



Tone variation of Thai Song Dam

Somsonge Burusphat
sburusphat@gmail.com

**Research Institute for Languages and
Cultures of Asia**

Mahidol University, Thailand

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Ethnic language processes in progress



The cluster research

Ethnicity

New paradigm in language and cultural transmission

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Six major Lao ethnic groups reside in the seven provinces of the western region of Thailand.

Lao Song Dam/Thai Song Dam

Lao Yuan

Lao Phuan

Lao Khrang

Lao Vieng

Lao Tay

Names:

Lao/Thai **Song** **Dam**
(**Black trousers**)

Song

Lao Song

Thai Song

Tai Song

Thai Song Dam

Tai Dam or Black Tai



**Original homeland of Black Tai areas
 Muang Thaeng (Myang Teng or Muoi),
 Sipsongchutai (Sipsong Chao Tai) in the northern part of
 Laos**





Reasons for the choice of research sites

(Huathanon and Sakaeray villages, Nakornpathom province, Thailand)

- Previous studies (Somsonge et al 2010) have found that TSD people in these villages moved from Phetchaburi province. They are strongly united and their language vitality is very strong.
- No previous acoustic studies of tones at these two locations.
- Community leaders and villagers are co-operative.



Tai Dam in Laos and Vietnam

Language affiliation

- **The Tai language group of the Southwestern Branch of the Tai-Kadai language family**
- **Southwestern Branch: Thai Song Dam, Lao, Thai**

Research questions

- how do the tones vary at different locations
- how do the tones vary according to age group

Framework

Gedney (1972)

**Variation theory
(Sociolinguistics)**

- regional variation**
- social variation**

PRAAT (Zirivarnphicha Thanajirawat)

Sources of data

Regional variation

- **12 locations in Thailand (8 provinces)**
 - Nakhonpathom (2 locations)**
 - Suphanburi (2 locations)**
 - Samutsakhon**
 - Petchaburi (3 locations)**
 - Kanchanaburi**
 - Nakhonsawan**
 - Pitsanulok**
 - Loei**
- **Muang La (Son La), Vietnam (Fippinger 1974)**
- **Muang La (Son La), Vietnam (Somsonge 2010)**
(Attasith Boonsawasd)

Sources of data

Social variation

Thai Song Dam at 2 villages:

Huathanon village, Donphutsa sub-district, Dontoom district

Sakaeray village, Donyayhom sub-district, Muang district

NAKHONPATHOM PROVINCE

Thai Song Dam speakers of three age- groups:

Old generation (over 60)

Middle generation (35-55)

Young generation (18-30)

Findings: Regional variation

How do the tones vary at different locations?

- A tone comparison of 14 Thai Song Dam/Tai Dam varieties reveals that the tone patterns of **most** varieties are uniform.
- Some** phonetic differences lie at the starting and ending points of contours and pitch levels.

Pattern of tonal splits and mergers

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
1	3	5	3	
2	4	6	4	

Tone characteristics

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
Lower-mid Rising	Mid- Rising	(Glottalized) Lower-mid Falling/level	Rising	
Mid-rising Falling (Humped tone)	Higher-mid Level	Higher-mid Falling	Level	

Tone pattern and tone characteristics

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
A1 Rising	B1 Rising	C1 (Glottalized) Falling/level	D1 Rising	
A2 Falling	B2 Level	C2 Falling	D2 Level	

Tone pattern and tone characteristics of most regional varieties

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
Rising	Rising	(Glottalized) Falling/level	Rising	
Falling	Level	Falling	Level	

LOEI

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
1Rising [241]	3Rising [45]	4Falling [21]	3Rising [45]	3Level [44]
2Falling [453]	4Falling [21]	5Falling [31]	2Falling [43]	

PB2 & SM

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized
voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
Rising [45] (SM)	Falling [342] (PB2)			

Pattern of tonal splits and mergers in ML 1 and ML 2

	A	B	C	DS	DL
aspirated unaspirated glottalized	Lower-mid level Mid level [33]	High- Rising Lower-mid high rising [25]	Low and glottalized Mid falling and glottalized [31 ⓧ]	High- rising Lower-mid rising [24]	
voiced	High level High level [55]	Higher-mid Level Higher-mid Level [44]	Mid falling and glottalized Higher-mid falling and glottalized [41 ⓧ]	Higher-mid Level Higher-mid level [44]	

Pattern of tonal splits and mergers in ML1 and ML2

	A	B	C	DS	DL
aspirated unaspirated glottalized	Level	Rising	Glottalized Low/Falling	Rising	
voiced	Level	Level	Glottalized Falling	Level	

Black Tai Proto-tones (Pittayawat 2009)

	A	B	C
aspirated unaspirated glottalized voiced	Mid level	Rising	Glottalized Falling

Findings: Social variation

How do the tones vary according to age group?

- The typical tone pattern of Thai Song Dam language is still preserved by three generations of speakers and has not been phonemically changed at both locations. Both varieties show the same tone patterns as the other regional varieties (except Loei).
- The phonetic features of all tones, except C1 tone, do not vary according to age group. Some minor phonetic differences exist but are insignificant.

Diagram 2 Tone variation by age group at Huathanon village

	A	B	C	DL	DS
aspirated	G1 [13]	G1 [15]	G1 [22?]	G1 [15]	G1 [25]
unaspirated	G2 [213]	G2 [214]	G2 [21?]	G2 [213]	G2 [23]
glottalized	G3 [213]	G3 [215]	G3 [21?]	G3 [215]	G3 [24]
voiced	G1 [243]	G1 [33]	G1 [31?]	G1 [33]	G1 [33]
	G2 [232]	G2 [22]	G2 [31]	G2 [22]	G2 [22]
	G3 [232]	G3 [22]	G3 [31]	G3 [22]	G3 [22]

Diagram 3 Tone variation by age group at Sakaeray village

	A	B	C	DL	DS
aspirated	G1 [23]	G1 [24]	G1 [33?]	G1 [13]	G1 [24]
unaspirated	G2 [213]	G2 [215]	G2 [21?]	G2 [24]	G2 [35]
glottalized	G3 [313]	G3 [215]	G3 [21?]	G3 [214]	G3 [24]
voiced	G1 [242]	G1 [22]	G1 [21?]	G1 [22]	G1 [22]
	G2 [232]	G2 [22]	G2 [31]	G2 [22]	G2 [22]
	G3 [232]	G3 [33]	G3 [31]	G3 [33]	G3 [33]

	A	B	C	DS	DL
aspirated	Rising	Rising	Glottalized	Rising	
unaspirated			Level/ Falling		
glottalized			(Glottalized)	Level	
voiced	Falling (Humped tone)	Level	Falling		

Original voiceless initials = high or rising (voiceless-high)

Original voiced initials = low or falling (voiced-low)

voiceless-high in A1 and B1

voiced-low in A2 and C2

Tones C1 and B2 are level or falling

aspirated
unaspirated
glottalized

voiced

A	B	C	DS	DL
Rising	Rising	(Glottalized) Falling/level	Rising	
Falling	Level	Falling	Level	

Black Tai Proto-tones (Pittayawat 2009)

	A	B	C
aspirated	Mid level	Rising	Glottalized Falling
unaspirated			
glottalized			
voiced			

Pattern of tonal splits and mergers in ML1 and ML2

	A	B	C
aspirated	Level	Rising	Glottalized Falling/level
unaspirated			
glottalized			
voiced	Level	Level	Glottalized Falling

Pattern of tonal splits and mergers in most regional varieties

	A	B	C
aspirated	Rising	Rising	(Glottalized) Falling/level
unaspirated			
glottalized			
voiced	Falling	Level	(Glottalized) Falling

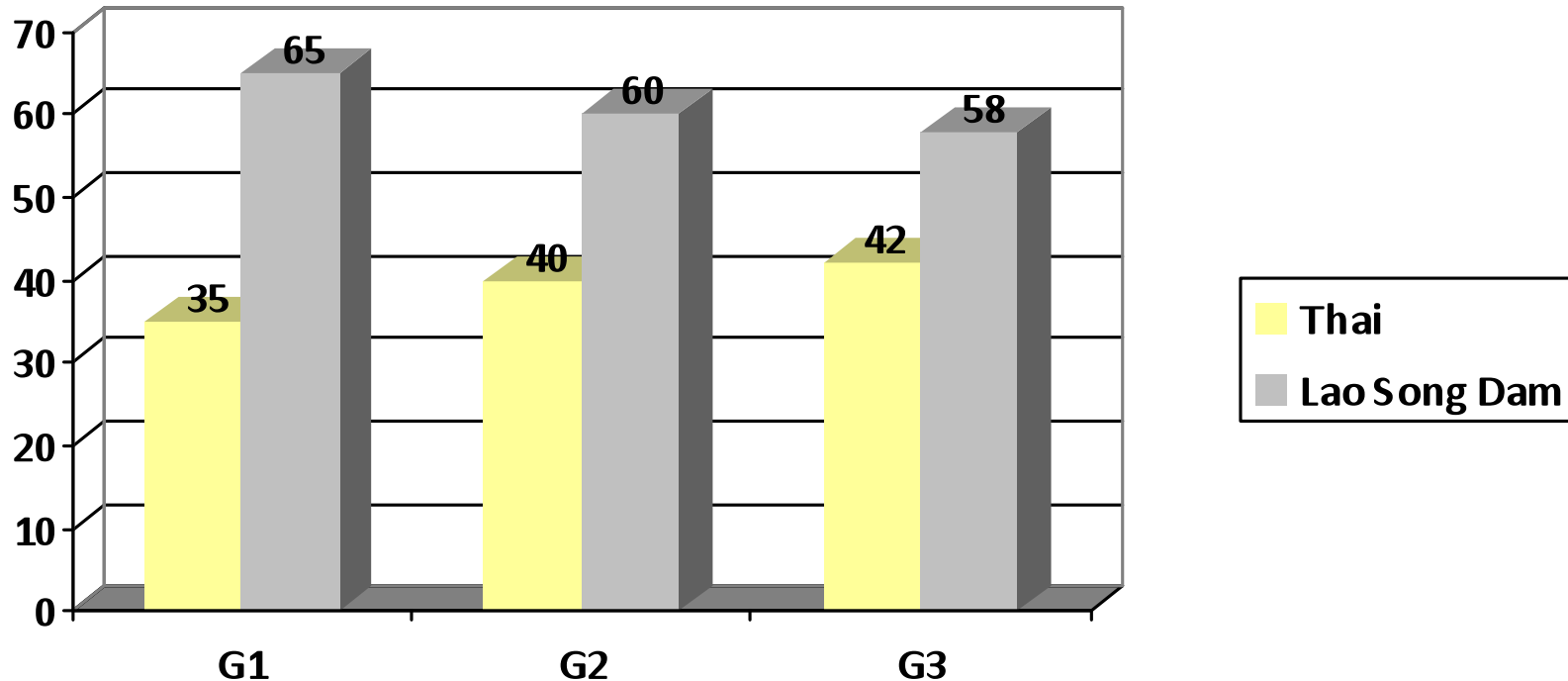
INTERNAL FACTOR

EXTERNAL FACTOR: LANGUAGE CONTACT

Tone change occurs slower than lexical change (Suntharat 2006)

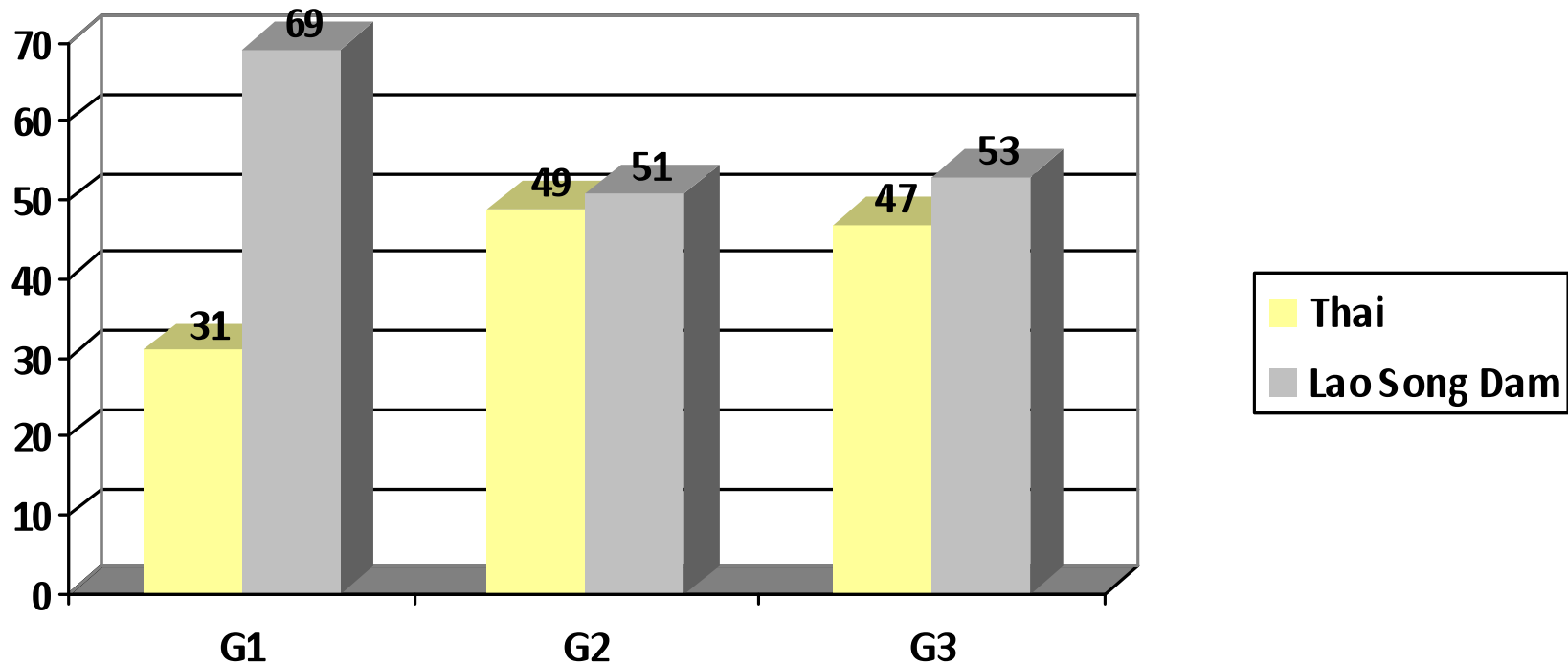
Lexical choice

Graph 1 the percentage of Thai and Lao Song Dam (HTN) words used by each generation



Lexical choice: The second and third hypotheses

Graph 2 the percentage of Thai and Lao Song Dam (SKR) words used by each generation





**Thank you for your
attention**