. Those who could cross the border to Thailand were placed there in refugee camps. Some of the refugees had worked directly for the U.S. Armed Forces, which supported the Royal Lao Government in various ways. Those were allowed to migrate to the U.S., with their families. The first Hmong came to Missoula about three years ago and more are still coming.

**Tribes**

The Hmong are divided into tribes. According to Bernatzik (1947), the Hmong believe that they were one group until the Chinese divided them in order to distinguish them from other minorities.
Bernatzik (1947), Barney (1954) and Kunstadter (1967) agree that the major difference between the tribes is the women's dress. Most tribes' names describe a color or a design in the costume of its women. For example, the women of the "Green Hmong" wear green in their skirts; the women of the "Striped Hmong" wear blue stripes round the sleeves of their black blouses. Clarke (1911) writes that the names of some tribes describe their major occupation. For example, "The Shrimp Hmong" is a tribe that used to catch and sell freshwater shrimp.

No one knows how many Hmong tribes exist. Clarke (1911) cites Chinese sources who counted twenty tribes. Bernatzik (1947) has heard that the number varies from twenty-four to forty-seven. He also says that most of the Hmong tribes speak mutually intelligible dialects and intermarry without hesitation. When the Hmong in Missoula were asked about their tribal affiliation, some were not clear about it and others insisted that tribal differences were only geographical distinctions and that there was only one Hmong nation.

**Modes of subsistence**

According to Bernatzik (1947), one of the possible meanings of the word "Miao" was in Chinese "tillers of the soil". This name was given to the Hmong because they were farmers when the Chinese first encountered them. They have
remained farmers to this day.

Since the Hmong have lived in mountain jungles, they used a method of farming called "swidden agriculture" or "slash and burn". They cut a clearing in the jungle, burned it twice so the ashes can be used as fertilizer and sowed grain. Depending on the soil and the weather, they grew either mountain rice or maize. Among the grain they planted vegetables. In separate fields they grew opium poppy, which was their predominant cash crop. In the Laotian province of Xieng Khoang, where there was a large concentration of Hmong people, the opium trade was legalized by the French. In other parts of Laos, the growing of this poppy was illegal but the fields were laid in hard to find mountainous areas.

The Hmong men helped to supplement the diet of their families by hunting, fishing, and raising cattle. The women raised chickens and pigs.

Trade was hardly known to the Hmong. According to Bernatzik (1947), Barney (1954) and Kunstadter (1967), the Hmong had little to trade beside the powder of the opium poppy. This powder was usually purchased by Chinese traders, who, during the dry season, used to travel the trails between the remote and isolated mountain villages. Barney (1954), said that the Hmong themselves were mostly inexperienced in trade and ignorant of the value of money. According to Bernatzik (1947) they used to buy only a few raw materials
from the Chinese traders and make locally everything they need from cloths to muskets.

Because of the war, many Hmong have left their villages in the past twenty years, but to this day most of them would prefer to farm if they could and trade is still foreign to them. The Hmong in Missoula do whatever work they can find and are trying hard to adjust to learn and adjust to the U.S., modes of subsistence.

Social organization and the family

According to Barney (1954), all social aspects of the Hmong life such as political organization, economy and religion, are based on the lineage system. The lineage includes those males who believe to have descended from a common mythical ancestor. Every lineage has a name, particular customs, a version of mythology, political affiliation, lineage loyalty and obligation for mutual assistance.

Marriage among the Hmong is lineage exogamous, which means that no Hmong person may marry anyone with the same surname. This custom is believed to encourage alliances between lineages. When a woman marries, she belongs to her husband's lineage and her primary obligation is to his family and ancestors. After her death, her soul will be reborn into her husband's lineage.

The basic lineage unit, according to Bernatzik (1947) is the extended family household. It includes all
individuals who live under the same roof: A man, his wives and their children, grown sons and their wives and children, adopted children, relatives and people taken in for one reason or another. Every household has a head, usually the oldest man, who has the authority over everyone in the house. He also has the responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of all household members.

Bernatzik (1947) observed that sons used to reside in their father's household until they reached the age of thirty years; then they could move out to establish their own household nearby. Both Bernatzik (1947) and Barney (1954) noted that although the head of the household had the authority, he did not usually make decisions without consulting with his sons. Sons, on their part, always conferred with their fathers before expressing opinions. When sons move into their own house, the authority of their father over them is reduced.

According to Barney (1954), peace and harmony were crucial for the survival of the Hmong family, so in case of conflict between brothers in the same household, the oldest son stayed with the father and the younger moved out. Thus, peace was restored and alliances were not totally severed.

Love, courtship, marriage and child rearing

According to the Hmong Myth, all people descend from the incestuous union of A-Zie and his sister. The following
is the version provided by Clarke (1911): F'o, the thunder, and A-Zie, fell out about the division of the family possessions. Thunder lived above and A-Zie lived on earth. Thunder threatened to destroy the earth with a deluge. A-Zie hollowed out a large gourd for himself, and collected a hundred kinds and a thousand sorts of seeds and put them in a smaller gourd. After the flood, when the earth dragon had swallowed up all the water, and the hill dragon—all the mist, all the people were destroyed. Only A-Zie and his sister survived. A-Zie asked his sister to be his wife, but she declined on the grounds that such marriage was improper. Because he kept coaxing her, she suggested that he roll stones from the top of the hill to the valley; if the stones met at the bottom, she would consent. A-Zie arranged two stones in the valley. The real stones were lost in the bush but the sister did not know it. The sister asked for another trial; she asked A-Zie to throw knives from the top of the hill; if the knives met at the bottom, she would consent. A-Zie arranged the knives in the valley. The real knives were lost in the bush but his knives were in place. A-Zie's sister agreed to marry her brother. Even their mother gave her blessing to them. A child was born to A-Zie and his wife, without limbs. A-Zie was angry and cut it to pieces. He sowed the pieces on the hill. In the morning, each piece became a man or a woman. Thus, the earth was repopulated.
What is right for mythical creatures, is not necessarily right for their descendants. The Hmong consider male-female relationships within the clan as incestuous and they practice what Barney (1954) refers to as "taboos". According to him, brothers and sisters avoid each other, men and their daughters-in-law avoid each other and so forth. This avoidance or taboo, may be explained by the fact that the Hmong lived in villages ranging in population from one to forty households. Most villages were seldom composed of more than two clans (Barney, 1954; Lebar, Hickey and Muskgrave, 1956). One must also remember that in the mountain jungles of Laos, communication and transportation were very poor (Bernatzik, 1947; Barney, 1954; and Garrett, 1974) so, if it were not for the avoidances, incestuous relationships would be more frequent.

Visiting between villages was possible only during the dry season. In December, the New Year Festival was celebrated and at that time, whole villages were invited to visit other villages belonging to other clans. New Year's Festival was, and still is, the official courting time. Grown boys and girls wear new clothes for the occasion and play traditional games together. "Friendships made then were followed up by the boy's visits to the girl's village. If the girl responded favorably to the boy, the relationship would end in marriage." (Barney, 1954, p. 277)
According to Bernatzik (1947), "Lovers used to meet in groves or fields, but never in the dwelling as to not offend the house spirits. Lovers would hold hands, sing, or play the mouth harp for hours. Then love-making would take place for hours too."

As long as the girl did not become pregnant, marriage was not contemplated. When she became pregnant, pressure was applied by her family for marriage. If the man refused, he could pay the girl's parents and the child stayed with her family.

Clarke (1911, p. 29) was of the opinion that "the Miao women had more liberty and were less conventional than the Chinese women, ... and many of their marriages were the result of mutual liking. Not infrequently, however, a girl was practically sold for money to a husband chosen by her parents. In such cases the results were often disastrous. The young woman often ran away from her husband's home and continued to meet her lover. She would return to her husband's home under pressure, but would run away again ... after intervention of family and elders, it was usually suggested that the lover repay the husband his bride price and marry the girl."

According to Barney (1954) and Bernatzik (1947), marriage must be formally arranged by the "Go-Between". The "Go-Between" is either an elder brother or an uncle of the
boy. If the boy and the girl want to marry but the girl's parents insist that their daughter wait until her elder sister marries, or until younger siblings grow older, or they want a high bride price, the young people may elope. They then marry and nothing can be done about it.

Barney (1954) writes that the young man and his family pay a bride price to the girl's family. The bride price is in the form of silver bars. The Hmong in the U.S. set a standard price of $400 in silver bars. The Hmong say that the bride price is not a business transaction and therefore it is mistaken to say that the bride is sold. The exchange of silver is a part of the ritual by which a relationship is established between the lineages involved.

Bernatzik (1947) wanted to know about the criteria that the Hmong used for choosing a mate. He was told that materialistic considerations such as wealth and status played only a minor role. The desirable attributes for girls were good looks, health and strength. The desirable attributes for boys were cleverness and strength. Boy's looks did not matter much.

According to Bernatzik (1947) and Barney (1954), the Hmong permit polygamy although it is not common. In this system, a widow may marry her husband's younger brother. An older brother is considered "father" and marriage to him would be incestuous. Because polygamy is permitted, young
married men may participate in the games of the New Year Festival and go courting. The wives, however, are not allowed to do so. In the U.S., polygamy is illegal. The Hmong women seem to be pleased by it. The Hmong men may be undergoing some adjustment period.

Child rearing

According to Bernatzik (1947), Hmong boys and girls are treated differently from birth. If the newborn is a boy, the placenta is buried in the middle of the house, and if the baby is a girl, the placenta is buried under the parents' bed. This is a symbolic way to say that the boy will take a central position in that family, while the girl is there only until she marries.

As children grow up, they are instructed, with great patience, by their parents, who train them in the various skills: religion, medicine, manners, good behavior and work. Girls are encouraged to be skilled in all phases of women's work, and to be industrious. Boys are trained to be skilled and competent in men's work. In the process of training children, parents provide much reward and encouragement. Even though they talk about punishment, Bernatzik never witnessed any. Bernatzik found Hmong children to be very obedient and Hmong parents to be very loving and to treat their children as most precious possessions.
CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE MALE-FEMALE LITERATURE

Sex Roles

The communication patterns of males and females have been creating a growing interest in the U.S., over the past twenty years. Patton and Patton (1976) say that on the one hand we have recently seen a new emphasis on seeking warm, personal relationships. Our complex, mobile automated society has produced heightened conditions of impersonality. The yearning for closer personal ties is a major theme of our time. Traditionally one would seek such ties with the opposite sex, perhaps within the frame of the family. Paradoxically, the conditions of our complex, mobile, automated society, have posed barriers to the attainment of that goal by promoting the ideas of freedom, individuality and equality and the resulting awareness of the inequality between men and women; these, in turn caused antagonism between the sexes.

Communication scholars have taken up the study of the specific sex differences in human communication. They have shown that these differences indeed indicate inequality of power and status. Most investigators agree that the differences in male-female behaviors are not inherent but
acquired in the process of socialization into sex roles. They are largely a remnant from previous conditions, are inappropriate for our times and should be modified in order to resolve the relationship paradox.

The author chose to review the literature on those male-female behavior categories which she intended to compare with the Hmong. The review will consist of three parts: (A) sex role and socialization and stereotyping by sex (B) male-female differences in verbal behaviors and (C) male-female differences in nonverbal behaviors.

SEX ROLES AND STEREOTYPES

With humans, says Oakly (1972), maleness and female-ness can be determined on two bases: biological evidence, which he suggests to term "sex", and those behaviors which are produced by social training and thus, vary with the culture, time and place, which he calls "gender".

The existence of differences in "gender" communication is a fact established by observation, but the reason for it can only be speculated upon. Eakins and Eakins (1977) suggest four possibilities:

A. Cultural elaboration: Males and females elaborate sex differences in body movement, posture, gesture, facial expression and the use language because the physical differences between them are minimal in comparison to
other species. The fact that the differences vary from culture to culture supports the view that gender behaviors are socially learned. Eakins and Eakins (1978) do not tell us why the sexes need to appear different. Is it for the purpose of clear role division? Social order? Sex appeal?

B. **Division of labor by sex:** The fact that each sex has been occupied with different duties may explain differences in interests, topics of conversation, distinctive vocabularies and diverse nonverbal patterns.

C. **Male dominance:** Male dominance in the areas of family, economy, politics, religion and legal structures may have affected nonverbal shows of dominance and submission such as touching, smiling, staring, as well as verbal mechanisms such as forms of address, explanation, commands and requests. The relationship of these criteria to dominance and submission will be discussed in detail under the appropriate categories.

D. **Differing value systems:** At least two value systems seem to exist simultaneously in the American society: 1) The **Dominant** orientation, which emphasizes individual achievement, independence, instrumental behavior to overcome obstacles and future time orientation, which is appropriate for males, and 2) A lower status value system which emphasizes **Group Identity**, (duty, loyalty
to family) self-realization, harmony with the world and a present time orientation which is appropriate for females. Eakins and Eakins (1977) do not explain the phenomena, but to the author it seems that the factors of dominance and submission are not related to the male and female orientations. The orientations result from the division of labor by sex. Men have traditionally been the breadwinners; they have carried out this role in accordance with the structure and values of American society: individually, independently, single-mindedly, planning for the future. Women have been the homemakers; their role has been to take care of the everyday needs of their families, hence the group identity and present time orientation. The dominance of males and the submission of females are associated with these roles through their holders. Look at the Hmong, for example; the Hmong males are dominant but their orientation emphasizes cooperation, group identity, duty, loyalty to family, harmony with the world and past present and future orientation. Females are submissive but their orientation is similar to the men's with perhaps a touch of some individual achievement. (See Cohen, 1977)

According to Williams (1970) and Warshay (1972), American male and female orientations are manifested by their behaviors. Men initiate activity, are deferred to, put their interests first and act directly to further them.
Females respond to the males, are sensitive to their needs, put their own interests second and use indirection in gaining their own ends.

Lakoff (1975) and Henley (1973) take the view that verbal and nonverbal communication acts are part of the micro-political structure of our lives. Henley says that, they help establish, maintain and convey the various signals of control, compliance, defiance and dependence that influence us and those around us.

**Stereotypes**

Social programming is responsible not only for actual differences in the behaviors of men and women, but also for assuming certain inherent differences in the characteristics of males and females, which are termed "stereotypes". Sherriffs and McKee (1957) found that we tend to believe that certain qualities, behaviors and rights belong to an individual because a person fits a category such as being a male or being a female. Rosenkrantz et al (1968) and Tobias (unpublished manuscript) note that the stereotyped gender characteristics are also the socially desirable ones for each sex. Tobias also believes that male attributes are seen as more desirable than female. Rosenkrantz et al (1968) asked college students about their perceptions of valued traits for males and for females. The list of traits that has resolved it is presented here for the comparison with
the Hmong.

Valued traits for females

Does not use harsh language, talkative, tactful, gentle, aware of feelings of others, religious, interested in own appearance, neat in habits, quiet, strong need for security, appreciates art for literature and expresses tender feelings.

Valued traits for males

Aggressive, independent, unemotional, hides emotions, objective, active, competitive, logical, easily influenced, dominant, likes math and science, not excitable in a minor crisis, self-confident, ambitious, worldly, knows the ways of the world, feelings not easily hurt, adventurous, makes decisions easily, never cries, acts as a leader, not dependent, not conceited about appearance, able to separate feelings from ideas and thinks men are superior to women.

Sherriffs and McKee (1957), who also studied sex stereotypes, concluded that males are stereotyped by both sexes as possessing social skills and as projecting warmth and emotional support. They found that negative characteristics were described as lack of the stereotyped attributes. For example, it was considered negative for a female to not project warmth and emotional support or for a male to be irrational.
Broverman et al (1970), who studies perceptions of emotional health, found that terms used to describe emotionally healthy males corresponded to terms used to describe emotionally healthy adults. Terms used to describe emotionally healthy women, did not correspond to terms used to describe emotionally healthy adults. While these stereotypes exist, both men and women prefer strong, but very tender males, and emotionally and physically strong females. (Reece, 1964; Franswa, 1974)

Jessie Bernard (1973) says that we are living in a time of changing relationships between the sexes. Modern technology has changed the physical requirements of the environment and the increased use of contraceptives has effected the division of labor by sex. However, according to Geyer (1976), the outmoded sex stereotypes continue to exist due to the cultural lag. Change in tradition comes slowly and in the meantime the conflict between the old perceptions and the new conditions causes difficulties for the communication between males and females.

MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN VERBAL BEHAVIORS

Eakins and Eakins (1978) remind us that verbal usage has a great effect on our lives. Feldman (1965) goes even further to say that talk may be as important in marriage as sexual activity. Eakins and Eakins (1978) maintain that talk can (a) be task oriented, as in giving information or

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instructions (b) communicate feelings and indicate relationship and (c) do (a) and (b) simultaneously.

Form of address

Form of address is one kind of verbal behavior studied by researchers. It is indicative of the relationship between people. For example, a subordinate would use formal terms such as Mr., Mrs., Doctor or Professor to address a superior. A superior would be allowed to address the subordinate informally, by first name or its abbreviation. Henley (1973) as well as Slobin, Miller and Porter (1968) say that both males and females tend to address men formally and to address females informally, which is a manifestation of the power structure of the sexes. This tendency may be correlated with the superior occupational status of most males with the status of most traditional women's occupations. Still, the form of address probably functions to further sex role discrimination.

Reference

Terms used for reference to males may also be different from terms used to refer to females. The English language contains words such as "bachelor", which refers to a male only, and is used with positive connotation of romantic desirability and sexual freedom. Its feminine parallel, "spinster", or "old maid", refers only to female
and implies undesirability, prissiness and fussiness. Graham (1973) calls this phenomenon a "praise him/blame her syndrome". The manner of reference is an indication of the person's worth. Lakoff (1973) points out that in our society men are defined by what they do and women are defined by their relationship to men. According to Lakoff, this is supposedly a carryover from the time when females were, in fact, possessions under the power of their fathers and husbands. First, they were someone's daughter and later someone's wife. A title such as "Mrs. Herbert Jones" is an expression of this attitude. Eakins and Eakins (1978) add that women are also considered sex objects and therefore are described by their looks. An example would be: "Ralph is a brilliant young lawyer, and he has a beautiful blonde wife".

**Forcefulness**

Another gender difference in verbal behavior is expressed in the degree of forcefulness of speech. Eakins and Eakins (1978) and also Hartman (1976) are under the impression that male students tend to come across more forcefully and definitely in their speaking, and many females seem more tentative, less decided and more open to suggestions and discussion. Eakins and Eakins (1978) feel that each mode of communication, though by itself very useful in certain situations, is detrimental if used
exclusively and without discrimination by members of one sex. They say that we shall probably feel more comfortable with ourselves and more attuned to others if we can cut through the layer of automatic, unthinking, reflexive vocalic fluff that often obscures, nullifies, or contradicts our words. A vocal mechanism responsive to our feelings and intents should be our goal. This may involve a moment to moment awareness.

Content and style of conversation

Males and females differ also in the content and style of their conversation. The content of women’s conversation is more person-centered and women are often concerned with interpersonal matters and feelings. In style women tend to be more polite, indirect, use qualifiers and other softening devices to avoid the appearance of attempting to exercise power. Men's speech content tends to center around external things and involves factual, external data. Men's style is more direct. It employs strong statements that reinforce their expectancy of compliance. This is judged by society to be evidence of masculinity.

Eakins and Eakins (1978) feel that it is damaging for men and women to fall into such communication habits because they perpetuate the power differences between them. The assumption is that equality of power is better for both sexes than inequality. Eakins and Eakins would like to see more adaptation of behavior to the situation on the part of
both sexes.

Bernard (1973), Barker (1973), Chesler (1972) and Hirschman (1973) suggest that the differences in interest, content and style in the communication of the sexes, may account for the way in which each sex sees the other:

"Women's talk may not come sheathed in a protective coating of facts and figures or straight-line reasoning. To men, women's dialogues often seem mindless or superficial, mere recital of feelings." (Little has been said about what men's talk seems to women). Eakins and Eakins (1978) believe that these differences may be a source of misunderstanding and frustration for both men and women in their attempts to converse together.

**Argumentation**

Females may encounter another cause for frustration by being discouraged from argumentation. Parker (1973) studied sex differences in intellectual argumentation in the college classroom and the kinds of emotive feedback that argumentators received. The categories examined were (a) recalling facts (b) making observations (c) seeing relationships (d) hypothesizing (e) testing hypotheses. Results showed that although a greater number of females contributed at least one statement, males participated more often and made significantly more intellectual argumentation statements. Males also received more positive feedback than
females, especially from instructors and female classmates. Both sexes viewed the five intellectual categories mentioned above as significantly masculine sex-role standards in our society. So, argumentation behaviors were considered primarily male characteristics. This is not surprising if we remember that argumentation is an exercise of power and exercise of power is considered inappropriate for females in our society. Tobias (1975) found that society rewards males, but not females for intellectual argument. In one case, a male lecturer's words were accepted as more authoritative, while identical words from a female lecturer were seen as less so. Bardwick (1970) says that women may even be penalized subtly for argumentation. He says that regardless of content or skill, the woman who risks sounding forceful is disapproved of as being aggressive and unfeminine. This is a threat to a woman's self-esteem, because women are conditioned to base their self-esteem on opinions of others. Men, in comparison, may have developed a sense of self-regard that does not depend as much on outside sources.

**Talkativeness**

Women may not argue (according to cultural restrictions) but, apparently, are believed to be more talkative than men. Wood (1966) tested this cultural assumption and found that males tended to talk more than females if they
were faced with failure in communication. It may be that our culture puts more of a premium on successful speech for males than for females, and females accept the view that their own speech is unorganized, illogical and confused and therefore, do not try hard to persuade. It may also be men in our society are oriented toward winning, and therefore, would battle the danger of losing in communication. Swacker (1975) learned that males took more time to describe drawings than females. Wood's data (1966) may explain the phenomenon by noticing that males tend to describe in objective, physical, measurable terms, which require the use of more words. Females, on the other hand, use interpretative adjectives in description and these are more inclusive and therefore brief.

**MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR**

**Sensitivity**

Nonverbal human behaviors too, vary with the gender. In the U.S., they are often expressions of the dominant position of the male and the submissive one of the female. Even the differences in sensitivity to nonverbal cues may be an indication of power or lack of it.

The sensitivity to nonverbal cues is significantly higher in females than in males. Females read these cues with greater accuracy than males (Argyle, 1967). Frieze
(1974) believes that such sensitivity is learned and is common to people of lower status, who depend on these cues for survival.

**Volume**

Another example of a gender use of nonverbal behavior is the volume, or intensity of speech. According to Markel, Prebor and Brands (1972), males speak with greater intensity, or loudness than females. Moses (1954) said that fearful people often spoke in voices not loud enough to be heard easily. In our society a weak voice indicated a timid personality or an extreme reaction to a speaking situation. Eakins and Eakins (1978) suggest that many women who see themselves in submissive roles, seem to reflect their roles in their voices. The author, who grew up in Israel, was impressed that in the U.S., speaking softly was a desirable trait for females, while speaking loudly and clearly was a desirable trait for males. It seems that in Israel both sexes are encouraged to speak loud and clear.

**Use of space**

Mehrabian and Friar (1969) talk about the manner of sitting as an example of the use of space. According to them, males tend to sit in a relaxed manner, legs apart, arms away from the body, and take much space. Women keep their knees together, arms close to their bodies and sit in
straight chairs, so as not to take too much room. The author wonders if women really sit in that position in order not to take space or because they wear short dresses, or perhaps because of association with sexual cues and our cultural reaction to such cues. The peasant Arab woman, in comparison, is thought to be more submissive to men than the American woman, but she rarely sits in straight chairs, she usually squats, legs quite apart, (she wears long pants or long skirts) and is not concerned with the use of space, as the author observed sitting next to such women on the bus.

Sommer (1969) observes that more personal space is used by dominant animals and dominant human beings. Willis (1966) points out that actual distance between pairs, vary according to sex, age, and race. Rosenkrantz and McCroskey (1975) found that women are generally approached more closely than men by both women and men. Perhaps women's personal space is usually smaller than men's, as women are perceived as less dominant.

**Touch**

Clay (1968) studied touching behaviors and found that mothers touched their female children more than their male children, even as early in life as six months. He has also found that females of all ages were touched by both males and females more than males were, and that males touched females more often than females touched males. This
pattern is explained by some researchers as a reflection of sexual interest and sexual motivation on the part of men. Henley (1973) is opposed to this view because she does not find evidence for greater sexuality in males than in females. She rather regards touching as a sign of status or power. Henley sees touching as an invasion of one's personal space and as involving the deference or lack of deference accorded to the individual, especially in non-intimate situations. This approach is supported by Goodall (1971) who studied the touching behaviors of primates. Henley (1973) adds that touch may be interpreted differently by males than by females. Males often consider women's touch as a sexual invitation. This may be the reason that women avoid touching men. Females often interpret men's touch as an expression of friendliness, which may explain the reason for their allowing men to touch them. Eakins and Eakins (1978) note that touching as a pattern of sexual status shows up primarily in outdoor settings rather than indoor, perhaps because outdoor interaction requires more attention to signals of power, while indoors, power can be more easily communicated by other cues, such as gestures, voice shifts and eye movement.

Physical appearance

Finally, a word about physical appearance: According to Eakins and Eakins (1978), physical attractiveness and artifacts that contribute to appearance affect communication
responses. Singer (1964), explored the effect of female physical attractiveness on grades obtained in college from male professors. He concluded that attractive females received higher grades, especially if they came to see the professor in his office. Singer suggested that "men live by their brains and women by their bodies." No study has been done yet on the effect of male physical attractiveness on the grades males receive from female college professors.

Mills and Aronson (1965) and Eakins and Eakins (1978) learned that persuasive attempts, regardless of quality, were more effective with both sexes, when delivered by attractive looking females than by non-attractive ones. Physical attractiveness of male persuaders did not make much difference in the acceptability of the argument.

Summary

Eakins and Eakins (1978) as well as most of the other writers cited, seem to feel that the communication patterns of males and females in our society are expressions of inequality in status. The differences in behavior seem to roughly parallel those between superiors and subordinates. Many writers promote the idea that both males and females should work toward attainment of equality of status and power between the sexes.

The present study will look at all the above mentioned aspects of male-female communication, to see if
and how they are enacted by the Hmong of Missoula, while keeping in mind that some categories may yield data more interesting than others and new areas, which have not been discussed, may invite looking into.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach considered most appropriate for a pilot study such as this, is broadly called "qualitative methodology". Qualitative methodology has been used and refined in the past fifty years by sociologists and anthropologists, but it is relatively new to communication research. For the benefit of those unfamiliar with it, the author will attempt to describe the procedures she used in as much detail as she can. The interested reader may find more information about qualitative methodology by consulting the works of Filstead (1970), Harre and Secord (1976), Jacobs (1977), Lofland (1971), Madge (1965) and McCall and Simmons (1969). Relevant studies in communication, using similar methodology were done by Bormann, Pratt and Putnam (1974), Bradford (1977), Liebow (1967) and Philipsen (1975, 1977).

Procedures

The author's first concern was the gaining of entry into the Hmong community. She did not know a single Hmong person and was not sure that the Hmong would want to be interviewed. Talking to people in a related field proved to be helpful. A fellow anthropology student knew the official
interpreter for the Hmong who worked for the Department of Social Services in Missoula. The author saw the interpreter, told him about herself, the nature and the purpose of her study and asked for his help. The man was very polite but appeared cautious. He wanted to know why the author chose the Hmong for her subject. The author told him that she was herself a newcomer to this country not too long ago and therefore understood the communication problems of newcomers. She said she was from Israel, whose national history resembled somewhat that of the Hmongs, and that she has been studying the people of the Far East for a number of years and would be glad for the opportunity to understand the Hmong culture and communication better.

The interpreter seemed interested. He said that the Hmong needed friends in the new country, and contacts with the local community. He also said that since the author was a woman, she was in an especially good position to talk to the Hmong women, for the Hmong women would not talk freely to a man. He gave the author names and phone numbers of some men and women who, according to him were educated and who could speak English sufficiently well. The interpreter also promised to talk to these people about the author and her study. He said that no Hmong person would refuse to be interviewed, a remark which puzzled me then and which I understood later. It shall be discussed in the Discussion section.
The Interview

The methodology of "participant observation" includes a number of techniques, but only those which were used in the present study will be discussed here.

The author could not possibly observe the communication of the Hmong as an actual participant in their ongoing lives, since she is not a Hmong herself nor does she speak the Hmong language. The best alternative was to conduct "guided interviews". A "guided interview" is an interview based on the questions which the researcher wants to study. The interview is structured loosely so as to permit spontaneous conversation and the possible emergence of unanticipated but revealing data. A tentative schedule of questions is a helpful tool for such an interview; it serves as a thought clarifying device and as a guide for the interviewer. The initial schedule of questions (appended at the end of this section), was based partially on the ethnic literature and partially on the categories of the male-female literature.

The questions were presented to the interviewees in an order that the author considered a normal progression of conversation. They started with an introduction of self and moved gradually from a neutral "what is your name" to an exchange of increasing degrees of personal information, feelings and opinions.
As the interviewing proceeded, questions were altered, omitted or added. Questions were altered if their phrasing made them hard to respond to. Questions were omitted when they did not yield interesting data. Questions were added in a number of instances: (a) when clarification was required the author would rephrase the unclear statement, ask for an example or for explanation (b) when the author puzzled over some observed behavior, she would ask interviewees for comments and opinions (c) when the conversation touched on a point which seemed interesting, the author probed for additional information, for example:

Man: When we choose a wife, we look for one who does not have a small heart.

Author: What do you mean by small heart?

Man: I mean that she must be willing to share what she has in the house if someone asks for it; she should not say, "no, I don't have it" if she does have it.

Author: You mean she must not be stingy?

Man: Yah, not stingy.

Author: Would you like her to give to anyone, or only to the husband's relatives?

and so on, (d) some questions came up at the time of transcription of the taped interviews or while reading previous
interviews. Such questions were written on cards, filed under the "Questions" category (more on the category system later) and presented to the interviewees at the appropriate opportunity. For example, during a transcription of an interview, the expression "he has a black heart" came up. The author wondered if "small heart" and "black heart" were the same or different. She wrote the question on a card to be pulled out before the next interview and asked.

Not all interviewees were asked to respond to all the questions, but many questions were presented to at least two respondents. It must be noted that, however helpful and necessary the questionnaire was, much valuable information resulted from free conversations.

Respondents

At the time of the study, approximately two hundred Hmong people lived in Missoula and the neighboring Bitterroot valley. An accurate count was not possible because the Hmong move in and out of the area frequently due to their custom of migrating, location of available jobs and location of relatives and friends.

The area families represented about five clan names (for "clans" see Chapter One). This may be of some significance because there is some indication of clan differences in patterns of male-female communication. The Missoula group was relatively young; most adults being under
thirty years of age.

Eight Hmong people were interviewed for this study, five women and three men. It might have been ideal to have an equal number of interviewees from each sex, but this did not happen for two reasons. First, the few Hmong men who could speak English and were old enough to know about their culture and its male-female communication, were also holding jobs, active in their community, playing soccer and volleyball regularly and going fishing often. Although no one refused to be interviewed, it was hard to contact men. Second, the author was both inclined to and advised to focus on the women, because being a woman herself, she was in a position to gather data that men could not.

The men's ages were 27, 29 and 30 years. The ages of the women were 18, 21, 22 and 26. All interviewees were married except for the youngest woman, all had children. The interviewees' backgrounds varied to some degree. Some grew up in mountain villages and moved to the cities as the war caught up with them; others were city dwellers from the start. These differences affected the individual's communication and also his/her adaptation to life in the U. S.

About seventy hours, over a three month period, between May and August 1978, were spent in interviewing. Not all interviewees contributed equal number of hours. The distribution was the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 16 hours (married to woman D)</td>
<td>A: 12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: 9 &quot; (married to woman B)</td>
<td>B: 12 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: 9 &quot;</td>
<td>C: 9 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 28 hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total: 42 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty additional hours were spent talking to people who were not Hmong themselves but had contact with and some knowledge of the Hmong. They were:

1. An anthropologist who has studied the art and culture of the Hmong for more than a year previous to this study.

2. A social worker who has been appointed by the Department of Social Services to assist the Hmong with finding work, child care services and what is called in that department, "case work".

3. A nurse in public health who worked with the Hmong when they first came to Missoula.

4. A woman who, with her husband, sponsored a Hmong family and was greatly interested in helping the Hmong.

5. A teacher at the vocational-technical school who taught English to the Hmong women for a year.

6. A man who fostered two Hmong children for four years and sponsored a number of Hmong students.
(7) The Hmong interpreter, who, although a Hmong himself was consulted for general orientation.

(8) To Fu Vang, also a Hmong, who works with a linguist in Minneapolis, came to Missoula to give a lecture and a seminar about the Hmong, and was consulted for general orientation.

These persons were consulted in two ways. With the exception of the last two, they were shown or told about the various male-female categories under investigation and were asked to share any knowledge or perceptions that they might have had about those topics. Some of the people were consulted when the author needed advice, checking on her own perceptions and additional information. These contacts added insight not only into the Hmong's behavior, but also into the perception of the Hmong by their American hosts.

**Interviewing**

When the tentative schedule of questions was ready, the author called the first person on the interpreter's list, a woman. As the interpreter had said, she did not refuse to be interviewed; however, she was busy. The author told the woman that the woman could say "no" and the author would ask another person for an interview, but the woman seemed unwilling to say "no" and an appointment was made. The author was not sure whether she had been pushy by Hmong standards, missed a cue or followed the correct rules unknowingly. A
somewhat similar preliminary conversation preceded contacts with some other interviewees.

A series of interviews with the same interviewee were usually completed before making contact with another. The author found that this way she could concentrate her efforts on understanding each person more fully.

Only one family, a husband and wife, was interviewed in the home of the author. This couple lived out of town and came to Missoula occasionally. This also was the only couple who was interviewed together. All other interviews were conducted individually. All other interviews took place in the homes of the interviewees, so that the author had a chance to observe actual interaction between husbands and wives, parents and children, adults and other people's children, siblings, friends, neighbors and relatives. Much of the time the author did not understand what she saw or heard, but sometimes she made comments which led to some explanation from the interviewee. Thus, the "guided interview" was supplemented by observation, which, in turn, provided additional questions.

**Techniques**

When the Hmong interviewees were presented with direct questions, they invariably answered fully and at length. However, they seldom attempted to explore the subject or volunteer relevant information which was not explicitly asked
for. The author, assuming the Hmong had perceptions which she could not anticipate and therefore could not ask about, tried various ways to discover them. One way was to ask about what struck the Hmong as strange, offensive or funny in America. Another way was to share some of the author's own experiences and compare them with the responses of the interviewees. For example:

Author: Do you have any questions about why Americans do or say certain things?

Man: I don't really know much about that.

Author: Did anything that you have seen Americans do ever make you wonder or laugh?

Man: I really do not meet many Americans; I just go to work and come back and stay with my family; I do not have a chance to meet Americans.

Author: You know, when I came to this country, I lived in University Housing, across the hall from a family from Bengal. We used to get together and talk about those funny Americans, who did many things differently from us. Have you had similar experiences?

Man: Oh, we sometimes get together and we wonder about how a boyfriend and a girlfriend kiss in the middle of the road; they are not ashamed to be seen by everyone, young or old . . .
At other times the researcher asked the interviewee to tell her of incidents that happened to him or her or to someone they knew or to talk about their childhood, brothers and sisters, parents, relatives, and so on, topics that promised to enrich the understanding of the Hmong male-female communication. Such conversations were enjoyable and very interesting. Both men and women asked about American customs, and with some of the women, discussions became quite personal. Still, it was often difficult to receive information relevant to the predetermined communication categories. This might have been partly due to the language barrier. Many Hmong are learning English, but most vocabularies are still limited. Not only words sometimes could not be shared, but also concepts. Whenever we talked about "expression of feelings", the author had in mind a range of emotions such as joy, fear, satisfaction, achievement, power, frustration, jealousy, calmness, turbulence and on and on. The Hmong, on the other hand always responded in terms of male-female pre-marital love. Either the discussion of feelings is foreign to the Hmong, or in their language "feelings" translates to "love", or the author did not explain her idea of "feelings" adequately.

Another possible reason for the difficulty was the lack of intellectual curiosity among the Hmong. Such curiosity may have to be developed through formal education of
which most Hmong still have only very little. The one woman who graduated from a French high school was very interested in analyzing and explaining behavior.

Perhaps the interviewees had not heard of male-female communication previously and had no concepts to relate their experiences to. Finally, the Hmong, like everyone else, may take their own behavior for granted and therefore are unable to discuss it.

More information might have been collected had the author stayed in the field longer. Perhaps she could have learned more had she been less systematic in following the predetermined categories.

**Data gathering**

For the first few interviews, the author carried a pad of paper and pen. She asked for the interviewee's permission to take notes, and during the interview jotted down key words or sentences to help her remember the conversation or particular expressions. Immediately after the interview, the author parked her car a few blocks away from the house of the interviewee and using the notes and her memory, she wrote as much of the conversation as she could recall. The author assumed that taking a few notes would be less threatening to the interviewee than taping, and it may well be so. However, at the suggestion of an advisor, a tape recorder was introduced and permission was requested to
use it. The interviewees did not object to taping. They said that it did not matter to them, but the house was too noisy and the sound would not be clear. The interviewer said that the noise did not bother her and that she will be the only person to hear the tapes. She also said that she would erase the conversations as soon as the study is finished. From then on the interviews were taped, without noticeable difference between them and the non-taped ones. The benefits of taping were not having to slow down the conversation in order to take notes and much more accurate transcriptions.

Transcriptions

The tapes were played at home and transcribed. Every idea, item of information (even redundant), every expression, metaphor, fable, example of communication, example of methodology, reactions of interviewer and of interviewee and observations were taken down. Some items, such as metaphor, were transcribed word for word; others were made more concise. When this was done, the transcription was sorted into categories for the purpose of organizing the results. The technical process was as follows: The author obtained a file box, a supply of eight by five cards and a lot of dividers. Reading through the transcriptions carefully, every item of information was written on three-fourths of the right-hand side of the card. On the top of the card, the
date of the interview was noted as well as the name of the interviewee and the page number of the transcription. The possible categories of male-female communication that the information on the card pertained to, appeared on the left-hand side of the card, written in pencil, so they could be changed if necessary. Comments or thoughts which came to mind during this process, were also written in pencil between the data written in pen. These comments were part of the ongoing analysis, which began right from the very first interview. The cards were then placed behind dividers bearing the names of the respective categories. A place was given to a "Methodology" category and to a "Questions" category. Under "Methodology" were filed examples of methodology which were to be used in this section. Under "Questions" were assembled the questions which came to mind during the process of transcription, carding and just pondering. These questions were later asked of interviewees and often served as a check on the validity of the information.

When information belonged with more than one category, cross reference cards were made and filed, behind the right dividers. When writing began, all the relevant cards were assembled, read and analyzed.

The process of analysis began with the first encounter with the Hmong interpreter: What did he mean by saying that no Hmong would refuse to be interviewed? Why
are Hmong women shy in the presence of men? What did the interpreter think of a woman researcher, who in comparison with his sweet politeness seemed almost aggressive? Such

A sample of a card

(Name of interviewee) 7/27/78 (date of interview)

Categories:

1) Touch: Hmong do not touch each other past childhood. Not even same sex. Hmong do not like to be touched by Americans, but was once introduced to an American man who had been in Laos. She held out her hand to shake his, he ignored her. American men who had been to Laos do not talk to her when she is with her husband.

2) Adaptation: Perhaps for the Hmong touch has strong sexual connotation. In U.S.: sex, friendliness, power.

questions were part of the analysis, as were comparing notes with Hmong and with outsiders about behaviors and perceptions, decisions of what data to prescribe, under what categories to file it, comments written in pencil between the data, and constant pondering.

The final analysis took place only after all interviews were completed and the writing began. The "grand organization" (see Lofland, 1970) followed the order of the review of the male-female literature. This way the reader may follow more easily the comparison of the literature with
the results and the writer is spared the agony of inventing a new organization.

Since many of the questions in the interviews corresponded to the male-female literature, much of the results may be compared with that literature. However, some topics which were interesting to American researchers proved to be irrelevant for the Hmong, and some Hmong behaviors and views were foreign to the American researchers. These were some of the reasons for the "emergence" of new categories. "Emergence" of categories, or "Discovery" happens nowhere but in the mind of the author, as she sifted through the information. Transcribing, writing categories cards, comparing notes with others, turning material over in her mind and especially the writing of the results, were all occasions on which new categories could emerge. The new categories were no more than seeing new relationships between data and resulted from mental associations and synthesis of bits of information.

An example of a new category would be: During the discussion of the criteria for choosing a spouse, respondents stated that reputation played an important role for the Hmong. "Reputation" could be seen as just "criterion for choosing a spouse" and the data could be filed under this category but the concept of reputation was mentioned in other contexts, and seemed to deserve a special analytical treatment, so it was awarded a category status. Another
"emergent" category was "Adaptation". It resulted from the questions which the Hmong posed to the author, from their anecdotes of the things that happened to them in this country, their statements of their world view and discussion with outsiders.

Validity

The population for this study was the Hmong community of Missoula, Montana and the neighboring Bitterroot valley as existed during the Spring and Summer of 1978. This population consisted of approximately two hundred individuals, with the number changing constantly due to the ongoing migration in and out of the area.

Three men and five women were interviewed. The sample was clearly skewed in favor of women, and in favor of the more educated, English speakers among the Hmong group. In spite of the selectivity of the sample there is ground to believe that the data may be generalized to the rest of the population because (a) men and women did not disagree on the data (b) many of the families in the population are related to each other, often through more than one marriage tie, and therefore, may have adopted similar communication behaviors, (c) taking into account the possibility of communication differences between clans, an attempt was made to choose interviewees from all five clans represented in the area (d) conclusions were cross-checked with some Hmong interviewees
and with several non-Hmong observers.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested in two ways: (a) By agreement of experts. Four experts i.e., the members of the thesis committee, inspected the questions and found them to relate well to the categories investigated. (b) Most questionnaire items, unless omitted when proved not useful, were presented to at least two interviewees and the responses compared. Although the responses were not identical, they often demonstrated that the questions were comprehended as intended. Only the question about expression of feelings was understood by four interviewees as pertaining to male-female pre-marital courting, but was understood as intended by two interviewees who had the most western exposure. This particular case may have been a result of either a lingual misinterpretation or a cultural difference which, if pursued further, may turn to be quite interesting.

Although for the sake of exercise the above measures were taken, it did not really matter much whether the questions were truly reliable or not. The purpose of this study was primarily heuristic and the questions were used only as a guide, or a starting point. Actually, vague questions sometimes led to unpredicted responses, which was exactly what such a study is looking for.
Objectivity

Most scholars would agree that in spite of the refined and rigorous research methods available, even quantitative studies cannot boast absolute objectivity. The researcher who uses a qualitative methodology even expects a certain degree of subjectivity. But the value of scholastic investigation lies in its validity, and this one is closely related to relative objectivity. The researcher who ventures into a qualitative research study faces endless numbers of pitfalls to objectivity, most of which are listed in various books along with guidelines for avoiding them. Perhaps because the present study was of a very small scope and ended in a short period of time, that the author experienced, or at least was aware of only a few phenomena which, if continued unnoticed, might have affected the results. For instance, rapport seemed to be established more easily with the women than with the men (who were still very polite and helpful) and the author needed to be wary of bias. Also, as she immersed herself in the ethnic literature and spent much time interviewing the Hmong, the author felt swept by the charm, the exoticism and the mysteriousness of the Hmong. She so much strove to understand and to know everything about the Hmong that she wished to become part of their lives; she "went native" as McCall and Simmons (1969) would say. Fortunately, she had been warned about this syndrome. In order
to regain mental balance and perspective, the author occasionally took time off from the study, or talked with outsiders who had different approaches than her own. She read again in methodology books about the role of the participant observer and about experiences of other observers, she made a habit of reminding herself of her role during interviews and made a point of meeting non Hmong people.

The results were written six months after the interviewing period. By this time, the author felt that she was sufficiently detached from involvement with the respondents that she could treat the data more objectively.

During the interviewing, a constant soul-searching had to be maintained for the sake of keeping the researcher's reactions from standing in the way. For example, some interviewers tended, as was to be expected, to present the ideal picture of the Hmong behavior rather than the actual one. They were either unaware of the real behaviors, or thought they were asked about the ideal, or preferred to say what would be acceptable to the "American ear". Some such information was uncovered through accidental cross-checking, through comparison with concrete examples and through discussion with other outside observers. The author was aware that she felt impatient with the "idealists", and had to remind herself that she was dealing with normal human nature, and that she was a researcher and not a judge. Had
the author not kept check on her feelings and responses, she might have ruined her relationship with the Hmong as well as her study.

It was important to remain objective and non-judgmental; however, the fact that mental and emotional reactions did exist and needed to be introspected on, probably added a number of questions to the interviews and were certainly a source of some insight.

Ethics

"If the strategy of participant-observation calls for achieving access to and acceptance by "social circles" for the purpose of encouraging unwitting revelation of information by their members, does this practice constitute a violation of prevailing ethical principles of our society? ... the present note suggests certain criteria for judging when the practice of participant-observation is ethically acceptable. If a social group under observation has a newcomer's role which permits the practice of participant observation, and if the ong-run functioning of the group is not disrupted by the unsuspected observation made by the investigator and his subsequent departure from the group, then there would appear no violation of prevailing ethical norms. This statement assumes, of course, that the investigator's report does not "damage" any respondent or subject, nor does it make it impossible for another investigator to enter this
group as a participant-observer at a later date. If all these conditions hold, standards of both the local group and the larger society would appear to be met". (McCall and Simmons, 1969)

The question of "newcomer role" was irrelevant for this particular study, because the researcher obviously could not belong to the Hmong society. Nor was it possible, necessary or desirable to conceal the purpose or the methods of the investigation. Each respondent knew the exact purpose and the procedures of the study. Notes were taken only with permission, as was the case with taping. All respondents were promised anonymity and confidentiality. No information that was considered personal by either respondent or researcher, or which betrayed the identity of a respondent, was ever used.

But there were other ethical problems. Right from the start, the author experienced discomfort when she asked for respondent's time without knowing what she could give in return. Her advisors encouraged her, saying that she could give "interest" and "amusement" to the Hmong, that everyone liked to talk about their own culture, and that she could provide the Hmong with information which they needed. It turned out that the Hmong did ask for information about American customs, services and so forth, but they definitely contributed more than they gained.
Not only did the researcher have a need to reciprocate, she also strove to create rapport and be accepted among the respondents. She needed to keep check on the efforts she made in those directions for fear of going overboard and losing neutrality as a result. A number of times the author found herself drawn unwittingly into husband-wife disputes. As interesting and instructive as these might be, they placed the investigator in an awkward position. She had to stop pursuing contact with one respondent and resorted to a greater formality in her relations with another.

As far as the safety and reputation of the whole Hmong group is concerned, this study has dealt with general cultural issues which seem mild and unthreatening, rather than with organization, politics or personalities, which may be susceptible to damage. Nevertheless, the Hmong may be quite vulnerable to any published information about them, may it be as innocent as male-female communication. First, there is a high rate of unemployment in Missoula. Some Viet Nam veterans in town are unemployed and they wrote angry letters to the local newspaper about giving jobs to foreigners instead of veterans. These people are looking for any derogatory and incriminating evidence to get rid of their competition. Second, everyone is naturally interested in a positive personal and public image, but the Hmong
traditionally are especially sensitive to "face". Particularly so in this country, where they are few and new and at a great educational and occupational disadvantage. A number of respondents, Hmong as well as non-Hmong, expressed concern about the publication of the data. The Hmong have been aware of some behavior differences between themselves and the Americans. When asked to comment generally about male-female communication among the Hmong, many respondents said: "You may not like it, but . . ." Two women in particular requested objective interpretation of the behavior of the Hmong man, which to them seemed very different from the American men. While intending to present the data as accurately as she can, the author did her best to treat it with objectivity, and with respect for both American and Hmong cultures. She prays that no one will be hurt as a result of this small study, and that her presence among the Hmong will not damage the opportunity of future investigators to do more research with these people.
TENTATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your name?
   a. If you are a woman, what was your name before you married?

2. What is your age? Do you mind giving your age?

3. What is your relationship to this household?

4. Who else lives in this house?
   a. How are they related to you? To each other?

5. Do you have relatives in Missoula or the area?

6. Where exactly did you come from? (Laos, Thailand, province, village, city)

7. What tribe do you belong to? And your spouse?

8. Are other Hmong in Missoula from the same tribe?

9. Are there Hmong in Missoula from other tribes?
   a. If there are, what are they?
   b. Do you speak the same language?
   c. Do they do things differently from you?

10. Could you describe your education?
   a. When did you first go to school?
   b. For how long?
   c. What language used in school?
   d. What kinds of things did they teach?

11. Could you tell me about the education of the other people in the house?
12. How important is education to you?
   a. If you could educate only some of your children, which ones would they be?

13. Could you tell me a little bit about your religion?
   a. It does not matter to me what religion you hold. The only reason I am asking is because some
      religions affect people's behavior. For example, Christians are allowed to marry only one wife at a time.
   b. According to your religion, who made male and female?
   c. Did whoever made them give them rules of how to behave?
   d. I assume that there are ways of behavior which are right for women and ways which are right for men, and there are ways which are not right for either of them, am I wrong?
   e. What happens to the person who does the wrong thing?
   f. What behaviors are right for Christian Hmong? Could you give examples?

14. If you are not Christian, how do you practice your religion here?
   a. Who has religious duties? Men? Women? Of what age or status?
   b. If you would like to change someone's relationship with you, is there any religious thing that you could do, such as praying, sacrifice, etc.?
15. I wonder how you like the food here. Have you tried American food?
   a. Who does the cooking usually?
   b. Are there occasions on which certain people are not allowed to cook or serve food?
   c. Does all the family eat at the same time? Together?
   d. If not, who is served first? Second? Last?
16. What do you do when someone in the house is sad?
   a. Could you think of a time when you were sad? Your husband and/or wife? How was it shown? How do others show it?
17. Could you tell me about your childhood?
   a. Where did you grow up?
   b. How did you spend your time?
   c. Who did you spend most of your time with? (Children, adults, boys, girls, etc.)
   d. Were there certain individuals with whom you were not to speak, be alone with, serve food or drink to?
   e. Can you describe what kind of things you used to do with other boys? Other girls? At age 5, 10, 16?
18. Can you remember how you were treated by your mother when you were not behaving right? By your father? Others in the family?
19. What is considered a good behavior for a girl? A boy?
20. What is considered a bad behavior for a girl? A boy?
21. Do you still consider the same behaviors good or bad?
22. How did your mother show you that she loved you? And your father? Other members of the family? Friends? Lovers?
23. What did your mother do when she was angry with you? And your father?
   a. Did they do the same things to your brother/sister when they were angry with them?
24. Who are the people you are most friendly with?
   a. Are they members of your family? Outside the family?
   b. What sort of things do you do with your friends?
   c. What kinds of things do you usually talk about with a good friend?
   d. Are there certain things which you would not discuss with a friend but will discuss with your mother or father, or other relatives?
   e. What are the things which you would not discuss with or in the presence of the opposite sex?
   f. Is there anybody to whom you can talk about your personal feelings?
   g. How important is it to you to talk about your feelings?
25. How did you choose your spouse?
26. How did you meet?
27. How did you let each other know that you liked each other?

28. Are you his/her first wife/husband?

29. If you are a woman, does your husband have more than one wife?

30. If he does, how do you feel about it?

31. Did your father have more than one wife?

32. If he did, what was the relationship between the wives? How did you feel about it?

33. What does a woman/man get married for? What does she/he get out of it? What do you think the opposite sex would say about it?

34. Who makes the decisions in the family?

35. What do you do or say when you want to influence decisions in the family?
   a. What would your spouse say or do when you attempt to influence a decision?
   b. How has decision-making in the family changed since you came to the U.S.?

36. You have probably noticed that American people touch each other when they like each other. How do you feel about it? Would you hug your husband in front of others? Your lover? Your child? Brothers? Sisters?

37. How would you show affection to children? When and where would you do it?
38. What can you do or say that will displease your husband/wife?
39. What do you do or say when your spouse displeases you?
40. How does the disagreement usually end?
41. Would you ask anyone to mediate in a dispute between you and your husband/wife?
   a. Who would that person be?
42. Are there words in the Hmong language which are used to describe only men or only women? For example, in English we have words such as "bachelor", "spinster".
43. What work do men do that women won't do? And vice versa?
44. What do you consider as traits typical to women? Men?
45. Could you describe an ideal woman? Consider looks, traits, ability, status. Other things that come to your mind.
46. What do you look for in a wife? Husband?
47. Is ideal wife the same as ideal woman? Man/husband?
48. What do you consider attractive in a woman? Man? Could you describe?
49. How important is looks in being attracted to a man? A woman?
50. No one is perfect, so perhaps your spouse is not either. If you could change three things about him/her, what would they be?
51. If you could change things between men and women to be the way you like them best, what would you change?
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The data in this chapter was collected by a number of qualitative methods, primarily by means of a "guided interview". Five Hmong women and three Hmong men contributed their knowledge, perceptions and opinions on issues of male-female communication. The tentative questionnaire to those guided interviews appears at the end of Chapter Three.

The interviews with the Hmong people were supplemented by some researcher's observations and by interviews with non-Hmong who have had contact with the Hmong in various capacities. (See Chapter Three)

The data which corresponds to the review of the male-female literature in Chapter Two, are reported in the order of the review. This may make reference to the review easier.

SEX ROLES

Let us open the discussion with findings which are not linked to any particular category, but are checked against some general statements in the literature. For example: Most writers on the subject of male-female communication believe that the differences in communication between males and females are manifestations of the inequality of the
sexes, Williams (1970) and Warshay (1972) say that men are viewed as those who initiate activity, are deferred to, who put their interests first and act directly to further them. Women respond to males, are sensitive to their needs, put their interests second and use indirection in gaining their own needs.

Statements made by Hmong respondents indicate that some of the Hmong attitudes are similar. Hmong men, too, initiate activity. One woman said: "Men do not cry, if a man cries, other men will say that he cannot do anything, he can just cry like a woman." Another woman said: "Men are strong, they can do things. When they are angry, they can fight; when a woman is angry she can only cry." Still another woman's story suggests how such differences may be created: "When I was a girl, sometimes my little brother would kick me. I would be mad and wanting to kick him too, but my grandmother would say to me; 'you cannot kick your brother, you must remember that you are a girl and girls do not kick.' Then I was angry and I cried, and my grandmother said: 'you should not cry because you are a girl and girls should not cry'. I said: 'Why can my brother kick me?' and my grandmother said: 'Boys are like that.'"

Another example of men's actions and women's inaction is apparent from the statement of the man who said: "When I have a fight with my wife, I just leave the house for an hour
or two, go to a friend's house, until I am not angry anymore ... but she stays home and cries." The man's wife verified this and added that some men, when angry, beat their wives or shout at them but women do not usually shout or beat their husbands; they just cry.

One more activity which only men may initiate is courtship, as a man described: "If the boy likes a girl, he can come and visit her. If he is shy, he can come to the girl's house at night, but he won't go in; just play the mouth harp behind the girl's bedroom wall. With the music he would tell her where to meet him. If she likes him they could meet. If a boy thought that the girl's parents would like him, he could come inside and talk with the family and try to talk with the girl. Hmong girls never refuse to see a boy in their house. If they like the boy they will treat him nicely, perhaps offer something to drink.¹ If they don't like him, they are still polite, but try to ignore him ... Hmong girls never go to visit a boy's house. They are shy and never start a conversation with a strange man." All the respondents who were consulted about the subject agreed with the statement but some added that in reality

¹Bernatzik (1949) and others wrote that when a girl offers water to a "visiting husband" (suitor), it is a symbol of acceptance; offering alcohol is an invitation. The Hmong in Missoula insisted that the liquid itself had no symbolic meaning. What matters is the degree of interest which the girl shows to the boy.
some Hmong girls attempt to initiate courtship indirectly. They have the opportunity to do so during the New Year's Festival (see Chapter Two) by showing special attention to a particular boy, catching the ball thrown by a certain boy, during the traditional ball game, or by other means of flirting. On other occasions a girl may ask a third party to let a boy know that she likes him.

Initiation of certain activities is expected from women and is carried out by them. These are mostly in the women's domain, the chores related to the household. In some families the women control the family purse. Therefore, instead of stating that men initiate activity, it may be more accurate to say that Hmong men have the right and obligation to initiate certain activities, and women have the right and obligation to initiate others.

Like the western women, Hmong women, too, defer to men. A non-Hmong observer noticed that Hmong women would not talk to her in the presence of a man. The women would say that they could not speak English, which often was not accurate, and would let the man speak for them. The author encountered such behavior only in two cases, perhaps because circumstances led her to interview the most Americanized families.

Deference to men may be inferred from the fact that a Hmong female must ask permission from her parents or her
husband when she wants to go somewhere. Men, on the other hand seldom inform their wives about their movements. This behavior was observed and later checked with respondents. One woman said: "Husbands do not usually tell their wives where they go, where they had been or what they are doing. They do not like to be asked about it either because they do not like to report." The woman explained: "Wives usually do not mind, because in the village they are home all the time, or at most, at a neighbors. Wives do not go anywhere. . . . If they need help, the household is large and it does not matter when the husband comes, or that the wife does not know where he is . . . even here, there are so many people around; if the wife must leave the house, someone will take care of the children." This explanation may be valid but the author feels that not having to report is also a privilege of the person in the position of power. She recalls instances of western families in which the husbands refused to report to their wives of their actions, and in which the wives accepted the fact, although they lived in a nuclear family in town.

Hmong women must tell parents or husbands where they are going, because parents are protective of their daughters and their own reputation, and "husbands", one woman said, "are jealous". Another woman remarked: "My husband thinks I may be going to meet my boyfriend." American investigators
may interpret the behavior as deference to men, since it is believed that an inferior is asked to provide more personal information than a superior. Apart from the fact that Hmong women are subordinate to men, one must recognize that women are more vulnerable than men and have to be protected. It used to be and still is true in the west and in a country such as Laos even more so. First, there was no law in Laos to protect unmarried women from abduction. In Laos, it used to be a common practice for Hmong men to kidnap unattended single women for wives. Second, many marriages were arranged without the girl's consent, and therefore, husbands sometimes had reasons to be jealous. The point is that indeed, having to stay close to the house and having to report on movements is a show of subordination and deference, but it results from biological and social conditions. Many male-female behaviors in western societies are possibly remnants of similar conditions.

As far as sensitivity of the Hmong women to the needs of men, it is hard to tell whether the women are sensitive or simply being obedient and perform their expected duties. The structure of the Hmong family, with the great separation between males and females, does not seem to call for such sensitivity. The little contact and scant communication between the sexes, presents little opportunity for it.

Exposure to western influence may be reflected in the words
of the young man who said: "I want a wife who will help me, who will understand me . . . but I think that what I want is too American and perhaps you should not write that." A highly westernized woman had an insight into the behavior of Hmong men: "Women have to understand their husbands; husbands have their own responsibilities and tensions to deal with." Three less educated women felt that their husbands were too domineering and were taking advantage of the wives.

Do the Hmong men, like the American men, put their own interests first? Respondents of both sexes agreed that for the Hmong, men are more important than women. Some, although more harshly disciplined than girls, are given more freedom, material goods, education and so on, than are girls. The Hmong say that this inequality is due to the fact that boys remain with the family, but girls leave to marry into other families. When they grow up, men are free to come and go as they please. Married men may go courting and some take more than one wife without consideration of the feeling of the first wife and her children. In these respects the Hmong men put their interests first. In others, his circumstances are different from those of the western man, and therefore the behaviors of the two are different. The western man lives in a society which promotes independence and individualism. His major responsibility is to himself and his interests may thus center around himself. The Hmong man, in
contrast, lives in a system in which all members are interdependent. In the words of To Fu Vang (see Chapter Three):

"A Hmong person sees himself not so much as an individual, but as a part of his family and lineage with certain expected roles and behaviors." A Hmong man must take into consideration the consequences of his decisions and behaviors on the welfare and reputation of his patrilineal family. The Hmong have structured their survival efforts around the principles of cooperation and reciprocity within their own family and lineage and between lineages allied by marriage contracts. According to this system, every member has the right to request and expect help and protection from the other members of the family or lineage, and is also obligated to provide such services when requested to do so. The fact that the Hmong do not usually refuse requests from strangers, such as the author's request for interviewing time, may be explained as a gesture of good will, with the hope and understanding that it will be reciprocated. In the case of this particular study, the respondents requested the author for information about various services, such as legal and social, about jobs, education and rules of behaviors. They also expressed a need for contact with the local community, which they have not yet established to a satisfactory degree.
The Hmong men consider especially the other males in his extended family who are usually the father and the brothers. These people are economically interdependent, they live and work with great cohesiveness and mutual loyalty, which remains, though to a lesser degree, even after the sons establish their own households. The dependence on harmonious working relationships between the males of the family may explain in part the structured discouragement of communication between husbands and wifes; the men say that women talk too much and complain too much, and a man who talks much is considered womanly and is not respected, all in an attempt to maintain cohesiveness among the men and avoid any influence which may hinder it.

The interests of the Hmong women are also structured differently from those of western women. As daughters, the Hmong women, like the Hmong men, are loyal to the family of their fathers. As wives, they traditionally become part of their husband's family, and even their souls are reborn into the husband's lineage. In reality, wives are not totally absorbed into their new families. For example, when a woman is asked for her last name, she gives her father's lineage name. She will give her husband's last name only if asked for it explicitly: "What is your husband's last name?" Some data shows that wives would like to have more influence on their husbands: "If I could change a few things about him,
I would like him to listen to me." Some women would like their husbands to spend time with them and their children instead of with the man's parents and brothers.

According to Cohen (1976)\(^2\) the major interests of wives are vested in their own family unit of themselves, husbands and children. Cohen believes that wives are subtly encouraged, or pushed into situations where they cause disharmony, so they can be blamed for the inevitable necessity to divide the original extended family into separate households. When the wives are made responsible for the breakup, the brothers can keep their alliances unmarred, while at the same time tending to the needs of their own dependents. Hmong women said that they liked the American custom of husband, wife and children living in their own house; "It is quiet" they said. Perhaps part of the reason is their experience with the tensions imposed on them, and their desire to avoid them.

The description above was true for the Hmong who lived in China and Laos before the war. According to To Fu Vang and to local observations, various changes have occurred to the Hmong family. Wars, displacement and dispersion of individuals and families, have caused the extended family to disintegrate. This situation is disturbing to the Hmong,\(^2\)

\(^2\)Cohen actually studied the rural Chinese family in Taiwan, but the structure of the family, society and communication of the rural Chinese are very similar to the Hmongs.
whose many aspects of life are structured around the family organization. The changes in the family may lead to faster changes in the male-female communication of the Hmong, than would occur by mere exposure. The Hmong in Missoula are striving to preserve their familiar way of life, but one can already observe some changes in life styles, adaptation of local concepts and in some families—of communication.

Hmong women often use indirection in gaining their interests. In courtship for example, a girl may prefer a particular suitor, but since she is not allowed to court actively, all she can do is encourage him by indirect means, such as offering drink or food. Other suitors are never turned down directly. A man with courting experience described: "You ask the girl if you may drop her a note or come to see her; she does not say 'no'. In our country, if she has a boyfriend, she never says 'sorry, I have a boyfriend,' she says 'it is fine, you may come to see me.' She talks with you and answers everything, but if you say you want to marry her, she can say 'sorry, I cannot marry' or perhaps 'we should not marry'. She will never say 'I will marry someone else'; she never explains to you why. She may see several boys but like only one. One should not take very long to ask if a girl wants to marry; about two weeks or so. If she says 'no', the boy knows and does not come anymore".
Women also may not demand or complain to their husbands or express their desires openly to them, because that, too, is viewed as complaining. One woman confided: "When I don't like something or when I want something I cannot get, I just make a sad face, and my husband can ask what is the matter; then I can tell him. If I just tell him, he says that women complain too much."

Hmong men act, in certain situations, directly to further their interests. Little boys may kick their sisters; when they grow they may initiate courtship and if they are angry they can shout, beat and fight. Yet, with regard to male-female communication, neither women nor men are free to act directly. With the exception of husbands and wives, most male-female communication, to the degree that it exists at all, is mediated through a third party, usually a mother. Husbands and wives keep "face" and form by talking only "business" during the day; but in bed, at night, they may talk about feelings and relationships. Other than spouses, males and females are expected to avoid each other. The women respondents said that after they were five years old, they hardly talked to their fathers; they were afraid of them and of all older men in the family. One woman said that when her father talked to her she assumed that she did something wrong. Two women assured the researcher that they could talk to fathers, but when asked about the content of
conversation with fathers both said that they could ask for money. Fathers too, prefer to communicate with their daughters through the girl's mother. Brothers and sisters have little in common: "The girls stay home and help, and the boys have their games". "Sure you can talk to your sister," said a man, "but you cannot talk to her about love." "You speak to your brothers politely" (formally?) said a woman. A young woman related that she never talked to her older brother until this year, when she was in a crisis. Both brother and sister were educated in the west. Fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are even more careful in avoiding each other, and so are older brothers-in-law and their sisters-in-law. Married women avoid talking unnecessarily to strange men and strange men would ignore the presence of a married woman, especially if she is accompanied by her husband. The reasons for this avoidance is probably the close physical proximity in which the members of the Hmong extended family live. They are in constant danger of sexual transgression, which, if not kept in check, may be detrimental to the working relationship and to the economic and social structure of the Hmong family. Another possible reason for keeping men and women separate from each other is to maintain the world of men uninfluenced by the women, thus protecting the family structure, which is necessary for survival, but is not favorable to women. Other societies also separate men and
women, although in different forms and to different degrees. It is true for the Australian aboriginees who see their wives just a few days a year, as it is for our own society, with men's and women's clubs, Little League, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls and so on.

In all human societies males and females are trained from an early age to act according to their sex and are taught to believe that "certain qualities, behaviors and rights belong to an individual because a person fits a category such as being a male or being a female." (Sherriffs and McKee, 1975) The Hmong grant males the right and obligation to make decisions concerning the whole family, such as where to live, when to move there, what house to buy or build. Only men may become leaders; in Missoula, men only serve on the board of the Hmong Association. Men have the right to act directly in certain situations, such as courtship. They may shout at their wives, beat them, although "It is not considered good, but some people do". In Laos men could even kill wives or children. The males in the family have the right to keep their children if the mother dies or divorces. Married men have the right to court unmarried women and to marry more than one wife. In the U.S., they cannot legally do so, but some Hmong, the author has heard, have a hard time accepting the fact. In their mountain villages they have always lived according to their own
customs and paid little attention to the ways of their host countries. Some men here expressed a desire to go back to Laos and marry a second wife. Men also have the right to come and go without telling their wives, or go live on their own if they so choose. Many of these rights are also obligations or result from social pressure, as one man explained when his wife accused him of beating her: "She wants to be free like an American, but we are Hmong; if I let her run loose and do what she wants, what will the other Hmong say of us?"

Being a man means being responsible not only for the welfare of the family, but also for the behavior and reputation of its members.

Hmong women may accept or refuse courtship, but in many cases they must obey their fathers who have the right to choose husbands for them. Women have the right and obligation to make decisions about the household and in some families—to control family finances. Women may not court, may not complain to men, may not intervene in family conflict and may not hold leadership positions. In Laos, they could not usually keep their children if they divorced, but in the U.S., they may seek the help of the law if they wish.
STEREOTYPES

When we say that males and females own different qualities and behaviors, then we are stereotyping. A list of male and female stereotypes was compiled by Rosenkrantz et al (1968) (see Chapter Two) and was presented to some Hmong men and women who were requested to compare each item with the view of the Hmong. The results are the following: Like the American woman, the Hmong woman, too, avoids harsh language, but so do men; the difference between men and women is mostly in the tone of voice. She is also more talkative than man. Is she tactful? One woman said: "Men are more tactful because they talk only business." A man thought that women were more tactful because "they would never criticize anyone to their face; they can if they want to, but they never do." Perhaps the word "tactful" meant different things to the two people. Awareness of the feelings of others "depends on the person", or "hard to be aware of the feelings of the Hmong, because they do not like to show their feelings." The degree of religiousness, also "depends on the person" and some respondents thought that women were more concerned with religious matters than men, perhaps because women are more helpless and need hope and support from somewhere.
Young Hmong women are interested in their appearance, but so are young Hmong men. Neatness in habits is irrelevant to the Hmong as one man observed: "The Hmong live so simply and own so little that there is nothing to keep neat."

Ideally, the Hmong woman is quiet, but some respondent said with a smile that real women are not always so. Hmong women used to have a strong need for security, which was not surprising, since they were almost totally dependent on the men in their families. This is how one woman expressed it: "The Hmong say that if you get married, your husband will take care of you when you are sick, but if you stay with your mother and father, who will take care of you when they die?" In Missoula, many Hmong women seek more independence by receiving education and work-training. Some already hold paying jobs.

While American women appreciate art and literature, the Hmong have no written literature and very few forms of art, but a number of respondents thought that the women were the ones who did the batic and the embroidery and who usually told the "stories" to the young children. The semi-professional, story tellers, however, are men. One Hmong woman in Missoula expressed her desire to learn how to paint, an art almost unknown to the Hmong, and another woman wishes to learn the English language well, "because I want to write
American women are characterized as tending to express tender feelings, and we shall find later that it is a valued trait for American women, but not for American men. Among the Hmong, the expression of tender emotion is not valued with either sex. Work, hard work, and harmony of work relationship, are of the utmost importance for the Hmong family, whose members must cooperate in order to survive in harsh conditions and with meager technology. Emotions of any kind, as well as unnecessary communication, are either a luxury in terms of time and energy, or outright undesirable because they may arouse jealousies and other tensions in the family and thus, may be detrimental to all concerned.

Hmong men and women behave very tenderly with very young children of both sexes. They talk to them with patience and gentleness, hug, hold, kiss and touch them. Some mothers were observed to demonstrate their fondness for their children by slapping the children's rear, quite hard, with the back of their hand, and in other ways handle the child roughly though lovingly. Perhaps such behavior makes the children tough.

Hmong mothers may show tenderness only toward their daughters, young or grown, but never toward growing or grown sons, and fathers avoid contact with growing and grown
It was said earlier that women can cry. This question, however, is somewhat controversial. On the one hand, Hmong and other women "cannot do anything but cry" and apparently they do cry a lot. On the other hand they are not supposed to cry: "you should not cry because you are a girl", and General Vang Pao said about his mother that she had good eyesight because she never in her life shed a tear. (Bessac, 1978) Men may cry only at funerals. Actually, then they are expected to cry, or will be considered heartless, but if a man cries on other occasions he is thought weak. Some interviewees said that men do cry a lot anyway.

Like the American man, so is the Hmong man stereotyped as aggressive, independent, unemotional, although one woman thought that "men have emotions just like everybody else, but they do not show them". American men are stereotypically objective, but Hmong men are not, according to two men interviewees. One woman thought that at least men were more objective than women.

The word "active" did not make clear sense to the respondents because it is not specific. Hmong are active; both males and females work hard.

Hmong men are competitive to some degree. They compete very hard in soccer and volleyball games. Ball games
may be viewed as rituals, and thus acceptable cooperation and mellowness which the men must display within the family and the social group.

Hmong men are not logical, a man was convinced, but his wife thought that at least they are more logical than women. (She is a very logical woman herself). Logic is probably not a value in the east as it is in the west and the Hmong may have never heard of it before they met the French in Laos. According to Rosenkrantz's list, the American man is easily influenced, but it does not say by what or by whom. Whatever the case, the Hmong man, at least, certainly would not like to be influenced by a woman. Women's opinions are seldom solicited and if she volunteers it, she is usually ignored. A man knows that to admit consulting his wife, means to be laughed at by both men and women.

The American man is thought to be dominant. The Hmong men traditionally dominates women and younger men, but never older men, who are revered. In addition, Hmong men are not excitable in minor crises, and are expected to be self-confident and ambitious, "but I am not ambitious at all" said a man, to demonstrate that in actuality, this, too, "depends on the person".

Are the Hmong "worldly"? This word was too abstract. Do they know the ways of the world? Men do more than women, perhaps, but not very much at that, because they have been
isolated in the hills for generations, and liked it this way.

It is hard to tell if the feelings of a Hmong man are easily hurt or not, because he would not show his feelings, but the respondents thought that men pay less attention to feelings than women. If this is true, it may be attributed to the fact that since men are expected to act and are free to do so, they are more interested in action and its outcome, while women, who are more confined and dependent must get their satisfaction from interpersonal relationship, and therefore are more sensitive to them.

The Hmong man is naturally adventurous. The Hmong used to live in remote jungles in which they had to hunt and fish and fight and often to migrate into new and unknown parts.

While the American man makes decisions easily, the Hmong man makes decisions after consulting with other adult male members of the family, or with friends.

According to Rosenkrantz's statement, western men love math and science. Like logic and literature, so have math and science been foreign to the Hmong until recently. Lately, the Hmong began to attend French, Laotian and American schools, but have not established sex preferences for any subject. The one Hmong person in Missoula who deals with numbers is a young woman who is studying accounting.
The other items on the list appeared to be the same for Americans and for Hmong except the one which says that women characteristically project warmth and support. The Hmong women are not encouraged to express their feelings, and their warmth and support are not projected but are probably expressed in some subtle and non-demonstrative ways. One woman recalled that her mother supported her decision to marry against the father's choice, by not saying anything.

In addition to providing the list of male and female stereotypes, Rosenkrantz et al. (1968) also suggested a number of general observations. First, they said that male stereotypes are considered superior to female. This is true also for the Hmong; Hmong men are able to do, they do not cry, they have good judgment, all of which are valued traits; women can only cry, cannot "do," are weak, their judgment is poor and they complain too much, all of which are inferior qualities. Second, the scholars above concluded that the stereotyped characteristics are also the desirable ones for each sex. In the case of the Hmong it is not always so. Men stereotypes appear to be desirable for men, but some women stereotypes are too derogatory to be desirable. For example, crying is a female characteristic, as are gossip, complaining, and inaction, all of which are undesirable. Some valued traits for both males and females
have nothing to do with stereotypes, but are rather related to economy, social structure, taste and survival; the example which will demonstrate this point will also lead us to the discussion of valued traits for Hmong males and females. All respondents were asked about desirable traits for women, but either because of language or for some other reason the question seemed unanswerable. When inquired about desirable traits for wives, the answers became very specific. Perhaps being a wife is the major context in which a Hmong woman is seen. The men respondents said they preferred a strong, clever, competent woman; one said: "I want a wife who is smart, has good ideas, who does a good job on anything she does." The women thought that men wanted hard working wives, certainly not lazy, "She should get up early, make breakfast for everyone, take care and serve everybody, take care of the animals, work in the fields, know how to do everything in the house, make clothes". One respondent suggested that "Men like women to be strong and healthy so they can work and bear many children". Some men and women thought that everyone likes a pretty woman", but others said that choosing a wife by her looks only is "not very wise", "if she is pretty she is only to look at, but if she does not work, it is not good". "Young men may like a pretty girl, but if she does not work, his mother and father don't like it." "If the family needs help, they want their son to marry someone
who can work, but if they have enough people they like someone with 'open heart'. 'Open heart' means that if a brother or cousin comes to borrow something, she does not say that she does not have it." Finally, "A wife should come from a family with a good reputation; not rich, but good people".

Men's family reputation is an asset for them. They are preferred if their family is reputed to treat wives well. If it is known that a woman who had married into that family committed suicide due to mistreatment, no girl would want to join that group. "Even if someone wants to change, no one would believe him." Both men and women thought that a man is valued if he is strong, hard working, smart, and a good provider. One woman wanted her husband to give her more attention, and be more considerate of her. Some man thought that women, like men, preferred a handsome spouse, but the women denied it unanimously. Another male trait, if not valued, at least attractive and successful, is being able to play the mouth harp well or sing ritual songs well, all during the courting time at the New Year's Festival. The author was told that some girls actually fall for those good musicians, but she has not met any couple whose courting started in this manner.

It is interesting to compare the Hmong valued traits for males and females with the findings of Reece (1964) who said that "both men and women prefer strong, but very tender
males, and emotionally and physically strong females." To conclude this section of the results and their discussion, a few words on the division of labor among the Hmong are needed. (See Tobias, unpublished manuscript, Chapter Two, for her opinion on the topic). The Hmong seem to divide labor similarly to other people: The Hmong man does the hard physical work: falling trees, building a house or a fence, lifting heavy things (except for water from the spring, or wood for the hearth). He hunts, fishes, works in the field, fights wars and makes certain decisions. The woman does the housework: she cooks, cleans, washes, serves, feeds the animals, tends the kitchen garden, cares for babies, sews clothes and handles finances. Sometimes she works in the field. If the wife is sick or if there is no woman in the house, the men would do whatever is necessary. A Hmong father was observed keeping an eye on young children when his wife was away. One man prepared lunch for his family, including his wife who was being interviewed. Another man was packing his own dinner to take to work with him, and a teenage boy was washing dishes in the house in which he stayed, to help the woman of the house who was employed someplace. One woman said that in her father's house (her father was an army official in Laos), men soldiers did all the housework, and as a result she never learned to do any housework herself, until, at the age of fifteen, she married, and her
husband taught her those skills! It seems that the Hmong divide the labor according to what works best for them and makes sense, with more flexibility and less stigma attached to roles than in the west.

**MALE-FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN VERBAL BEHAVIOR**

Speech effects our lives greatly, according to Eakins and Eakins (1978), and it also reflects our personalities, circumstances and relationships. The aim of this portion of the study was to find out about the part that speech plays in the relationships between males and females.

One way to indicate a relationship is by the form people use to address each other. According to Henley (1973) and to Slobin, Miller and Porter (1968), people in the U.S., address each other with terms which reflect their relative social status. Women, being of lower social status than men, are addressed as inferior, (see Chapter Two, "Form of Address" for detail). The Hmong have a different system: Most people outside the lineage are addressed by their first, or given name. (Exceptions will be discussed later).

**Form of address**

Opinions on the form of address within the lineage vary. Some say that one is always addressed by first name by one's blood relatives. Others say that one addresses brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles by their designated
titles. The disagreement may be the result of varying customs due to lineage or to geographic differences. More agreement exists concerning other terms. "Cousin" for example, appears to apply to real cousins but also to all other clan members of the generation of the speaker. Aunt and uncle refer to most clan members who are older than the speaker.

Relationships are more formal with the spouse's family, where people are addressed as "daughter-in-law", "mother-in-law", "father-in-law", brother-in-law and sister-in-law". A man's family addresses his wife by the term appropriate to the relationship plus the name of the husband. If the husband's name is Lang, his wife will be addressed by his brothers and sisters as "sister-in-law Lang". When she has a child she may be addressed as "the mother of" plus the name of the first child. For example, if the name of the first child is Chu, the father's family may address the mother as "Chu nia" or Chu's mother. The same goes for the father and the term for his is "Chu tse" or Chu's father. When a man turns forty, he sacrifices a pig or some chickens in honor of his wife's parents and presents them with embroidered pillows to use in their coffins. At that time they give him a new name which he uses from then on. The woman who described the event was unable to explain the reason for the custom.
A person from outside the lineage, addresses everyone by their first names, except for the married women. This is especially true when the speaker is a male. Married women are addressed as their husband's wife, similarly to our use of the term "Mrs." For example, if the husband's name is Chu, his wife will be "Mrs. Chu" or "Nia Chu". A few interviewees suggest that this is a show of recognition and respect for the marital status of the woman, or more precisely, a show of respect for the marital status of the woman, or more precisely, a show of respect for the families involved in the marriage arrangements. The terms of address that the Hmong use seem to serve as reminders of the rights, rules and obligations that go with each relationship.

When Hmong people are asked for their names, they always give their first name only (except in the U.S.). No other information is volunteered. If one wants to know the name of the clan, the marital status, the name of the husband, one may ask specifically.

In the U.S., Hmong men are addressed by their lineage name, followed by their first name. If the lineage is Mua and the person's name is Cha, he will be addressed as Nua Cha. Respondents said that this is a result of the introduction of written records by the French or the Loatians, something comparable to Smith, Joseph.
Hmong women in the U.S., are addressed by their first names, followed by the father's lineage name. If a woman's name is Mai and her father came from the Lee lineage, then the woman would be addressed here as Mai Lee. One woman said that the lineage name changes places in men's and women's names in order to distinguish between the sexes. Why do women carry the lineage name of their fathers? Is that an indication of their status and independence? Respondents said the reason was that the Hmong may marry only outside their lineage, and people must know what lineage a woman comes from, to determine relationship. Another respondent said that the business of women's last name was caused by some misunderstanding between the women and the immigration officers in this country: "He asked me what my last name was, so I gave him my father's last name. He did not ask for my husband's last name, so I did not tell him."

In sum, the form of address among the Hmong is indicative of the specific family relationship of people or its absence. Although Hmong women have a status inferior to that of men, the form of address between males and females stresses the expected sexual distance, the seniority standing and other aspects of familial relationships rather than power or superiority as it is thought to be in the U.S.
Reference

The English language has some words in it which refer only to men or only to women, with definite connotations. Since the author does not speak the Hmong language, the only way she could find any clue to the existence of similar terms in Hmong, was to ask the interviewees for the equivalent for the English ones. So, the Hmong have a word for "old maid", which implies undesirability, but also sadness and shame, "perhaps she is ugly, or has a bad reputation", rather than the English "fussiness and prissiness".

No interviewee could think of a word for "bachelor", because "there are no Hmong bachelors"; all Hmong men marry sooner or later. No reference words exist for homosexuality, which may indicate that homosexuality is rare or does not exist among the Hmong.

The definition of the person is another aspect of reference. Lakoff (1973) said that men are defined in our society by what they do and women—by their relationship to men. The Hmong, both men and women, are defined to a great degree by their lineage and family affiliation, but men, true, have more opportunities to make a name for themselves as good men, strong men, clever men, affluent, leaders, etc., than do women. Hmong women, like their American friends, brothers, husbands or sons. A woman, for example, may not
mediate in disputes, but if she is the wife of a great and respected leader, or a mother or a daughter of one, her opinion and advice may be solicited and even accepted. The woman is respected for the power of the men in her family.

Content and style of conversation

In their conversation, American women talk about interpersonal matters and feelings, while American men converse about external, factual data, says Lakoff (1973). Lakoff does not tell us what men talk about when they converse with women and vice versa.

Hmong men do not say much to women and Hmong women talk very little to men. When they do talk together, it is mostly about tangible, practical matters such as children, budget, shopping, who will do what and so forth.

Already at an early age, daughters talk to their fathers "politely" or "formally". They may ask for money or for permission to go places, but otherwise are shy or are afraid of their fathers. Feelings, wishes, discipline, are all mediated through the mother. Hmong women do not talk much with their brothers, brothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, husbands and perhaps even their grown-up sons. They certainly are discouraged from talking with strange men, because talking is flirting, and "flirting too much is not good". When a strange man comes in the house, the wife must greet him and then leave the room. On other occasions, women may talk
to men, but again, only about tasks or external things. No feelings should be mentioned: "If she is married, she cannot tell him she loves him and wants to marry him, and men should not talk like that to a married woman. They should know that she is married".

One man thought that what one says depends on the relationship between people rather than on their sex, and by relationship, he meant family relationship. For example, one may talk about love to unmarried women, but not to married ones, to one's own sisters or to older women in the family, unless it is one's mother, and she had asked about it first.

Men do not like to talk to their wives about relationships and feelings. If the subject comes up, husbands are likely to become irritated and to say that women complain too much. Discussion of feelings and relationships may be undesirable for various reasons. Cohen (1977) gives as one reason the conflicting needs of the extended family household. (See Chapter Two) Another explanation was given by a woman who said: "Sometimes, if the wife and husband sit down together and talk, maybe they become angry with each other, because they find out too much about each other; maybe they find out about an old boyfriend or an old girlfriend."
The Hmong interviewees apparently interpreted the word "feelings" as feelings for the opposite sex; their responses often related to courtship and marriage. Either the Hmong do not share our preoccupation with feelings, their definitions, variations and ratings as good or bad, or a misunderstanding may have occurred on the parts of both the author and the interviewees.

Among themselves, Hmong women talk about children, housework, relationships, feelings, and other things that are of interest to them. Hmong women tend to complain, whether they mean it or not. One often hears women saying "it is terrible" or "don't you think it is terrible?", which non Hmong women also use. The Hmong, like other groups, may be using complaining behavior as a smoke screen against evil spirits.

Men talk with other men mostly "business": Work, taxes, hunting, fishing, prices and politics. Relationships may be discussed on the factual level but feelings are considered weakness and sentimentality, and their discussion is probably not useful to Hmong men, as it is unuseful to American men.

On the question of style of conversation, Eakins and Eakins (1978) write: "Women's talk may not come sheathed in a protective coating of facts and figures or straight line reasoning. To men, women's dialogues often seem mindless or
superficial, mere recital of feelings." Nothing was said on how women view men's dialogues.

Hmong men consider women's dialogue as "just woman talk", even though straight line reasoning, facts and figures, are not known to be important to the Hmong. ("The Hmong are not logical", "The topics of math and science are irrelevant to the Hmong"). Hmong men have their own reasons for not talking to women about what they consider important, for not asking their advice or not listening to their suggestions, but one of them they probably share with men of other nations, and it is the need for control, or at least for feeling important.

The effect of the lack of communication between Hmong men and women may be the same as it is on American men and women: "Frustration for both in their attempts to converse together." At least it seems to be true for the Hmong women who often live far from their family of origin and are not always able to make friendships with the women of their husband's family. The husband may be the only person with whom a woman could talk. Cohen (1977) says that communication between husbands and wives sometimes improve when they move from the extended family household to their own dwelling and have to depend more on each other.
Argumentation and persuasion

Argumentation is not an issue with the Hmong women because it is not a part of the Hmong culture. Hmong women are not expected to speak in public, and even in private are often not listened to. A Hmong woman who sounds forceful, can expect, as does her western sister, to be disapproved of as aggressive, unfeminine, and "not nice". Nor can the Hmong woman hope to be persuasive. The American women may accept the fact that their speech is unorganized, illogical and confused and therefore, do not try to persuade as Wood (1966) suggests, but these criteria are irrelevant for the Hmong women, who were not brought up with any concern for organized, logical speech, at least not in the aristotelian sense. That is not to say that some Hmong women do not possess sound logic which at times helps them with persuasion attempts, but the Hmong women are not granted the right to persuade because they are women and should not be listened to. Some Hmong women are listened to nevertheless: Some husbands recognize the value of the wife's advice, or "The husband does not have good ideas of his own", or the woman is the wife of a powerful man and her opinion is accepted whether it is logical or not.

This state of things seems quite similar to ours. We may value organized, logical speech to some degree, but do not take it seriously unless some form of power and
authority endorses it. Often power and authority help give the impression of organized, logical persuasion. In both Hmong and American societies, women have a lesser persuasive power than men but the explanation for it is different in each society.

NONVERBAL MALE-FEMALE COMMUNICATION

Use of space

As is the case with other human societies, the Hmong too, communicate nonverbally. For example, there are certain ways in which they use space for communication. Hmong men and women who are not married to one another, keep physical distance between themselves. When a strange man comes into the house, the first wife greets him and then leaves the room. Men and women of the same extended household would avoid too close a presence of one another. Unless they are married, men and women would not sit close to each other. The author discovered this rule by ignorantly placing herself on a sofa next to a male Hmong interviewee, and leaning forward to hear him over the children's noise. The man, being polite, did not move away, but leaned backward, and at the first chance he had, moved to a chair on the other side of the room. The author's perception was checked later with other Hmong who laughingly agreed with it.
In the past, at public gatherings such as weddings, New Year's Festival or other celebrations, men occupied the food tables first, then the women and small children. Nowadays, the Hmong say, they just set separate tables for men and women. Observers said that in Missoula, men and women eat together even at feasts.

Hmong women are expected to avoid the presence of men because the Hmong men are jealous. No explanation was given to the assumption that Hmong men are more jealous than non Hmong men. Perhaps in a society in which marital happiness is regarded as less important than family alliances and economic considerations, and in which women are often married off against their own choice, communication with any male is a threat to fidelity.

**Touch**

Another channel of nonverbal communication is touch. In our society females may be touched more than males by both males and females (Clay, 1968). Some of us believe that touching another person is a demonstration of power and others argue that touching and being touched is a basic human need and that we should have more of it. The Hmong take the following course: Hmong babies, regardless of sex, are held, touched, hugged, kissed and fondled. Toddlers and children up to five or six years of age are touched more roughly, sometimes even swatted fondly with the back of the hand.
At the age of six years or so, the Hmong child matures into a non-touching, non-demonstrative tradition. Hmong men do not touch other men and women do not touch other women. Needless to say, men and women avoid touching one another.

The Hmong are adverse to those friendly non-Hmong who throw their arms around people's shoulders. They also do not like having to shake hands with American women, or to have American men kiss cheeks of Hmong women. One Hmong man in Texas, so goes the story, said he wanted to divorce his wife because an American man kissed her cheek after dinner at her house.

Perhaps for Americans, touching Hmong is a show of benevolent superiority. The Hmong are newcomers to this country, we owe them help because they helped us, they are poor, unsophisticated in our way of life, and are of a small stature. The Hmong may or may not perceive the touching gestures as a show of power. It seems that for them, touch, as are talk and the use of space, have sexual and territorial implications. Since the Hmong traditionally live physically close to each other, the avoidance of talk, touch and physical proximite serve as a territorial safeguard comparable to the avoidance behaviors of people in our society who are crammed in an elevator together.

Although they do not like to be touched, the Hmong never object to it openly, perhaps because they refrain from
criticizing openly anyone in a position of power (compare with women's content of conversation). When I suggested that they express their preferences to those who touch them, the Hmong people invariably said: "no, we don't mind, we get used to it." They probably do.

The Hmong find especially objectionable the American scene of male and female kissing in public: "We walk along the street, and we see the boyfriend and the girlfriend and they kiss each other along the road, they are not ashamed, ... we say, everyone can do that, but should do it in your own place, like your house ... or shadow of some tree, but you can't just stand at the side of the road and kiss and let everybody, young and old to see ... that may be a bad example to the young ones who still need to go to school or do something and when they see it, they learn how to do it too. We say that, but perhaps it is not so bad."

During the period of the Hmong adjustment to our ways, and our adjustment to them, some confusing incidents happened. In one such incident, a young Hmong woman who spent a few years in France and thought that all westerners shake hands and kiss on both cheeks upon introduction, was introduced in this country to a man who spent a few years in Laos. The man was knowledgeable about Hmong customs and knew that he should not touch a Hmong woman or talk to her in the presence of her husband. When they were introduced,
the woman extended her hand for a hand shake, but the knowl-
edgeable man ignored it, leaving the woman insulted and be-
wilderied.

The final question was "what did the Hmong consider
as good looks and how did these looks affect them?" It was
collapsed that beauty is a matter of personal taste, and
many factors contribute to the final judgment: "Perhaps the
nose is not so pretty, or the eyes not so pretty, but to-
gether the face is pretty; or may be face is pretty but body
is not . . ." Nevertheless, most respondents agreed that a
pretty woman "not too fat or too skinny, especially not
skinny" is relatively tall. One woman said that her hus-
band's family did not like her because she was too short.
Light complexion, soft, clear skin, broad face, large eyes
and nose which is not too wide or flat, are also considered
beautiful. Men's good looks were harder to describe, but
respondents gave examples of some handsome men whom we all
know. These men had in common broad face, light complexion,
cheek bones not too prominent, wide mouth and soft, intel-
ligent expression. None were especially tall or strong, but
one must bear in mind that the sample was very small.

Now, in this country we can study the effect of
physical appearance as it influences the college grades
of female students, or the pursitability of the same. One
cannot repeat the same studies with the Hmong, because very
few of them go to college, and because Hmong women are not ordinarily given the opportunity to attempt to persuade. Love and marriage have been the major realms in which physical appearance may have made a difference. While many Hmong are known to have had some love relationship with the other sex before marriage, they are reluctant to talk about it, so one cannot ask if appearance played a part in that choice. In choosing a marriage partner, one man thought that "everyone likes a pretty woman and a handsome man" and one woman listed "pretty" as a desirable woman trait. Most others insisted that physical appearance is not a consideration; however, they could tell about women who never married because they were ugly.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Critique

Customarily, scientific investigations deal with a small number of variables at a time. The present study, though, is exploratory in nature and therefore considers a relatively large variety of male-female communication behaviors. Each category of behavior could not be studied in depth, but this disadvantage may have been offset by the advantage of receiving a broader view of the subject. The broader picture enables us to see patterns in the male-female communication of the Hmong and to compare these with our own.

The problem of superficiality may have been corrected, had more time been allowed for the study. The interviewing and observations took place over a period of time of three months. Prior to the first interview, the author had only very little contact with individuals of the Hmong community. She found that she needed about a year's time to get to know the respondents well, to space interviews over a longer period of time to avoid respondent's fatigue, and to interview more individuals. However, circumstances did not allow for more time, and the results, therefore, may present only part of the truth.
The selection of the respondents has posed another limitation. By necessity, the respondents were those few Hmong individuals who could speak adequate English. Those people also happen to be the most educated, the wealthiest, and those who had the most contact with the American culture. They were also young, grew up in towns rather than in jungle villages, where most Hmong come from, and were already changing some of their customs and behaviors. For all these reasons they may not represent the other Hmong in Missoula, who were not interviewed.

The size of the sample, too, seems small now. A larger sample would have offered more clarity into some issues and would have eliminated the question of where individual differences end and the rule begins. In order to overcome the problem of small numbers of respondents and reaching those who could not speak English, the author considered the possibility of working with an interpreter, but the Hmong in Missoula, especially the ones who speak English, are so busy making a living and helping the others who do not speak the language, that this idea did not materialize.

An additional limitation was created by the fact that the Hmong live in Missoula, and the author had to use her judgment as to what data could be reported without hurting or offending any one. This factor is the reason for omitting some data, but the loss to knowledge is justified by
the ethical code of honoring confidentialities.

Some knowledge is also lost due to the language barrier between the researcher and the respondents. The methodology was limited to the guided interview, which means to talking, but even the respondents who spoke the most English were not yet familiar with nuances of the language and it is possible that they did not always understand the questions correctly and that what they said was not always exactly what they meant.

Besides the interviews, observations were also made, but again, due to lack of language, they often remained meaningless to the researcher. One more aspect which could not be explored was the specific uses of language in the male-female communication. It was only touched on in the discussion of terms of reference and address, but proved to be very frustrating to discuss for both researcher and respondents. All these interesting subjects may be successfully studied by a person who speaks both English and Hmong and is versed in the cultures of both.

Implications

The fact that this study considered quite a few categories of male-female communication, allows the author to conclude that in spite of geographic, cultural and technological differences between the Hmong and ourselves, the male-female communication of both are amazingly similar in
many ways. This raises the question of the reasons for such similarities. To understand the similarities and differences and the reasons for them, we may need to study the various categories of Hmong male-female communication in greater depth and detail. We may learn more about male-female communication generally and ours specifically, if we studied it in other cultures. Also, a researcher from another culture, who would be free from our biases, could investigate our communication and probably present it in a new light.

Finally, there is the question of the degree and kind of change that has occurred and will continue to occur in the male-female communication of the Hmong. In China, Laos and Viet Nam, the Hmong managed to maintain their way of life and their customs by isolating themselves in the mountains and by adhering to in-group marriage. In this country they cannot very well isolate themselves. Television alone is a great intruder, and the Hmong use it a lot in order to learn the language. Other influences are compulsory education, necessity to find work in cities and thus encounter the American culture, the dispersity of not very many Hmong over a huge continent and attempts of churches to convert the Hmong to Christianity. Some Hmong believe that they will be able to keep their old ways for a few more generations. The author feels that change, although gradual, will come to the Hmong sooner than they now want. Some of
the force behind this change may come from the Hmong women, who would like to close the gap of difference between themselves and the American women. It will be very useful to do a study of the changes that may take place in male-female communication of the Hmong over a long period of time, let us say every five years for twenty-five years. Such a study will be even more useful if it will take into account change in other areas which may be responsible for the change in communication such as education, occupation, residence, social-economic status, size and nature of the Hmong community, size and ties of the extended family, religion and contacts with non Hmong.

In spite of the barriers and limitations, the author found the process of studying the communication of the Hmong very instructive and enriching and she hopes that she was able to communicate some of her knowledge and inspiration to the reader of these chapters.

These have been the findings about the perceptions of the Hmong in Missoula of sex-roles and stereotypes and about their verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors between males and females. Upon comparing the male-female communication of the Hmong with our own, we find a few differences but many similarities. Such similarities are amazing and intriguing, when we consider the geographic distance between our origins, and the social, cultural and technological differences.
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