

Paper title: Variation in the systems of kinship terms used by  
Teochui speakers of different age groups in Wat  
Hualampong community in Bangkok

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Variation in the systems of kinship terms used by Teochui speakers of different age groups in Wat Hualampong community in Bangkok

Wat Hualampong community is a crowded community in the heart of Bangkok. It is close to Chulalongkorn University and about 3 kilometers from Silom, a very sophisticated area near the Chao Phraya River. There are two ethnic groups living in this community: Thai and Teochui. These ethnic groups in this interact with each other all the time. This made me wonder how each of the groups preserve its identity, especially the Teochui, who are Chinese minority in Thailand. Therefore I am interested in finding out whether the Teochui people in this community still maintain their language. I chose to focus on kinship terms because they represent basic relationships and used in daily life.

This objective of this paper is to study the system of kinship terms used by Teochui speakers and to investigate variation in the use of the terms among Teochui speakers in different age groups. The linguistic variables studied are basic kinship terms in Teochui and the social variable studied is age. I divided the age groups into two: the old age group (35 years old and over) and the young age group (26 years old and below). The data used in this study was gathered by interviewing 14 informants in Wat Hualampong community.

The hypotheses of this paper are that the kinship terms in Teochui are differentiated by five dimensions of contrast: generation, lineality, age, parental link, and sex and that the terms spoken by the young group are influenced by Thai kinship terms.

The findings reveal a relationship between the linguistic variables and the social variable. The result of the analysis indicates that most of the old Teochui speakers used Teochui kinship terms, except some speakers who have a Thai father or mother. They would use Thai kinship terms mixed with Teochui terms. As for the young group, it is found that they all used Thai kinship terms for 'child' and 'grand-child', and the Thai terms for 'mother' and 'father' in case one of the parents is Thai.

This study implies gradual change in the identity of the Teochui group in Thailand and that social factors, such as intermarriage, can cause linguistic change.