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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY OF THREE LISU DIALECTS



LA MAUNG HTAY

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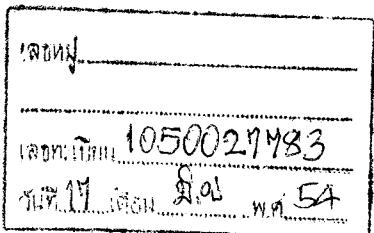
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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the sociolinguistic situation and lexical comparison of the three major Lisu dialects in China, Myanmar, and Thailand.

The sociolinguistic situation covers the use of the language of wider communication, attitudes toward languages of wider communication, comprehension of Lisu dialects, attitudes toward Lisu dialects, attitudes toward Lisu scripts, and language vitality. For the use of the language of wider communication, the younger generation seems to speak it better than the older generation. In general, the Lisu reported high bilingual proficiency. Of the three Lisu dialects, the Southern Lisu speakers reported the highest bilingual proficiency while the Northern Lisu speakers reported the lowest. The Lisu speakers from Myanmar reported the highest bilingual proficiency, followed by those in Thailand, and those in China reported the lowest.

The Lisu speakers from Myanmar reported the least positive attitudes to the language of wider communication, followed by those in Thailand and then those in China.

For the attitudes toward the Lisu dialects, there was no general agreement about which form of speech is the most pure. Most Lisu speakers reported that they prefer the Fraser script. The highest percentage of lexical similarity is 98%, within the Northern Lisu dialect, and the lowest percentage is 82%, which is between Northern and Southern dialects from different countries.

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บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้พร้อมนำเสนอสถานการณ์ทางภาษาในสังคมและการเปรียบเทียบศัพท์ของภาษาลีซู 3 ถิ่นหลัก ในสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน ทั้งภาพพม่า และประเทศไทย

สถานการณ์ทางภาษาในสังคมหมายรวมถึงการใช้ภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ทัศนคติต่อภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ความเข้าใจภาษาลีซูถิ่น ทัศนคติต่อภาษาลีซูถิ่น ทัศนคติต่อตัวเขียนภาษาลีซู และความมีชีวิตของภาษา สำหรับการใช้ภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ดูเหมือนว่าคนรุ่นใหม่จะพูดภาษาลีซูได้ดีกว่าคนรุ่นเก่า โดยทั่วไปแล้วผู้พูดภาษาลีซูมีความสามารถสูงในการใช้สองภาษา เมื่อเปรียบเทียบภาษาลีซูทั้ง 3 ถิ่น พบว่าผู้พูดภาษาลีซูถิ่นได้มีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาสูงที่สุด ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูถิ่นหนึ่งมีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาต่ำที่สุด ผู้พูดภาษาลีซูที่อาศัยในสภาพพม่า มีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาสูงที่สุด รองลงมาเป็นผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในประเทศไทย ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน มีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาต่ำที่สุด

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ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในประเทศไทยมีทัศนคติทางบวกมากกว่า แต่ยังเป็นรองผู้พูดภาษาลีซู
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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

Adj	adjective
BM	Burmese
C.LS	Central Lisu
CN	Chinese
CT	Central Thai
Dem	demonstrative
G	glide
JP	Jingphaw
LS	Lisu
N	noun
N.LS	Northern Lisu
NT	Northern Thai
S.LS	Southern Lisu
T	tone
LWC	language of wider communication

Glossary

Bilingualism

Bilingualism is the degree of proficiency that a person must achieve in order to speak a language that is not the mother tongue (Crystal 2003: 51).

Domains

Domain refers to a group of institutionalized social situations typically constrained by a common set of behavioral rules, e.g. the domain of the family is the house, of religion is the church, etc. the notions is seen as of particular important in the analysis of multilingual settings involving several participants, where it is used to relate variations in the individuals' choice and topic of language to broader sociocultural norms and expectations of interactions (Crystal 2003: 148).

Language attitudes

Language attitudes are the ways in which a person or community perceives the relevance and status of their language, often reflecting their attitudes about themselves relative to other groups. Language attitudes play a key role in language maintenance, shift, and death (Fasold 1984: Ch 6).

Language of wider communication

A language of wider communication (LWC) is the de facto established language used in the influential domains of higher education, technology, and government and is usually international in utility and scope (Bamgbose 1991: 20).

Language shift

Language shift is the long-term collective results of the language choices within a specific community in which the members have given up one language in favor of another one. This is an outcome of choices that are not necessarily overt or volitional, but are constrained by societal factors that may limit the freedom to act otherwise for speech community members (Fasold 1984: 213).

Language use

Language use is the study of what people do with language, and how, when, where, and why they do it (Blair 1990: 107).

Language vitality

Language vitality is the extent to which a language serves the needs of its speakers. When a language loses important, meaningful, or useful functions in a community, it loses vitality (Edwards 1985).

Lexicostatistics

Lexicostatistics is a technique of measuring similarity between lexical items across languages or dialects used originally in glottochronology to deduce the amount of time since related languages separated, and now used more commonly to determine the degree of genetic relatedness between languages or dialects by establishing indices of lexical similarity (Crystal 1985: 178-9).