The Analysis of Khmer Kinship Terms in Buri Ram Province

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to conduct a survey of Khmer kinship terms spoken in Buri Ram province, to study the meaning of Khmer kinship terms using componential analysis methods, and to analyze the culture reflected in the Khmer kinship terms. The researcher used a combination of documentary and in-depth interviews. The Khmer kinship terms were derived from an interview with thirty Khmer informants. According to the study's findings, 28 Khmer kinship terms are spoken in Buri Ram province. There are 14 single-word kinship terms and 14 compound-word kinship terms in total. The definitions of kinship terms were classified into six categories: generation, lineage, gender, age, marriage, and remarriage. The culture was reflected in the Khmer kinship terms system spoken in Buri Ram province, which were comprised of five factors: the importance of seniority, an emphasis on genetic relatedness, preference for direct lineage, equal weight for mother, father, husband, and wife relatives, and equal weight for male and female relatives.

Keywords : Kinship terms; Khmer dialect; Buri Ram province

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Introduction

Khmer (Central Khmer or Cambodian) is the national language of the Kingdom of Cambodia, a country in Southeast Asia. Its neighbors are Vietnam to the East, Laos PDR to the Northeast and Thailand to the Northwest.[1] As for Northern Khmer is spoken in northeastern Thailand in the province of Buri Ram, Surin, and Sisaket by perhaps 1,000,000 people. It is closely related to Central Khmer of Cambodia[2]. Therefore, the Khmer dialect in this area may have been settled here for a long time. Though their communities are among villages, which people speak Central Thai language, they still communicate by using their mother tongue in their daily lives.

The Khmer language belongs to Eastern Mon-Khmer sub-family of the Austro-asiatic language family. Varieties of Khmer include the following, (1) Northern Khmer spoken by sizeable numbers of ethnic Khmer, people in the south of the northeast part of Thailand, (2) Central Khmer spoken by the Khmer in Cambodia and (3) Southern Khmer spoken by the ethnic Khmer in the Mekong delta in Southern Vietnam.[3]

Khmer is a language within the Palaungic branch of Mon-Khmer of Austroasiatic language family. The Khmer at Mueang district, Huai Rat district, Krasang district, Satuek district, Prakhon Chai district and Phlapphla Chai district, Buri Ram province is one of the ethnic groups that came to settle down in Thailand to escape from the continued fighting between the military dictators and various ethnic groups in their country.

Thai-Khmer Group, Buri Ram province has a large number of Khmer people. This is because Buri Ram province is adjacent to the border of Cambodia. And Surin Province where most of Thai-Khmer people in Buri Ram province emigrated from Surin and Sisaket province. Most of Khmer people live in the southern part of Buri Ram province such as Prakonchai, Ban Kruad, Pakham, Lahan Sai, Krasang, Phlupphla Chai, Satuk, and Mueang Buri Ram district. Thai-Khmer group in Buri Ram province makes a living

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[1] Makara Sok, "Phonological Principles and Automatic Phonemic and Phonetic Transcription of Khmer Words", **M.A. Thesis**, (Chiang Mai: Payap University, 2016), p. 1.

[2] David Thomas and Wanna Tienmee, "An Acustic Study of Northern Khmer Vowels", **Mon-Khmer Studies**, (Bangkok: Kasetsart University, 1987), p. 1.

[3] Amphon Wichitkhachee, "A Phonological Study of The Khmer Spoken at Ban Nawattai, Tambon Dongnoi, Ratchasan sub-district, Chachoengsao province", **M.A. Thesis,** (Graduate Studies: Mahidol University, 1996), p. 12.

by cultural identity, tradition and language which are seriously their tradition, especially for beliefs such as black magic, superstition, poison, philter and different rituals in the way of life from birth to death. These things have been traditionally performed from generation to generation continuously. For the tradition concerning belief, Thai-Khmer people have another tradition such as merit-making to dedicate to the deceased which is called "Donta merit-making", it is the merit-making to the deceased which is annually observed in the end of September. The dead ritual is performed by making a burial and kept it for 3-4 years for cremation ceremony.[4]

Humans are united as a society, so language is needed as a tool to communicate and understand each other. "Kinship term" is part of the language used in kinship systems that are basic human social groups.[5] The use of the kinship terms of Thai people in Buri Ram province. It is also used in Khmer-speaking families for both children and adults. Kinship term is a reflection of the culture of each ethnic group as Prapasit Swasdiyat[6] said "Every culture has a set or group of words that identify or indicate kinship. In each state, it is called kinship terms. And all the kinship terms are called system of kinship terminology".[7]

The researcher chose to study Khmer- Thai dialect in Buri Ram Province because of a survey of past research results. The researcher found that the kinship terms of Khmer Thai dialect in Buri Ram province have never been studied before. Therefore, the researcher chose many districts of Buri Ram province as the data collection places. If considering the changes and loss of language and culture of ethnic groups, Thais who speak Khmer in Buri Ram province are considered to be one of the ethnic groups counted in this situation. So it is necessary to study, research and collect

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[4] Buri Ram Provincial Cultural Office, (2019), "The people of Buri Ram province", **Buriram-gen**, [Online], available: http://www.buriram.go.th/downloads/buriram-gen.pdf [March 1, 2021], pp. 28-29.

[5] Ruthaiwan Pancha, "The kinship term system of Northern Khmer in Mueang", **Mangrai Saan Journal, Institute of International Language and Culture, Chiangrai Rajabhat University,** Vol. 8 No. 1 (January - June 2020) : 66.

[6] Prapasit Swasdiyat, **Kinship systems and social organization**, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1992), p. 89.

[7] Eng Tola1 and Banyat Salee, "Kinship Terms of Thai KohKong in The Kingdom of Cambodia", **Chophayom Journal,** Vol. 29 No.2 (June – October, 2018) : 90.

information in all aspects. For this reason, the researcher is interested in studying Khmer kinship terms in Buri Ram province for the sake of collecting information about kinship terms as part of the language and culture of ethnic groups. It provided guidance and benefits for Khmer dialect education to those interested in studying Khmer Buri Ram in the future.

Objectives of the Research

1. To survey the Khmer kinship terms spoken in Buri Ram province.

2. To study the meaning of Khmer kinship terms spoken in Buri Ram province with componential analysis methods.

3. To analyze the culture that is reflected from the Khmer kinship terms.

Research Methodology

This research used a documentary and qualitative method. Researcher revised the principle, theory and literature concerning the analysis of Khmer kinship terms in Buri Ram province. The tools used to collect data consist of kinship terms think tank and voice recording. Also, researcher prepared a convenient form for recording kinship data by creating a family genealogy for an analytical convenience. The researcher selected a total of 30 informants from 6 districts; 5 persons in each district. The qualifications of the informants were specified as follows; (1) not limited to gender, education and occupation, (2) must be aged 40 years and over, (3) must be born and raised in a Khmer community or village which has never been relocated before or may relocate before but must have resided in the area not less than 10 years, and (4) speaking Khmer in everyday life. After receiving the words from the local Thai Khmer relatives, the researcher analyzed the data by using the componential analysis method.

Results

1. The results of surveying the Khmer kinship terms spoken in Buri Ram province.

The results of this research, the Kinship terms of Thai ethnic groups in Buri Ram province where researcher collected sample data in the sub-districts. There are 6 districts: Mueang district, Huai Rat district, Krasang district, Satuek district, Prakhon Chai

district and Phlapphla Chai district, it was found that there are 28 kinship terms of Thai ethnic groups in Buri Ram province as follows, /ʔʌw/, /mɛː/, /ʔom/, /puː/, /paj/, /taː/, /jɛj/, /ta: tuːt/, /jɛj tuːt/, /bɑːŋ/, /pʔoːn/, /koːn/, /caw/, /kmuːj/, /pdɛj/ , /prɔpuːan/, /ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /koːn psaː/, /bɑːŋ tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn tʰlaj/, /caw tʰlaj/, /ʔom tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /ʔʌw ʔancem/, /mɛː ʔancem/ and /koːn ʔancem/.

According to the Khmer dialect spoken in these six districts that were found for 28 words, the researcher found that these words were divided into two types based on the structure of words.

Single word, based on the information of 28 kinship terms, it was found that there are 14 kinship terms that are single words, as below.

/taː/, /jɛj/, /ʔʌw/, /mɛː/, /ʔom/, /paj /, /puː/, /pdɛj/, /prɔpuːan/, /bɔːŋ/, /pʔoːn/, /koːn/, /caw/, /kmuːj/

Compound Word, based on the information of 28 kinship terms it was found that there are 14 kinship terms that are compound words, as below.

/ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /koːn psaː/, /pʔoːn psaː/, /ʔom tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/,

/bɔːŋ tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn tʰlaj/, /ta: tuːt/, /jɛj tuːt/, /puː tʰlaj/, /koːn ʔancem/,

/ʔʌw ʔancem/, /mɛː ʔancem/

Compound word, where the two words are combined together until becoming the long compound words, actually there are more two words such as;

1) Noun + Noun, i.e.

/koːn psaː/, koːn + psaː   /pʔoːn psaː/, pʔoːn + psaː   /ʔom tʰlaj/, ʔom + tʰlaj

/paj tʰlaj/, paj + tʰlaj   /bɔːŋ tʰlaj/, bɔːŋ + tʰlaj   /puː tʰlaj/, puː + tʰlaj

2) Noun + Verb, i.e.

/koːn ʔancem/, koːn + ʔancem ,   /ʔʌw ʔancem/, ʔʌw + ʔancem

/mɛː ʔancem/, mɛː + ʔancem

2. The result of studying the meaning of Khmer kinship terms spoken in Buri Ram province with componential analysis methods.

The researcher found that there are 6 semantic dimensions that made a difference in basic Khmer kinship terms and in the relationship concerning marriage in all 6 places, namely generation, lineage, gender, age, marriage and remarriage.

For generation, It can be divided into 8 generations.

Generation +4 has 2 kinship terms: /taː tuːt / and /jɛj tuːt/.

Generation +3 has 2 kinship terms: /taː tuːt / and /jɛj tuːt/.

Generation +2 has 2 kinship terms: /taː/ and /jɛj/.

Generation +1 has 16 kinship terms: /ʔʌw/, /mɛː/, /ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /ʔom, paj/, /puː/, /paj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /mɛː ʔancem/, /ʔʌw ʔancem/, /ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /ʔom tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/.

Generation +0 has 7 kinship terms: /bɔːŋ/, /pʔoːn/, /bɔːŋ tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn psaː/, /pdɛj/ and /prɔpuːan/

Generation -1 has 5 kinship terms: /koːn /, /caw /, /koːn psaː/, /caw tʰlaj / and /koːn ʔancem/

Generation -2 has 3 kinship terms: /koːn/, /caw/ and /caw tʰlaj /

Generation -3 has 3 kinship terms: /koːn/, /caw/ and /caw tʰlaj /

For lineage, it can be divided into two types.

+Direct: /ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /pdɛj/, /prɔpuːan/, /koːn psaː/

- Direct: /ʔom tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /bɑːŋ tʰlaj/, /paʔoːn tʰlaj/, /caw tʰlaj/

For gender, there are two genders: male and female.

+Male, for example: /taː tuːt/ 'great-grandfather'/taː/'grandfather', /ʔʌw/'father', older male siblings of the father and mother', /puː/ 'younger male siblings of the father and mother'.

-Female, for example: /jɜj tuːt/ 'great-grandmother', /jɜj/ 'grandmother', /mɛː/ 'mother', /ʔom/ 'older female siblings of the father and mother', /paj/ 'younger female siblings of the father and mother'.

For age, it is related to the kinship relation either as older or younger within the same generation. There are two types of age.

-Age: /pʔoːn/, /tʰom tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn tʰlaj/

+Age: /bɑːŋ/, /tʰom tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /bɑːŋ tʰlaj/

For marriage, it is used to indicate the relationship of the couple's relatives. There are two types for marriage.

- Marriage: /ʔʌw/, /maː/, /tʰom/, /puː/, /paj/, /bɑːŋ/, /pʔoːn/, /koːn/, /caw/.

+Marriage: /ʔʌw kameːk/, /maː kameːk/, /tʰom tʰlaj/, /puː tʰlaj/, /paj tʰlaj/, /pdɜj/, /prɔpuːan/, /bɑːŋ tʰlaj/, /pʔoːn tʰlaj/, /koːn psaː/, /caw tʰlaj/.

For remarriage: /ʔʌw kameːk/, /maː kameːk/.

3. The result of analyzing the culture reflecting from Khmer kinship terms.

From studying and analyzing the Khmer kinship terms by way of componential analysis, It can be summarized as a cultural characteristic reflected by the Khmer kinship terms as follows:

1) Emphasis on older relatives

In giving precedence to seniority system as a cultural characteristic that reflects the Khamer kinship terms after identifying such a characteristic such as using the difference on generation in order to separate kinship terms from each other as the following.

The dimension or difference on generation can separate Khmer kinship terms into 8 generations as follows: G +4, G +3 , G +2 , G +1 , G 0 , G -1 , G -2 and G -3.

If considering these generations by using the generation to be the same as onself or G 0 as the criteria, these generations can be divided into two groups: group 1 which is higher than generation of oneself. The generation with + mark (plus) is consisted of G+4, G +3, G +2 and G +1, and group 2, the generation that is lower than onself, or the generation with – mark (minus) is consited of G -1, G-2, and G-3.

Each group has different generations and kinship terms as in the following table.

Table 1. Showing the number and percentage of Khmer kinship terms classified by generation

Generation group	Appearing	
	Number (word)	Percentage
Group 1: generations are older than oneself. (G +4, G+3 , G+2 , G+1)	16	66.67
Group 2: generations are lower than oneself. (G-1 , G-2, G-3)	8	33.33
Total	24	100

From table 1 as above, the kinship terms in group 1. or the kinship terms of the generation which is higher than oneself, there are the total of 4 generations and 16 kinship terms, counting for 66.67 percent of all kinship terms.

Group 2. The kinship terms of the generation lower than oneself, there are 3 generations and 8 kinship terms in total, counting for 33.33 percent. Such a result shows that the Khmer kinship terms made the terms to call the relatives of higher generations that are not the terms stipulated to call the relatives of generations lower than onself that reflects in giving precedence to seniority system.

2) In giving precedence to lineage relatives

If classifying the Khmer kinship terms by using marriage differences, the Khmer kinship terms can be separated into two groups: [-marriage] means the kinship terms that are not from marriage or a descended relative, and [+marriage] means to the terms obtained from the marriage.

Table 2. Showing Khmer kinship terms classified by the dimention of marriage

- marriage	+ marriage
ʔʌw	ʔʌw kameːk
maː	maː kameːk
tʰom	tʰom tʰlaj
puː	puː tʰlaj
paj	paj tʰlaj
bɑːŋ	pdɜj
pʔoːn	prɔpuːan
koːn	bɑːŋ tʰlaj
caw	pʔoːn tʰlaj
	koːn psaː
	caw tʰlaj

From table 2, we can see that the difference on marriage can separate the kinship trms into 2 groups that the first group is consisted of the kinship terms that are not obtained from marriage, and the second is the kinship terms obtained from marriage, which is higher than those of the first group.

If considering carefully the characteristic of the two groups of Khmer kinship terms, it was found that the first group of kinship terms are single terms with one syllable for all 3 terms. But the second group of kinship terms or the kinship terms obtained from

marriage is mostly compound words which mean the persons who are the husband or wife of relatives, or father or mother of the husband or wife.

3) In giving precedence to direct relatives

If considering the khmer kinship terms that were obtained from marriage [+marriage] can be separated into 2 groups of khmer kinship terms with a lineage dimension, [-direct lineage] which means the relative who is directly descended or who has a vertically relationship with onself, and [+direct lineage] which means the relative who are not the direct lineage relatives who have a horizontally relationship with onself.

Table 3. Showing the kinship terms obtained from marriage classified by dimension of lineage.

+ direct	- direct
ʔʌw kmeːk	ʔom tʰlaj
mɛː kmeːk	puː tʰlaj
pdɛj	paj tʰlaj
prɔpuːan	bɑːŋ tʰlaj
koːn psaː	paʔoːn tʰlaj
	caw tʰlaj

According to table 3, if considering the kinship terms of the two groups it can be seen that besides the two groups, mostly they are the compound words and also the kinship terms of the first groups obtained directly from marriage and lineage, or having avertical relationship with onself.

The direct kinship terms obtained from marriage were created like /ʔʌw kmeːk/, /mɛː kmeːk/, /pdɛj /, /prɔpuːan / and /koːn psaː/ but the kinship terms of the second group or being obtained from marriage and the persons who are not descended directly or the relatives who have a horizantal relationship with onself. They are the compound words obtained from the kinship terms concerning marriage mixing with the word /tʰlaj/ which means "son-in-law or daughter-in-law", especially the word /psaː/ of the word /koːn psaː/ which means "son-in-law or daughter-in-law." But Khmer speakers produced new words when these words are concerned with direct kinship terms obtained from marriage. This characteristic shows that Khmer-speakers give preedence to the relatives from direct marriages more than the relatives from non-direct marriages.

4) In giving precedence to the relatives of father and mother side, and the relatives of husband and wife side equally.

If considering the Khmer kinship terms as a whole it can be found that there were no any kinship terms that separated the kinship terms of father and mother side. The kinship terms of each dimension can be used for the relatives of both father and mother side such as the word /ʔʌw kmeːk/ and /mɛː kmeːk/ that they can be used for the relatives of husband and wife's father and mother.

The word /ʔom/ works can be used for father and mother's elder brother, and the word /puː/ and /paj/ can be used for both father and mother's younger brother, etc.

It can be said that the Khmer speakers give precedence to the relatives of father and mother side, and the relatives of husband and wife side equally.

5) In giving precedence to male and female equally

The Khmer kinship terms classified by dimension of difference concerning gender such as male [- male], female [+ female] and the kinship terms that can be used in both genders.

When considering the kinship terms used for female and a male, it was found that both groups had the same number of kinship terms, that is 6 words, counting for 21.43 percent. This supports in giving precedence to equalimity on female and male, and when considering the kinship terms classified by dimension of gender, It was found that the kinship terms separated the terms used for calling male and female apart that appeared only in kinship terms of G 0 up or higher than oneself.

Table 4. Showing Khmer kinship terms classified by dimension of gender that is related to dimension of generation.

Generation	+male	-male
+4 and +3	taː tuːt	jɛj tuːt
+2	taː	jɛj
+1	ʔʌw ʔʌw kameːk ʔʌw ʔancem	mɛː kmeːk mɛː ʔancem
0	pdɛj	prɔpuːan

From table 4, it can be seen that the kinship terms obtained from other words by dimension of gender that appears in the generation that is higher than oneself, consiting for 2 words, that is [G 0] or the same generation as oneself that cosists of /pdɛj/ and /prɔpuːan/ which means husband and wife or the same model as myself: /pdɛj/ and /prɔpuːan/, which means husband and wife. This makes it clear that Khmer speakers had produced their new kinship terms to suit for the two genders in order to reduce the gender inequality. The words /pdɛj/ and /prɔpuːan/ that appears in the same generation with onself used to call a woman or man who gets married to oneself to make it different in calling oneself or make it different from the role of oneself. It is said that the kinship terms that are separated from other words by gender dimension appears only as the kinship terms of self - generation which is higher than oneself or the generation with the mark + (plus).

Gender identification in higher-self-age generation can be considered a priority for those who are older. Identifying the gender of the generation which is higher than oneself can be considered as giving precedence to senior persons. As for the words other than the table above are the kinship terms that can be used for calling both genders, such as /thlaj/ and was used to call the relative who is the son-in-law and daughter-in-law,. The word /wac/ can be used to call relatives who are nephews and nieces of grandfathers and grandparents. And the word /puː/ and /paj/ can be used to call up the father's younger brother as well and mother's younger brother, etc. This supports the ideas that the Khmer speakers give precendence to females and males equally.

This culture was reflected in the Khmer kinship terms system spoken in Buri Ram province, which were comprised of five factors: the importance of seniority, an emphasis on genetic relatedness, preference for direct lineage, equal weight for mother, father, husband, and wife relatives, and equal weight for male and female relatives.

Discussion

The Khmer kinship terms are studied by way of Ethnosemantics or Ethnoscience which aimed to penetrate the feeling, ideas and visions of a group of people by studing their language. The purpose of this research is to conduct a survey of Khmer kinship terms

spoken in Buri Ram province, to study the meaning of Khmer kinship terms using componential analysis methods, and to analyze the culture reflected in the Khmer kinship terms. The data used in the analysis is the kinship terms that are associated by the lineage and marriage in 6 Khmer dialects in Buri Ram province, i.e. Mueang district, Huai Rat district, Krasang district, Satuek district, Prakhon Chai district and Phapphla Chai district. The findings of this study agreed with the report on the general education framework in line with the research work of Amara Prasitratthasin is a research that used componential analysis on the meaning of kinship teams in standard Thai language, and summarize the important characteristics in the culture that are reflected from the meaning of the kinship teams and the use of kinship terms in various contexts as well. Jatuporn Dompraiwan mentioned about comparison of kinship terms system in Thai and Mian (Ya), Engchuan studied Fujian kinship terms in southern Thailand and Penang in Malaysia and found that seniority is considered important in Fujian culture. Patrilineal lineage, from an ancestor down through a series of male links, is regarded as important as well. This is in line with Waraphon Tira who studied the kinship terms of Thai Muslims of different ethnic origin (Cham-Khmer, Thai, Persian) in Bangkok and reported that Thai Muslim kinship terms reflected the value of seniority and patrilineal descent for Thai Muslims.

Recommendation

The researcher thought that the language should be studied based on the Ethnosemantics because as far as the research has shown that there are very few for the works in this field when compared to the study's work on the kinship terms that they should be supported for further studies as the following.

1. The Khmer kinship terms in other places, such as in the central region, in the north, etc., or the kinship terms in Cambodia and Vietnam, etc.

2. Study in bringing the kinship terms in Khmer to be used among relatives and non-relatives as well as the use of relatives in other circles.

3. Study and compare the kinship terms in other Khmer languages in different areas.

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