

## **Kham Mueang Dialect Usage over Three Generations in Tambon Wiang Phayao.\***

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate Kham Mueang dialect usage in the daily lives of the local people according to gender, education, and occupation and to study the differences over three generations of informants in the use of words, phrases and expressions. Purposive sampling was used to select 90 Kham Mueang informants over three generations in Tambon Wiang Phayao, with 30 informants from each generation group. They were classified by age, above 51 years old, between 31- 50 years old, and between 15 - 30 years old. Research results showed that the language commonly used in daily life of the informants consisted of over 50 percent in Kham Mueang, according to gender, education, and occupation. In general, the informants use Kham Mueang dialect exclusively the most, followed by Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively, respectively. Concerning the 166 words, phrases and expressions, Informants aged above 51 years know and use Kham Muang words the most. Those aged 15 - 30 used Kham Muang the least. It was found that certain Kham Muang words used by older generations have been replaced with Central Thai vocabulary words pronounced in a northern accent by subjects between the ages of 15 - 30 years. This research found evidence which confirmed that Kham Muang was still in existence and was used daily. Several methods of preservation are proposed.

**Key Words:** Kham Mueang dialect usage, Kham Mueang words (used), Kham Mueang dialect sample sentences

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## Introduction

At present, northerners still use Kham Mueang dialect for communication in their daily lives. There have been some changes as time has passed because Kham Mueang dialect uses Tua Mueang language which was once the official language of the Lanna Kingdom. (Thanesuan Charoenmueang, 2012). Later, when the use of Central Thai became widespread into Lanna during King Rama V's reform and restarting Northwest Precinct (Bunkhit Watcharasat, 1995) Central Thai became more widespread. Afterwards, King Rama VI proclaimed the Primary Education Act B.E. 2464, and the Ministry of Education ordered the end of reading and writing Tua Mueang language in both temples and schools and replaced it with Central Thai. In addition to this, Lanna people were instructed to study Central Thai with all textbooks being written in Central Thai. Students were instructed to speak Central Thai in educational establishments which led to more students conversing in Central Thai. This government education policy of encouraging exclusive use of official Thai language caused younger generations in schools to not recognize the significance of their local dialects and made parents worry that their children could not speak Central Thai, so they communicated in Central Thai with their children. Even local dialects such as Kham Mueang, Isan dialect and Southern dialect are still used widely because they are regional dialects. However, young people who use Northern, Northeastern and Southern dialects usually use Central Thai words in their local accents and forget local words. In the developing areas, there has been more code-mixing as Patima Premisiri (1993) found that the convenience of transportation was related to the degree of Kham Mueang usage. In other words, people who live in remote areas lacking good transportation will use Kham Mueang more than those who live in areas with better transportation facilities such as in cities or the center of progress. People in these developed areas use Kham Mueang less than those who live far from cities. This is in accordance with Burutphakdi, Natnaphang (2004) who found that students in Mueang districts speak Central Thai more than those in the countryside. Moreover, mass media is another reason that helps support the widespread use of Central Thai. Local people are constantly being exposed to Central Thai from mass media such as newspapers, radios, movies, and televisions. The written language is mainly in Central Thai, especially in the urban areas, main towns of provinces. Central Thai is used as a medium of communication as the areas are the zones of government officials and the center of progress in technology, economics, education and transportation.

The Kham Mueang dialect is one of four major dialects used in Thailand. When researchers conduct research about the Kham Mueang dialect they usually focus on Chiang Mai because it is the most important Centre of the Northern Thai language. (Thanesuan Charoenmueang, 2012.) Much of the research which has been carried out in the north of Thailand has focused on vocabulary, divided according the regions in the north as well as differences in pronunciation and geographic influence on pronunciation.

Tambon Wiang Phayao is a small sub district measuring 4 square kilometers with a population of 10,368 of which 4,703 are male and 5,428 are female, and 4,468 households. ([www.thaitambon.com](http://www.thaitambon.com), 2012). There are no airports, railway stations and department stores, there are few tourist attractions. Tourists will mostly visit Kwan Phayao lake for the purposes of dining and recreation. This is because it is 90 kilometers or one hour drive from Chiang Rai, and 200 kilometers or two hours drive from Chiang Mai. (Division of Technical Services and Planning, 2012) The occupations of people in Tambon Wiang Phayao are mostly farmers, gardeners, fishermen, merchants, noodle and ginger factory workers or owners of businesses.

I chose to conduct my research in Tambon Wiang Phayao because 1) Inactive language contact: Tambon Wiang Phayao is not frequently visited destination, since there are not many tourist attractions or large universities. Hence, the local dialect has not been subjected to much change and still remains. 2) The way of life: This region an agricultural and small industrial society. Most people make their living from agriculture without experiencing changes to their language or culture, and 3) Semi-rural area: Phayao province is located in a semi-rural area and Tambon Wiang Phayao is in the central . If there is any developments in education, technology ,migration, this Tambon Wiang Phayao will be the first place where changes will take place. and I would like to conserve the Kham Mueang dialect and to arouse interest and give knowledge to those interested in this field. Many people speculate that Kham Muang use is gradually disappearing as new generations may use their local dialect less and less. This research aims to study whether this is indeed true, and if so, to what extent giving reasons for this change. Another objective of research is to investigate Kham Mueang dialect usage among three generations of people in Tambon Wiang Phayao according to gender, age, education, and occupation, and the differences among the three generations of informants in the use of words, phrases and expressions.

### Research Objectives

1. To investigate Kham Mueang dialect usage in the daily lives of three generations of people in Tambon Wiang Phayao according to gender, age, education, and occupation.

2. To study the differences among the three generations of informants in the use of words, phrases and expressions.

3. To develop the list of most frequently used Kham Mueang words in Tambon Wiang Phayao including their meaning and sample sentences use in daily life.

### Research Methodology

This research employed the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research procedure with interviews, observations, percentages and chi-square analyses.

The informants consisted of 90 people were as follow:

The informants consisted of 90 people					
Gender	Males (45)			Females (45)	
Age	Above 51 years old (30)		Between 31- 50 years old (30)		Between 15 - 30 years old (30)
Education	Primary level (30)		Secondary level (30)		University level (30)
Occupation	Housewives (18)	Government officers (18)	Students (18)	Freelancer (18)	Agriculturists. (18)

The first generation (above 51 years old), preserve the original forms of Kham Mueang dialect. The second generation (between 31-50 years old) are of working age and the third generation (15-30 years old) are the new generation whose languages use may be influenced by Central Thai.

### Research instruments: two questionnaires for interviews

The first questionnaire consisted of 20 questions about Kham Mueang usage in the daily lives of the three generations of people in Tambon Wiang Phayao, Mueang District, Phayao Province.

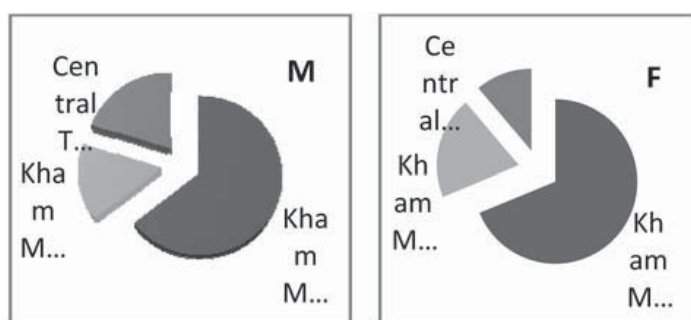
The second questionnaire consisted of 166 Kham Mueang words, phrases and expressions, of which 146 were words and 20 were phrases and expressions. (Appendix on page18) These two interviews were validated by four academic scholars including an expert in language, culture and religion, an educational supervisor, a Thai language teacher and an expert in the evaluation of education and research.

### Data collection

The first questionnaire of 90 informants focused on Kham Mueang dialect usage in daily life, divided into use within the family members, colleagues, neighbors, and other people. Informants were grouped according to their personal information such as name, gender, age, occupation, education, first spoken language, when they started to use Central Thai and Kham Mueang dialect, and their usage of Central Thai and Kham Mueang dialect in 20 daily life contexts, namely with family members, colleagues, neighbors, friends, government officials, teachers, strangers, merchants in the local markets and department stores, people in the temple and people at funerals. The questions which the informants answered in each situation were, Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively. The second questionnaire which interviewed three generations included information about 166 Kham Mueang words, phrases and expressions usage.

### Results of the Study

**The first objective 1.1: Gender.** Comparison of male and female informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, use of Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and use of Central Thai exclusively. **(from chi-square analyses)**

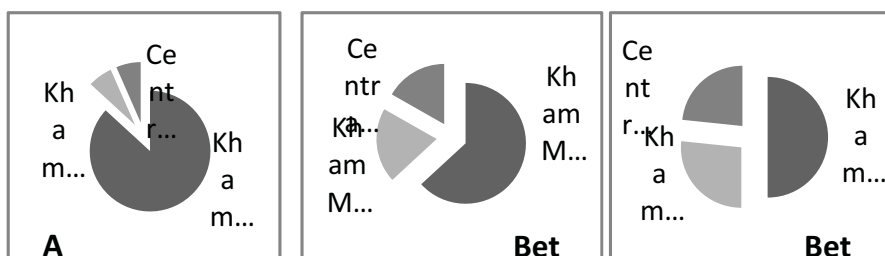


Gender	Language use			Total
	Kham Mueang dialect exclusively	Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai	Central Thai exclusively	
Males	29 (32.2%)	7 (7.8%)	9 (10.0%)	45 (50.0%)
Females	31 (34.4%)	9 (10.0%)	5 (5.6%)	45 (50.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 (66.7%)</b>	<b>16 (17.8%)</b>	<b>14 (15.6%)</b>	<b>90 (100.0%)</b>

**Note:** The numbers in parentheses are expressed as percentages. Chi-Square Tests = 1.460 df = 2 ;  $p > 0.05$  ( $p = .482$ )

The research revealed that both male and female informants use Kham Mueang dialect exclusively more than Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively. There was no significant difference between male and female informants in their use Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively.

**The objective 1.2: Age.** Comparison of the three generations of the informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, use Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and use Central Thai exclusively (**from chi-square analyses**)

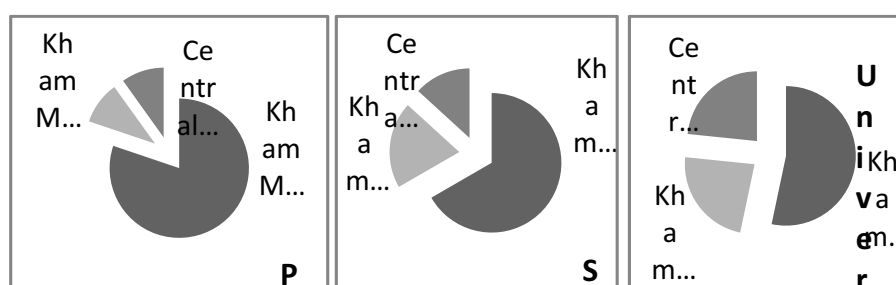


Age	Language use			Total
	Kham Mueang dialect exclusively	Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai	Central Thai exclusively	
Above 51 years	26 (28.9%)	2 (2.2%)	2 (2.2%)	30 (33.3%)
Between 31-50 years	19 (21.1%)	6 (6.7%)	5 (5.6%)	30 (33.3%)
Between 15-30 years	15 (16.7%)	8 (8.9%)	7 (7.8%)	30 (33.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 (66.7%)</b>	<b>16 (17.8%)</b>	<b>14 (15.6%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>

**Note:** The number in parentheses are expressed as a percentage. Chi-Square Tests = 9.314

There were no significant differences among three generations of informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively. Research reveals that informants aged above 51 years old use Kham Mueang dialect exclusively more than the other groups.

**The objective 1.3: Education level.** Comparison of education levels of the informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, use Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and use Central Thai exclusively. **(from chi-square analyses)**



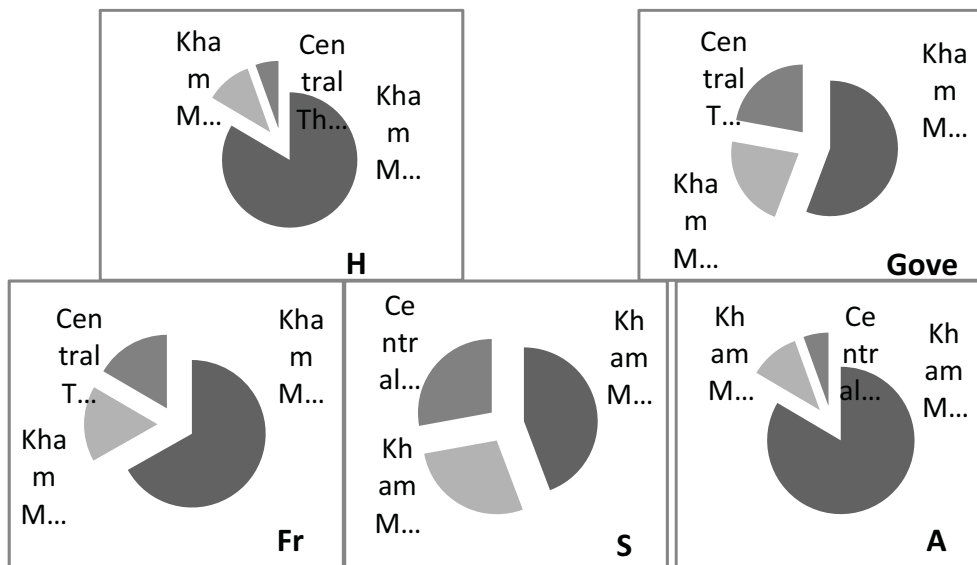
Education Level	Language use			Total
	Kham Mueang dialect exclusively	Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai	Central Thai exclusively	
Primary	24 (26.7%)	3 (3.3%)	3 (3.3%)	30 (33.3%)
Secondary	20 (22.2%)	6 (6.7%)	4 (4.4%)	30 (33.3%)
University	16 (17.8%)	7 (7.8%)	7 (7.8%)	30 (33.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 (66.7%)</b>	<b>16 (17.8%)</b>	<b>14 (15.6%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>

**Note:** The number in parentheses are expressed as a percentage. Chi-Square Tests = 5.082 df = 4 ; p = .279

The primary education informants used Kham Mueang dialect exclusively more than the other two levels, and there was no significant relationship among the three educational levels of informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and Central Thai exclusively.

**The objective 1.4: Occupation.** Comparison of the occupations of the informants in their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, use of Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai, and use of Central Thai exclusively **(from chi-square analyses)**





Occupation	Language use			Total
	Kham Mueang dialect exclusively	Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai	Central Thai exclusively	
House wives	15 (16.7%)	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.1%)	18 (20.0%)
Government officials	10 (11.1%)	4 (4.4%)	4 (4.4%)	18 (20.0%)
Students	8 (8.9%)	5 (5.6%)	5 (5.6%)	18 (20.0%)
Freelancers	12 (13.3%)	3 (3.3%)	3 (3.3%)	18 (20.0%)
Agriculturists	15 (16.7%)	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.1%)	18 (20.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 (66.7%)</b>	<b>16 (17.8%)</b>	<b>14 (15.6%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>

**Note:** The number in parentheses are expressed as a percentage. Chi-Square Tests = 9.863 df = 8 ;  $p > 0.05$  ( $p = .275$ )

This table shown that 'house wives' and 'agriculturists' use Kham Mueang dialect exclusively more than the three other groups, namely 'government officials', 'students', and 'freelancers'.

There was no significant relationship among the occupations of the informants and their use of Kham Mueang dialect exclusively, Kham Mueang combined with Central Thai and Central Thai exclusively

**The second objective** : To study the differences among the three generations of informants in the use of words, phrases and expressions.



In comparing the three generation groups it revealed that the age group above 51 years and between 31-50 years knew most of the phrases in their dialect but did not use some of these phrases in daily conversations such as ญะซิดบ้านซิดเมือง แต่ว่า (wâ yâ kHt bâan kHt muang dtÊÊ wâa Bad luck), ปาดิฮักเมืองญ่าแคม (bàa dii hàk bHang yâm kÊÊm To be unfair) ละอ่อนตอนแต่นหมู่นี้ (lá ʋʋn dtʋʋn dtÊn mùu nîi Children) and ดีกอะละกะขายจัวใจนี้ (dtUk à lâ gà kăai ngua cháí nîi Finally). It also found that the oldest age group (above 51 years) knew most of the expressions in their dialect but did not use some of these words in daily conversations such as กั้นเข้าฮื้อไว้ตาน้ำ (gîn kào hU H wái dtàa náam One should know the extent of one's ability) and ฮ่อมหนูหนูได้ ฮ่อมไหนไหนเดียว (hʋʋm nũn nũn dtài hʋʋm nài nài dtiao Each person has one's own duty). In addition, the youngest age group neither knew nor used the expressions in Kham Mueang more than two other age groups.

In general, people of older generations tend to use original Kham Mueang words whereas younger generations tend to use Central Thai words pronounced in their local accent. An example of this is the word สายฮ้าง sǎai háang which means 'belt' in Kham Mueang is mostly used by older generations and the younger generations pronounce this word as เข็มขัด. Thus, today some Kham Mueang words have faded and almost disappeared among younger generations and become replaced by Central Thai words pronounced in their local accent while they are still in current use by their parents. One interesting finding in this research was that younger generations used proverbs to a lesser extent than older generations.

**The third objective:** To develop the list of most frequently used Kham Mueang words in Tambon Wiang Phayao including their meaning and sample sentences use in daily life.

There are sample dialect sentences of 166 Kham Mueang words, phrases and expressions.

**Sample: 166 Words and Sentences** (The Central Thai words are in the brackets)

Kham mueng dialect	English	Sample in English Sentences
<b>1. คำนาม Kham Nam Noun</b>		
1. อัยหม่อน Ui Mon (ทวด) Thuat	Great-grandfather Great-grandmother	เขาไปหาอัยหม่อนกันป๋อ Hao Pai Ha <b>Ui Mon</b> Kan Bo. Let's visit our <b>Great-grandfather</b> .
2. น้องไป๋ Nong Pai (น้องสะใภ้) Nong Saphai	Sister in law	<b>น้องไป๋</b> ไปตลาด <b>Nong Pai</b> Pai Kat. My <b>sister in law</b> goes to the market.

Kham mueng dialect	English	Sample in English Sentences
<b>11. คำวลีต่างๆ Kham Wali Tang Tang Phrase</b>		
1. อะหยังมาน่าฮักน่าจังแต่ว่า A Yang Ma <b>Na Hak Na Chang</b> Tae Wa (น่ารักจัง) Narak Chang	cute	อีน้องอะหยังมาน่าฮักน่าจังแต่ว่า I Nong A Yang <b>Ma Na Hak Na Chang</b> Tae Wa. She is so cute.

Kham mueng dialect	English	Sample in English Sentences
<b>12. สำนวน/ภาษิต Samnuan Pha Sit Expression</b>		
1. กินเข้าฮื้อไว้ต๋าน้ำ <b>Kin Khao Hue</b> <b>Wai Ta Nam</b> (รู้จักประมาณตน) Ruchak Pra Man Ton	One should know the extent of one's ability.	ตัวกินเข้าฮื้อไว้ต๋าน้ำผ่องTua <b>Kin Khao Hue Wai Ta Nam</b> Phong.You should know your limits.

In summary, this research reveals that despite exposure to Central Thai in the media such as television, newspapers and the internet, Kham Muang usage among the younger generation has not disappeared. Although these younger generations understood these words in their dialect, they have also replaced these original Kham Muang words with Central Thai words which are pronounced in a northern Thai accent when they use them in daily conversations. This research differs from other research previously carried out in that it focuses on the evidence which confirms that Kham Muang is still in existence. Moreover, this research will be useful to other researchers who plan to do field trip research and would like to look at possible methods to of data collection.

The benefits of this research are that it provides knowledge about new words which are unique. This research provides useful information for policy making in areas such as administration, language and culture conservation, and for use by organizations involved as well as local curriculum developers.

**Current relationship between society and language usage.**

Relationship	Context			Note
	Formal	Semi-formal	informal	
G1 -G1	K.M	K.M	K.M	<b>K.M refers to</b> Kham Muang exclusively <b>Mix refers to</b> Kham Muang combined with Central Thai <b>C.T refer sto</b> Central Thai exclusively <b>G1 refers to Generation 1</b> (Above 51 years old) <b>G2 refers to Generation 2</b> (age between 31-50 years) <b>G3 refers to Generation 3</b> (age between 15-30 years)
-G2	K.M	K.M	K.M	
-G3	Mix	Mix	K.M	
G2 -G1	K.M	K.M	K.M	
-G2	C.T	Mix	K.M	
-G3	C.T	Mix	K.M	
G3 -G1	C.T	Mix	K.M	
-G2	C.T	Mix	Mix	
-G3	C.T	C.T	Mix	

This table shown that if generation 1 communicates to a person from the same generation, they tend to use Kham Muang exclusively in all contexts regardless of the level of formality.

If generation 2 communicates to a person from the same generation, they tend to use Central Thai, in formal context Kham Muang combined with Central Thai for semi-formal context and Kham Muang exclusively for formal context.

If generation 3 communicates to a person from the same generation, they tend to use Central Thai, in formal and semi-formal context Kham Muang combined with Central Thai for informal.

**Recommendations for ways in which the Kham Mueang dialect could be better preserved.**

1) TV programs should be broadcasted in Kham Mueang in order to teach and promote the use of the dialect. 2) The internet is an interesting tool which the government or private sector can use in order to preserve the Kham Mueang dialect. 3) The government should have a bilingual policy for conserving their mother tongue with measures to promote use of the Kham Mueang dialect. 4) This study can be applied as a guideline for other studies of Kham Mueang dialect or Northern Thai dialects spoken in different areas of Thailand. 5) Knowledge of ASEAN languages is very important as ASEAN citizens such as Thais should know more than two languages besides English and should know the languages of the neighboring countries such as Burmese, Khmer and Lao as these countries have languages which are similar to Kham Mueang dialect. Thus, the Kham Mueang dialect is easy to understand by Lao people and vice versa.

### Suggestions for further research

Kham Mueang dialect usage is widespread in the northern region of Thailand. However, there are great differences between the upper and the lower northern regions. It would be worthwhile to reveal what differences they are and what sociolinguistic influences that cause such differences.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire (Section 1) Usage Kham Mueng Dialect

1. **Name- Surname** .....
2. **Gender**    ☐ Male        ☐ Female
3. **Age** ( ) Above 51 years (.....years) ( ) Between 31 – 50 years (.....years) ( )  
Between 15 - 30 years (.....years)
5. **Education Level**  
( ) Primary    ( ) Secondary    ( ) University
4. **Occupation**  
( ) Housewife    ( ) Student    ( ) Freelancer    ( ) Agriculturist  
( ) Government Official /Permanent full time employee

**In which language do you use to communicate with the following people? Choose one of these answers:**

People	Kham Mueng Exclusively	Kham Mueng combined with Central Thai	Central Thai Exclusively
1. Grandparents(on fathers side)			
19. People in the temple			
20. People in funeral			

**Questionnaire (Section2) The list of Kham Mueang words for interview**

Kham Mueang dialect	English	The interviewee not know the word in his/her dialect	The interviewee know the word in his/her dialect		Choice of word which the interviewee chooses to use instead
			The interviewee use the word in daily life	The interviewee does not use the word in daily life	
1. คำนาม	Noun				
5. ละอ่อน láwǎn	Child				
1. คำวลี	<b>Phrase</b>				
7. บ่ดีฮักเบื่องญาแควบàa dii hák bǝ́ang yâm kɛɛm	To be unfair				
12. สำนวน	<b>Expression</b>				
1. ฮ่อมหนูหนูได้ฮ่อมไหน ไหน เตี่ยว hǝ́wm nǝ́n nǝ́n dtài hǝ́wm nài nài dtiao	Each person has one's own duty				