

# The Tày Language in Tuyen Quang

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.805151>

Received: 04 May 2024; Revised: 19 May 2024; Accepted: 23 May 2024; Published: 21 June 2024

## ABSTRACT

The Tay people have settled in Tuyen Quang province for a long time. The Tày language is an isolated, monosyllabic, tonal language. The Tày language also has dialect areas. The Tày language belongs to the Tay – Thai language group, belonging to the Tai – Ka Dai language family. The differences between dialects are mainly at the phonetic level, partly in vocabulary. This article studies the language of the Tày people in Tuyen Quang – in the Western region of the Viet Bac region (Northeast – one of the 5 Tày dialect regions).

**Keywords:** Tày Language, dialect, phonology, vocabulary, monosyllable

## INTRODUCTION

According to historical records, since ancient times, Tuyen Quang was a province with many ethnic minorities living together. Tuyen Quang “has human races such as: Nung people, Răng Vàng people, Hóa Thượng people, Ngô Ngàn people, seven Mánethnic groups including Sơn Trang, Sơn Tu, Cao Lan, Sơn Man, Sơn Ban, Sơn Mieu...are like the Sơn Trang, Sơn Từ, Cao Lan, Sơn Man, Sơn Bán, Sơn Miêu...” [5, p.11-12]. Currently, Tuyen Quang is still a province with many ethnic groups, where there are more than 22 ethnic groups, including 8 ethnic groups with the largest population: Kinh, Tày, Dao, Cao Lan, Nùng, Hoa, H'Mông, Sán Dìu.

Ethnic minorities in Tuyen Quang mainly belong to the Tày, Nùng language groups and the Mông, Dao language groups, of which the Tày, Nùng ethnic group is the majority population in Tuyen Quang Province. Tuyen Quang Provincial Statistics Department (2009), According to 2009 statistics, the Tày people have 185,456 people, the Dao people have 90,618 people; The Nùng people have 14,214 people. These ethnic minorities are indigenous peoples, who have a long process of formation and development and are attached to their areas of residence.

Among ethnic minorities, the Tày people “are one of the first indigenous people to live on the Tuyen Quang land ” [10, p.21]. The original names of the Tày people were “Thổ” (referring to aborigines, indigenous people); “Ngan” (due to wearing a shorter shirt); “Phén” (wearing a brown shirt), v, v... [4, p. 14]. Regarding ethnic origin, the Tày people settled very early in our country and were one of the first owners of ancient Vietnam.

Through research, it has been shown that the Tày and Nùng people belong to the same Âu Việt group in the Bách Việt bloc, whose residence areas are North Vietnam and South China. During history, these two tribes had a close relationship and were easy to get along with, so they could interact and influence each other's cultures favorably. After that, the Lạc Việt people gradually migrated downstream to the rivers and coastal areas, gradually forming the modern Vietnamese nation. The Âu Việt people who settled in the mountains

and mid lands gradually formed the current Tày group [7, p. 26]. From there, the Tày and Nung people have had a close relationship since ancient times. The Tày people in the regions call themselves [tai 31], the Tày people in Cao Bangare [dai 31]. It should be noted that the self-names/tai 31/, /dai 31/ in the Tày people, /Tày 55/ in the Thái people, /dai 31/ in the Thu Lao people, /jai55/ in the Giáy people, BóY people, Hlai/hlai 55/ in the Le people (Hainan China)... are different deformations, originating from Proto Tai – KaDai /\*daiA/ “person, man”.

As for many other ethnic groups living in the same area, the Tày people are indigenous people, so they are also called “Thổ”. In the Tày region, this word is pronounced “thổ” with the meaning “local, native”, for example, *Cần Thổ* (Tho people), *da thổ* (medicine prepared by local healers) *phái thổ* (locally chee- self-woven).

During the French colonial period, the ethnic name “Thổ” was commonly used instead of the ethnic name “Tày” in daily interactions and in some research books. Nowadays, Cao Bang and Lang Son people are sometimes still called *Cần Thổ* (Thổ people).

In history, the Tày people are also known as the Lí people and the Lào people. The name Lí may be a variation derived from the Proto name Tai-KaDai /\*daj/ “people”.

Author Trinh Nang Chung [3] based on ethnographic investigation documents, folklore and ancient bibliographies, it has been concluded that the owner of the burial site belongs to the Tày ethnic group, who has long lived in this area. After that, based on 39 graves and stone stele at a depth of 50 – 60 cm, engraved with 19 Chinese characters, translated: The predecessor lived in the Vinh Khanh dynasty, died in the first month (Dan month) of the year Binh Close. The authors concluded that this is a stone stele from the reign of Emperor Duy Phuong (1729-1732), 255 years later during the reign of Le Trung Hung. Thus, the above studies have estimated that the Tày people were present and settled in Tuyen Quang from the early period of Vietnamese history.

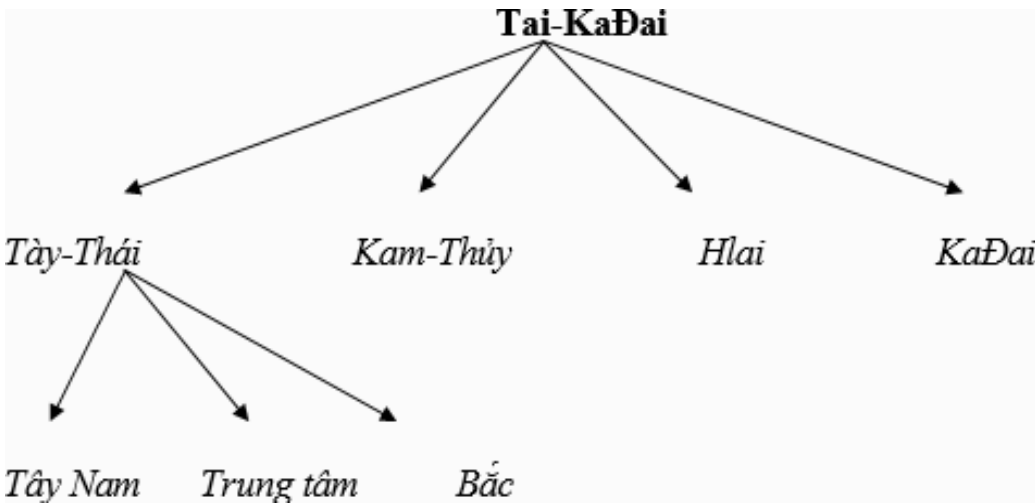
The Tày ethnic group includes the indigenous Tày people, a part of the Tày people of Kinh origin, and a part of the Nùng-turned- Tày people. Because they resided in the same area, the Tày language gradually became a common language for communities living in the same area as a common language. On the contrary, the Tày people also know how to speak the languages of other ethnic minorities such as Nung, Cao Lan... but the Tày people in Tuyen Quang province communicate with each other mainly in the Tày language. This shows that they pay great attention to protecting their nation’s cultural identity. The Nùng ethnic group in Tuyen Quang mainly belongs to the Nùng An branch[1,p.77].Currently, the Nùng people are quite few, the reason for this is because in fact there are many Nùng people who have “coordinated” with the Tày people. The connection between the Tày and Nùng is also easy to understand because these two peoples have the same origin, the same basic language and customs. Regarding the relationship between Tày and Nùng languages, it is considered that these two languages are very close to each other and *people have the policy that “on the basis of a common script, it is possible to build a Tày – Nùng cultural language.” unified as a means of developing education, culture, and mass information in the Tày and Nùng ethnic communities* [11,p.21]. However, according to research results, *“people still recognize the difference in language between the Tày and Nung people based on the phonetic appearance (pronunciation) of each word”* [11, p.23]. Therefore, Tày and Nùng are still two languages belonging to the Tai- Ka Dai language family.

Thus, the Tày, Nùng, Dao , Mông, ... ethnic groups are the original residents, long-standing settlers in Tuyen Quang. The languages of the ethnic groups in Tuyen Quang are classified into the following main groups: Tày – Thái language group of Tày, Cao Lan, Nung ethnic groups; Mong , Dao language group of Mong, Dao, Pa Then ethnic groups. In this article, we only learn about the Tày language, which belongs to the Tày – Thái language group and belongs to the Tai – Ka Dai language family.

## CONTENT

### The Tày languages belong to the Tai -Ka Dai language family and the Tày – Thái

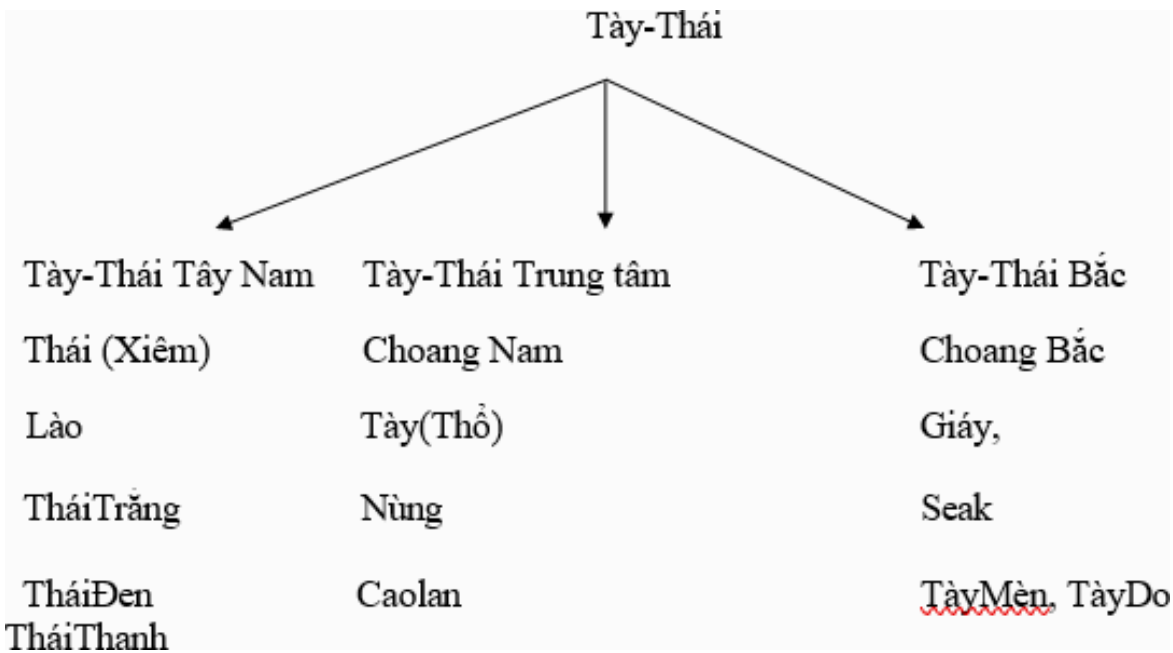
In the classification according to kinship (origin) of Tai-Ka Dai languages accepted by many scientists, Tày - Thái is one of three lineages of the Tai-Ka Dai language family.



### The internal division of the Tày- Thái language

Currently, there is no consensus among authors on the internal division of the Tày-Thái branch into groups (AG Haudri court's concept). [6; p. 44-56].

Based on basic vocabulary and phonetic historical change processes, Ly Phuong Que divides Tày- Thái languages into 3 groups: Northern Tày – Thái, Southwest Tày-Thái and Central Tày -Thái. The classification of Tày- Thái languages according to Ly Phuong Que is presented in the diagram below:



AG Haudri court's opinion is that the Tày-Thái language is divided into two groups: the Northern Tày-Thái group and the Southern Tày -Thái group [6]. Based on statistics on the common word ratio between Tày and

Thái languages, Hoang Van Ma compared and made more detailed statistics. Below is the percentage of common words between Tày- Thái languages according to the 700-word word table.

|                  | Tày | T Lao | PDí | Ngạn | N Cháo | NAn | N Dín | Xuông | Thái (TB) | Lào | Lự | Tống | Thủy | Giáy | BốY | Pu Nà | Cao Lan |
|------------------|-----|-------|-----|------|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----------|-----|----|------|------|------|-----|-------|---------|
| <b>Tày</b>       |     | 74    | 79  | 78   | 96     | 83  | 82    | 93    | 89        | 83  | 80 | 51   | 46   | 76   | 69  | 68    | 78      |
| <b>ThuLao</b>    |     |       | 74  |      |        |     |       |       | 75        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>PaDí</b>      |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 92        | 89  | 87 |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Ngạn</b>      |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 76        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>N.Cháo</b>    |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 80        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>N.An</b>      |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 75        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>N.Dín</b>     |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 79        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Xuông</b>     |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 76        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Thái (TB)</b> |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       |           |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Lào</b>       |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 95        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Lự</b>        |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 93        | 94  |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Tống</b>      |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 43        |     |    |      | 78   |      |     |       | 49      |
| <b>Thủy</b>      |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 42        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>Giáy</b>      | 76  | 65    | 73  | 95   | 74     | 79  | 74    | 75    | 76        | 71  | 71 | 52   | 46   |      | 86  | 86    | 78      |
| <b>BốY</b>       |     |       |     | 82   |        |     |       |       | 96        |     |    |      |      |      |     | 96    |         |
| <b>PuNà</b>      |     |       |     | 83   |        |     |       |       | 67        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |
| <b>CaoLan</b>    |     |       |     |      |        |     |       |       | 69        |     |    |      |      |      |     |       |         |

Statistical table of common word ratios between Tày and Thái languages

Hoang Van Ma [9] has calculated that the difference between the Northern Tày- Thái and Central Tày – Thái languages ranges from 75% to 76%; Northern Tày-Thái and Southwestern Tày-Thái have from 71% to 73% common words. Between Central Tày-Thái and Southwest Tày-Thái there is from 80% to 83%. The special thing is that the ratio of common words between Thái Đăm (Son La) and Tày Cao Bang is higher than the ratio of common words between Tày Cao Bang and Nung Din (Hoang Su Phi). Thus, in terms of vocabulary (vocabulary statistics), there is no clear distinction between Central Tày-Thái and Southwest Tày -Thái, while there is a quite clear difference between Northern Tày-Thái on the one hand. and two groups of Tày- Thái Southwest and Tày-Thái Central, on the other side.

Using the dialect research method of pointing out boundaries of dialects, there was a view to divide the Tày language into 4 dialect regions. Later, when learning about the Tày language in Hoang Su Phi area, Yen Bai, people realized that this is a different dialect from all four previously identified dialects. Thus, in the Tày language there can be the following dialects:

1. The Western region of Viet Bac region (Northeast);
2. The southern region of Viet Bac;
3. The Northeast region of Viet Bac includes several districts in Cao Bang province;
4. The central region of Viet Bac;
5. The extreme Northwest region of the Viet Bac

The differences between the dialects are mainly on the phonetic level, partly in vocabulary. Regarding phonetics, among Tày dialects, the rhyme system (main and final sounds) is relatively consistent, the

difference is in the initial sound system and tone.

## CONCLUSION

Language Ethnic minorities in Tuyen Quang include many languages belonging to different language families such as: Tai – Ka Dai language including Tày, Nung, Cao Lan..., of which Tày is the main language. The Tày language is a branch of the Tai – Ka Dai language family – a large language family in Southeast Asia. The Tai – Ka Dai language family includes 3 branches: the Tày – Thái family, the Kam – Water family, and the Ka Dai family. In the Tày – Thái branch, in Tuyen Quang province, there are languages of the Tày, Nung, and Cao Lan people.

## ACKNOWLEDGE

This research is funded by Tan Trao University in Tuyen Quang, Vietnam

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