

SIRIRAT SIRIVISOOT : VARIATION OF FINAL (l) IN ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN THAI ACCORDING TO STYLE AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND. THESIS ADVISOR:

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The purpose of this study is to investigate variation of the final (l) in English loanwords in Thai focusing on the occurrence of its variants' according to two social variables : style and the speaker's educational background.

The data are collected from 40 staff members of a bank who are speakers of Bangkok Thai. Twenty of them represent those who received education up to the certificate in vocational education level whereas the other twenty represent those who received education up to the bachelor's degree level. Each group consists of male and female of an equal number. Three styles are selected for this study : interviewing, passage reading and wordlist reading, representing the fairly formal, formal and very formal styles respectively.

Twenty-four loanwords are used in the test in this study. All of them consist of a final (l) and spelt with a in Thai.

The analysis shows that the final (l) has four important variants : [l], [n], [ɲ] and [w]. [n] occurs in the highest percentage, followed by [l], [ɲ] and [w]. The findings also reveal that there is a significant relationship between each social variable and final (l) ($p=.01$). The more formal the style, the more frequently [l] occurs and the more informal the style, the more frequently [n], [ɲ] and [w] occur. The more educated group uses [l] more than the less educated. On the contrary, the latter uses [n], [ɲ] and [w] more than the former.