An Examination of Lexical Attrition in the Native Thai Speaker Living in the U.S.

There are numerous studies on how language is acquired. However there seems to be less interest in how language is lost. Most researchers seem to agree that the term attrition deals with a "loss" of some aspects in a person's linguistic ability. Compared to a L2 attrition and pathological causes of attrition, L1 attrition is considered to be the rarest form of language attrition (Schmid & Köpke, 2009; Kargar & Rezai, 2014). Of the various existing components in language, lexical attrition has been argued to be the most noticeably vulnerable form of attrition for the L1 (Abbsian & Khajavi, 2010; Kargar & Rezai, 2014; Yoshitiomi, 1992). In this talk we will investigate the phenomenon of L1 lexical attrition in Native Thai Speakers living in the U.S. In considering the elements involved with this topic, a comparative input from respective fields such as, psychology as well as sociology were implemented. The study was conducted with the participation of 50 individuals who were required to be native Thai speakers having lived in the U.S. for a minimum of 5 years. No age limits were set. The investigation was conducted by distributing two tasks to the participants. The participants' first task was a sociolinguistic questionnaire. The second task the participants took part in, was an adapted version of the Boston Naming Task (BNT). For the findings, Pearson's two-tailed correlation coefficients was utilized to evaluate whether there is a linear relationship between the variables, and the degree of correlation between them. The results indicated that there seems to be little to no lexical attrition in terms of item production for the L1 in the Thai immigrant community.

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