

Boosaba Fangsaken 2014: Language Choice and Language Attitudes towards Khorat Thai Dialect of Thai Khorat People. Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics), Major Field: Applied Linguistics, Department of Linguistics. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Chamaipak Tayjasanant, Ph.D. 196 pages.

This research aims to investigate language choice and language attitudes toward the Khorat Thai dialect of Thai Khorat people. Age is the main variable used for data analysis to compare the language choice and the language attitudes towards the Khorat Thai dialect among Thai Khorat people who are varied in age and locality (urban and rural areas). The quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. The data were collected through the questionnaires. The participants were 369 people from Muang District (Suranari Witthaya School) and 363 people from Phimai District (Phimai Wittaya School) Nakhon Ratchasima. The participants were divided into three groups based on their age: 15-30, 35-50, and 55-70.

The findings showed that age and locality influenced the language choice. The participants in Muang district mainly chose to use Thai with all domains of language use. The 15-30 year olds chose to use more Thai in almost every domain than the middle-age and elder did. The average percentage of Thai language use was up to 80-90. On the other hand, the participants in all age groups at Phimai District mainly chose to use the Khorat Thai dialect within the community domain. Especially, the 35-50 and 55-70 year olds are the groups that mostly used the Khorat Thai dialect with the highest percentage of 80-90. Outside the community domain, all age groups mainly chose to use Thai. The 15-30 year olds is the group that mostly used Thai outside the community domain with the average reached 50%. Language attitudes were found to be different depending on age and locality. The participants at Muang district had a neutral attitude toward the Khorat Thai dialect, which was not statistically significantly different. In contrast, the significance of the mean score in language attitudes towards Thai was at 0.003 ($p < 0.05$), which indicated positive attitudes. On the other hand, the participants in all age groups at Phimai District had positive attitudes towards the Khorat Thai dialect and neutral attitudes towards Thai. The findings showed that the participants had significantly different attitudes towards the Khorat Thai dialect and Thai at the level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

In sum, the Khorat Thai dialect is in the process of language change because the Thai language began to have important impacts on people in both areas. Although the Khorat Thai dialect is in any situation, the participants of both localities still have realised the problem situation of the Khorat Thai dialect nowadays and insist on continuously maintaining their own language.

Student's signature

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