134628

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY OF THREE LISU DIALECTS

PAYAP UNIVERSITY LIBRARY TRUTH • SERVICE

LA MAUNG HTAY

Presented to Payap University in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN
LINGUISTICS
Faculty of Arts

Payap University
April 2011

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Title:	A Sociolinguistic Survey of Three Lisu Dialects
Researcher:	La Maung Htay
Degree:	Master of Arts in Linguistics
Advisor:	Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun, Ph.D.
Approval Date:	18 April 2011
Institution:	Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

This Thesis is approved by:

1. _____ Committee Chair

   (Professor Somsonge Burusphat, Ph.D.)

2. _____ Committee Member

   (Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun, Ph.D.)

3. _____ Committee Member

   (Robert Wyn Owen, Ph.D.)

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

เลขหมู่ _____
เลขทะเบียน 1050027983
วัน 17 เดือน มิ.ย. พ.ศ. 54

Copyright © La Maung Htay
Payap University 2011

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to praise the Lord my God for giving me the strength, patience, and knowledge for this research. I have learned to rely on Him more through the process of writing this thesis.

I am very grateful to Dr. Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun for being my advisor for this thesis. Every time I met with you for my thesis, I have learned something from you. Thank you very much for your patience and hard work. I would like to thank Aj. Robert Wyn Owen for being the second reader of this thesis. Thank you to Professor Dr. Somsonge Burusphat for her suggestions and being outside examiner.

I am grateful to Mark Wannemacher and Jeff German who always advise and encourage me. Thank you to Noel Mann and Marcus Chou for their willing help to reduce my work (2,000 pages of analysis). You both are so smart. I want to thank John Eppele for designing the sociolinguistic questionnaires for this thesis. I want to say thank you to my friend, Ellie Hall who helped me to check every single page of this thesis. I also want to say thank you very much to Rebecca Bicksler for helping me to draw a map. I want to thank Aj. Terry Gibbs for helping me with the thesis template.

I want to say thank you to all the friends who helped me during my fieldwork in China, Myanmar, and Thailand. Especially, I want to give my thanks to the language resource people who helped me with wordlists and answered my sociolinguistic questions.

Finally, I want to thank my friends from Chiang Mai Lisu Baptist church who always support me in so many ways with love.

La Maung Htay
April 2011

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Title:	A Sociolinguistic Survey of Three Lisu Dialects
Researcher:	La Maung Htay
Degree:	Master of Arts in Linguistics
Advisor:	Phinnarat Akharawatthanakun, Ph.D
Approval Date:	18 April, 2011
Institution:	Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Number of Pages:	114
Keywords:	Sociolinguistic survey, Lexical comparison, Lisu, Bilingualism, Language vitality, Language shift

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.

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

ชื่อเรื่อง:	การสำรวจเชิงภาษาศาสตร์สังคมของภาษาลีซูถิ่น 3 ภาษา
ผู้วิจัย:	นาย หล่า เมาง เท
ปริญญา:	ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาศาสตร์
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก:	ดร. พิณรัตน์ อัครวัฒนากุล
วันที่อนุมัติผลงาน:	18 เมษายน 2554
สถาบันการศึกษา:	มหาวิทยาลัยพายัพ จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ประเทศไทย
จำนวนหน้า:	114
คำสำคัญ:	การสำรวจเชิงภาษาศาสตร์สังคม, การเปรียบเทียบคำศัพท์, ลีซู, ภาวะสองภาษา, ความมีชีวิตของภาษา, การเปลี่ยนภาษา

บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้พรรณนาสถานการณ์ทางภาษาในสังคมและการเปรียบเทียบศัพท์ของภาษาลีซู 3 ถิ่นหลัก ในสาธารณัฐประชาชนจีน สหภาพพม่า และประเทศไทย

สถานการณ์ทางภาษาในสังคมหมายรวมถึงการใช้ภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ทัศนคติต่อภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ความเข้าใจภาษาลีซูถิ่น ทัศนคติต่อภาษาลีซูถิ่น ทัศนคติต่อตัวเขียนภาษาลีซู และความมีชีวิตของภาษา สำหรับการใช้ภาษาในการสื่อสารในวงกว้าง ดูเหมือนว่าคนรุ่นใหม่จะพูดภาษาลีซูได้ดีกว่าคนรุ่นเก่า โดยทั่วไปแล้วผู้พูดภาษาลีซูมีความสามารถสูงในการใช้สองภาษา เมื่อเปรียบเทียบภาษาลีซูทั้ง 3 ถิ่น พบว่าผู้พูดภาษาลีซูถิ่นใต้มีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาสูงที่สุด ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูถิ่นเหนือมีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาต่ำที่สุด ผู้พูดภาษาลีซูที่อาศัยในสหภาพพม่ามีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาสูงที่สุด รองลงมาเป็นผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในประเทศไทย ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีนมีความสามารถในการใช้สองภาษาต่ำที่สุด

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

ผู้พูดภาษาลีซูจากสหภาพพม่ามีทัศนคติทางบวกต่อภาษาที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารในวงกว้างต่ำที่สุด ส่วนผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในประเทศไทยมีทัศนคติทางบวกมากกว่า แต่ยังเป็นรองผู้พูดภาษาลีซูในสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีนที่มีทัศนคติทางบวกมากที่สุด

สำหรับทัศนคติต่อภาษาลีซูถิ่น ไม่สามารถสรุปได้ว่าภาษาถิ่นใดมีความบริสุทธิ์ที่สุด ผู้พูดภาษาลีซูส่วนใหญ่มีความพึงพอใจในตัวอักษรเฟรเซอร์ ภาษาถิ่นย่อยในกลุ่มภาษาลีซูถิ่นเหนือมีความคล้ายคลึงทางคำศัพท์สูงที่สุดถึงร้อยละ 98 ส่วนภาษาลีซูถิ่นเหนือและถิ่นใต้จากคนละประเทศมีความคล้ายคลึงทางคำศัพท์ต่ำที่สุดเพียงร้อยละ 82 เท่านั้น

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ii
Abstract iii
บทคัดย่อ iv
List of Tables viii
List of Figures xi
List of Abbreviations and Symbols xii
Glossary xiii
Chapter 1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background of the study 2
1.1.1 The classification of the Lisu language 2
1.1.2 The background of the Lisu language 3
1.2 Objectives of the study 5
1.3 Scope of the study 5
1.4 Hypotheses of the study 5
1.5 Limitations of the study 6
1.6 Benefits of the study 6
Chapter 2 Literature review 7
2.1 Language classifications 7
2.1.1 Sino-Tibetan languages 7
2.1.2 Tibeto-Burman languages 9
2.2 Phonological features of Tibeto-Burman languages 12
2.2.1 Phonology of Tibeto-Burman languages 12
2.2.2 Grammar of Tibeto-Burman languages 16
2.3 Classification of Lisu language 17
2.4 Phonology of Lisu 18
2.4.1 Phonology of Northern Lisu 18
2.4.2 Phonology of Central Lisu 20
2.4.3 Phonology of Southern Lisu 22
2.4.4 Syllable structures of Lisu 24
2.4.5 Lisu orthography 26
2.5 Sociolinguistics 28
2.5.1 Bilingualism 28
2.5.2 Language use and language attitudes 31
2.5.3 Language vitality 32
2.6 Lexicostatistics 33
2.6.1 Definitions and reviews of the lexicostatistics 33
2.6.2 Examples of lexicostatistics in some earlier works 35
Chapter 3 Methodology 39
3.1 Research locations 39
3.2 Wordlist collection and procedures 42
3.3 Sociolinguistic questionnaires 43
3.3.1 Questionnaire content 45
3.3.2 Questionnaire mapping procedure 47
3.3.3 Limitations of the questionnaires 49
3.3.4 Data sources 50

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Chapter 4 Lisu sociolinguistic situation 52
4.1 Language use and bilingual proficiency 53
4.1.1 Use of languages of wider communication 53
4.1.2 Bilingual proficiency 54
4.1.3 Domains of language use 57
4.2 Attitudes toward languages of wider communication 65
4.2.1 Primary attitudes 66
4.2.2 Secondary attitudes 70
4.3 Contact between Lisu dialects 71
4.3.1 Reported contact of Lisu dialects 72
4.4 Attitudes toward Lisu dialects 75
4.5 Attitudes toward Lisu scripts currently in use 81
4.6 Language vitality 85
4.6.1 Proficiency of children in the Lisu language 85
4.6.2 Language attitudes 89
4.6.3 Ethno-linguistic make up of the villages 90
4.6.4 Reported language shift 92
4.6.5 Attitudes toward reading and writing in Lisu 93
4.7 Summary 93
Chapter 5 Lexical comparison 95
5.1 Determining lexical similarity 95
5.2 Lexical comparison 99
5.3 Lexical similarity and the analysis results 103
5.4 Conclusion 107
Chapter 6 Conclusion 109
6.1 Evaluation of methodology 109
6.2 Sociolinguistic results 110
6.3 Lexicostatistic results 112
6.4 Suggestion for further studies 113
Bibliography 115
APPENDIX A SIL MSEA (Mainland South East Asia) 436 wordlist 120
APPENDIX B The sociolinguistic questionnaires in English 134
APPENDIX C The Sociolinguistic Questionnaires in Lisu 149
APPENDIX D The Sociolinguistic Questionnaires in Burmese 162
APPENDIX E The Sociolinguistic Questionnaires in Chinese 177
APPENDIX F Cognates with Major and Minor Syllable Forms 190
APPENDIX G Cognates in Root Syllable Forms 199
Resume 206

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

List of Tables

Table 1 Initial consonants in Tibeto-Burman languages (adapted from Benedict 1972: 17-18) 13
Table 2 Consonant clusters of Tibeto-Burman languages (adapted from Benedict 1972: 37) 14
Table 3 Vowel system of written Tibetan 15
Table 4 Vowel system of written Burmese 15
Table 5 Consonant chart of the Northern Lisu dialect (adapted from Bradley 1994: viii-xi) 18
Table 6 Vowel chart of the Northern Lisu dialect (adapted from Bradley 1994: viii-xi) 19
Table 7 The distribution of six contrastive tones in the Northern Lisu dialect (adapted from Bradley 1994: viii-xi) 19
Table 8 Consonant chart of the Central Lisu dialect (adapted from Fraser 1922: 1-5) 20
Table 9 Vowel chart of the Central Lisu dialect (adapted from Fraser 1922: 1-5) ... 21
Table 10 The tone system of the Central Lisu dialect (adapted from Fraser 1922: 4-5) 21
Table 11 Consonant chart of the Southern Lisu dialect (adapted from Hope 1972: vi) 22
Table 12 Vowel chart of the Southern Lisu dialect (adapted from Hope 1972: vi) 22
Table 13 The tone system of the Southern Lisu dialect (adapted from Hope 1972: vi) 23
Table 14 Tone comparison between the major Lisu dialects (adapted from Bradley 2006: viii) 24
Table 15 Examples of six Lisu scripts 27
Table 16 The Swadesh 100-wordlist 34
Table 17 Numbers of sites visited in three countries 40
Table 18 Central and peripheral sites 41
Table 19 Age and gender criteria for choosing the individual interview subjects at each site 44
Table 20 Knowledgeable Insider Questionnaire content 45
Table 21 Group Sociolinguistic Questionnaire content 45

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Table 22 Individual Sociolinguistic Questionnaire content 46
Table 23 Research goals, questions, concepts, and indicators 47
Table 24 Numbers of subjects interviewed 51
Table 25 Bilingual proficiency in specific tasks 54
Table 26 Bilingual proficiency by dialects 55
Table 27 Bilingual proficiency in the national languages by country 56
Table 28 Language use in the home domains by country 58
Table 29 Language use outside the home domains by country 61
Table 30 Language use in the church domains by country 63
Table 31 Bible language and comprehension 65
Table 32 Reported attitude regarding marriage to a person of the LWC 66
Table 33 Reported attitude toward marriage to an LWC speaker by country 67
Table 34 Reported attitude on marriage to an LWC person according to reason 67
Table 35 Reported attitudes about living next to LWC people 69
Table 36 Reported attitudes to living next to LWC people by country 70
Table 37 Non-Lisu people groups that the Lisu marry 71
Table 38 Reported reasons for most pure places 76
Table 39 Reported attitudes regarding own village dialect 77
Table 40 Reported least pure locations 78
Table 41 The reported reasons for saying why the Lisu in a place is least pure 79
Table 42 Tone comparison between Southern Lisu (Moegok variety) with Northern Lisu and Central Lisu dialects 80
Table 43 Reported contact with place where the least pure Lisu is spoken 81
Table 44 Attitudes toward Lisu scripts 81
Table 45 Reported script that the subjects are interested in using 82
Table 46 Reported easiest script to learn 83
Table 47 Reported do not like script by individual 83
Table 48 Reported do not like scripts by group 84
Table 49 Reported first language of children 86
Table 50 Languages children speak before school 87
Table 51 Attitude on the use of Lisu among the next generations 88
Table 52 Languages the parents teach to children and Lisu use by the children 89
Table 53 The Lisu use of next generation 89
Table 54 Ethno-linguistic make-up of the survey sites 91

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

Table 55 Reported proficiency in Lisu by site 92
Table 56 Examples of cognate sets with major and minor syllables 98
Table 57 Examples of cognate sets with root syllable forms 99
Table 58 Criteria for lexical similarity 100
Table 59 Examples of application of criteria for lexical similarity 101
Table 60 Phone table for lexical similarity 102
Table 61 The result of the lexical similarity 103
Table 62 The percentage of lexical similarity between Lisu varieties 104

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

List of Figures

Figure 1 The classification of the Lisu language (adapted from Bradley 2006: xv) 2
Figure 2 The distribution of Lisu language (adapted from Hope 1974: 54) 4
Figure 3 Early classification of the Sino-Tibetan family (adapted from Ruhlen 1991: 143) 8
Figure 4 Proposed subgroupings of the Sino-Tibetan family (adapted from Ruhlen 1991: 144) 8
Figure 5 The Sino-Tibetan Family: Benedict (1942), Shaffer (1955), and others (adapted from Ruhlen 1991: 146) 9
Figure 6 Various groupings of the Tibeto-Burman language family (adapted from Ruhlen 1991: 146) 10
Figure 7 Classification of the Tibeto-Burman languages (adapted from Thurgood 2003: 8) 11
Figure 8 The level of language attitudes (Blair 1990: 109) 31
Figure 9 Language tree of Lolo-Burmese (Bradley 1996) 36
Figure 10 Language tree of Lolo-Burmese (Peiros 1996: 238) 37
Figure 11 Map showing survey sites 42
Figure 12 Reported contact among Lisu dialects 72
Figure 13 Reported contact by gender 73
Figure 14 Reported contact by age 74
Figure 15 Tree diagram of the Lisu varieties 106

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

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

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

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).

PAYAP UNIVERSITY

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).

PAYAP UNIVERSITY