

Lexical Variations between Three Generations of Tai Dam in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand¹

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Abstract

Tai Dam is a language in the southwestern group of the Tai language family. Spoken in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, Tai Dam originated in the Sip Song Chu Tai region of Vietnam. This article aims to study the lexical variations between three generations of Tai Dam speakers in Donkhleng Subdistrict Damnernsaduak District, Ratchaburi Province. Data for the analysis comes from a list of 222 semantic units tested on three generations of informants : old generation (over 60 years old), middle generations (35-55 years old), and young generation (18-30 years old). The results reveal that the first generation used Tai Dam the most whereas the third generation used Tai Dam the least. The young generation use lexical in central Thai more than the other generation groups. The young generation tend to use only lexical in standard Thai or lexical in central Thai together with lexical in Tai Dam. When the young speakers use Tai Dam lexical, a variation in sounds was found. The sound variation can be attributed to the fact that standard Thai is an official language used in educational institutes and the mass media in Thailand.

Key Words: Lexical variation; Social variation; Thai Song Dam; Tai Dam

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