Synthesis of Doctoral Dissertation in Thai Linguistic Research on CNKI Database during 2015-2020

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Abstract

This research aims to study an overview of the doctoral dissertation in Thai linguistic studies published on CNKI during 2015-2020. The study found that 55% of dissertations were structural linguistics, followed by semantics, socio-linguistic and diachronic study which accounted for 25%, 15%, and 5%, respectively. These 20 dissertations were written by Thai scholars, which chose Thai and Chinese languages as compare objects. However, there were no topics related to pragmatics, psycho-linguistic, neurolinguistic, and computational linguistics, which is a gap that should be studied shortly.

Keywords: Thai Linguistic, Doctoral Dissertation, CNKI database, Synthesis

1. Introduction

CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) is an electronic database that collects research articles, academic conferences, annual books, newspapers, statistics, and master and doctoral dissertations from many of China's universities and research institutes. CNKI is an extensive database covering various disciplines like science, technology, philosophy, economy, politics, economics, social sciences, humanities, management, etc. It began to be published online and used officially in 1999. Today, CNKI also subscribes to journals from several international databases, which made some data are published in other languages. Studying research related to the Thai language in China through the CNKI database will help us understand the direction, trend, and research gaps of Thai language learning in China, which will be helpful for academics and those who want to study in China including Thai language learners and related field.

Thailand and China have had a relationship for a long time. Whether in trade cultural exchange or population migration, however, teaching the Thai language in China has just been officially started for 75 years, starting at Nanjing Eastern Vocational College before being incorporated into the Department of Eastern Languages at Peking University as it is now. (Bo, 2007) Currently, China offers more than 70 Thai language courses in higher education. (Jirapas, 2019) Courses are conducted from high school to doctorate level in metropolitan areas, like e.g., Shenzhen and Shanghai. Most Thai language textbooks are written by Chinese professors such as Peking University, Guangdong University of Languages and Foreign Trade, Chongqing University, Yunnan University, Shanghai International Studies University, etc.

The trend of learning Thai language in China is becoming more and more popular day by day due to the influence of the Belt and Road Policy (BRI), including many other economic cooperation projects. The need to produce a workforce who can communicate in Thai fluently is increasing; however, the labor market also needs knowledge workers in related fields such as trade, investment, law, or even agriculture. The synthesis of research related to Thai language and Thai studies from the CNKI database gives us an overview of the research and directions in Thai language studies more clearly.

2. Research Object

This research aims to survey and synthesize research on Thai linguistics doctoral dissertation in China published in the CNKI database during 2015-2020, and the relation between research methodology and the population in the study.

3. Scope of Research

According to the research object, the scope of this study was set as follows:

1. The database used for searching is CNKI.

2. The data was retrieved on August 2nd, 2021.

3. The internet network and gateway used in this study are provided by Dhurakij Pundit University's SecoClient VPN network in Thailand.

4. Use the word "泰语 (Thai language)" to search the information in the category of doctoral dissertations published in Chinese between 2015 and 2020.

4. Research Limitation

This research only selected doctoral dissertations published in the CNKI database in Chinese; thus, this study did not include some data from universities that were not subscribed to the CNKI database.

5. Literature Review

From the review of relevant literature found that there was some research papers on the synthesis of knowledge about Thai language and Thai studies from the CNKI database as follows:

Amornwanitsak (2013) surveyed Thai studies from the CNKI database. The study of master's theses and doctoral theses from 2000 to 2012 found 26 doctoral dissertations and 421 master's theses. By dividing the content into 16 subject groups, 69 fields from 68 universities, using documentary research methodology, analyzing, classifying, and displaying data proportions according to content groups, university, province, the field of study, and year of graduation. Then, figurative reasoning was given to infer the phenomena discovered from the survey. The results showed that the trend of Thai studies is increasing.

Xu and Sun (2018) researched the status of education in Thai grammar from 2004-2016. The research found that there were 118 papers related to Thai grammar, which could be divided into 71 articles, 112 master's theses, and 5 doctoral theses. The subject included the

study of grammar from word to sentence level. This research paper was documentary research that used quantitative analysis and descriptive analysis by selecting articles and theses related to various research types, not statistically in conclusion and trends. Therefore, it is the research that helps to see the preliminary status of Thai grammar education in China.

Rojanawanichkij (2020) synthesized and compared the Chinese and Thai research from master's degree thesis, doctoral dissertations, and academic articles appearing in the relevant CNKI database using quantitative and qualitative research methods. This paper defined the search term from the word "Comparison of Chinese and Thai" and categorized the content of information into four main categories: Comparative study of Chinese and Thai vocabulary, A comparative study of Chinese and Thai grammar, A comparative study of Chinese and Thai in translation, and A comparative study of Chinese and Thai pronunciation. The research on the vocabulary comparison between Chinese and Thai had the highest number, followed by grammar, translation, and pronunciation studies. However, the scope of research was limited to the comparative study of Chinese and Thai in the CNKI database, which is just one population of articles and thesis related to Thai language and Thai studies. Therefore, it reflects only the relevant information for the comparative study involving Chinese and Thai languages.

6. Research Methodology

1. Collecting data in China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (oversea.cnki.net) by using the word "泰语 (Thai language)" to search the information in the category of doctoral dissertations published in Chinese between 2015 and 2020.

2. Grouping and examining preliminary data with descriptive statistics then choosing the dissertations that related to Thai language linguistics

3. Using ATLAS.ti to analyze and categorize the data and interpret the results using descriptive analysis methods.
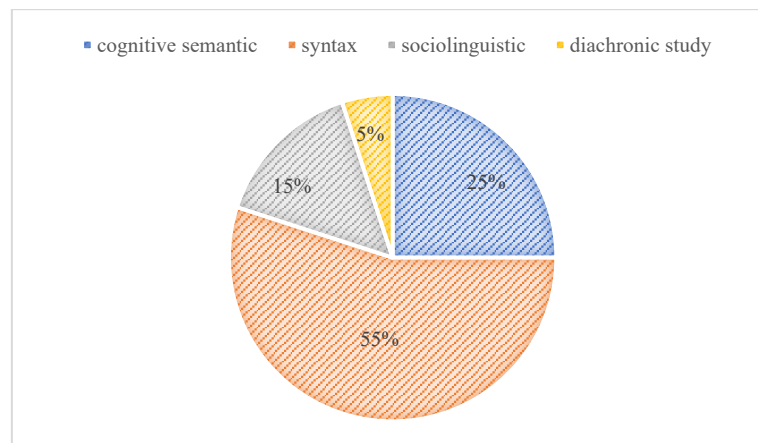
7. Research Result

This paper defines the search term from the word "Thai language"（泰语）on the CNKI in articles and dissertations field without setting year limit found 3,896 results. (Accessed on August 2nd, 2021) The results were divided into 122 doctoral thesis, 2,205 master's thesis, and 1,569 articles. After screening out irrelevant data and setting year limits in 2015-2020, it was found that over 6 years, there were 42 doctoral theses related to the Thai language, which can categorize into 22 papers in Thai language and 20 papers in the field of Thai Studies. The sub-topics in Thai studies can be categorized into 8 types: policy studies, Chinese culture in Thai, Teaching Chinese as a foreign language, Chinese literature, Education, Folklore, Ethnics, and minority, and political view. The field of Thai language has 2 papers in translation and 20 papers in linguistics. Categorizing by content, these 20 theses are in diachronic linguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive semantics, and structural linguistics, as detailed in the following table.
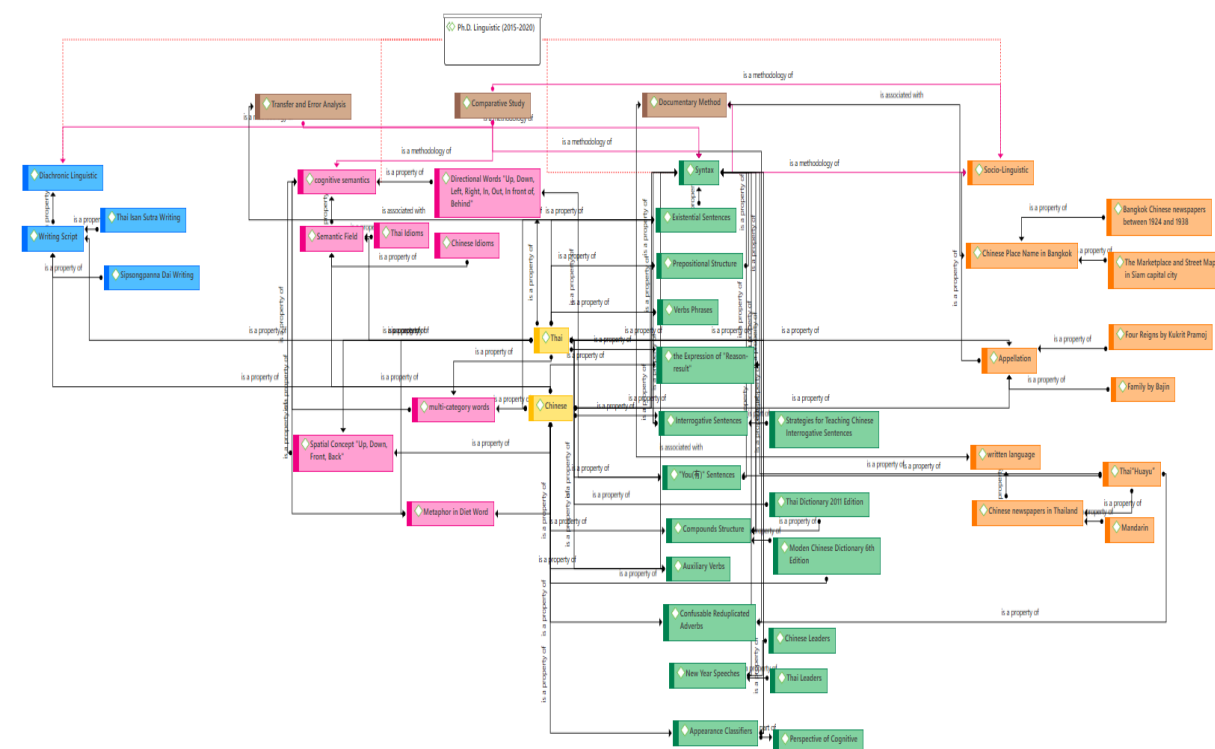
Table 1 Dissertation topic, type and publish year

No.	Year	Topic	Type
1	2015	A Comparative Study of Spatial Concepts "Up, Down, Front, Back" in Mandarin Chinese and Thai	Cognitive Semantics
2	2015	Comparison And Analysis of Chinese Verbs Phrases and Thai Verbs Phrases	Syntax
3	2016	A Contrastive Study of Appearance Classifiers in Chinese and Thai from the Perspective of Cognitive ——Chinese Error Analysis of Thai Learner	Syntax
4	2016	A Comparative Study between Chinese and Thai Leaders' New Year Speeches	Syntax
5	2016	A Contrastive Study of Appearance Classifiers in Chinese and Thai from the Perspective of Cognitive ——Chinese Error Analysis of Thai Learner	Syntax
6	2016	A Comparative Study between Chinese and Thai Leaders' New Year Speeches	Syntax
7	2017	A Study on the Auxiliary Verbs between Chinese and Thai-Based on Comparative Analysis	Syntax
8	2017	Similarities and Differences between Chinese and Thai Interrogative Sentences and Strategies for Teaching Chinese Interrogative Sentences	Syntax
9	2017	A Study on the Expression of "Reason-result" in Modern Chinese	Syntax
10	2017	A Comparative Study of Compound words in Thai and Chinese and the influence on the second language acquisition	Syntax
11	2017	A Comparative Study of Chinese and Thai Appellation between Family by Bajin and Four Reigns by Kukrit Pramoj	Sociolinguistics
12	2018	A Comparative Study of Chinese Directional Words and Their Thai Equivalents	Cognitive Semantics
13	2018	The Comparative Study of Metaphor in Chinese and Thai Diet Words	Cognitive Semantics
14	2018	A Comparative Study of Fuzzy Words in Thai and Chinese	Cognitive Semantics
15	2018	A Comparative Study of Confusable Reduplicated Adverbs in Chinese and the Equivalents in Thai	Syntax
16	2018	A Study on the Comparison and Teaching of Existential Sentences in Chinese and Thai	Syntax
17	2019	A Comparative Study of the Semantic Field between Chinese and Thai Idioms ——A Case Study of Culture Spirit	Cognitive Semantics
18	2019	The Comparative Studies of "You（有）" Sentences in Chinese and Thai from the Perspective of Linguistic Typology	Syntax
19	2019	A Comparative Research on the Forms between Sipsongpanna Dai Writing and Thai Isan Sutra Writing	Diachronic Study
20	2020	The Study of Prepositional Structure "Starting Point Preposition + X + Noun of Locality"	Syntax

According to the table above, most of the research is in structural linguistics (syntax), followed by cognitive semantic, sociolinguistics, and diachronic studies. The comparing ratio will be as shown in the following chart.

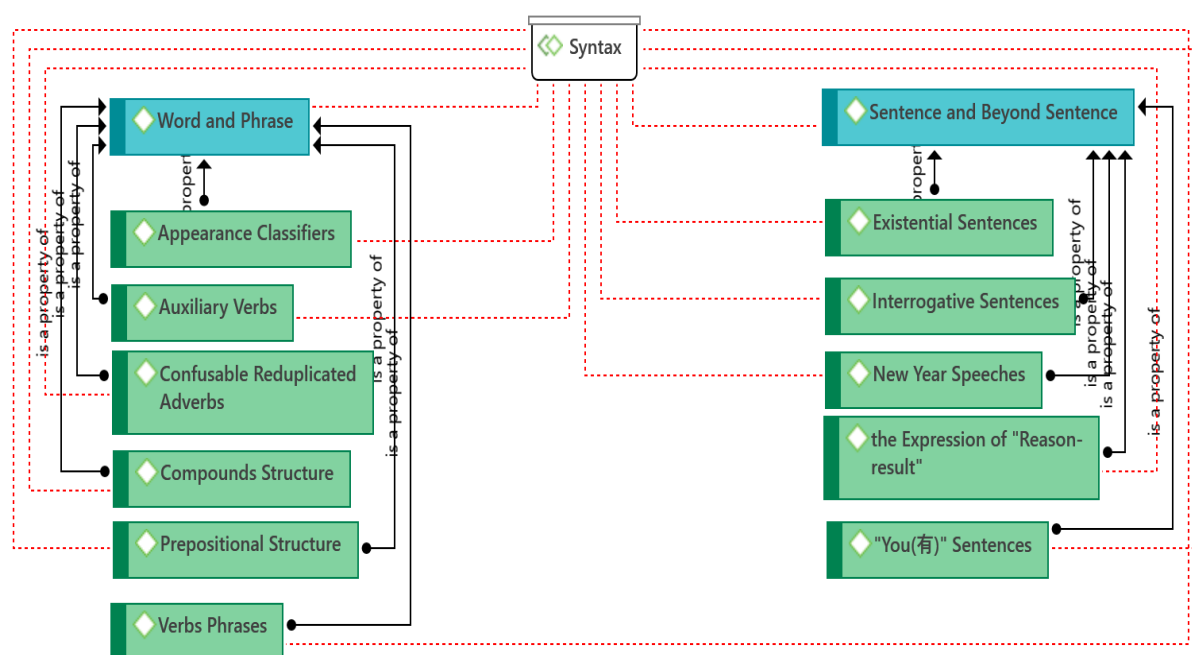**Figure 1 Comparing ratio in each topic**

After analyzing the relationship between research methods, research content, and comparative language pairs by using ATLAS.ti, qualitative data analysis program, the total relationship is shown in the following figure.

Figure 2 Relationship between research methodology, type, research content and comparative language pairs.

From the figure above, the topic was grouped by different colors. The blue is a diachronic group. The content of the research was the Thai Isan alphabet (Tham script) in Thailand, and Tai Sipsongpanna script（西双版纳傣文）in Yunnan province, China. The research found that both Isan Sutra Scripture and Sipsongpanna old Dai Scripture were originated from the ancient Mon and Lanna scriptures in the Indochina Peninsula. The Pink is
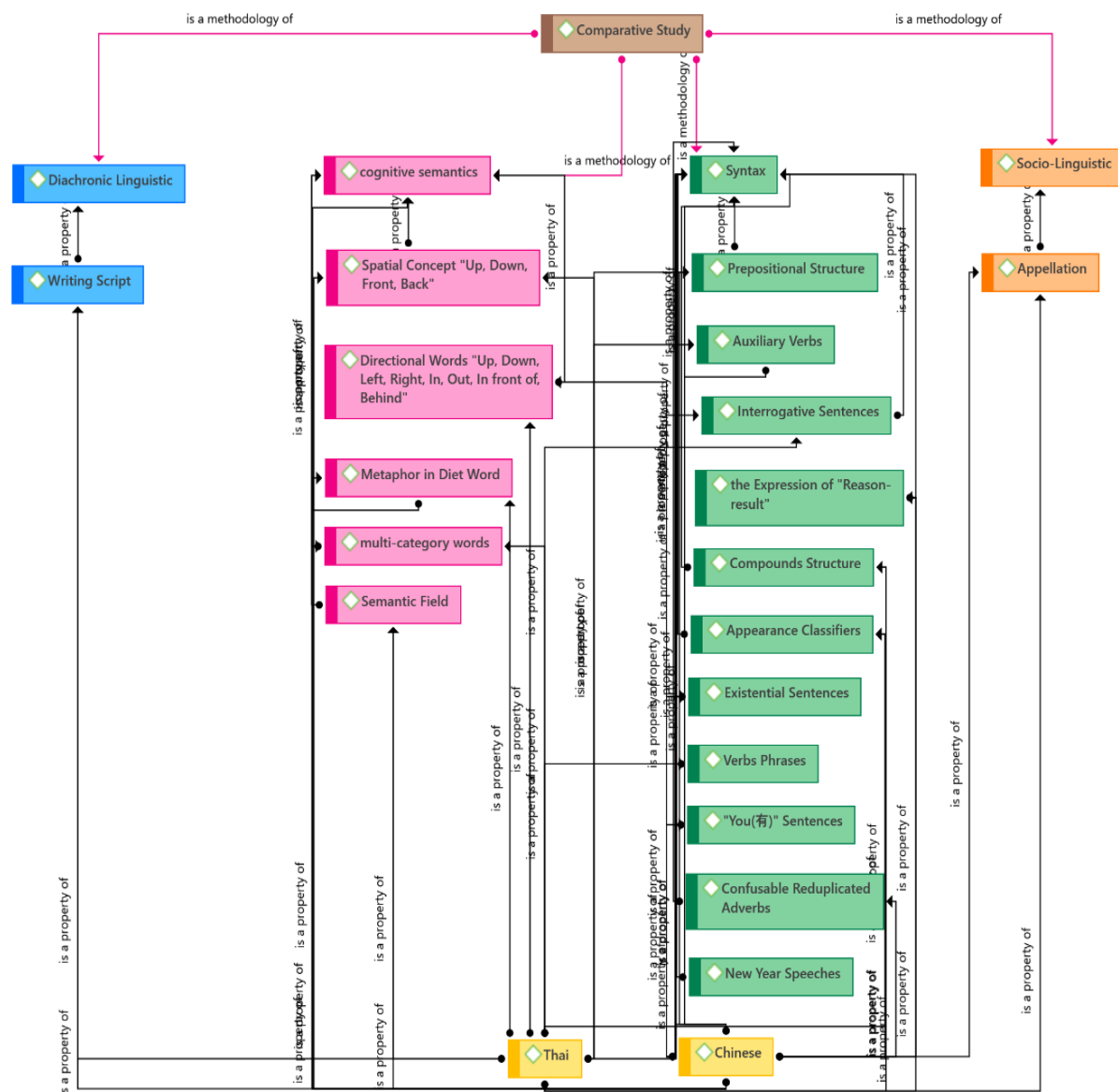
a group of cognitive semantics. It consisted of the study of direction words, idioms, and conceptual metaphors related to food. All comparative research methods were used in these 2 groups. The orange is a sociolinguistic group. It consisted of the study of Chinese place names in Thailand, a study of Chinese written language characteristics on Chinese newspapers in Thailand and a comparative study of the appellation in Kukrit Pramoj's novel "The Four Reign" and Bajin's novel "House". The research of Chinese place names in Thailand was collected data from both documents and fieldwork, which were the Chinese newspapers in Thailand and the marketplace and street map in the capital city. Comparative methodology with Thai and Chinese language pairs was used in these two topics. In contrast, the study of written language characteristics in Chinese newspapers in Thailand compared the writing style between Mandarin Chinese and Thai "Huayu" or Thai style Chinese language. The green part is the structural linguistics group. These research papers could be divided into two sub-types: research at word level and research at the sentence and above the sentence level, as detailed in the following picture.

Figure 3 Relationship between research topic in the field of syntax.

As shown in the picture above, the study at the word and phrases level tends to be the most popular group. The research topics included classifiers, auxiliary verbs, adverbs, compound words, directional words, and verb phrases. On the other hand, in the sentence field and above the sentence, the study has expanded from sentence structure to leader speeches on New Years' occasion. Each topic in structural linguistic used Thai and Chinese as comparative languages. Only the study of interrogative sentences was expanded the research field to find strategies for teaching Chinese as a second language. By the way, the comparative methods were primarily used in all fields, as shown in the following figure.

Figure 4 Relationship between of comparative study in all type of research

All research topics using comparative research methodology had comparative language pairs in Thai and Chinese. The details differ according to the topic and scope of the study. The above data corresponds to the ratio of authors, which is 4 Chinese and 38 Thai people, or in a ratio of 1:9.5. The doctoral theses written by Chinese authors during 2015-2020 related to Thai Studies fell under the Thai Studies category. Moreover, after analyzing a specific group of doctoral research topics in linguistics, it was found that most of the topics focused on syntax, both in terms of words and sentences. Nevertheless, there were few research papers in other fields of linguistics, such as pragmatic, discourse analysis, psycho-linguistic, neurolinguistics, and computational linguistics. This is a gap that should be studied further.

8. Conclusion and Discussion

Doctoral research is in-depth research that requires an understanding of both theories and related texts. Most of the researchers upon graduation are considered experts in that field. Synthesis of research in Thai linguistics doctoral dissertation which published in the CNKI database during 2015-2020 found that most of the research was conducted by Thai researchers, and most of the researchers were university lecturers that teach Chinese language. Therefore, the researcher chose to use the linguistic pairs in Thai and Chinese. This reflects that there is still a lot of open space for study in the Thai language in China, especially at the Ph.D. level.

However, the status of a doctoral study related to the Thai language in China is not yet widespread. As a result, some Chinese students have to study in other fields with can be related to Thai language or Thai studies, like translation, literature, international relationship, or choose to study in Thailand instead. This could be an opportunity to develop courses and create more educational collaborations.

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