

Sarawut Kraisame 2009: Language Maintenance and Shift of Urak Lawoi' Ethnic Group in Radsada Sub-district, Mueang District, Phuket Province. Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics), Major Field: Applied Linguistics, Department of Linguistics. Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Wipakorn Wongthai, M.A. 181 pages.

This thesis is a sociolinguistic study of Urak Lawoi' language by focusing on the language maintenance and shift of Urak Lawoi' ethnic group in Radsada sub-district, Mueang district, Phuket province. Belonging to the Austronesian language family, Urak Lawoi' can be found in the southern west coast of Thailand such as Phuket province, Krabi province, Satul Province and etc. The following areas are investigated in this research: Multilingualism in the community for finding major and minor language; Language proficiency of Urak Lawoi' native speaker; Language use; Language attitudes; and sociology and anthropology factors contributing to language maintenance in the community.

The 60 samples are selected randomly on the basis of sex and age variables. The purposive samples are divided into 3 generations: 15-30 year-old; 35-50 year-old; and 55-70 year-old. Firstly, 15-30 year-old represents the Urak Lawoi' youth and new generation. Secondly, 35-50 year-old represents the middle age people. Lastly, 55-70 year-old represents the elder people and old generation.

The findings are as follow: 1) there are 2 languages being used as a mother-tongue in the community, Urak Lawoi' and Thai. These two's percentage of usage are 95% and 5% respectively. Moreover, the research has been found that Urak Lawoi' is a major language and Thai is a minor language for communicating within the community. 2) The difference of language proficiency can be found in both sex and age variables. The age group of 15-30 year-old has lower language ability than 55-70 year-old. 3) Urak Lawoi' is used in a family domain, a cousin/neighbor domain, a rite/religions domain and a village's meeting domain and Thai is used in a trade domain and a government official domain by the majority of samples. 4) The samples express the positive attitude towards Urak Lawoi' and Thai. 5) Most of contributive factors for language maintenance are found in this community. Therefore, the results can be assumed that Urak Lawoi' ethnic group in Radsada sub-district, Mueang district, Phuket province still maintain in this community.

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