LANGUAGE ECOLOGY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING
IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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1.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the significance of the study. The chapter also outlines the aims of the study, followed by research questions, choice of the research methodology, organization of the research report, and limitation of the study.

1.1 Significance of the study

Language death causes great loss to the world’s traditional knowledge, biodiversity and linguistic diversity. The causes of the loss are largely the results of economic development, political pressure, educational reforms and other forms of development (Crystal, 1997; Fishman, 1996; Lasimbang, Miller, & Otigil, 1992; Luengthongkam, 2002; Maffi, 2001a, 2001b; Nimmanhemin, 2004b). Being fully aware of the language loss problem, linguists played an important role in tackling it and employed methods based on the predominating theoretical linguistics. There have been a number of efforts, studies and research aiming to help prevent languages from dying out by recording them but languages are still dying at an alarming rate.

The chilling fact is that by the end of this century 90 percent of the existing languages will disappear and Asia alone accounts for 32 percent (Ethnologue, 2004a; Maffi2004a; Matisoff, 1989). A few studies have noted that most of the languages used in this area are spoken and not written, and are passed on through oral traditions. At the same time we have to bear in mind that these small languages live side by side with large speech communities and they have tendencies to shift to other languages that are more powerful in terms of political or socioeconomic influences (Bradley, 1989; Matisoff, 1989; Nantapan; 2003; Sittisantikul, 2003; Wurm, 1986). This hastens language shifts and disappearance in Asia; and Thailand is no exception to the changes that have taken place (Chupinit, 1994; Delang, 2002; Nimmanhemin, 2004b; Santasombat, 2003; Sittisantikul, 2003; Warr, 2005).
Therefore, a group of linguists have started questioning themselves on the effectiveness of their discipline and theories, including methods, used in preventing language death. Against all the prevailing doubts, linguists had to explain the importance of saving dying languages. What is the use of saving dying languages? Why is language diversity important to this revolving Earth? While linguists are searching for the explanation of the puzzle, at about the same time things are happening in other fields as well (Maffi, 2001b; Matisoff, 1989).

Besides linguists, researchers from other fields such as anthropology, musicology, science, pharmacy, ethnobotany, biology and environment, who in their respective fields have been pondering about their objects of studies, began to see the emergence of some loss in their fields. Moreover, a great amount of literature over the past decades in the researchers’ fields all show some kinds of similarities which led to the conclusion that there was some relation occurring between these phenomena: the relation between language diversity, cultural diversity and biodiversity (Cox, 1996; Fishman, 1996; Maffi, 2001a, 2001b; Oupra, 2004; Pakdee, 2001; Tsuji, 1990).

This relationship is crystal clear in Yos Santasombat’s work in which he strongly emphasizes that the destruction of any culture by any forms may result in a rapid decline of biodiversity, since knowledge of biodiversity in any culture is a result of profound appreciation and subtle apprehension of human interaction with the environment around them. Thus, Santasombat (2003, p. 217) confidently claimed that:

“local knowledge is a repertoire of situated experiences that have been developed in particular physical, historical and cultural contexts from intimate interaction between humans and environment…[which has] passed intense scrutiny until crystallized and transformed into cultural patterns of consumption that differ according to varying localities and ethnic groups”

Santasombat made an interesting remark in the same volume that, since local knowledge is a result of “intimate interaction between humans and environment” (ibid.), there is no hope for its survival outside the active cultural spaces. The effort to collect an endangered species without maintaining its culture and environment, and the links between them is an incalculable waste of intellectual effort. Therefore, to preserve the endangered diversity heritage, the intertwined forces that make up a culture will have to be reactivated and the indigenous ways of knowing and learning will have to be acknowledged. This view is
increasingly evident in the works of researchers and scholars around the world (Cameron, 2002; Cox, 1996; Maffi, 2001a, 2001b; Norgaard, 2001; Oupra, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Unprasert, 2000).

The importance of language diversity was recognized and reassured when it was pushed forward and found its way into the 1998 International Biology Code of Ethics, which states that “culture and language are intrinsically connected to land and territory, and cultural and linguistic diversity are inextricably linked to biological diversity” (Maffi, 2001a, p. 2). However, an increasingly large number of scholarly works unequivocally state that a big drawback to reactivate a culture is the failure to transfer local knowledge in cultural space through indigenous language and this causes great loss to the local knowledge and to biodiversity (Maffi, 2001b).

The inability to transfer local knowledge is affected by many agents as mentioned earlier - pressure of development, economic growth, government policies and educational reforms. Research in hilltribe villages in the Northern region of Thailand reveals the massive impact of development on local ecological knowledge and on forest related knowledge, once practiced by minorities, and now under threat of extinction. Thailand’s natural resources have been depleted as a result of a decade of economic development prior to the 1997 Asian economic crisis. This leaves little or no room for the development of biodiversity knowledge which still remains a hidden asset. (Chupinit, 1994; Delang, 2002; Kaosa-ard, 2005; Oupra, 2004; Santasombat, 2003) Pressured by government policies of declaring laws restricting forest use, relocation of hilltribe highlanders to lowland areas, and compulsory schooling for indigenous children, younger generations and villagers have limited opportunity to learn and experience the local knowledge from their elders through language. This lack of intergeneration language transmission results in language loss.

Language loss is confirmed by a dramatic decline in numbers of children speaking their indigenous language. Some languages are reported to have only a few elderly speakers. For example, hilltribes and northern Thai speaking children are not taught to speak their indigenous and regional languages due to the perception of the inferior status of their languages to that of standard Thai. Furthermore, the writing system in northern Thai language is rarely studied by younger generations. It was at some point considered dead by the public although still studied by a few academics (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005;
Charoenmuang, 1995; Moondi, 2004; Nimmanhemin, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Ongsakul, 2001; Santasombat, 2003; Sittisantikul, 2003; Smalley, 1994). Another example of pressure from government policy such as Thai-ness, is worth mentioning.

The concept of a Thai-ness identity is so strongly and effectively instilled in the people that Thais in general perceive themselves as monolingual which is not the case. This is mainly because the languages other than Thai, including the regional languages, have a low status and are not appropriately appreciated by the majority, not even the government (Heikkila-Horn, 2002). Furthermore, language in the southern part of Thailand has long been an issue between the locals and the government officers, teachers and students, but it is a point that is less talked about (Arya, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d; Rujanaseree, 2005).

However, governing powers in Thailand both at the state and provincial level have yet to realize this potential language, culture and biodiversity tragedy. Firstly, Thailand needs to probe into its constitution. According to Faingold (2004) a nation’s language legislation in the constitution reflects the nation’s problems, and aims to solve the problems, or, at times, the drafting of such constitution may be used to the advantage of the dominating language group instead of solving the conflicts. If that is the case, what is Thailand’s vision on language problems? What is the language plan and language policy of Thailand? Secondly, the amount of attention given to indigenous/regional/minority languages is considered nil when compared to the attention given to the language of business and economics such as English and Chinese. There is less or no concern at national level on the loss of the indigenous languages. If there appears to be some concern it is done on either a small community basis or an individual basis with the help of linguists from leading universities in Thailand (Moondi, 2004; Sittisantikul, 2003). Although there are no explicit language plans for indigenous languages, there were a few attempts to teach these languages. The attempt to teach local or regional languages was a top down approach and proved unsuccessful. These languages are taught approximately one hour a week in secondary and high schools in northern Thailand. At some point in time the number of students decreases. Students who have studied the orthography of northern Thai commented that there is no place where northern Thai script can be used in daily life (personal communications with language teachers and students). When younger generations cease to learn the language, the health of the language is profoundly affected.
Apart from high schools, a tertiary level institution has also attempted to revive minority languages. Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, a university in northern Thailand, having recognized the imminent loss, has continuously offered regional language courses, indigenous language courses, neighboring countries languages such as Burmese and Chinese. Only a few interested people attended the courses. Furthermore, languages that have better economic benefits always have long waiting lists. Acknowledging the economic benefits from Thailand signing a Free Trade Agreement with China, and the geographical advantage of the province in being the center of economics in the Greater Mae Khong Sub-region (GMS), Chiang Rai Rajabhat University foresees the benefits that students in this region will gain with particular language skills. The university consequently devised a university wide language project. The project aimed to enhance students’ language skills with the projection of benefit to students in their job applications. All students will have to master at least two languages – English and Chinese - before graduation.

Thirdly, the only seemingly concrete language plan is not about indigenous languages but that of English Language (Liando, 2002; Ministry of education, 1996; Mungthaisong, 2003). The plan is to promote the use of English as a second language in Thailand instead of the dominant concept of English as a foreign language. A number of university curricula in Thailand are taught using English as a medium of instruction. Some university regulations require students to write their thesis in English instead of using Thai.

As this thesis is to show that apart from maintaining the world’s biodiversity, language and cultural diversity also play important roles in the stability of a nation as well. This is yet to be realized and taken into consideration by the Thai government.

Now that the stage is set, the researcher is particularly interested in studying the ecology of language and how it can be used in language planning and policy in Thailand, particularly in Chiang Rai province. My particular interest in Chiang Rai province is because Chiang Rai borders three countries namely Myanmar, Laos and China, and it is an area with powerful economic and sociocultural forces. Chiang Rai is diverse in terms of ethnic population, culture, and language having approximately 30 different ethnic groups (Dearden, 1991; McKinnon & Bhrusasri, 1989). In some places in the highlands it has

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1 Personal communication with Chamroen Thanundorn, the then Director of Language Center, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, 2004.
been observed that in common places people still communicate with each other in several different languages, and also, in some places, Black Lahu language as a lingua franca is used among the highlanders in Mae Chan district. To the researcher, there is an interesting power relation in languages in Chiang Rai (Bradley, 1989; Chupinit, 1994; Dearden, 1991; Matisoff, 1989; Mühlhäusler, 1998).

Besides the sociocultural forces, economics does play a very strong role in Chiang Rai. The province has been declared as a GMS area where agreements with neighboring countries in trade and logistics have been made. One of the problems mentioned and widely discussed is the problem of language use in transactions with both private sectors and government sectors especially at the immigration checkpoint and custom control where all the trade related documents were in the country of origin’s language, such as Chinese which is incomprehensible to the second parties (Conference hosted by the Chiang Rai Chambers of Commerce on 26th of August, 2005). Chiang Rai province declared three major districts that border neighboring countries as its GMS districts (Chiang Khong, Chiang Saen) and one district (Maesai) as a special economic border zone.

Due to immense dynamics and diversity, this area has long been of interest to researchers both anthropologists and linguists. Studies of hilltribe languages were conducted but most of them were mainly conventional linguistics studies of recording the unwritten languages and studying them in terms of their phonology, vocabulary, and structures (Bradley, 1989; Burutpat, Sujaritluck, & Srijumpa, 1997; Matisoff, 1989; Smalley, 1976). There appears to be little research on language situation or language ecology in Chiang Rai, and how it came about, including how the knowledge of language ecology can be used. To the researcher’s knowledge, language ecology or language use is rarely studied. The only research which has been conducted was on a broad spectrum of the languages of Thailand which gives an expansive picture of languages in Thailand since 1994 (Smalley, 1994). However, no studies have touched upon language ecology and the interaction of power in Chiang Rai, thus leaving a big gap in the understanding of language ecology not only in northern Thailand but in Thailand as a whole.

1.2 Aims of the study

There are three main purposes of this study. Firstly, the purpose is to study language ecology and sub-ecologies of Chiang Rai province and how they came about. Secondly, the
study also aims to examine the factors and forces that underpin the language ecology and sub-ecologies of the province. Thirdly, the purpose is to study the language plan and policy of Thailand and Chiang Rai and how the result of this study can be used in language plans and policy of the province and the nation as a whole.

1.3 Research questions

This study began with general conceptual questions of: “How to prevent language loss and language death? and “What is the language ecology of Chiang Rai province?”. The general questions have been expanded and adapted as a result of the literature survey, data collection and analysis, and thesis word limitation. The expansion put emphasis more on the language situation in Chiang Rai and its sample villages in designated areas and the underlying factors and forces that underpin the existing language ecology. These questions then were expanded to three research questions:

1. What is the language ecology of Chiang Rai province and how did it come about?
2. What are the factors and forces that underpin the existing language ecology?
3. What is Thailand’s and Chiang Rai’s existing language plan and policy and how can it benefit from the existing language ecology?

1.4 Choice of research methodology

This research intends to find out what is the existing language ecology of Chiang Rai and the underlying factors and forces that cause the existing language ecology. This study aims to provide detailed descriptive accounts and interpretation of the issues concerned. The research requires a method that will assist in extracting information from different sources especially from participants speaking the minority languages to government sectors and education institutions. The methodology that I will use should allow varieties of data collection methods in order to get different sets of data for a better understanding of the situation. Moreover, the methodology should allow for high flexibility to accommodate the changing nature of the research environment because of the unknown nature of the situation and what it might reveal at later stages. Therefore, the most appropriate methodology for this research is ethnography or ethnomethodology. According to Jacobson (1991) ethnography is the method that aims to extract knowledge from people,
society and culture. Ethnography is both description and interpretation of the data working in accordance to a theoretical framework.

For the study, data were collected in six randomly sampled villages of three selected districts in Chiang Rai province namely Chiang Khong, Maesai and Chiang Saen. The districts were selected based on two economic expansion: the Greater Mae Khong Sub-region (GMS) which is an economic cooperation of countries along the Mae Khong river; and national designated special economic border zone. Maesai was picked due to the area being designated as one of the nations’ special economic border zones while Chiang Khong and Chiang Saen was picked due to the area being in the designated area of GMS. Thus, the researcher initially saw the three districts as they were in a vibrant state of development due to economics, which would affect the state of languages and their ecology. The probe into this occurrence will provide an understanding of language ecology and the power structure that causes language change and its corresponding language ecology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected districts</th>
<th>Sampled villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chiang Khong district</td>
<td>Wiang Mok village, Huai Kok village</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Maesai district</td>
<td>Payang Chum village, Phamee village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chiang Saen district</td>
<td>Sop Ruak village, Santhaat village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were collected from government and non-government organizations in the province. Interviews, observations, participant observations, field notes, document studies, and tape recordings were used to collect data.

1.5 Organization of research report

Beyond this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 defines and discusses the theoretical background to the study, Ecolinguistics, and preliminary concepts on language planning and language policy, including language plans and policy found in Thailand. Chapter 3 describes and discusses nationalism in Thailand and its effects on language. Chapter 4 emphasizes Thai names which were the result of nationalism and economics. Chapter 5 surveys language families found in Thailand and Chiang Rai. Chapter 6 discusses the research methodology used in this research, ethnography. Chapters 7 -14 describe and

1.6 Limitations of the study

There are two limitations to this thesis. The first limitation is translation technicalities. All the translation in this thesis is my own translation. Thai readers with limited exposure to and understanding of northern Thai and the use of the language will find the quotes in Thai script difficult to understand and at times it will seem that the quotes do not make sense due to the following reasons:

Readers may lack understanding of the language ability of the people in that particular situation. People have limited standard Thai knowledge and in some cases they tend to use Thai words at the referent meaning only, not intending to mean the whole encapsulated concept of a word. The use of words and meaning is on an individual basis since there are different understandings of the Thai words. To fully understand what they say, it is a must to understand the context of a speech and the background of a particular individual. It is extremely detailed and exhaustive to fit the standard Thai translation in this word limited thesis. Therefore, an attempt to read the quotes in this thesis by a non-regional who lacks prior background knowledge of the area and an understanding of how people communicate will seem to be difficult to interpret in standard Thai.

Some pronouns used may offend standard Thai speakers but to the villagers those pronouns were normal everyday words and they carry no offensive meanings. Therefore, the interpretation is also based on the language competence and concepts of that individual. If not taken into consideration, readers might misinterpret the situation and language ability.
Therefore, it is strongly recommended for standard Thai readers, or those who have limited language knowledge of this region, to read the English translation of the quote.

The second limitation is word count. Due to word limitations, the three-tiered quoting – Thai, transliteration of the Thai, and translation – are only given where appropriate in the chapters. The rest of the three-tiered quotes are given in the appendices where indication of the quotes will be given in the footnotes. Thus, only the translation will appear as quotes in the chapters.

1.7 Summary

This chapter introduces the topic and significance of the study, aims, research questions, methodology, and limitations of study. The next chapters provide literature reviews, context and background information of this study.
CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE ECOLOGY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the background of this study. The chapter consists of three main sections: language ecology and Ecolinguistics, language planning and policy in general, and language planning and policy in Thailand and Chiang Rai.

2.1 Language ecology and Ecolinguistics

The development of language ecology began with Haugen’s “ecology of language”, followed by Halliday’s further development of the idea on the connection of language to environmental and social issues. This development led to the thought that language expresses agent, experiencer and recipient in the form of grammatical structure: subject, predicate and object (Fill, 2001). Ecology of language was later taken to a new height by Mühlhäusler. Thus, I would like to first address issues focal to Haugen’s approach and then continue with Ecolinguistics as developed and proposed by Mühlhäusler (Fill, 2001; Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001)

2.1.1 Haugen’s “The ecology of Language”

Einar Haugen, in 1970, presented a landmark article entitled The Ecology of Language, which was a breakthrough in the field of linguistics. He commented on the flaws of “orthodox” linguistics, and earlier research and studies. Haugen pointed out that most of the research which had been done in the linguistics field prior to the 1970s tended to emphasize the main components of language as a system as being phonology, grammar, and lexicon, including brief accounts on location of languages, some history and number of speakers. Those studies rarely unveiled understanding of and insight into the languages studied in terms of their status and their function. These have been considered as blind spots for linguists. Haugen (2001, p. 57) states the flaws of the orthodox linguistics as follows:

“Most language descriptions are prefaced by a brief and perfunctory statement concerning the number and location of its speakers and something of their history. Rarely does such a description really tell the reader what he
ought to know about the social status and function of the language in question. Linguists have generally been too eager to get on with the phonology, grammar, and lexicon to pay more than superficial attention to what I would like to call the ‘ecology of language’. I believe we could profit from paying special attention to this aspect, which has been explored in some depth in recent years by linguists working in cooperation with anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and psychologists. Most linguists have been willing to leave the field to the non-linguistic social scientists, but I believe that there is a strong linguistic component in language ecology”.

Haugen (2001) made suggestions and called for attention to a new way of thinking, which he coined “ecology of language”.

The view on language flaws is revisited in Mühlhäusler’s (1995; 1998; 2003) works and he confidently and explicitly states that linguistics theoreticians in those times have been disappointed with the dominant linguistics knowledge. He states that:

“…their pronouncement [Dell Hymes, George Steiner and others] were made in an era in which the vast majority of linguists were concerned with either substantive universal[s] of languages or universal constraints on the form of linguistic descriptions. Such appeal fell on deaf ears, and even today linguistic diversity remains an under-researched and under-understood topic”. (Mühlhäusler, 2003, p. 3).

I do not wish to discuss the critique of traditional linguistics here, however, I would like to draw attention to how Haugen defined language ecology and later to how Mühlhäusler defined Ecolinguistics.

The term “ecology of language” is simply defined by Haugen (2001, p. 57) as “the study of interaction between any given language and its environment”. Haugen further defines the environment of a language as:

“The true environment of a language is a society that uses it as one of its codes. Language exists only in the minds of its users, and its only function in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment. Part of its ecology is therefore psychological: its interaction with other languages in the minds of bi- and multilingual speakers. Another part of its ecology is sociological: its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication. The ecology of a language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use it, and transmit it to others”.

In the same volume, Haugen further explains that: “the analysis of ecology requires not only that one describes psychological situations of each language, but also the effect of this
situation on the language itself” (ibid., p. 63). He also mentioned that in order to answer what is the ecology of any given language one has to consider the following ten questions:

“ For any given ‘language’, then, we should want to have answers to the following ecological questions: (1) What is its classification in relation to other languages? This answer would be given by historical and descriptive linguists; (2) Who are its users? This is the question of linguistic demography, locating its users with respect to locale, class, religion or any relevant grouping; (3) What are its domains of use? This is a question of sociolinguistics, discovering whether its use is unrestricted or limited in specific ways; (4) What concurrent languages are employed by its users? We may call this a problem of dialling, to identify the degree of bilingualism present and the degree of overlap among the languages; (5) What internal varieties does the language show? This is the task of dialectology that will recognize not only regional, but also social and contractual dialects; (6) What is the nature of its written traditions? This is the province of philology, the study of written texts and their relationship to speech; (7) To what degree has its written form been standardized, i.e. unified and codified? This is the province of descriptive linguistics, the traditional grammarians and lexicographers; (8) What kind of institutional support has it won, either in government, education, or private organizations, either to regulate its form or propagate it? We may call this study glottopolitics; (9) What are the attitudes of its users towards the language, in terms of intimacy and status, leading to personal identification? We may call this the field of ethnomethods; (10) Finally we may wish to sum up its status in a typology of ecological classification, which will tell us something about where the language stands and where it is going in comparison with the other languages of the world”. (ibid., p. 65)

Haugen’s view on language ecology was embraced and critiqued during the 1980s. Haugen’s ten questions, according to Smalley (1994, p. 6) who conducted research on the language ecology of Thailand, “does not emphasize the historical processes by which existing ecological relationships are achieved, but such processes are a significant part of the picture in Thailand as well”. Haugen’s approach may have a few drawbacks such that according to Fill (2001, p. 44), “the impetus of Haugen’s metaphor seems to have weakened a little”. This is when re-evaluation of language ecology occurred and gave rise to a Hallidayan approach.

Halliday (cited in Fill, 2001, pp. 43-53) proposed that language is interconnected with whatever is happening in the world, whether it is the development or the deterioration of the environment, social problems or any other problems that may arise. With this knowledge, there has also been an increasing interest in the studies of ecological and environmental problems. A number of research projects have revealed an interesting fact which has brought enthusiastic attention to the language of human beings containing “fragmentation” of the universe, that is, language expresses agent, experiencer and
recipient hidden in the form of grammatical structure: subject, predicate and object (cited in Fill, 2001, pp. 43-53). This finding does not surprise scientists, particularly physicists (Capra, 1992; Peat, 2008). This is because they had earlier recognized lack of words in language to describe the processes that appear in their work. In other words, the language that we use reflects only our perception of the world around us and what we have not perceived as yet we will not have the vocabulary for. Since then the focus of Ecolinguistics has turned to address the linkage between language and segments of knowledge existing in world languages. In addition to the linkage between language and world knowledge, the context of anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism of language is also studied (Fill, 2001).

2.1.2 Ecolinguistics

Building upon the two ideas of Haugen and Halliday, Mühlhäusler came up with a comprehensive and interesting theory of the relationship between language and environment. He agreed with Haugen’s definition of language ecology, that it is “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment”, and also added that: “it [Ecolinguistics] considers not just a system of internal factors of a language but also wider environment factors … [since]… language is interconnected with the world – it both constructs and is constructed by it” (Mühlhäusler, 2003, p. 2). Interestingly he emphasizes that Ecolinguistics is not specifically preserved for linguists but it is a new theory waiting to be explored and studied by any people who have an interest in environmental issues.

Since the theory is relatively new, a central understanding of what is ecological needed to be understood, or as Mühlhäusler termed it “ecological thinking”. According to Mühlhäusler (2003, p. 1), ecological thinking can be described in terms of the following five parameters:

1. Awareness and dangers of monoculturalism;
2. Both system-internal and wider environmental considerations;
3. Awareness of the limitations of both natural and human resources;
4. Long term vision; and
5. Awareness of those factors that make for the health of ecologies.”

With ecological thinking as the basis, the question is what do ecolinguists study and what are they all about? Mühlhäusler (ibid.) mentioned that Ecolinguistics is similar to all new
theories in the sense that it encompasses and relies on earlier “building blocks” which have been “recycled”. He further states that, Ecolinguistics still uses existing linguistics notions but in different or wider and larger perspectives which then later on can be expanded to address various environmental parameters.

Mühlhäusler (2003) not only uses concepts and parameters from the established linguistics discipline but also interestingly employs concepts and parameters from outside this discipline. He justifies himself in doing so based on the reason that Ecolinguistics is seen as having an interrelation with the disciplines around it and, therefore, parameters from outside the linguistics discipline assist immensely in the understanding of language interplay with the world and vice versa. Mühlhäusler provides detailed accounts of the concepts and parameters which he employs in his theory and which can be summarized in the following table. The table is adapted from Mühlhäusler 2003:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters from linguistics discipline</th>
<th>Parameters from non-linguistics discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Wörter-und-Sachen (words and things)</td>
<td>1. Anthropology and ethnoclassification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tradition in historical linguistics</td>
<td>2. Cultural geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Etymological research</td>
<td>3. Environmental history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language and world view</td>
<td>4. Deep ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Semiotics of nature</td>
<td>5. Ecofeminism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Metaphor studies</td>
<td>6. Cultural studies and post-modernism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Functional linguistics</td>
<td>7. Environmental dictionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Critical linguistics</td>
<td>8. Future studies (Futurology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The ecology of language perspectives</td>
<td>9. Historical studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sociolinguistics</td>
<td>10. Literary analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Deliberate creation of language</td>
<td>11. Biocultural diversity studies</td>
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<td>12. Discourse and text analysis and narratology</td>
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<td>13. Linguistics naturalness</td>
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<td>14. Applied ecological linguistics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Integrational linguistics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Ecolinguistics and its parameters

2.1.3 Ecolinguistics: “proactive nature”

Apart from ecological thinking and being a parameter rich theory, another interesting characteristic of Ecolinguistics is its dynamic nature. Amery (2000, pp. 38-39) mentions that Haugen’s and Mühlhäusler’s ecological approach has a “proactive nature” in which
linguists are encouraged to be “actively involved” rather than be “objective observers”.
The views of the two contenders as cited by Amery are as follows:

“One may even venture to suggest that ecology is not just the name of a descriptive science, but in its application has become the banner of a movement for environmental sanitation. The term could include also [in] its application to language some interest in the general concern among laymen over the cultivation and preservation of language. Ecology suggests a dynamic rather than a static science, something beyond the descriptive that one might call predictive and even therapeutic. What will be, or should be, for example, the role of “small” languages; and how they or any other language be made “better”, “richer”, and more fruitful for mankind?” (Haugen 1972 as cited in Amery, 2000, p. 39)

Mühlhäusler (as cited in Amery, 2000, p. 39):

“The ecological metaphor in my view is action oriented. It shifts the attention from linguists being players of academic language games to becoming shop stewards for linguistic diversity, and to addressing moral, economic and other ‘non-linguistics’ issues”.

Thus, Ecolinguistics is a theory that requires linguists working on languages to be actively involved rather than being passive observers of languages.

The “ecology of language” concept has taken three decades from the 1970s to the 1990s to become established as a branch of linguistics. Following the 1970s, the language ecology concept had a massive impact on the study of linguistics in which it expanded the scope of studies in several linguistic branches and at the turn of 1990s, a new branch of linguistics was recognized which was called Ecolinguistics (Fill, 2001). Ecolinguistics then was a unified branch of the study of language approaches that in some ways linked to ecology. To date, according to Fill (2001), Ecolinguistics has developed into roughly four important strands which are: foundation Ecolinguistics, ecology as metaphor, language and environment and critical Ecolinguistics.

In the same volume, Fill (2001) made an interesting remark that the Ecolinguistics theory put together by Mühlhäusler is an attempt to redefine the linguistics domain and provide comprehensive, inclusive and dynamic ways of thinking for the system. Fill further stated that, it may be argued that the ideology proposed is loosely constructed and seemingly very broad in nature. Although the argument may seem applicable at one stage, he counter claimed that since the study is fairly new, fairly wide in nature, extensive tasks need to be
conducted in order to come up with new questions and original ideas related to the theory. Thus, those massive tasks would include:

“…the finding of appropriate theories of language, the study of language systems as well as of texts, the study of universal features of language relevant to ecological issues, the study of individual languages with regards to such features (with the possibility of contrastive approaches) and studying the role of language in…teaching ecological thinking to children and adults.” (Fill, 2001, p. 51)

Despite these boundless tasks involved, Ecolinguistics provides an adequate background in terms of theory and methods including the new dimension of worldview for further studies. It can be said that there is a whole new meaning out there waiting to be explored and thus a challenging one for linguists. Apparently, one of the challenging tasks that await ecological linguists is to play a part in the maintenance and revival of the world’s endangered languages.

2.2 Language planning and language policy

This section provides brief background understandings on language planning and language policy. To develop a proper language plan and policy, concepts of language planning and language policy need to be distinguished.

The two terminologies, language planning and language policy have been used interchangeably without much distinction in some literature while in others they have been used as two separate terms. This has caused difficulties and blinded interested people in literature searches. To prevent confusion the two terms will first be defined. This section draws ideas mainly from Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) work due to their work being not only a basic introduction to language planning and its terminologies but also a good compilation of this field.

According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) language planning and language policy is not a new matter, the study started out of mere interest over 35 years ago and has gradually developed into a discipline with increasing interest in the past two decades. Therefore, there exist a number of similar ideas given on the definition of the two terminologies in the literature. Language planning will be addressed first followed by language policy. Language planning is defined by Kaplan and Baldauf (ibid., p. 3) as:
“Language planning is an activity most visibly undertaken by government (simply because it involves such massive change in a society), intended to promote systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers. The reasons for such change lie in the reticulated pattern of structure developed by the government intended to maintain civil order and communication and to move the entire society in some direction deemed “good” or “useful” by the government”.

Language policy is defined as “a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. xi).

From the definitions, it can be concluded that the difference between language planning and language policy is that language planning is an activity carried out by an entity or entities with particular purpose while language policy is a set of laid out provisions.

### 2.2.1 Language planning process

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) states that the language planning process involves four influencing actors:

1. Highest level of government organization;
2. Education agencies;
3. Non/quasi government organizations; and
4. Other organizations.

The four actors are discussed below.

The highest level of government organization, the first actor, is involved since they play an important role in fostering activities and they have the power and ability to enforce any kinds of rules, laws, and policy in language planning.

The second actor, education institutions, have high degree of involvement in the planning. Education institutions have to take care of numerous language policies and make decisions in language planning. Their main responsibilities in decisions and planning include six majors areas: define language and curriculum design; define teacher supply and teacher related issues such as determining who will teach and their recruitment; determine the
target group who will be in the language learning program; determine approaches and methodologies to be employed; determine the assessment processes; and, finally, determine support resources both in terms of finance and other physical support in order to maintain the language planning process.

The third significant actor in the language planning process is non-government organizations or the quasi-government organizations. There are numerous quasi-governmental organizations that promote the use of several languages to other non-native speakers. Well-known agencies are the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and many others. These quasi government organizations are supported by their own governments. Apart from the organizations promoting languages to non-native speakers there are also organizations that promote national languages of particular countries such as Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. These organizations promote purity of languages intended to be national languages. These academics regulate rules of language use, restrict inflow of foreign language use in national languages and also develop measures to prevent contamination of national languages. Besides these quasi government organizations there are a number of sectors worth mentioning as having roles in forming language policy, they are churches, general businesses and local governments. In this case, in Thailand, the Royal Institute of Thailand which is under the jurisdiction of the government plays a very important role in regulating rules of language use.

The final actor in language planning process are those actors who happens to appear later or accidentally as a result of the formulation of language planning and language policy. This final actor could be any organization or individual whose primary functions were not language planning related kind of work. Kaplan and Baldauf provide a good example of the United States Postal Service. This organization is a member of the International Postal Union. In order to effectively deliver the mail, the Union agreed that all envelopes are to be addressed in Roman script. Any other forms of characters and scripts will not be accepted or delivered. The second example given is the language used in the International Olympics Commission. This agency is clearly not a language related agency but also considers the language to be used in a global context. If accidentally is the case in determining the actor in this final category, then any individuals who use language in public, putting up signs, all are involved someway or the other in the formation of language planning and language policy. As for Thailand, the postal service language use is
no other than standard Thai. One interesting thing that appeared in Thailand is the shop sign tax act where languages used in signs are considered and where signs in standard Thai pays less tax than signs in other languages.

Although language planning involves four important actors, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) argue that the four do not solely help a language survive and often language planning fails to fulfil its prime function. There are other crucial influences that language planners have to be aware of. These are basic structures of language and language ecology. They argue that if language planning structures are not formed then the plan is most likely to fail. Moreover, language use in everyday life and its relationships with other languages, or language ecology, needs to be distinguished and supported so that the language can be used in everyday life and continue to live on its own. Therefore, there are a number of criteria for language planners to think about which range from a language planning model, language planning goals, and language planning methods.

Kaplan and Baldauf provide five detailed accounts of developments of levels of language planning models. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) mentioned that early in language planning discipline, researchers identified two main but different types of language planning activities - *corpus planning* – activity that attempts to make changes to language - and *status planning* – activity that attempts to make changes to the environment where language is used. This thinking has become the basis for much of the literature and models concerned. Haugen’s model is mainly based on this thinking. Haugen’s four stages of language planning model consists of selection, codification, implementation and elaboration (See details in Table 2.2). Harmann, adding to the already existing two levels of language planning, introduced a third level called *prestige planning* (Table 2.3). The model further developed into the *Macro, Meso and Micro language planning model* by Williams who clearly illustrated this thinking in his list of factors that promote the use of Welsh (Table 2.4), and was followed by *Cooper's accounting model* to language planning (Table 2.5). These language planning models define certain activities and involve certain goals and purposes in planning any languages.

Language planning may be undertaken with particular goals or purposes. The purpose of language planning varies in different circumstances. There are different levels of language planning purposes which are: language purification, language reform, language spread,
language revival, language standardization, lexical modernization, stylistic simplification, language maintenance, terminological unification, interlingual communication, and auxiliary code standardization (for details of the levels see Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). Kaplan and Baldauf comment that language planning is an ongoing activity therefore consumes effort, time and capital investment, and involves cooperation from various bodies, both the receivers of the plan and the population as a whole. In order to effectively include and implement any language plans, language planners need to come up with an effective and accountable language planning process and not forget tools or data collection methods.

The language planning process involves two methods of information collection: sociolinguistic survey and specific language-in-education planning. Prior to in depth involvement with the planning process, language planners have to master skills or take into account the following six areas: historical analysis, language planning evaluation, cost analysis, corpus analysis, anthropological linguistics and ethnography of communication. When the six areas have been taken account of then the data produced from understandings in those areas will be helpful to the next step of the process that is the sociolinguistics survey. The sociolinguistics survey can take any form, either national or regional survey of the language use by the speakers in the area, or it may be at some extent preceded by pre-survey planning and activities. Therefore, this first step in the process creates considerable amount of work for language planners.

The second step of the language planning process is language-in-education planning. Due to the limitation in resources and power to enforce any rules and regulations to any sectors except schools, it is suggested not to put the implementation activities and responsibilities to schools at this stage but to wait until the policy has been decided by the governing powers. At this stage, the language-in-education process can then be designed with six major areas of concern: target population, training of teacher pool, syllabus, methods and materials, cost analysis and finally assessment and evaluation. However, the language planning process is not solely the work of education sectors since they do not have the power to influence any other entities except schools under their jurisdiction. Language planning is in fact an effort put forward by many concerned actors.
Table 2. 2 Haugen's language planning model as revised with additions from Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p. 29)

Table 2. 3 Prestige planning developed by Harmann as revised with additions from Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p. 50)
Table 2.4 Macro, Meso and Micro language planning in Welsh by Williams (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 53)

Tables have been slightly modified by adding numbers and adding shaded areas.

NOTE:
This table is included on page 23 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
The language planning process and policy described in this section provides fundamental understanding of the actors concerned. In addition, they assist immensely in the identification of language planning and language policy actors and their projected roles in Chiang Rai. Multiple sets of interview questions were specifically designed in accordance
with the variety of actors and their projected roles. Data collected assisted in the understanding of the existing plans and policies in Chiang Rai.

2.3 Language policy in Chiang Rai in relation to the national policy

This topic attempts to respond to the third research question which is to examine language policies and plans in Thailand and Chiang Rai. It was found that language policies that existed were mostly formed from the central government and were all from the Ministry of Education. Educational institutions in Chiang Rai follow the national curricula. Thus, when discussing policies found in Chiang Rai, the researcher will have to discuss the policies in relation to the national scheme. National curricula in the past and present place emphasis on two main groups of languages: national language and foreign languages, specifically English. Although emphasis is placed on English it is not as much as given to the national language as stated in Mungthaisong (2003) relating to 1978-1995, “The national language policy in the past tended to lay great emphasis on the study of national language and the teaching and learning of English was not emphasized” (p. 14). This section will address three groups of languages: minority languages, national language and foreign language movements and instruction.

2.3.1 Minority languages

Among the policies issued in the past national curricula, there were no policies on minority languages spoken in Thailand. However, there were three main stages that concerned minority language movements in Thailand.

The very first stage of the movement was that minority languages had not been given any importance. Language and culture had been suppressed due to nationalism (Mead, 2004; Ongsakul, 2001; Wittayasakphan, 2006). The attention given to national language had greatly impacted on the ethnic people: people denied their own identities; ethnic children had low achievement tests; loss of self respect and loss of respect for elders and ancestors; loss of self confidence; and lack of toleration in cultural differences. These were all caused by early language and political policy (Wittayasakphan, 2006). Also see Chapter 3 for details on nationalism in Thailand.
The second movement was in the late 1970s when the situation had eased up and there was a gradual rise in historical and regional studies where cultural differences and language started to be of concern (Ongsakul, 2001). As confirmed by Lekawatana (2003, p. 38) “In the past regional dialects and minority languages with the exception of Chinese and Malay were not known outside their small circle of speakers” and that only with the establishment of regional universities had an interest in language, arts and crafts been conjured up. A substantial amount of research have been done on regional and minority languages and culture in Thailand (Assawayingtaworn, 2002; Bradley, 1989, 2007; Burutpat, Sujaritluck, & Srijumpa, 1997; Premsrirat et al., 2004; Smalley, 1994, 1976).

Prior to the second movement, early attempts to study minority languages and regional languages, according to Wilaisak Kingkham (2004), were not systemised due to the lack of proper linguistic knowledge and the studies were based on standard Thai. The first book was a vocabulary compilation of southern Thai by Phra Thammavarodom in 1932, followed by a book of northern Thai language by Phra Thammarachanuwart in 1949 and a northern Thai dictionary by Jor Jor Sor in 1955. The first linguistically and systematically conducted study was a Master’s thesis on the differences between Bangkok Thai and southern Thai in 1956 (ibid., 2004).

The third movement was fairly recent. In 1997, a section in the then new constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand stated a plethora of human rights especially the rights to practice and preserve traditional communities, local wisdom, arts and culture. Acknowledging the rights stated in the constitution and the educational problems that had occurred, the national curriculum took a sharp turn where 30% of the curriculum must be localised. In 2005, the then Minister of Education, Mr. Chatoron Chaisaeng, in collaboration with Mahidol University and the Summer Institute of Linguistics collaborated in a research project on bilingual education of the minority language and the national language. Two major conferences were conducted in order to orient teachers and educators to take into account the language, script, and cultural perspectives of the locals. A national and local framework was devised. An action research had been conducted in 2006 in Chiang Mai (Ministry of Education 2005; Special Education Office, 2006). However, the lack of teachers, educators and linguists in particular languages in Thailand could cause a major drawback in the project.

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1 See the rise of regional studies and historical studies in Saraswadee Ongsakul’s famous book called Lanna History in Ongsakul, 2004
Apart from the curriculum, a fixed date, April 2\textsuperscript{nd} of every year\footnote{This date, April 2\textsuperscript{nd}, was chosen due to it being Princess Sirin\textquotesingle hor\textquotesingle's birthday and her highness has always been a patron of research and projects on language and culture. Her highness is also known for her passion and interest in language and culture.}, was appointed as National Cultural Heritage Day. This includes all the cultural communities in Thailand. According to Yongrut Meesat (2006, 20 February, interview), director of Chiang Rai Cultural Office, it is the day when all languages and cultures are celebrated. The office supports all activities in the communities. The activities and projects received were mostly cultural, with very few to none in minority languages, apart from northern Thai.

With regards to media in minority languages in Chiang Rai, there are two main types: radio programs and newspapers. Radio programs in minority languages are broadcast from the military radio stations and other stations such as community radio in Chiang Rai. People can tune in to listen to the broadcast everyday. With regards to newspaper the only newspapers in minority language is an Akha newspaper with a Thai name called “ฟ้ า เ ด ี ย ว กัน - Fah Diaew Kan”. The newspaper is published in both Akha and Thai languages and in two scripts: standard Thai and Roman, as Akha use Roman script. Kraisit Sittichodoke (2006, 7 March, interview), the owner of the newspaper, proudly mentioned that the newspaper was the first government approved Akha newspaper in Thailand. However, the Akha newspaper was not granted permission to publish solely in Roman script and in Akha language. With regard to periodicals, “สารสภาวัฒนธรรม-Sarn Sapawattanatham” and “ไชยณารายณ์– Chainarai” were the only two northern Thai related periodicals in Chiang Rai. Sarn Sapawattanatham owned and published by Charin Jamjit, a northern Thai scholar, was published in two scripts, northern Thai and standard Thai whereas Chainarai, owned by the Chiang Rai cultural office, was mainly in standard Thai with northern Thai language and cultural contents. Although they were the only two, publishers and owners were struggling with a decline in circulation numbers.

However, the army-led coup in September 2006 abrogated the 1997 constitution and while the drafting of the new constitution was underway, the Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC), a military organ, made use of the vacuum state and halted the transmission of community radio in Plong Karen language in Chiang Mai. Community radio stations were not allowed to transmit radio programs in their respective minority languages but were restricted to only two languages: standard Thai and northern Thai.
violations in the orders would result in the closing down of the radio stations. This order was applied nationwide. The reason underlying this order, according to the military, was for security purposes. This indeed affected all the other language communities in Thailand. Mr. Boonjan Janmor, the head of the community radio at 90.75 MHz frequency, the first affected radio station, reported that the community people were not satisfied with the order due to the order violating their communication rights. Mr. Boonjan Janmor further explained that shortly after the army-led coup, there was a signed solemn oath of 10 or more radio stations and newspaper association members that radio stations would not use languages that would harm national security (Prachatai Newspaper, 2007). Minority languages were still viewed as a threat to national security according to the ISOC.

This incident clearly illustrated that the military view of language was based on the myth that minority linguistic rights was a threat to national security. The myth goes:

“…[that] by granting linguistic and cultural rights will lead to quests for autonomy and independence (first culturally, then economically and politically), and in the end to the disintegration of the nation state” (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Runnut, 1995).

On the contrary, as stated by Skutnabb-Kangas et al (1995), examples from many countries have clearly illustrated that minority identities do not “disappear” but “they may remain dormant for a while” and that the stronger the nationalism force is on the minorities, the stronger the drive to preserve their identities.

To conclude, national security in Thailand is still attached to only one linguistic identity which is standard Thai although the Plong Karen had been living in that area for over a century (Prachatai Newspaper, 2007). It is the same old nation-state, one language and one nation concept being reproduced over and over again (see Linguistics Rights under 2.5).

2.3.2 National language

The second group of language under language policy is the national language policy. The first seemed to be national language policy was introduced in 1932 due to the nation’s focus on nationalisation of the country and its regions. Therefore, language policy in those days focused more on the unstated national language, which was one central Thai language
of the Bangkok area and later was standardized as standard Thai (Lekawatana, 2003; Wittayasakphan, 2006). Lekawatana (2003, p. 34) stated that:

“The impression that Thailand is a nation of one language is probably created by the unstated language policy. There is no mention of the country’s official language in any of the several versions of the Thai constitution. The fact that all official documents especially the constitution are in Thai indicates beyond doubt that Thai is the official language. The existence of bilingual communities is not officially recognized and standard Thai is taught as a subject and the medium of instruction in public and private Thai schools in all parts of the country.”

There is still no statement mentioning the country’s official language in the constitution drafted in 2007 ("Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand," 2007).

Although the unstated national language policy in the past tended to lay emphasis on standard Thai; due to the development of science and its technological innovations, and globalization, standard Thai, which was the means of communication, has been dramatically affected (National Thai Language Project, n.d.). This was felt by a group of Thai language lecturers at Chulalongkorn University and a project called “Thai National Language Day” was proposed to the government in 1999 in order to raise the awareness of Thai language among the people. The project was approved on 19 July, 1999, and the very first “Thai National Language Day” was celebrated on the 29 of July3 1999 (Official letter informing of national Thai language day, n.d.). The approval of the project was no more than an “unstated language policy” which marked the beginning of the national language policy in print.

The first ever Siam language policy was prior to the change of the country’s name and the enforced Thai-ization process in 1932. According to Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006, p. 6) prior to the change, Siam had two types of script: Khmer script and Thai script. Siam liberated itself from the use of anything foreign in Thai culture and language, including the long held belief that Khmer script was sacred. Siam switched to the use of Thai script in writing Buddhist texts. Thai monks did not have to learn the considered sacred Khmer script in order to read the Buddhism related texts any further. The change immensely affected the local and regional Thai scripts and wiped them away. Monks in the region had

3 The date, 29 July, was selected due to the attendance of His Majesty the King at the first conference on Thai Language at Chulalongkorn University on 29 July 1962. The speech given by His Majesty the king was on the concern of Thai language usage problems.
to switch from reading and teaching in the regional variety to the Bangkok Thai variety. Khmer script since then has lost its function in the religious domain. However, the script still has a sacred effect when used in yantras, as protecting the holder of the yantras from evil spirits or any other purposes depending on the mantras written on the yantras (for further details on Khmer script on yantras see Chapter 14 under 14.6).

Interestingly, it is not only regional and minority languages which are changing, standard Thai is also changing. Standard Thai language change is perceived by organizations concerned as a deterioration. Regardless of the two attempts to raise awareness in standard Thai language usage taken in 1932 and prior, and in 1999, new problems arose. The third Thai language deterioration alarm was raised eight years after the second alarm (2004 - 2007). Thai language use among students and youngsters had gone from “อย่างน่าวิตกอย่างยิ่ง – yang na witok yangying – “worryingly and dramatically changed” in 1999; to “อย่างไม่น่าพึงประสงค์ – yang mai na phueng prasong”4. “undesirably changed” in 2007 (Matichon Newspaper, 2007a; Official letter informing of national Thai language day, n.d.). The undesirable changes were as follows.

Firstly, in 2004, the National Achievement Test in standard Thai revealed an undesirable result that all the marked educational level students tested achieved less than 50% in their standard Thai language achievement test (Krungtheptharakit Newspaper, 2005). The primary school level, Year 6, had an average mean score of 17.69 out of a total of 40; the lower high school level, Year 9, scored 15.32 out of 40; and finally the upper high school level, Year 12, scored 24.63 out of a total of 50. Thai language has been neglected by students as reflected by Pennipa Intratrakul in a local newspaper (Kaosod Newspaper, 2006):

"This is because the national research found that Thai students’ ability in Thai language is below standard even though Thai is the national language, the roots of our arts and culture, roots of our thought process, our heritage"

4 The first term was used in the Thai National Language Project article while the second term was used by His Excellency the Privy Councillor to the King in a seminar.
and pride and also the mechanics of communication. Therefore, there is an urgent need to fix this problem with emphasis on the teachers and students’ awareness of Thai language.\(^5\)

Secondly, His Excellency the Privy Council President and statesman, in a national conference on “Solving Thai Language Crisis”\(^6\), mentioned that there were numerous changes in the Thai language use in terms of pronunciation, speech, spellings, the use of Karant\(^7\), clipped words\(^8\) and tones. He quoted His Majesty the King as having once remarked that there has been an observed change in the tones used “เสียงโทกลายเป็นเสียงตรีเสียงตรีกลายเป็นเสียงจัตวา เลยทำให้ดูแปลก” which means “high tone becomes rising tone and rising tone becomes falling tone which sounds strange”\(^9\) (Matichon Newspaper, 2007a).

At the same conference Kunying Kaisri Sri-arun, the then Minister of the Ministry of Culture, expressed that there had long been problems of Thai language usage such as incorrect pronunciation, loss of initial clusters, clipped words, reading problems, poor sentence structures, redundant words choice, unnecessary use of foreign words in Thai [which often implies to English even when not explicitly stated], use of registers in wrong contexts\(^10\) including a high tendency of naming nicknames, shop names and product names in English. She suggested that the solution to these problems begins at home and that the education institutions will have to be overhauled. Moreover, hand-writing practice, summary skills, and composition and essays writing should be reintroduced in schools (Matichon Newspaper, 2007a; Phataramawik, 2007).

Thirdly, a problem that had recently (in 2007) dominated the news, was language change in terms of pronunciation and attitude towards English that affected the Thai pronunciation. The concerns were that many singers nowadays failed to pronounce Thai words clearly. They tended to sing with English sounds. A national artist who was awarded the best Thai

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\(^5\) See transliteration and three tiered quote given in Appendix A under 2.1

\(^6\) A special speech was delivered by the Privy Council President at the Thai National Language Day conference hosted by Chulalongkorn University.

\(^7\) A Thai diacritic mark “ ณ ”, karant put on the consonant when it is not pronounced.

\(^8\) For example มหาวิทยาลัย (University) shortened into มหาลัย (mahalai).

\(^9\) Transliteration and three tiered quote given in Appendix A under 2.2

\(^10\) Thai word for context is  “กาละเทศะ - kalathesa” which is equivalent to time (kala) and space (thesa).
language usage, Mr. Chinnakorn Krailart, expressed his deep concerns that incorrect pronunciation by singers would set examples of incorrect Thai pronunciation to people. He further stated that “songs with incorrect pronunciation should be barred from going on air” (Nation Newspaper, 2007).

If that would be the case then there would be very few singers whose songs would be on air. At the moment of writing this thesis there are many singers who are singing with what is perceived as improper Thai sounds and pronunciation. The change in pronunciation is seen in the manner of articulation. The manners of articulation of certain sounds has changed, for example, the change of [s] to [θ], trilled [r] became an approximant [r], [t] became [ʃ]; most of the Thai sounds turned out to be articulated similar to English sounds which seems to be more of a social process rather than strict linguistic transfer. Moreover, the trilled [r] in the initial cluster was either pronounced as an approximant [r] or changed into [l] for example riueng (เรื่อง) became riueng with approximant r and liueng with a lateral. Furthermore, lateral [l] was not pronounced in the initial cluster such as นิ้ว gloom, which means worried, became นิ้ว (goom).

The habit of not pronouncing the [l] at the initial cluster was noticed and composed into a song by a duo band called Asanee - Wasant. The song was released in 199011 and became a big hit. The lines were “นิ้วใจไม่มีลิ้น รีวิ่งจริงๆ ลิงกุ้มใจไม่มีลิ้น ลิงกุ้มใจไม่มีลิ้น - goom jai mai me lorling goom jai jing jing lorling pai nai” which means “worried for not having the L, really worried where has the L gone”. The L in this case is the sound [l] which has gone from the word ‘gloom’. The effect of that song brought back the [l] pronunciation to the cluster.

Fourth, with regard to the Thai’s attitude towards English, the language had always received highest attention and status among all the foreign languages. It is viewed as the language of modernity. TV hosts who mix Thai and English in their speech, either at word or sound level, received high attention and became a fashion, “many teenagers imitate TV hosts and stars as well as singers who commonly mix Thai and English together” (Matichon Newspaper, 2007b; Phataramawik, 2007). This mixing in the physical world has made it into the virtual world.

11 The song is in the album called “sapparot” (pineapple), and was released in October 1990.
Due to the nature of the medium of the internet where writing and typing are the main communication, the cyber space’s use of Thai language took the change of standard Thai to an advanced level, or rather in the Thai lecturers’ and the Minister of Culture’s words “deteriorated” the Thai language. This deterioration is known to the general public as the Abbaew phenomenon. Abbaew was coined from two clipped words, one from English and the other from Thai; ‘ab’ from ‘abnormal’, and ‘baew’ from a Thai colloquial adjective ‘bongbaew’ which means innocent. This type of language use later on came out of cyber space into real world usage both in written and spoken language. This, to some, was irritating to hear and read. This new written form does make its way into school work and is seen as ruining the proper Thai language use. The Abbaew phenomenon became an interesting national debate between ‘standard Thai is deteriorating’ and ‘abbaew is a natural phenomenon in language and that the use of this kind of language will cease in the future’ (Matichon Newspaper, 2007a; Nation Newspaper, 2007).

Samples of abbaew language use and analysis are given in Appendix B as I have not attempted to describe in detail what the abbaew phenomenon changes were, due to the topic itself requiring an independent study. My attempt behind the examples was to illustrate the change, which triggered the national language awareness and national language and identity issues, as can be seen in a Thai article (Klaysuwan, 2006, p. 28-34) expressing the loss of language and the loss of the Thai identity. The article quoted a poem written by a standard Thai language lecturer expressing grief and sadness “แสนสงสารครูภาษาไทยในอนาคต คล้ายจะหมดความหมายให้คิดถึง...ไม่มีที่อยู่ให้ครูภาษาไทยแล้ว” (ibid., p. 28) which means it’s a pity that in the future Thai teachers will be out of jobs and there will not be any value or place for Thai language teachers anymore. The Royal Institute held a conference in Bangkok in July 2008 to formulate the national language policy. At the time this thesis was written the report has not been published as yet.

At the time of writing this thesis there is no clear-cut language policy in Thailand as yet. However, the national language awareness issue will affect all languages and all regions in the near future.

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12 In some sources, the word “abbaew” is said to be the effect that Australian English had on the spoken English of the Thais due to the Australian English teachers hired in schools. However, it was argued that Australian English was not the cause but in fact English as a whole. With this explanation, it is evident that only American and British English are the favoured varieties in Thai society.

13 Three tiered quotes in appendix A under 2.3
2.3.3 English language policy

Although Thailand has explicit and well laid out English language policies, various problems have arisen and caused major revisions to existing English language plans and policies (Mungthaisong, 2003).

Due to the emphasis given to the national language, the learning of English at a point in time was seen as equal in status to all other foreign languages, as mentioned by Sukamolson (cited in Mungthaisong, 2003, p. 14), “all foreign languages were regarded as equal (English was mostly chosen)”. English was seen as the language of trade and a stepping stone to knowledge. English entered the national school curriculum in 1913 as a compulsory subject taught from the fifth grade until 1977 when the teaching was shifted to start from the first grade (Kachru & Nelson, 2006, p. 185-186) until the phase of Thailand’s economic boom of the 1980’s.

The economic boom brought about significant changes in the teaching and learning of English under the national English language curriculum. Prior to the economic boom, English taught in primary level (Grade 5) was not more than 5 hours/week. The change can be seen in the 1996 English curriculum, the number of hours increased and English became a compulsory subject in primary schools from Grade 1 (Mungthaisong, 2003, pp. 14-15). English was then promoted as an international language. The revision of English was seen as “…to assist economic, political and social progress” (ibid., p.14). The opening of new international schools was encouraged with the enrolment of Thai citizen students restricted at not more than 50% of all students while the rest were international students. Moreover, an English Program (EP), in which the language of instruction was English, was introduced in Thai schools. There are 183 English Program schools and 90 International Schools in Thailand. Even though there have been a number of changes in the national policy in the teaching and learning of English, students’ language proficiency was still far from satisfactory.

English language scores in the national test of Thai primary to high school students from October 2003 to March 2005 were reported the lowest of all subjects, less than 50% in all levels. The average scores were: the sixth graders scored 41.14%, the ninth graders scored 37.92% and the twelfth graders scored less than 40% (Nation Newspaper, 2005b). This was due to a number of reasons: Thai EFL teachers and students, problematic text books
and large classes (Munthaisong, 2003). All these problems together with the TOEFL results, in which Thailand’s score was ranked as eighth out of nine countries in South East Asia, resulted in the overhaul of the English curriculum in 2005. (See problems in English teaching in Chiang Rai under 2.4.1)

Urgent attention was called for by the then Minister of Education, Mr. Jaturon Chaisaeng and a working group chaired by Pattharasak Osathanukroah, the then MP, was formed to probe into the problem (Osathanukroah, 2005). The working group found that students’ attitudes toward English were only to pass the school examination and university entrance examination. As a result, a national strategic plan (2005-2015) to upgrade the English language capabilities of the Thai Population was formulated (Chiang Rai Education Office Area 3, 2005). The plan listed seven main strategies:

1. All English classes in all schools were to be instructed in English.
2. Expand and promote English Programs and Mini English Programs in schools and the government to support 20% of cost to schools with financial difficulties in running the programs.
3. All schools must have annual English camps.
4. Develop the English language skills of teachers at primary, secondary and vocational levels.
5. Set up new ERIC Centres (English Resource and Instruction Centre) and develop the existing centres.
6. Further support such as:
   a. Collaborate with domestic and international universities in order to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their language skills with the government providing part of the expense.
   b. Special reward money to be set aside for teachers with outstanding language abilities and effective language instruction.
   c. Support the launch of English language electronic books (e-books).
   d. Support English television programs for educational purposes called English Television or ETV and the launch of satellite TV for education purposes in remote areas.
   e. Support the use of e-learning and the internet in language classrooms.
   f. Support teachers to produce their own teaching materials.
7. Establish national English language promotion and development centres.

The Strategic Plan above was seen as the first clear and systematic plan to help solve the English language problems of the Thai population. This strategic plan was administered in 30 tourism provinces where Chiang Rai was included in the count.

Primary and secondary school teachers in Chiang Rai had to attend an intensive English workshop to improve their language skills and Chiang Rai Rajabhat University was the hub for this intensive workshop. Sornchai Mungthaisong (2006, 5 January, interview) the then head of the project and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, has noted that the university and the faculty have had many requests for organising intensive or specifically designed workshops, English camps, and other workshops throughout the year.

2.4 Language policy under the control of Chiang Rai provincial office

Language curricula in Chiang Rai are under the supervision of the Chiang Rai Provincial Office of Basic Education (CRPOBE). Language curricula are classified into two groups: English and other foreign languages, and Chinese. Chinese has been given prime importance in Chiang Rai and can be clearly seen in the language curriculum administrative structures. Two committees are responsible for their language group one for English and other foreign languages, and the other for Chinese. Noticeably, there is no curriculum or responsible body on minority languages or research on ethnic students learning languages in Chiang Rai although the province has the highest number of minority languages in the northern region. Although the CRPOBE team does acknowledge the existence of minority groups in specific schools and their below average national language ability still there is nothing done with minority languages. This section discusses the two languages groups’ policy in Chiang Rai - English and other foreign languages and Chinese.

2.4.1 English and other foreign languages

Ajarn Nattaya (2006, 24 January, interview), Head of English and Other Foreign Languages Committee of Chiang Rai, mentioned that apart from English, other foreign languages provided in schools in Chiang Rai are French and Japanese. The committee did see some major problems with the programs they were handling: government budget allocation, teacher related problems and text design. Government allocated budgets were
limited and inadequate which resulted in a non-continuous teacher training and curriculum development. The three language programs, English, French and Japanese had to take turns for the budget to carry out the planned curriculum development and teacher training. In many cases the CRPOBE would be allocated a certain amount of money from the government designated to specific language development programs.

With regards to teacher related problems, the problems mostly occurred with English due to it being the only foreign language taught at primary schools. At early primary level teachers were not confident enough to teach English conversation and only vocabulary was taught, while in some schools English was not taught at early primary. At higher primary level, there were inadequate teachers and teachers had to teach other subjects in conjunction with English. Teachers mainly used standard Thai as the language of instruction and the Grammar Translation Method was mainly used in classrooms. Apart from teachers, most school principals neglected the importance of teaching English when compared to other literacy skills. This may have been because of the lack of teachers in remote areas. On this problem, Ajarn Nattaya suggested that teacher training organizations should take into consideration that primary schools do need experienced language teachers and so their students should be trained accordingly. Training students to be efficient primary school language teachers is much needed.

With regard to texts and text design, schools were allowed to select their own texts. Most of the texts available were commercial texts without the 30% local curriculum. There was, however, a text for primary level designed by Nattaya herself with the local content added in, but due to the budget and other related problems the text could not make it into print. Parts of the content in the text however had been used with primary schools in the city, such as Anubaan Chiang Rai Primary School. Although the text had local content there was a drawback in that it lacked content of other districts, so that students in primary schools may not be able to relate to their own situation. At this stage no other language texts such as Japanese or French with local content added are available.

With regard to high school language classes, the problem seemed to be as that of the national problem. It was concerned with only English whereas French and Japanese had not been given as much importance. The national English test scores of Chiang Rai
students were slightly less than 50% whereas there were no national tests or scores of either French or Japanese.

2.4.2 Chinese language policy and curriculum

The CRPOBE’s secretary for Chinese language curriculum committee representative, Ajarn Puangporn, provided insights into the working of the committee that the Chinese language curriculum committee in Chiang Rai was the first Chinese language curriculum committee established in Thailand (Puangporn, 2006; Puangporn, 2006, 8 February, interview). It was set up as a consequence of economic collaboration between China and Thailand and also the nation’s geo-economic strategy. The Chinese government has taken its first step in the economic collaboration by funding the construction of the Chinese Language and Cultural Centre at Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai. The provincial committee was subsequently formed.

The Chinese language curriculum committee received provincial recognition as it is chaired by the governor and has the Director of CRPOBE as the secretariat. The committee’s key members are comprised of government and private education institutions, educational organizations and the president of Chiang Rai Chamber of Commerce. The committee was set up in 2005 and since then has formulated a Chinese language curriculum for primary schools and high schools with a projection of 20% increase in the teaching of Chinese in Chiang Rai by the year 2009. The policy was to extend the teaching of Chinese in both formal and informal schooling apart from the teaching in existing Chinese ethnic schools. However, being the first ever Chinese language committee in Chiang Rai and Thailand the committee confronted many problems such as which Chinese to be taught, curriculum, teachers and budget.

With regard to problems, the committee found a number of urgent problems to deal with. Firstly was the decision whether to use Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese Chinese. There were no standard criteria of which Chinese to be taught and which material or text to be used in schools, as there were two differing views connected to mainland China and Taiwan. To understand the depth of the problem the geo-political and historical aspect have to be considered. Most ethnic Chinese schools in Chiang Rai are private schools and belong to the Yunnanese Chinese or locally called Haw Chinese schools. They were the descendants of the Chinese Nationalist Army known as Kuo Min Tan Battalion 93 who
fled the Communist Party in China and settled down in Chiang Rai. This group of
descendants have close ties with Taiwan and used Taiwanese Chinese and curriculum. The
Chinese taught in schools was the Taiwanese Chinese known to the committee as the “the
full form” or “the traditional form” of Chinese whereas the Chinese that was taught in
other Chinese ethnic schools conformed to the Mandarin Chinese which is used in
Mainland China, known as “the abbreviated form”. The differences of the two were
mostly concerned with written characters. The committee decided to conform to
Mandarin Chinese as the language is most widely used, to allow the Taiwanese to still be
taught as a dialect in schools and to direct students to master the knowledge of both the
short forms and the full forms.

Secondly, there was no standard curriculum for Chinese language in Thailand and hence
not in Chiang Rai either. Chinese curriculum used in ethnic schools depended solely on
individual schools’ choice. Therefore, the curriculum differs from school to school; for
example at Ban Tham School, the curriculum was a Thai-Chinese bilingual program;
Chinese school in Wiang Mok village was an ethnic school which teaches only Chinese in
the evenings; and at other government schools Chinese was taught as an elective subject.
In most ethnic and bilingual schools, Chinese was usually taught in the evenings and
included not only the language but other subjects were also taught in Chinese. The
committee decided upon four main levels of curriculum which were Level 1 (Grade 1-3),
Level 2 (Grade 4-6), Level 3 (Grade 7-9) and Level 4 (Grade 10-12). With regard to Level
4, due to the continuity and link to the curriculum at university level, it was specifically
designed by two local universities, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and Mae Fah Luang
University. With the curriculum at hand, however, the implementation of the curriculum
staggered due to the lack of budget in 2005. Since the project was initiated by the province
the budget wasn’t provided by the Ministry of Education or the government at the early
stages. Therefore, the project and budget had to be divided in order to get support from
both the province and the Ministry of Education. The curriculum could be fully
implemented in 2006.

However, while implementing the curriculum another problem arose which was teacher
related. The schools lack qualified teachers both Thai and native Chinese teachers. Local
Chinese speakers and volunteers were initially hired and later on Chinese teachers from
mainland China were hired. Although Chinese teachers were hired, another problem arose
which was the mismatch of the teaching techniques. The native Chinese teachers used a
Chinese style of teaching practice which was mainly grammar translation method,
memorization and rote learning in the classrooms (Puangporn, 2006, 8 February,
interview). The Chinese teachers from China believe that learning Chinese needs tolerance
and hard work especially memorization. These teaching techniques were not the
techniques emphasized by the Thai national curriculum as the curriculum focused more on
the learners and their attitude or the learner centred curriculum. This problem still awaited
a solution while the project to train 40 Thai teachers and the budget related were also on
their way to the Ministry of Education.

In February 2007, the then Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, Khunying Kasama
Worawan Na Ayutthaya, reported in a press conference that there would be a nationwide
government project that would help train 500 - 1,000 Thai teachers teaching Chinese by a
Chinese university due to the urgent demand of the teaching staff (Manager Online
Newspaper, 2007a). There were 623 schools that had Chinese language courses available in
their schools but without qualified staff. The ministry would also set up 20 Chinese
Language Promotional Centres throughout Thailand.

In Chiang Rai Chinese language entered the school curriculum as an elective subject and as
a compulsory subject only at Samakkhee Wittayakhom School. The school has its own
program called Chinese program side by side with Science–Math, English-Math, French–
English, Social Science, and Agriculture- Social Science programs. This was due to the
school’s availability of the resources and teaching staff. However, the committee projected
that Chinese would and should be the third language of Thai students in Chiang Rai apart
from Thai and English.

2.5 Linguistic rights

Skutnabb-Kangas et al. (1995) stated that “Linguistic Rights should be considered basic
human rights”. This basic human right had been violated to some extent in Thailand when
the radio stations were not allowed to broadcast radio programs in their ethnic languages
(see under 2.3.1 p. 31-32). While the first people-centred constitution in Thailand
formulated in 1997 handed traditional community rights to the people, the army led
government snatched away that linguistic freedom, respect and confidence from the
people. The ISOC showed minimal respect to the people and culture concerned.
Moreover, with this kind of order and language rights infringements, the army-led government had hammered down the sense of oneness and Thai-ness leaving diversity and cultural cohabitation in doubt.

In that vacuum state, nothing could be done via any national laws due to a special military law being enforced, even though the interim government was in office nothing could be done\textsuperscript{14} as the government at that time was under the inspection of the military government. The only assistance that could be used at that particular time lapse to revoke the injustice, were the following United Nations’ Universal Declaration on Human Rights treaties for example (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 1995):

\textbf{Article 2} of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. (p.372)

\textbf{Article 19} of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, states

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any other media of his choice.” (p. 374)

Hopefully, under the provisions of the new constitution, the rights to language shall be had. With regard to human and language rights in the constitution, a few provisions have been made in the constitution drafted in 2007 as follows:

\textbf{Section 26.} In exercising powers of all State authorities, regard shall be had to human dignity, rights and liberties in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

\textbf{Section 30.} All persons are equal before the law and shall enjoy equal protection under the law. Men and women shall enjoy equal rights. Unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of the difference in origin, race, \textbf{language}, sex, age, disability, physical or health condition, personal status, economic or social standing, religious belief, education or constitutionally political view, shall not be permitted.

\textbf{Section 66.} Persons assembling as to be a community, local community or traditional local community shall have the right to conserve or restore their

\textsuperscript{14} This incident happened early in October, 2007, during the interim government put into power by the military coup league. The national election was scheduled on the 23 December, 2007.
customs, local wisdom, arts or good culture of their community and of the nation and participate in the management, maintenance and exploitation of natural resources, the environment and biological diversity in a balanced and sustainable way.

However, it is worth noting that language rights were not stated in any section of the “Rights in Judicial Process” of the constitution.

Although the sections mentioned above have been stated in the constitution, the future of minority languages cannot be guaranteed. The human rights watch organization mentioned that the drafted Internal Security Act (ISA), passed in June 2007 by the interim government of PM General Surayud Chuthanond, is in doubt, as the military had been given the power in the name of internal security (Human Rights Watch, 2007). According to the organization, the ISA “…would allow the military unprecedented powers even after scheduled elections in December [2007]” and in particular Article 17 in the ISA was “a blank check to override all laws and human rights protections” (ibid.).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed two contexts of study: language ecology and Ecolinguistics, and language planning and language policy in general and in Chiang Rai.

Language ecology has taken three decades to develop and become established into a field of linguistics called Ecolinguistics. Ecolinguistics is a theory that bases itself on an existing language ecology concept and ecological thinking. Ecolinguistics is the study of “interactions between any given language and its environment; and it “considers not just a system of internal factors of a language but also wider environment factors … [since]… language is interconnected with the world – it both constructs and is constructed by it” (Mühlhäuser, 2003, p. 2). Ecolinguistics is the main theoretical construct of this thesis.

Language planning and language policy is also one of the factors that make up the language ecology of any language in any nation. Language planning is a series of work to be done to assist in the revival and maintenance of languages while language policy is a set

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15 “Article 17, allowing the ISOC director to take command of state agencies by “issuing a notification commanding state officials not to perform any act or to perform any act to the extent that this is necessary for preventing, suppressing, stopping, and rectifying any situation that affects internal security. This is a blank check to override all laws and human rights protections” (Human Rights Watch, 2007)
of laid out provisions. Thailand has no explicitly stated language policy but it has a provision in the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions of the Kingdom of Thailand, that mention “unjust discriminations against the differences on the grounds of... language... cannot be done”. Since there is no clearly stated language policy with regard to minority languages it is worth keeping a close eye on other laws that might infringe the linguistic human rights of the minority language groups.

Due to the centralized government structure, Chiang Rai has to follow a national language policy or curriculum set out by the central government. The curriculum set out by the Ministry of Education covers two main language groups: national language and foreign languages apart from Chinese.

Due to the national and provincial strategic economic plan envisioned, Chiang Rai educational institutions had to adopt certain strategies and put them into use in the curriculum with particular emphasis on the Chinese language. Thus, Chinese language policy and curriculum in Chiang Rai was formed as a result of economics.
CHAPTER 3

NATIONALISM IN THAILAND

3.0 Introduction
This chapter discusses nationalism and its effects in Thailand as a context of study. The chapter covers nationalism in Thailand and the conscious creation process which includes the confrontation of colonial powers, territorial boundary, the reinvention of the nation, symbol construction, and the rise of regionalism. All these topics will contribute to an understanding of the underlying power structure that makes up the language ecology of Thailand and its regions.

3.1 Nationalism
Benedict Anderson (1983, p. 15) defined nationalism as “an imagined political community” which is not a sudden erupted phenomenon but in fact a process well thought out. According to Anderson (1998, p. 21), “the rise of nationalism meant a change of consciousness so thoroughgoing that a pre-nationalist consciousness has become inaccessible and thus has to be substituted for by History and Tradition”. Apart from history and tradition, other core elements of nationalism consist of common territory, common language and nation. The creation of tools such as national history, literature and language, national heroes and statues, national symbols, traditions in tandem with the development of mass media, are essential in the construction of a nationalist consciousness. The tools both bind the people to the polity and open the people in the polity to the modern world (Anderson, 1983, 1998).

Nationalism as defined in the above paragraph will be used as the frame of discussion of the context of study for nationalism in Thailand. The following paragraphs provide background understanding of nationalism in Thailand, the consciousness building process and how this process was carried out and its impacts on languages and attitudes of its own people and the neighboring countries.
3.2 From Siam to Thailand: becoming a nation

Thailand, a collection of vassal states, was known as Siam until 1939 when the country changed its name and political ideology. The change of the name was the result of the government’s effort to reinvent the Thai identity and Thai nation: an “imagined political community”. The name change was perceived by the governing body as necessary and was a significant indicator of the changes in ideology and consciousness that had taken place and reached its peak. The change of the name, political ideology, and consciousness was triggered by roughly three significant events in history.

The three significant events that fostered full blown nationalism in Thailand were: the confrontation of the colonial powers (1863-1895); the uprising of the vassal states (1902-1906) as a response to developments and the threat of Chinese capitalists in Siam; the assimilation process as a result of Chinese communism during the cold war, the first wave in 1930s and the second wave in the 1950s (Anderson, 1998; Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005; Connors, 2003; Greenfeld, 1992; Mead, 2004).

3.2.1 External threat: confrontation of colonial powers

The incident believed to be a starting point for Siam to adopt nationalism was Siam’s confrontation with two competing colonial power on two borders: the British over Myanmar and the French over Laos and Cambodia. According to Thai history, Siam had lost parts of its land to the French in order to secure the rest of the nation. Cambodia, being a former vassal state to Siam, was made to sign a treaty, which truncated Cambodia as a French protectorate. The situation caused tension to the then ruling King Rama the V. Anderson (1998) and Strekfuss (cited in Connors, 2003) both mention that this part of history should not be overlooked, as it is essential to the understanding of how Siam entered into nationalism. With mounting pressure from the French and the British, Siam worked its way into the development of the core elements and tools of nationalism like nation-state, national boundary, modernization (coined in Thai as siwilai which came from an English word civilized), free trade economy, western education, and language and religion reforms, as counter-colonial strategies to deal with the colonial powers (Connors, 2003). In Connors’ terms Siam developed strategies to deal with the “western anthropological fetishism for race” (ibid., p. 5).
3.2.2 Territorial boundary: state of confusion

We know that the construction of Thai nationalism was successfully built and implanted in the Thai people’s mindset. Connors (2003, p. 5) sharply penned his first sentence in his book saying that, what the Thais believed and assumed “Thai people have always existed” and also “naturally” existed is a fallacy. He further stated, “No national people as such exist” (ibid.). This argument although very true could cause uproar to the Thais in general as the Thais were tuned into the nationalism wavelength through all sorts of media and particularly education. We also know that ‘being Thai or kwaam pen Thai’ was a concept created against the expansion of the two colonial powers: the French and the British. The two powers were in fact old time rivals and trying to keep each other off their frontiers. The Colonial powers knowing the confusion and discrepancy in the concept of exact demarcation of state borders of the Southeast Asia mainland, made use of the discrepancy to influence and expand their powers. The confusion can be clearly seen from the accounts of the early explorers into mainland South East Asia.

We know from the 19th century explorers to inland South East Asia, Francis Garnier, a French Mae Khong Explorer, Auguste Pavie, French Diplomat to Luang Phrabang, James George Scott, British Proconsul in Burma, and Archibald Colquhoun, the author of the famous book *Amongst the Shans*, that mainland southeast Asia had no demarcated borders due to the independent levels given to the vassal states or “autonomous principalities and city-states” (Jumsai, 2005, p. 8 A). Explorers and diplomats dispatched in the 19th century to the area mentioned incidents where no areas were marked but only recognized by its people which kingdom they belonged to. According to Francis Garnier’s account in 1885 both the people and the land on the east of the Mae Khong although belonging to Laos was more like a “Siamese Laos” and the wings of the Siamese kingdom even spread over a vast area to the north of the Mae Khong river in Laos for a long time and still did in 1866 at the time of the expedition (Keay, 2005, p. 190). Moreover, according to Keay’s (ibid.) observation of maps of the British and the French expeditors published in 1885, both countries’ maps had interesting and distinctive elements. The British mapped what is today’s southern Laos to Siam and also mapped the north of southern Lao, the stretch of land from the east (from Tonkin) to the west until Keng Tung in Burma, simply as belonging to Burma. In Colquhoun’s map, this stretch of land was named “Independent Shan Country”. As opposed to the French maps, this territory was assigned to Siam. This particular labeling leaves a mystery to Keay himself as to whether this stretch of land did
belong to the Burmese or whether it belonged to the Siamese or Shans. Also confusing was the exact demarcation point of the kingdom, where did these kingdoms start or end. Apart from the maps, the names in the literature created great confusion, such as names like “Siamese Shan state”, “the Shan/ Lao state” and “Shans and Lao Muang”. What about the Siamese’s perception of their influences?

The Siamese being in the middle of this confusion, viewed that the same stretch of land belonged to the Siamese. Apart from this horizontal stretch, Laos (the whole area on the left bank of the Mae Khong river), Cambodia (Siem Reap, Angkor Wat, Battambang, Sisophon) and the Shans states in Burma up to Jinghong in China were under Siamese control. Charnwit Kasetsiri, a leading Thai Historian, states that this Siamese view is reflected in primary school history textbooks and that Siam entered the modern age at the cost of its territories to the major powers. This history is repeated in the *Welcome to Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai* (See Picture 3.1) tourism journal saying Siam lost 14 of its territories, covering 90,000 square miles, to the foreign powers. Among the 14 territories, 8 plots were lost to Britain and France. This loss was later used repeatedly to build a nationality consciousness (Kasetsiri, 2006b; Solomon, 1970).

The lack of understanding of the area and the worldview behind it created confusion for researchers and scholars. Osborne (2000) mentions that there are two possible factors that could help in answering the mystery: natural geographical terrain and two different worldviews.

To begin with the geographical terrain, the southeast Asia mainland roughly has three main rivers which played significant roles in marking out the traditional kingdom borders: the Mae Khong, the Salween (known as Thanlwin in Burmese) and the Irawaddee (known as Ayeyawady in Burmese). The Mae Khong flows past today’s Laos and Thailand, the Salween flows past the Shan state of Burma and the Irawaddee flows past and belongs to Burma. Being in the middle of the two rivers the Salween was a natural demarcation line. The area to the left of the Salween or the Irawaddee side of the Salween was known as the “cis Salween Shan state” and the area to the right of the Salween on the Mekong side of the Salween was called “trans-Salween state” (See Map 3.1). Therefore, the area in the cis Salween Shan state was under the power of the Burmese Court of Ava and the area at the trans-Salween Shan state was claimed by both the Chinese and the Siamese. Therefore, the
Salween, through French eyes, was seen as the demarcated border of the Burmese power thus leaving the Mae Khong Salween free from clear suzerain power. The Mae Khong side of the Salween consisted mainly of Jinghong and Keng Tung. To date, the Jinghong part belongs to China and the Keng Tung part, formerly belonging to Siam, is now with Burma. This takes us into another factor: the difference in the worldviews of the traditional city-states.

NOTE:
This picture is included on page 49 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Picture 3. 1 A page from Welcome to Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai magazine.

This picture is from Charnwit Kasetsiri’s presentation at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University.
Map 3.1 Myanmar map showing three rivers Irawaddee, Salween and Mae Khong

The map is taken and adapted from http://www.asterism.info/maps/index.html
With regard to the second factor, the concept of a demarcated state existed in China and Vietnam but did not exist in Siam, Burma and Laos and its peripheries (Osborne, 2000). A reasonable explanation given by Osborne (ibid.) was that there were two different views behind the territorial boundary discrepancy. One is the Indian worldview influenced kingdoms which perceived the territorial borders as “porous and shifting” and also as providing a certain level of independence to the vassal states by their suzerain powers. This independent level is best explained in terms of the dichotomy model of center and periphery where the royal power was seen as strongest in the center and less powerful in the peripheries (Keay, 2005; Osborne, 2000; Solomon, 1970). The countries possessing this worldview were Siam, Burma and Cambodia.

Another worldview is the Sinitic worldview influenced kingdoms which perceived the territorial border as fixed and immovable (Osborne, 2000). The countries holding this worldview were China and Vietnam. Vietnam had been under the influence of China long before the French expansion in mainland South East Asia and thus the Sinitic world view was deeply instilled in the Vietnamese. Charnwit Kasetsiri (2006b) mentions that there is even a saying in Thai that “หลักหมุดของประเทศจีนอยู่บนหลังของคนจีน” which means the Chinese territorial border is fixed on the back of all the Chinese people. This saying, to me, is a corrupted version of the Chinese term ‘guanxi’ meaning connections or having a mutual relationship which is beneficial to businesses (Buderi & Huang, 2007). In addition, this view re-appeared in Panichsart’s book on the Chinese economy in Thailand, mentioning that one of the reasons that China expressed interest in investing in Chiang Rai province was due to the Chinese descendants now living in Chiang Rai as Thai citizens (Panichsart, 2006). Moreover, the accounts of early explorers either French or British document the existence and the clash of the two different worldviews.

The clash in worldviews did exist in the old days and both the suzerain powers and the early explorers were confused by the situation especially with the regions lying in the periphery of Burma, China, Siam and Vietnam (Keay, 2005; Osborne, 2000). In 1867 the early explorers documented the situation and the attitude of the Chinese powers as often becoming upset by its southern Xishuanbanna or Jinghong vassal state as not recognizing its suzerain powers. They owned allegiance to multiple city states such as Burma and China, in actual fact to the more powerful suzerains. The vassal states were addressed as

1 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 3.1.
southern dwellers and foreigners were addressed as “หมาน-maan” or barbarians (Keay, 2005, p. 226; Leesueng & Thongchai, 1988, p.1; Osborne, 2000). Early French explorer, Francis Garnier, documented an incident in 1866 where Laos, a small state, was a vassalage state to the three suzerain powers of Siam, Mandalay (Burma) and China. This boundary-less state was beyond the comprehension of the western powers in Southeast Asia.

However, the imperial powers, having learned the geographical terrain demarcation point existed and knowing the difference in the worldviews of the periphery areas, made clever use of the two perceptual factors to claim the lands. In defending its porous and shifting territorial boundary, Siam had to launch a fixed and immovable territorial boundary, thus employing the western concept of fixed territory and nation state.

3.2.3 Reinvention of the nation: administration and education reforms

After gaining a fixed territorial boundary and the concept of nation state, the very first element of nationalism, Siam moved into the conscious creation process as termed by Anderson (1983; 1998). This conscious creation process started out with the fact that the vassalage to Siam in those days was culturally and linguistically diverse. This diversity created a problem for hegemony. Therefore, Siam had to deal with the situation and thus embarked upon centralized administration and assimilation policy. Thus, the year 1905 was the marked year for the “reinvention” of the nation with administration and education reforms taking place all over Siam and its vassalage (Arya, 2005d; Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005). However, the policies were not appreciated by the vassalage. Several unrests occurred in the vassal states; the northern state, northeastern state and the southern state during the years 1902-1906 against the government of king Rama the V.

As a response to the unrests stricter measures were taken. The vassal states were reduced to provinces and towns of Siam. Army conscription was introduced. Financial institutions were established. Royal page schooling was established in order to staff the newly established ministries. Furthermore, the elites, the nobles and the royal pages or officials from the central administrative bureau, were dispatched to the provinces to oversee the royal administration (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005; Mead, 2004; Ongsakul, 2001).

As for education, Bangkok Thai language was introduced in temples as in those days temples were the traditional form of educational institutes. Learning and speaking of other
languages was forbidden (Charoenmuang, 2006). Later on, formal schooling was established so children of peasants, farmers and elites alike could all go to school and become better citizens. However, textbooks and their contents in those times as history textbooks today were prescribed by the central Thai government (Kasetsiri, 2006b; Mead, 2004). Six textbooks, entitled Thammachariya or “moral education” series, were compiled and used nation wide. This Thammachariya series became a tool in creating the consciousness of being Thai.

3.2.4 Conscious creation process: kwaam pen Thai (being Thai)

We learn from Benedict Anderson (1998) that nationalism is a process which requires tools. The tools employed by Siam in creating the “being Thai” consciousness consisted of textbooks and the coining of new words, nationalist history, state preferences or ratthaniyom, a national anthem and the three national symbols called chaat-sart-kasat which mean nation, religion and monarch (Mead, 2004). Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead’s detailed analysis of Thammachariya or moral education shed light on how the concept was introduced and gradually inculcated.

According to Mead (2004), Thammachariya was compiled by a western educated official named Chao Phraya Thammasakmontri and the series’ main purposes were to indoctrinate the citizens with the ideas of nationalism and to introduce economic development and participation in the world economy as a means to become a developed country. In her analysis, the series did refer to the “…threat from the colonial powers, but only as a danger which was already past, thanks to king Chulalongkorn’s great ability in developing the country” (ibid., p. 88).

Nationalist ideas were introduced and new vocabulary was coined. The ideas introduced were nation-state and what it meant in “being Thai”. Mead provided a crystal clear picture of how the process took place and was inculcated. She (Mead, 2004, pp. 88-89) described it as:

“The new stress on the nation-state involved developing new vocabulary. Originally the word chaat [chat] meant birth, and its use in the sense of “nation” was an innovation that seems to have originated in the middle of the nineteenth century when Siam was concluding trade treaties with Britain. In Thammachariya, this idea was popularized; the individual was told that he belonged to a cultural community called Chat Thai, and that the whole community lived in a country (muang Thai),
which was their father land. … the word Thai was used in the sense of freedom: “we are Thais because we are nobody’s servants”. But these notions did not have general usage; in 1883, students from Suan Anan School found it impossible to translate the word “nation” from English into Thai.”

Language was added as an element of being Thai. Mead (2004, pp. 88-89) quoted a passage from Thammachariya to support her claim, and the passage itself illustrates how the nation-state notion was projected, and also how language became a part of being Thai and the national boundary.

““Remember that Muang Thai is our fatherland [ban gird muang non] and we have to love it very much. We have to love it more than the school where we study. Moreover, we have to love our fellow Thais, in other words our nation. This is because we are born Thai and belong to the same group of people. We are of the same nation and speak the same language, so how can we not love each other more than we love other people who belong to other nations and speak other languages.””

Thus, Thai language was defined as the essence and one of the components of being Thai. The text, Thammachariya, set a scaffold in the people’s perception before the concepts of nation and language were firmly hammered in when the Nationality Act was passed in the reign of King Vajiravudh or King Rama VI. The Nationality Act was passed in 1911 to square out the non-royalist group of the capitalist class - who happened to have Chinese origins or had migrated from China - who were believed to be potential political risks. The Chinese posed an internal threat to the nation and were tagged as “the Jews of the Orient” by King Vajiravudh (Balasegaram, 2001; Bun & Kiong, 1993; Leuangaramsri, 2003; Mead, 2004; Tarling, 1998). This was due to Chinese migrants to Siam having had a century long history of being workers, merchants, traders, a tax-collecting monopoly and other trade monopolies in Siam (Anderson, 1998; Bun & Kiong, 1993; Connors, 2003; Knecht, 1994; Mead, 2004). As a result, according to Connors (2003), the Nationality Act:

“…exclude and include different sections of the Chinese population. This inclusion and exclusion, and the use of various measures to stamp out the speaking of foreign languages, set the scene for a long history of state efforts to marginalise the Chinese, both workers and capitalists.”

However, the Nationality Act was later amended to conform to the government’s policy of granting Thai citizenship to those born in Thailand as it was believed that it would reduce the migrants’ children’s “attachment to China and Chinese nationalism” (Leuangaramsri, 2003, p. 161). The idea of being Thai was further expanded in 1927 and by the 1950s basic discrimination measures had been wiped out (Bun & Kiong, 1993).
Thus, being Thai meant having three characteristics: love of national independence, tolerance and the power of assimilation (Connors, 2003; Kasetsiri, 2006b).

### 3.2.5 Thai-ness: degrees of Thai-ness

Measures taken by the Thai government in the construction of Thai-ness have indeed downplayed the ethno-heterogeneity in Thailand. The inclusion/exclusion and the categorization of ethnicity reflects the government’s imposed identity on the ethnic groups. Luengaramsri (2003, p. 160) argues that ethnicity identification in Thailand is a result of government imposition based on the Thai-ization process and:

> “Within Thai official discourse, the heterogeneity of ethnic people in Thailand has often been regarded as problematic in the process of nation building. Since the mid-twentieth century, assimilation has been the major mechanism of incorporation of the diverse ethnic groups living within the bounded nation-state. Central to the assimilation process is the state’s attempt to create an identity of Thai-ness and to differentiate ‘distinctive characteristics’ separating Thai from non-Thai.”

There are roughly two main categories of ethnicity: the dominant Thais and the non-dominant group called ethnic minorities. The dominant Thais means the Thais who share a common language, culture and religion while the non-dominant group was further categorized into five main groups. The ethnic minority category comprises of Chinese, hill tribes people, Muslim Thais, Vietnamese immigrants, and others. Under the ‘others’ category are refugee groups of Yunnanese Chinese, Burmese and refugees from Indochina (Leuangaramsri, 2003). Interestingly, Luengaramsri also points out that within this category the Yuan or Khon muang of northern Thailand and the “Lao” of the northeast are excluded. They are classified as ethno-regional groups and not ethnic minorities. This is due to their cultural differences being seen as regional distinctions but not ethnic differences. The exclusion was explained by Khachadpai Burutpat, the then-Deputy-Secretariat of the National Security Council, who argued that “…(these people) are actually Thai because they have never caused any problem to the government administration” (Leuangaramsri, 2003, p. 162).
Rhum (1996, p. 337) observed that there were attempts to redefine the identity of the Yuan of northern Thailand in the “nationalistic direction”. He argued that it can be seen as a negotiation of power in the cohabitation of cultures and that it was a downplay of a regional culture. Rhum (ibid., p. 338) mentioned cases where the officials as representative of state presided over regional customs and traditions and “the presence of provincial governor underscores that the northern Thai are Thai first and northern second”. Rhum (1998, p. 336) made an interesting remark on how modern politicians help in bringing out the distinction:

“Tellingly, they take the occasion to wear the ‘traditional’ Tai Yuan peasant’s shirt (sua morhom), a very nice demotic touch that has become de rigueur at these ‘folkloric’ public functions. The ordinary citizens of the town, on the other hand, dress up (not dress down, like the politicians) in their best European-style clothes”.

3.2.6 Nationalist history: an ethnocentric view

During the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925), the notion of nationalism developed into what is known to the Thais until today as chaat, sart and kasat or nation, religion and monarch, which in Connors’ interpretation is seen as the “ideological weaponry”
(Connors, 2003, pp. 35-36). The idea of nation was strengthened when the idea of identity was attached to it. The attachment process employed several techniques, which included education, the writing of history, propaganda and the establishment of scouts and media. The writing of standard history was purely to instill the sense of identity and to produce “endless affirmations of the identity of the dynasty and the nations” (Connors, 2003, p. 36). The nationalist History of Siam is based on an ethnocentric view of the central Thai, to be specific – Bangkok. This type of history created problems for the Thais as a whole at the national level and international level.

To begin with the problems at national level, the history does not refer to any regional history of former vassal states, which are now the provinces of Thailand. Charnwit Kasetsiri (Kasetsiri, 2006b) stated that the national history is an “official domain and there is no trespassing” and it can be seen in what “is written, or correctly is not written” [my italics] in the textbooks for primary and secondary school students. The history lacks the diversity of the regions. Even until today the history textbooks used at the primary and secondary school level, still do not provide a proper regional history. Only a few lines appear, if there is a need to mention about the regional history. The lack of regional history paid off with interest.

Professor Dr. Nidhi Eiewsriwong, a Thai sociologist, explicitly pointed out a heartrending fact that even today’s students living in the region have no idea of their own history. To be exact with his words, “…เด็กเชียงใหม่เดินอยู่บนซากอิฐซากปูนที่พระเจ้าติโลกราชสร้างไว้ ไม่มีใครรู้จักพระเจ้าติโลกราช รู้จักแค่พระเจ้าบรมไตรโลกนาถ ซึ่งพระเจ้าบรมไตรโลกนาถรบแพ้พระเจ้าติโลกราชด้วย แต่เด็กเชียงใหม่ไม่รู้จัก…” which means “…Chiang Mai kids didn’t even know who King Trilokaraj was [Chiang Mai King] even though they are standing on top of the ruins of his ancient kingdom. They only know of King Boromatrilokanath [central Thai King]. They didn’t even know the fact that King Boromatrilokanath was defeated by King Trilokaraj” (Gliangglao, 2007). National history was taught as follows.

The Thai people perceived and were taught that all the Thai-speaking people migrated from a kingdom called Nanchao in the southern part of China or even further than this; sometimes reference is made to the Altai Mountain in Mongolia. Once migrated they settled down and established kingdoms in the central plains called Sukhothai, Ayutthaya,
Thonburi and finally Rattanakosin respectively. Sukhothai was referred to as the first kingdom and the first capital of Thailand. In this kingdom under the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng, the Thai alphabet and the writing system was formed, developed and used until today. King Ramkhamhaeng befriend the northern Thai kingdoms called Lanna and Phayao. The three kings assisted in founding the city of Chiang Mai which later became the capital city of Lanna kingdom. As the Thais ventured into the Ayutthaya era, problems occurred with Burma and war was waged against Burma.

Ayutthaya was defeated twice. Later a new kingdom, Bangkok, was established. The northern kingdom also fell to the Burmese and was finally assisted by the rulers of Bangkok in driving the Burmese troops out. Following the war, the northern kingdom became vassalage to Siam. The rulers of Bangkok later confronted the colonial powers and due to the intelligence and prowess of King Rama V Thailand never went under colonial rule. Following this period Thailand merged all the vassalage to the Bangkok and Thailand was established. However, this part of history is believed among the Thai academics and those interested in Thai studies to be myth as it was written to serve nationalism (Connors, 2003; Kasetsiri, 2006b; Phongpaichit & Baker, 1996; Rhum, 1996; Winichakul, 2005; Wongthes, 2005, 2006a). No matter how diverse the cultures were, in Connors’ terms they were all “subsumed under the central Thai identity constructed in Bangkok. The historical origin became the discursive basis on which central Thai chauvinism worked to marginalize other ethnic groups” (Connors, 2003, p. 37).

Moreover, this type of history coupled with the fact that Thailand has never been colonized, has caused problems to the Thais at an international level, especially with its neighboring countries, and at the national level. The history textbooks portray two types of enemy, in Charnwit Kasetsiri’s terms: the “contemporary” enemy and the “imagined” enemy (Myanmar). The Ayutthaya-Burmese war became a recurrent theme for national unity even until today in drama, advertisement and movies. A Thai energy drink company called Carabao Dang, owned by the lead singer of a Thai rock band named Carabao, had television commercials and advertisement posters with the singer’s image (See Pictures 3.2 and 3.3) put up all over town with the phrase “เชิดชูนักสู้ผู้ยิ่งใหญ่ไทยผู้ยิ่งยง คาราบาวแดง” which means, “honoring the great warrior and the mighty Thai people, Carabao Dang”. On

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3 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 3.3.
hearing the phrase there is an automatic connection with the recurring Ayutthaya-Burmese theme. As Siam and Burma have had a long standing rival history since the Ayutthaya period that Siam had been invaded and occupied twice by the Burmese and it was considered one of the greatest loss in Thai history. Moreover, the owner of this energy drink is known for his songs with national unity content and other advertisements with the same content. Interestingly, when the two, the wordings and the singer, pair up the poster creates a strong sense of national unity. On my field trip to Maesai, I saw the same poster all over town and surprisingly I saw two similar posters in Burmese script. The poster in Burmese says “Carabao Dang mait hswe do thouit pyi dai a mo-pye” which means “Carabao Dang, friends! You’ll be relaxed after drinking this every time”\(^4\). That was a clever move, and an excellent marketing technique, as it was a switch from nationalistic mode and views of Burmese as “imagined enemy” to a friend for business reason.

![Picture 3.2 Carabao Dang written in Burmese.](image)

![Picture 3.3 Carabao Dang poster written in standard Thai script.](image)

At the national level, the nationalist history put the Thais in a difficult situation in terms of relationships with its neighbors (Kasetsiri, 2006b; Winichakul, 2005). Charnwit Kasetsiri mentions that Thais have what is called a “superiority/inferiority complex” with its neighboring countries. He also asserts that Thailand’s relationships with its neighboring countries are more like foes than friends; especially the Burmese are seen as an everlasting rival who conquered Siam twice: once in 1569 and another in 1767. Charnwit Kasetsiri adds that even though time has passed, the Thai’s feelings linger through the “egocentric history” and the fall of the Burmese empire to Britain was seen as deserved. In 2001, the

\(^4\) Translation provided by a Burmese friend, Ms. Thuza Nhwe.
Thais even protested against the Burmese for criticizing the Thais in their primary school history textbooks where it is stated that the Thais posed a threat to the Burmese. Charnwit Kasetsiri also points out that Laos and Cambodia are seen as “less developed” and inferior as the two countries have a history of being in vassalage to Siam during the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin eras. He provides an example of a term *norng* or younger sibling, as used in a Thai phrase “ไทยลาวก็เป็นพี่น้องกัน – Thai lao pen phi norng kun” which means “Thais and Laotians are siblings”, as attached to the relationship with Laos and which Laotians did not like to be labeled.

In the same manner with Cambodia, the relationship proved to be problematic when Thai businesses and embassy in Cambodia were burnt down as a result of nationalism histories produced by both Thais and Cambodians (analysis of Cambodian history textbooks available in Pukdeekum, 2003). Charnwit Kasetsiri describes the relationship as a love-hate relationship and mentions an incident believed to have triggered the incident. On January 29, 2003 when a Thai TV star mentioned she would not visit Cambodia unless Angkor Wat, Cambodia’s famous ancient temple, was returned to Thailand. This was regarded as a serious offence to the Cambodians as it went against the national history that Thailand had indeed taken the land from Cambodia, as they moved southward from Nanchao and pushed the Cambodians deeper south. Thongchai Winichakul added that there are Thai terms that refer to Cambodians in the legendary times as “untrustworthy and inferior”: “ขอมดิน - khom dam din - the underground traveling Khmer” and “ขอมพราพักตร์ - khom prae phak - the betraying Khmer” (Winichakul, 2005).

On the other hand, relationships with China and Malaysia seem to be on good terms. China was once seen as a threat but today is seen as a big brother whereas the Thais’ perception of Malaysia is different again as the relationship is seen as exceptional, as Malaysia is “rather successful, well developed, and even richer” (Kasetsiri, 2006b).

With this type of perception the Thais paid little or no attention to the learning of their neighbors’ languages except for the languages that had economic value. Chinese was the only language that seemed to have been of interest among the neighbors’ languages apart from the non-neighbor languages like Korean, Japanese and English. Chinese language teaching institutes in Thailand and especially in Chiang Rai mushroomed at the signing of
FTA between China and Thailand while other languages such as Burmese were of minimal interest.

**Picture 3. 4** Cartoon in the 1920s during King Vajiravudh's time published in a Siam newsletter called Dusit Samit.

**NOTE:**
This picture is included on page 61 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
The cartoon above expresses how the Thais perceived their neighbors in the 1920s. The picture shows King Vajiravudh pulling his Thai people high up from their neighbors (from left to right - Burmese, Cambodian and Vietnamese). In the background, the five former kings look on from heaven (Kasetsiri, 2006b).

Chiang Rai Rajabhat University provided a course in Burmese at the faculty of Humanities but had to be closed down due to minimal to no interest in the language or culture despite the facts that Chiang Rai is only 60 kilometers from Myanmar, and there are millions of Bahts (Thai currency) trade values going on across the borders. The Burmese language was later provided at the Language centre in the university but was also closed down. The government did encourage the study of neighboring countries’ languages and cultures and allocated a one time only fund to the universities in the border provinces to set up a neighboring countries’ study centre.

The university, being a university in the border province near Burma and Laos, assigned me to oversee the setting up of the centre. With the limited one time allocated budget and its limitation such as the budget did not cover the hiring of any experts, therefore nothing much nor significant could be done leaving only organizing a couple of seminars, buying books and writing web pages which could not be accessed. To the people who worked in setting up the centre, the money allocated was first seen as a falling orange (a Thai phrase meaning free stuff and good) but was later called a falling Durian (free stuff but painful), an expression coined by staff members. Moreover, it was not a setting up of a centre but seemed to be a mixture of cosmetic surgery and giving treatment without an attempt to diagnose the problem, as by doing so would be a self-inflicted wound for the government.

3.2.7 Second wave of nation building: anti-Chinese and promotion of ratthaniyom

After the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in June 1932, the government under the revolutionary party jumped onto the notion of nationalism, separating nationalism from monarchy. However, there were numerous unrests and political turmoil in Siam until the late 1930s when political turmoil had cooled down and the second wave of nation building was established. This post-absolutism wave of nationalism was based on the government’s fear of foreigners, in Connors’ term “xenophobic nationalism”, to be exact – the Chinese.
This fear associated the Chinese with two keywords: business and communism. In the 1930s the fear was mainly about the Chinese taking up 90% of Siam’s business and economy, as a result there was a strong sense of fear towards the Chinese. Whereas the fear that underlay the 1940s and following two decades was communism (Knecht, 1994). Two main measures can be seen in this fascinating era: the anti-Chinese schemes and the promotion of 12 state preferences or ratthaniyom.

The first measure, the anti-Chinese schemes, took off with the encouragement of intermarriage. Balasegaram (2001) pointed out that intermarriage of the ethnic communities has been greatest in Thailand and the Philippines while Bun and Kiong (1993) found that the culture of the intermarriage families, Chinese and Thai, was changed and that by the third and fourth generations the Chinese would be left with something Thai and the Thais would be left with something Chinese. Moreover, the Chinese were encouraged to adopt Thai names in order to get citizenship (The change of names is addressed in Chapter 4). Thus, the encouragement of intermarriage is a gradual approach to assimilation.

The second measure in building the nation was when Siam issued 12 distinct state preferences or policies during 1939-1941 under General Plaek Pibulsongkram’s government. The 12 state preferences or ratthaniyom, although distinct policies in practice, all channeled citizens on the road to uniformity – the oneness as in one country, one culture and one thinking. The very first state preference, issued on 24th June 1939, was about the change of the country’s name from Siam to Thailand. In Sumet Jumsai’s words “…the country changed its name to Thailand with an ethnic-cum-nationalist agenda as embodied in the anthem…” (Jumsai, 2005, p. 8 A). The remaining 11 state preference policies were to control citizens and prescribe them with standard behavior codes such as the modern attire codes for men and women which in fact was a European dressing code; lyrics of national and royal anthems and the standing to the anthems to show loyalty and respect to the nation; the standard names of Thailand and its citizens; and finally the use of Thai language and Thai names. Thais were encouraged to change already existing Thai names to proper Thai names (name change is dealt with in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, Thai language went into transformation and was standardized as the national language.
The attempt to transform Thai language included both written and spoken language. Many letters were deleted from the alphabet list and new spellings were encouraged such as the word culture being changed from วัฒนธรรม into วัทนธัม, although the word was later changed back into its former spelling. As for spoken language all Thais were to substitute a polite ending “ja” to gendered polite endings “kha” for females and “khrub” for males. Moreover, pronouns that implied the notions of subjection to elites and nobles were asked to be dropped. The underlying reason for language reforms was to get rid of foreign identities in the Thai language. For the same reason, 59 traditional songs with ethnic names of Laos or Ngiaew (Shans) in the song’s titles were deleted, such as Lao Dumnernsai was left with only dumnernsai. However, the original form of written and spoken language, including the name of the songs, was later brought back to use when General Plaek Pibulsongkram’s term ended (Rangsipanuruk, 2007).

Apart from Chinese, regional languages and other ethnic minority languages also suffered from the enactment of the state preference (Charoenmuang, 2006; Leuangaramsri, 2003; Mead, 2004; Rujanaseree, 2005). The use of languages other than Thai was discouraged; for example, Melayu was forbidden in government transactions and offices. Accordingly, the teaching and learning of Al Quran was also forbidden (Rujanaseree, 2005). Languages other than Thai such as northern Thai, northeastern Thai and Melayu were prohibited as languages of instruction. Buddhist monks and students were prohibited from teaching and learning via regional languages. Only Bangkok Thai was encouraged and the benefit was clearly seen that studying Thai would guarantee a secure job in government offices and status raised. The Chinese and the regional people having seen the economic and social benefit in studying Thai through the enforcement of language and education did grasp the opportunity. Consequently, the non-Thai languages have been made subordinate to Thai and do not have official recognition.

The xenophobic era was not over. In fact the fear marched on in the 1940s and changed its form into fear of Chinese communism. The fear reached its pinnacle in 1957 due to the government of Sarit Thanarut following American policy on the fight against communism. Chinese schools in Thailand were seen as delivering nationalistic Chinese education. As a result, the study of Chinese language was seen as a tool for the spread of communist ideology. Chinese schools were ordered to close down, teachers were arrested and deported to China (Bun & Kiong, 1993; Knecht, 1994; Kruewiwatkul, 2006;
Prachachartthurakit Newspaper, 2007). In addition, studies about the regions and ethnicity have implicitly been an untouchable issue in Thai society. This owed much to the construction of Thai-ness or being Thai.

### 3.2.8 Regionalism

When political and economic stability eased up the situation, the study of languages and ethnic cultures began to be accepted. Regional studies have only been wide open to study within the last three decades (Kruewiwatkul, 2006; Ongsakul, 2001; Wittayasakphan, 2006). To illustrate this there are a few incidents worth discussing.

Firstly, in 1970, northern Thai or Lanna language was not considered a Thai language, or else what was known about it was a misunderstanding. A book entitled *Luk Paasathai* or Thai Grammar written by a well known Thai linguist, Kamchai Thonglor, in which a full account of Thai language history is given, did not mention what was classified or included as Thai language. The only language mentioned was standard Thai or Bangkok Thai. However, the book gave examples of different types of alphabet sets for example Cambodian, Mon, Burmese and Laotian (Thonglor, 1970).

In Thonglor’s (1970) book, there are two types of Laotian alphabet illustrated. On close comparison, one is the Laotian alphabet used in today’s Laos and the other is similar to that of the Lanna alphabet used in northern Thailand. This second alphabet was labeled “อักษรลาวอีกแบบหนึ่ง - aksorn lao ik baeb nueng” or another type of Laotian alphabet. This was a big misunderstanding. This alphabet in fact is called *Tua Dham* or Dhamma script which is used in Buddhist palm leaves and Sa paper scroll inscriptions. All Buddhist texts in Laos, the north and northeast of Thailand, Burma and Xishuanbanna in China use a similar script. This clearly illustrates that there had been little to no research on regional languages before 1970. A second explanation can be that central Thai in the old days referred to the people in the north and to northeastern people as Laotian as their speech was similar. Also, during the reign of King Rama V and VI, the northern Thai area was named collectively as the Lao Chiang, or, literally, diverted Lao state, which means the northwestern Laotian state.
Moreover, Ongsakul (2001), a leading Lanna Historian at Chiang Mai University, mentions that historical approaches and studies of the regions were of huge interest in 1977 when cultural centers were established in the provinces all over the country. Furthermore, conferences on regional studies have been widely held.

However, there are contrastive views on studies of the regions that suggest that nationalism ideology was still felt even in the 1980s. Nicholas Tapp (2000) provides an interesting observation that this ideology was prevalent in the International Thai Studies Conferences. He states that:

“Since the International Thai Studies Conference started in Bangkok in 1984…, there has always been an awkwardness (remarked on by many) in the topics of the conference. There have been papers dealing specifically with the Thai majority population of Thailand, Thai (meaning Thailand) ecology and development and history, literature, language, culture and manners. There have been other papers dealing with the broader groups of people speaking languages of the Tai family of which Thai is one, which have included northern Thai and the Lao population of northeastern Thailand, the Laos people of the Laos, the Shan of Burma, the Lue and many smaller Tai-speaking groups in China, Laos and Vietnam. And then there have been papers dealing with unrelated (in a cultural/linguistic sense) peoples who form ethnic minority groups within Thailand and neighboring countries, such as the Hmong and Yao, Akha and Lua. In effect we have had Thai studies, Tai studies, and studies of other ethnic minorities, within a single conference. …There is of course a reason why the international Thai Studies Conference has taken the form it has, with ethnic minority studies jostling uneasily with Thailand scholarship. This is to do with a general movement towards Thai cultural studies within the Thai academic world, associated with the notions of Thai nationalism, with which many have been uncomfortable. …” (Tapp, 2000, pp. 351-352)

Associate Professor Saichon Sattayanuruk (2006), a Thai historian, mentions that nationalism has created a situation in the Humanities which she terms “Humanities Crisis”. She mentions that Humanities studies in Thailand reflect the long dominated view of nationalism and create the “forbidden humanity studies” and “humanities without imagination”. Therefore, an attempt to go beyond nationalism ideology is a matter of danger. This can be seen in the case of two studies: Tao Suranari and the Ramkamhaeng stone inscription.5

5 The statue of Tao Suranari was proposed as Tao Suranari did not exist but was created as a result of nationalism to include the eastern state into Thailand and the Ramkamhaeng stone inscription was proposed as not having been inscribed in Sukhothai Era (700 years ago) but as recent as 200 years. This is significant because it is believed that the stone inscription was the point of reference of the present Thai history and language. The former received massive protests while the latter became a national concern a decade back and recurred again in 2006. (Please search Michael Vickery for the original work on the inscription study.)
Regional studies began as recently as the 1980s, especially linguistics studies have been researched extensively (Bradley, 2007; Thonglor, 1970; Wittayasakphan, 2006). Although language research has been extensive, most of the research aimed at language structures and sociolinguistics. Very few questioned the language ideology behind the enforced laws and acts (Burutpat, Sujaritchuck, & Srijumpa, 1997). However, if questioned, which is a rare case, a compromised voice and position was taken if they happened to be Thai citizen linguists. Therapan Luengthongkam’s (2002) work on dialectal Thai and language diversity is one of the very few published research reports that attempts to mildly suggest the state’s and linguists’ roles in language policy as a delicate issue, needing to be carefully planned. The same voice was taken by Professor Dr. Pongsri Lekawatana as “bilingualism might be a better policy than assimilation” despite her understanding of the alternative expressed by the comment for example “This lady’s attitude towards the northern dialect is typical of many Bangkokians!” (Lekawatana, 2003, p. 40). Lekawatana was referring to the language used by one of her respondents who was a northerner and who could not speak northern Thai due to her mother forbidding her to use it for fear that she would not do well in her studies. The girl’s mother was a Bangkokian and had never learnt the northern dialect herself. Suwilai Prem krótki’s ethnolinguistic report of Thailand gave strongly supported language diversity, but in the same manner as other Thai linguists, was a compromised voiced (Prem krótki et al., 2004).

The only strong voices on the effect of Thai politics on language belongs to that of foreign linguists; for example, William Smalley, David Bradley and Mary J. Haas (Bradley, 2007; Haas, 1951; Matisoff, 1991; Smalley, 1994). The only work that touches on nationalism discourse, language, identity and attitudes ware works done in the fields of sociology and anthropology by scholars at Chiang Mai University (Ganjanapan, 2005; Santasombat, 2003).

However, Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006) argued that the opening to Regional Studies owed much to the change in polity and to the market driven economy. Regional cultures became a selling point and campaigns were raised to restore the regional cultures. It seemed, interestingly, as if regionalism had been given prime importance. The distinctiveness became the magnet for the tourism industry. Sompong Wittayasakphan may be right in a way, as the market driven economy renders an opportunity to the marginalized languages and cultures to rise and flourish.
Northern Thai script which was once banned from use and so lost its significance and space in today’s education has been brought back in use but with limitations. The script appears on shops signs, road names signs and temple names, but disappointingly, a few of the signs are misspelled, and what disheartens most is that it seems signs in Lanna language are only put up as decoration pieces that bring back the nostalgia of the old days.

In the same way but at a grandiose level, with economic power attached to its wings, Chinese has made a remarkable comeback after having been in a period of decline. Chinese has made its way into the national curriculum as the language of economic power. The Ministry of Education reported a lack of efficient Chinese language teachers, as there was an excessively high demand for Chinese language courses. The existing 623 schools, both government and private schools, that offer Chinese courses, could not cater for the high demand as such. Therefore, the Ministry is now funding 500 – 1,000 teachers to attend language workshops and training (Manager Online Newspaper, 2007a).

In Chiang Rai, Chinese has become a provincial strategic plan in all government sectors, especially the educational sector. Chinese is offered as an elective course in high schools. The language is offered as a compulsory language course in Samakkhee Wittayakhom High school where it has leveled with the sole, long-timer international language – English. Chinese language centres have mushroomed and the government itself offers free language classes to the public. According to one informant at the Worker Skill Development Office in Chiang Rai, the office provides tuition free classes in Chinese and the rate of enrolment is unbelievably high. The office has had to hire more Chinese language teachers in order to serve the huge demand. When demand came from the three main districts that have business contacts with China the office had to hire local Chinese language teachers. Chinese, the language once suppressed by the Thai authority, is now flying high and enjoying the ride due to economics.

3.3 Conclusion

Looking back at what Thailand has gone through from the confrontations of colonialism, the hegemonic process employing tools like education, religion, state preferences, the nationality act, the building of national history and history textbooks, the state-imposed identity of ethnic groups to the change in geopolitics - all these factors have played a concerted role in the construction of today’s generation’s common sense and perception
of others and of themselves. The early history shaped the Thais in such a way that the Thais had a low tolerance and acceptance level of cultural differences (Archavanitkul, 2006) and they perceived themselves as monolinguals (Heikkila-Horn, 2002). Heikkila-Horn (ibid.), was struck by the fact that the country’s journey had brought the ethnic citizens to the denial of their language identity, “…urban educated Bangkokians confess with a somewhat embarrassed smile that they can also speak Teochiu, Hainanese, Cantonese or Hokkien. …The fact that nearly the entire population of Thailand is in fact bilingual is a huge hidden asset, which neither the Thai government nor the business community have learned to appreciate properly”.

CHAPTER 4

THAI NAMES: WHAT’S IN A NAME?

4.0 Introduction

Thai names of all kinds, first names, last names, nicknames, village names, district, and province names are reflections of two main influences: political and economic. Moreover, Thai people have certain values such as auspiciousness attached to naming, therefore change of name either because of political or economic influences, is based on this value. Monks and Buddhist scholars are consulted for auspicious names and surnames. This section discusses the change of names as a result of political and economic influences. Political influences will first be dealt with followed by economic influences and the social value of the auspiciousness of names.

4.1 Politically influenced names

Politically influenced names in this section include the country’s name, village names, and first and last names. As mentioned in Chapter 3 Siam changed its name to Thailand in 1939 as a matter of nationalism. With the change in the country’s name, its population was also affected. Chinese, ethnic hilltribe groups and the Thais were all affected to varying degrees. Chinese ethnic groups were among the first groups who had to go through the names change as a result of the anti-Chinese measures, whereas the Thais had to change their names as a result of the state preference issued in the 1930s.

4.1.1 Educational institutions names

Due to government policy, Chinese ethnic schools had to go through name change. The ethnic schools were no longer called the huaxiao or overseas Chinese school, but known as minxiao or kongxiao which means people's school or public school respectively (Bun & Kiong, 1993). However, a private university in Bangkok with a good reputation is named ‘มหาวิทยาลัยหัวเฉียว’ or Huaxiao University which means the overseas Chinese University.
4.1.2 Last names

Personal names and last names can be seen as a result of the assimilation process, for example Chinese, Thai and hilltribe names. This is due to the fact that originally Chinese first names and last names were usually short, having not more than three syllables. Thai first names are usually long, with the surnames even longer. Today, Chinese last names are longer than the Thais, “… All of them [Chinese Thai] search sophisticated dictionaries to find lengthy Thai names and surnames in order to appear more Thai, with the result that now one can recognize really the true Thais only by their short surnames” (Bun & Kiong, 1993). A Thai friend once humorously expressed her feelings about her long surname while filling out immigration forms upon entering other countries on her travels, that either the government had to have more of the square boxes on the forms for people with long last names or else she would have to change her last name to fit in the provided boxes, because she always had only half of her surname filled in.

To most Thais it is an instant recognition that last names ending with or including words like trakool or sakul, meaning clan or lineage, as in Tangtrakool, Foo-trakool, Aswatrikool, Seksantisakul; wanich or panich, meaning trade or commerce, as in Wongwanich, Kijwanich, Sengpanich, Pongpanich, Thitisophonpanich or simply Panich; Kij, meaning business, as in Kijchai, Tangthanakij, Paiboonkij, all are usually Chinese-Thai surnames.

The most elaborate and sophisticated Thai names and surnames have Pali and Sanskrit roots. Being a teacher in an area with diverse cultures, I see the pattern in the name changes of my students even today. Those with long Pali and Sanskrit surnames are mostly Thai and Chinese, some of the last names mentioned above are mere translations of Chinese names such as Aswatrikool and Aswhem, meaning the horse clan or in connection with horses, as the word Aswa is an indic root meaning horse. When confronted with long surnames with ordinary Thai words, the names can belong to hilltribe people who had their surnames changed to Thai such as Seriduangjai (เสรีดวงใจ) which means the free hearts; Yungyuentawee (ยั่งยืนทวี) which means stability and prosperity.

The ethnic hilltribe groups were the second group that had their last names changed. Not all of them had their last names changed, a large number still maintain their last names. Those who maintained their last names can be recognised by the word Sae as in Sae Yang in their last names which is roughly equivalent to the Yang Clan as in the Chinese names. For
those who had their last names changed, it is interesting to see that the meaning of their surnames do fall into this political category of name change as well.

There are a number of hilltribe peoples’ last names in which the meanings are usually about loyalty, loving the nation, loving the countryside, loving the forests, and protecting the forests such as Praipanaruk ไพรพนารัก which means preserving the forests; any meaning concerning the forest and nature such as Chamroenkhunhuai จิ่มเรียนขุนห้วย which means prosperous, developing in the hill and valley; and Anusawaridoi อนุสาวรีย์ which means statue or monument of the hill. In the same case, a surname that starts with Jai ใจ, as pointed out to me by one of my informants, usually belongs to the Yunnanese Chinese especially the descendants of the Kuo Min Ton (KMT) soldiers in Chiang Khong district for example Jairukbanna ใจรักบ้านนา which means loving the countryside or rural area.

There are some Thai surnames that tell the origin of the owner. People with surnames ending with Thaisong ไทสง as in Mungthaisong มุ่งไทสง, Chathaisong ชาไทสง, Thorthaisong ธ.ไทสง or simply Thaisong ไทสง are from the eastern region of Thailand specifically from Buriram province. Regarding the origin of this surname, it is widely believed that the surname came from an ethnic Tai group’s name who used to refer to themselves as Song and were believed to have migrated from the land of the ancient kingdom called Sipsongjuthai. Last names ending with Rum ราม are from Buriram province such as Prakhonrum ประโคนรัม. Last names beginning with Pu ภู, which means mountain, are often from Kalasin province in the northeastern region of Thailand as in Pukham ภูคํา, Punonsing ภูประโยชน, Pukaengsri ภูแก่งศรี, and Puyadaw ภูยาดาว.1 Sritarnto ศรีธารโต is a surname that belongs to an indigenous group named Sakai in Tarnto district, Yala province, in the southern part of Thailand. This surname was given to the Sakai by the Princess Mother, King’s Bhumipol Adulayadej’s mother.

Surnames can be formed by combining ancestors’ first names as can be seen in the Kammu tribe surnames in Huai Kok village. The head of the village, Mr. Led Surlan, told me that his surname came from his great grandparents’ first names: Sur was his great

1 Last names ending with Rum and Pu are provided in personal communication with Udom Srinon, a lecturer from Kasetsart University.
grandfather’s name and *Lan* was his great grandmothers’ name. He explained that men’s names always come before women’s name when combined. He humorously added that his surname has always attracted public attention in government offices. This is because his surname did not sound Thai-like in fact it sounded like a farang\(^2\) surname. He would be asked how he had a farang surname. He would proudly answer the question of the origin of his surname. There are times during the talk where he jokingly said that the surname sounded ‘kind of modern’. The other villagers’ surnames also had the same combination as the head of the village. Many people simply combined the names of their great grandparents resulting in surnames like: Boonjerng (Boon+Jerng บุญเจิง), Boonruean (Boon+Ruean บุญเรือน), Yerpern (Yer+Pern เยอเปิน), and Lapaai (La+Paai ลาปาย). It was clarified that most of the surnames in this tradition are two syllable surnames since the people in the old days had only one syllable names, both men and women. Any name that has more than three syllables is not likely to fall in this category.

As for the northern Thai peoples’ last names, the last names consisted of two-four syllables but mostly two-three syllables such as Wianglor (เวียงลํา), Bua-nguaam (บัวงาม), Boonma (บุญมา), Makaew (มาแก้ว), Buntham (บุญธรรม), Buatoom (บัวตูม), Pimpaeng (ปิมแปง), Jaikum (ใจคุ้ม), Thongkumpun (ทองคุ้มพัน), Parami (ปะระมี), Intapanya (อินตันันญา), or Junphad (จันทรผัด). The languages used are Thai and a mixture of Thai, Pali and Sanskrit. Although the surnames are a mixture of Pali and Sanskrit, the words used are usually short. Another characteristic is that the sound [t] in *Intapanya* and *Naitip* is pronounced as an voiceless aspirated [tʰ]. There may be other traits to the patterns of names in northern Thai last names but it is not within the scope of this thesis, it deserves an independent study.

### 4.1.3 First names

The Thais in general encountered name change as a result of the promotion of state preference or ratthaniyom in the 1930s. The state preference prescribed that the Thai people change their first names into proper Thai names. By proper Thai names it was meant to have names gender appropriate, females with female names and male with male names. This is done by assigning the meaning of names to each gender: the female names

\(^2\) Thais refer to all foreigners especially the western people as farang, a borrowed term from Persian from the term “ferangi” and nativised as farang.
must have feminine associated qualities such as beauty, ornaments, jewelry and flowers whereas the male names must imply strength, power or weaponry. This troubled people due to their names not being gendered prior to this policy; for example, a man named Prayudsri had to have his first name shortened to only Prayud according to this policy, as the word sri implied a feminine quality. In the same manner Sirm and Sirmsri are a male and a female name respectively. However, this naming process is not related to the polite ending as mentioned elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Female names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>Malee (flower), Busaba (flower), Kulab (rose), Mali (Jasmine), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>Soi (necklace), Waen (ring), Pinkaew (gemstone hairpiece), Manee (gemstone), Suwanna (gold), Tubtim (ruby), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Ngarmta (pleasing to the eye), Panwaad (a drawn beauty), Anong (lady), Kanya (lady), Sukanya (beautiful lady), Sopha (beauty), Saitharn (brook), Pennapa (Sky on a full moon night), Somying (lady like quality), etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 1 Female names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Male names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power/Strength</td>
<td>Umnaj (power), Saksit (sacred), Somsak, Seksan (power to create), Wiset (special power), Srisuk (good power), Yos (rank, title), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaponry</td>
<td>Arwut (weapon), Sorinchai (arrow of victory), Sornram (lord Rama’s arrow), etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 2 Male names

In addition to the change of first names as a result of the state preference there is an interesting study on the development and pattern of Thai naming practices. The study divided the timeline into five main eras: Sukhothai kingdom, Ayutthaya and Thonburi kingdoms, Rattanakosin kingdom in Absolutism era, Rattanakosin Kingdom in early democracy era and Rattanakosin today (Siriwattananawin, 2001). The study revealed that the names and their meanings in each era reflected political situation and the stability of each era.
The basic elements considered in the naming of the people in all the eras are number of syllables used, languages used and meaning. To begin with the Sukhothai era, almost all the names in this era consisted of one syllable. The language used was solely Thai and the meaning reflected the idea of settling down since Sukhothai was newly established therefore the focus was on strengthening the community. Thus, the meaning of names reflected kinship, security and stability.

Second, the Ayutthaya and Thonburi names consisted of one-two syllables. The languages used were mostly Thai followed by Pali and Sanskrit and a mixture of the three languages – Pali, Sanskrit and Thai. The meanings of the names were of daily life objects and common verbs. The Ayutthaya era, according to history, was a powerful and stable kingdom. Therefore, the names may likely reflect the ease of the people in looking for objects around them for naming purposes.

Third, the first phase of Rattanakosin era or the Absolutism era, the names consisted of one-two syllables and the languages used were mainly Thai, followed by Pali and Sanskrit, and a mixture of the three languages Pali, Sanskrit and Khmer (Cambodian). The meaning of names reflected common beliefs and lifestyles. The second phase of the Rattanakosin era or early democracy period, (this is worth noting because this era is the era when anti-Chinese measures and the 12 state preferences were launched) had names that consisted of one-two syllables and the language used mainly was Thai but the use of the language in naming decreased whereas an increase was seen in the use of Pali and Sanskrit names. There was no report of Khmer usage. My interpretation is that this may have been the result of the measures in getting rid of the foreign identity in the Thai language whereas Pali and Sanskrit were used since the latter two were used in Buddhism texts and Thailand considered itself a Buddhist country. The meanings of the names were mainly about power, victory and war and there was a significant increase in those meanings. The study also noted the appearance of names with meanings like knowledge, intelligence and education.

The names in the final phase of the Rattanakosin era, consisted of two or more syllables. Pali and Sanskrit are highly used languages in naming followed by Thai, and a mixture of Pali, Sanskrit and Thai. Apart from these naming practices, unique names have also
appeared with more syllables therefore longer names, and more of concrete names than abstract names. As far as uniqueness is concerned, I once encountered a student named Sanskrit. Country names have also appeared as people’s names such as Sabarat (United States), America, India and Jeen (China). In contrast Lao will not appear as Thai names due to the association of being less developed according to Thai-centric history. Anything that is labelled as ‘lao’ is considered ‘no taste or out of date’ as in ‘dressed so lao’.

Having a Thai name was associated with modernity especially in the regional area. The idea of modernity went with the attempt to promote Thai-ness and Thai language in education. The encouragement of Thai language usage went hand in hand with the discouragement of regional language. Living in the northern region, I witnessed the name change around me almost everyday. A lot of people had their first names changed just for the sake of being more Thai and modern. Typical northern Thai first names such as Giangkam (เกื้องคำ), Kamlah (กินละ), Gaew (แก้ว) and Junta (จันตา) were most likely to be changed. I overheard a name change conversation in a hair salon while observing language use. The client changed her northern Thai name from Sanglah (แสงหล้า), meaning the earth’s light, into a Thai name. When I asked her the reason for the change, the answer was simply the old name was ‘too muang’. Northern Thai people refer to themselves or anything related as muang, which implies a sense of being authentic and traditional, but when used in relation to Thai-ness the meaning shifts to too traditional, and, to the extreme, as backward. Thai-ness gained a sense of modernity. However, when Thai-ness is used in relation to farang, a Thai term denoting western people, or western ideas or concepts, the word Thai also has the meaning of “not modern”.

4.2 Economics influenced names

Economics influenced names are fewer than politics influenced names. The majority of the cases found during fieldwork are concerned with small-scale businesses. The majority of the name changes in these small businesses involve nicknames and in a few cases it is the change of first names. Names can be changed by the employees or can be given by the employers. However, name changes do occur at other levels of business such as at the call

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3 For further reading on Modernity and Traditional concepts in Thai society see "Modernity and Traditions in Thailand" by Michael R. Rhum, 1996.
centres as in Friedman’s observation (Friedman, 2006) and in Heller’s research in Canada (Heller, 2003).

4.2.1 Name change in businesses

Before getting into the names I would like to give an overview of the labour market in Chiangrai. Most of the workers in the small-scale service industries such as noodle shops, restaurants and small sized shops of all kinds are either ethnic hilltribe or Burmese. The workers usually have names that are difficult for Thai employers to pronounce. Therefore, in many cases employers have new Thai nicknames for their employees, such as Dao (ดาว), Fon (ฝน), Aom (อ้อม) etc. Some of these Thai nicknames are not known in their villages.

One owner of a small shop told me about one of her sales assistants who had dropped out of school and worked for her for a long time. The sales assistant identified herself as “Dao” but when her parents came to visit her and asked to see her by another name there was a slight confusion with the names from both parties.

There are also cases when workers from Myanmar are illegally employed and a change of Burmese names for Thai names reduces the effect of foreign sounding names and to be noticed by authorities. However, due to the government initiated program on migration control and the legalization of alien work force by registering alien workers on work permits, more Burmese sounding names can be heard in Chiang Rai.

In some cases Chinese and Burmese entrepreneurs running cross border businesses in Thailand have both Thai names and Chinese or Burmese names for business purposes. Their business cards would have both names printed.

This change of names exists at other, higher levels of business. This can be seen in Heller’s (2003) and Friedman’s (2006) works on call centres language use. Heller describes that most bilingual speakers of French and English in a Canadian call centre industry “…anglicized their names when speaking English on the phone and some even made up entirely new names for themselves” (Heller, 2003, p. 485). This is similar to what Friedman described in his 2006 best seller and business book of the year, *The world is flat: The globalised world in the twenty-first century*, that:
“Columbus accidentally ran into America but thought he had discovered part of India. I actually found India and thought many people whom I met were Americans. Some had actually taken American names, and others were doing great imitations of American accents at call centers and American business techniques at software labs.” [p.5].

“…The Indian call center operators adopt western names of their own choosing. The idea, of course, is to make their American or European customers feel more comfortable. Most of the young Indians I talked to about this were not offended but took it as an opportunity to have some fun. While a few just opt for Susan or Bob, Some really get creative [for example] Male Call center operator: “Merchant services, this is Jerry, may I help you? Woman operator in Bangalore speaking to an American: “My name is Ivy Timberwoods and I am calling you…”[p. 23] (Friedman, 2006, pp. 5, 23)

Friedman mentioned that behind the scenes all the call centre operators had to take an “accents neutralization class” (Friedman, 2006, p. 26) to “disguise their pronounced Indian accents” (ibid., p. 27). The accents neutralization class was also designed based on which part of the world or country, the call centre operators would be speaking with. He further stated that the young Indians, at the lower end of the middle class, who took up this job, found it amusing and responded to him that “If a little accent modification is the price they have to pay to jump up a rung of the ladder, then so be it – they say” (ibid., p.28).

4.3 Road, shop, and place names signs

The languages used in road name signs, shop name signs and place name signs in Chiang Rai clearly reflect the economic factor in the signs. Before going into the signs, a brief background of the situation in Chiang Rai should be discussed as it is significant for the overall understanding of road, shop and place name signs.

The event that marked the change in Chiang Rai road, shop and place name signs is the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Thailand and China on December 2, 2004. Prior to this, road, shop and place name signs were in two languages, namely Thai and English. Standard Thai occupied the first row as the national language while English took the second row as an international language. Chinese only appeared on signs whose owner was of Chinese descent, and it occupied the second row instead of English. Although the full scheme economic cooperation hasn’t begun to take effect as it is anticipated to be by 2010 (Saccardo, 2007), changes have already taken place in the name of preparation for the economic cooperation. This is mainly due to part of the agreement, which identifies the Mae Khong River development as one of the “priority areas for
immediate cooperation”, or the “Economic Quadrangle” and Chiang Rai, therefore, is inevitably the centre of the government’s concern.

4.3.1 Road name signs

The early changes felt by the local people and also widely seen were road name signs which have been installed. Prior to 2004, before this study had been conducted, road name signs only had Thai and English written on simple blue square signs. However, the locals had seen some new things emerging. Being a local myself I had noticed a few road name signs very elegantly made with four mythical creatures, the four elephant-head nagas, lined up on a twin pagoda temple structure. The signs were only on the roads of the city centres, such as on the road to the night bazaars. The signs were in red and gold and to me and to a lot of the locals, the colours featured were very Chinese-like although the mythical creatures and the twin pagoda were depicted to signify Chiang Rai province. The road name signs have started using three languages: Thai, English and Chinese. Thai occupies the top row, followed by English in the second and Chinese on the third row.

Prior to 2004, having Chinese in the road name signs in Chiang Rai was a new thing to the people. The topic was discussed widely, especially in the daily morning market and coffee and tea stalls in the market called sapakafae. A completely new sense was created, from a

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4 One of the signs was noticed by Aksornsri Panichsart in her book on *Looking at China and Thailand* (Panichsart, 2006, p. 173). The road named Prasopsook is the road at the night bazaar area which is a tourism industry related area.

5 Sapakafae (sapa is a Thai word for committee while Kafae means coffee) is a coffee and tea stall more like a local café but it is in the market where people usually come for breakfast and talk about issues that go on in town and the country for a brief period and then leave but the sapakafae gets particularly interesting on weekends. This is due to the people being able to stay longer. The locals go to the morning market for
history of discouraging language by the government to a language encouraged by the
government. The use of Chinese in the signs created a sense of economic development
and the significance of Chinese language in the businesses of the locals.

Two years later, in 2006, which is also two years after the signing of the FTA, when I
returned to my home town for field work, the change was even more striking. The signs
were also installed outside of the city centres. There were road name signs on most of the
roads and streets in the city area and even more interesting was that they appeared in the
suburbs surrounding the city and even on the major tourism routes, for example the road
to Maesai district. This Maesai route is the route to the border area of Thailand and
Myanmar. I take the same route to my workplace and my fieldwork villages, and the
change was clearly seen. Signs had been put up at almost every street. Chinese had entered
into the domain where English had long dominated. This is only seen in Chiang Rai and
not seen in other cities in the northern region, not even Chiang Mai, which is the major
city of the northern region, or Pitsanulok. Pitsanulok was a province that promoted itself
as Siyaek indo jeen (Indo-china intersection)⁶.

On a trip to the residence of one of my informant, I happened to take a wrong turn into a
road called San Khong Luang, and on my way out at the other end of the road, I noticed a
difference in the way the first Chinese character was used in the signs at the two ends of
the road. Two different characters were used on the same name of the road. Out of
curiosity, I had the road name signs in that community photographed and expanded the
area out of the city into the suburbs. Fifty eight photographs of road name signs were
randomly taken. Out of 58 signs, only three signs were considered good and acceptable by
five Chinese informants who included Chinese language teachers, native speakers of
Chinese from mainland China and Chinese speakers living in Chiang Rai. The rest, 55
signs, were considered as problematic and unacceptable in part or in whole and should be
rewritten. The improper language use in signs was due to a lack of linguistic rules and
guidelines. This can be clearly seen in the language use in signs and can be grouped into

breakfast and other goods. The market usually opens at 4am and runs through the whole day. The language
used during the talk is northern Thai.

⁶ Due to the province's geographical area being in the lower northern region and nearer to Bangkok, the
province and the government had initiated an economic policy for the province to be an economic hub in
the northern region and also the economic hub of the Indo-Chinese region. Therefore, the Pitsanulok
province named itself as siyaek indo jeen. This idea was prior to the FTA signed with China.
two main categories: pronunciation and meaning, and translation and transliteration problems.

Signs in the first category, pronunciation and meaning, had two main errors: missing characters and unacceptable characters. At least one word in the road name was left out either due to a technical error while making the signs or, in many cases, the mispronunciation of the Thai name. The word pa was left out in the road name Banpapragarn (บรรพปราการ) in Chinese but not in English.

![Picture 4.2] Missing Chinese character for “pa” between the first and second character.

In one case two signs of the same road, ratchayotha (ราชโยธา), (see Pictures 4.3 and 4.4 below) were pronounced differently in Thai as can be seen in the English versions as Ratyotha and Rajyotha whereas the Chinese versions were pronounced and written as ratyotha. It can be assumed that the two signs, especially the English versions, were written by two different people and both did not conform to the transliteration rules provided by the Royal Institute.

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7 The difference in pronunciation was pointed out to me by a Thai language lecturer. The Banpaprakarn case was not as clear as the Ratyotha case.
Secondly, a large number of Chinese characters used in the signs were not the closest or the best character for Thai pronunciation. Informants have made suggestions that if the problematic characters were changed to certain suggested characters, the names would “feel and sound right”. Moreover, there was a lack of consistency in the use of Chinese characters. A Thai word “sun” was represented by four different Chinese characters as illustrated in the road names in Table 4.3. Informants suggest that one character should be used consistently as in this case they have the same meaning “the edge of” and pronunciation.

The second problem seen in the signs was confusion between the concept of translation and transliteration. There were two particular types of error: Type I and Type II. Type I error was a number of road names were translated wrongly. This type of error is illustrated in the following scenario which I call ‘taxi driver problem’. If a Chinese person asks a Chiang Rai taxi driver to go to Doi Thong road and instead of saying the name Doi Thong Road he/she says what is written on the road sign “Jin Shan Lu”, then the taxi driver would draw a blank face and not know which road it is, as he will only know that it is called “Doi Thong Road” and not “Jin Shan Lu”. Road names must not be translated. I strongly urge Chiang Rai Municipal Office to rethink and correct this linguistic problem. Examples are provided in Table 4.4. The second type of error, Type II error, was a combination of both translation and transliteration errors, with word order arranged in accordance to Chinese word order. Examples are provided in Table 4.5.

Based on the mistakes and errors of road names in Chinese, the informants whom I have consulted, suggested that some of the sounds used reflected different dialects of Chinese spoken in Chiang Rai. One informant mentioned Tae Chiew dialect was used.
Interestingly, the varieties and differences found in the transliteration of road names suggested that there were many Chinese speakers involved in the translation and transliteration process. For example, one informant mentioned that two forms of Chinese had been used: the traditional form and the abbreviated form. This would definitely cause future confusion.

There were mixed feelings about the road signs in Chinese among the people. For those who cannot read Chinese, they don’t see the difference. For those who can read Chinese sometimes they did not pay attention to what was written on the signs and were surprised to see the mistakes when I pointed them out. One of the informants, a Chinese language teacher, and a local, expressed that “as a Chiang Rai person I feel so embarrassed. I have seen a few funny ones like the 18 June Street, but this is more than funny. This is really embarrassing. What would my students think when they see these mistakes? The municipal office should do something”. This is where the question lies, will the local government invest in another cosmetic project of signs or consider setting up a working team on language guides as there will be more signs to come in the future. Rules and guidelines in the transliteration are needed and the municipality will have to work on it since the Royal Institute has no rules and guidelines for Chinese as yet.

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8 The two forms became a concern in Chinese Curriculum planning at the Chinese language curriculum planning committee in Chiang Rai.

9 The Royal Institute has rules and guidelines for the transcription for nine languages namely English, Japanese, French, Melayu, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Italian but not Chinese as yet (www.royin.go.th).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant one</th>
<th>Variant two</th>
<th>Variant 3</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Sign 1](image1) | ![Sign 2](image2) | ![Sign 3](image3) | - Three different Chinese characters for one Thai word in one road name.  
  o In the 1st sign, it is the second character, while in the 2nd and 3rd it is the first character.  
  o The mistake in the first sign is a combination of translation and transliteration. |
<p>| <img src="image4" alt="Sign 4" /> | <img src="image5" alt="Sign 5" /> | <img src="image6" alt="Sign 6" /> | - Three different Chinese characters for Thai word “san” in one road name. |
| <img src="image7" alt="Sign 7" /> | <img src="image8" alt="Sign 8" /> | <img src="image9" alt="Sign 9" /> | - Two different Chinese characters for Thai word “san” in one road name. |
| This road does not have this character variant. | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st character</th>
<th>1st character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This road does not have this character variant.</td>
<td>This road does not have the three character variants but the fourth character emerged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 2 different characters for the word “san” in one road name
- There is no difference in the Chinese but this is the fourth Chinese character used for the word “san” in road name signs.

Table 4. 3 Four different Chinese character variants for one Thai word “san”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Road name signs</th>
<th>Thai name</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>As appeared in Chinese on signs</th>
<th>Chinese meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | ถนนเจ้าฟ้า      | ถนนเจ้าฟ้า | Chao Far Road  
Chao Far = prince | Huangzi lu | The prince’s road |
| 2    | ถนนแม่ฟ้าหลวง | ถนนแม่ฟ้าหลวง | Mae Far Luang Road  
Mae Far Luang = the Kings’ mother | Huang tai hou lu | The king’s mother’s road |
| 3    | ถนนดอยทอง      | ถนนดอยทอง | Doi Thong Road  
Doi = hill  
Thong = gold | Jin shan lu | The golden mountain road |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Thai Road Name</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>ซอยยุติธรรม</td>
<td>Soi Yutitham</td>
<td>Go jern lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soi = Lane</td>
<td>Yutitham = justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>ถนนโรงฆ่าสัตว์</td>
<td>Rongkhasat Road</td>
<td>Tú zai chang lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rong = hall, premises</td>
<td>Kha = slaughter, kill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sat = animal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>ถนนพหลโยธิน</td>
<td>Paholayothin Road</td>
<td>Yazhou er hao gong lu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Illustrates Type 1 error, translation, in road names.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Road name signs</th>
<th>Thai name</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | ![Image](162x232 to 286x419) | ถนนสันโค้งน้อย | San Khong Noi Road  
San means edge or rim  
Khong means corner  
Noi means little or small | Xiao Shan Khong Lu  
Xiao is a Chinese word for little or small. | Little Sun Khong road |
| 2    | ![Image](162x232 to 286x419) | ถนนสันตาลเหลือง | San Taan Leang Road  
San means edge or rim  
Taan means palm tree  
Leang means yellow | Huang San Taan Lu  
Huang is a Chinese word for yellow. | Yellow San Taan Road |

Table 4.5 Illustrates Type II error, translation and transliteration, in road names.
4.3.2 Shop and place signs

When going into the three districts; Maesai, Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong, languages used in signs become more complex as far as local and border economics are concerned. Let us first look into the types of signs and the complexity that the signs reveal.

Shop signs in Chiang Rai can be divided into two main categories according to languages used in the signs. The first group consists of signs that use standard Thai and northern Thai script. Northern Thai is considered a category here due to it being the regional language spoken in the area. The second group consisted of signs that used multiple languages namely standard Thai, English, Chinese and Burmese.

The first category signs, standard Thai and northern Thai, are usually found to be used for temple signs (see Picture 4.5) and school signs where standard Thai is the top row and northern Thai the lower row. There are also many cases where northern Thai words are misspelled. These often were corrected by Charin Jamjit, a northern Thai language expert, in his articles published in two local journals called Hirunnakorn and Chainarai, but it never resulted in a real change in the signs (Jamjit, 2005a). The reason was “nobody can read it, it doesn’t matter”\(^{10}\) (Jamjit, 2006, 30 January, interview). It is a matter of nostalgia. There are cases where the two languages are merged – standard Thai is written with the northern Thai or Lanna type of fonts where the lines and strokes of the particular fonts convey the

\(^{10}\) Charin Jamjit mentioned in his interview and also his article that writing errors also occurred in a northern Thai hand-writing contest for school students in a cultural fair. When this error was pointed out by him as one of the judges before the contest, the answer to his suggestion was that it was only a hand-writing contest. It wouldn’t make any difference and students only had to copy the original (personal communication, Jamjit, 2005, 2005b).
feelings of being northern Thai. However, doing so loses the particular writing structure of northern Thai and conforms to that of standard Thai. The northern Thai alphabet becomes an accessory and thus creates a certain effect of being a cultural commodity and product. Many shop signs in tourist areas and night bazaars begin to have shop names written in Thai but garnished with strokes and lines; also, a rounder alphabet to imitate the northern Thai script characteristics. Moreover, T-shirts with northern Thai or Lanna script and alphabet lists have become a product, a souvenir. In addition, key chains and name plate businesses began to have northern Thai-like letters, making a business in one corner of the night bazaar.

The second category of sign is signs in multiple languages. Firstly, shop signs with Thai and Chinese characters can be divided into two main categories: originality, and the economics influenced signs. The first category sign originally had two languages due to the shop owners’ Chinese descent while the latter was a result of the Thai and Chinese economic cooperation. It is the latter one that is emphasized here.

Language and territory border together with business structures play important roles in the number of languages used in shop signs. In terms of contact areas and territorial borders, although Chiang Rai city centre has no direct business contacts with Myanmar or Laos, the three districts Maesai, Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong do. Of the three districts Maesai has the most vibrant border trade economy with import and export businesses including domestic micro, small and medium scale businesses followed by Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong respectively (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2005a; Department of Foreign Trade, 2006; Nyunt, 2006). All trade conducted with China in Maesai has to go through Myanmar while Chiang Saen trade with China is direct and via the Mae Khong River. Chiang Khong is geographically not suitable for shipping due to the River rapids, therefore, most businesses in Chiang Khong are smaller in scale than the other two districts and are concerned with the tourism industry and micro scale businesses between the Laotians and Thais. Having set the scene, let us move into signs in multiple languages.

Shop signs in the city area consist of two main languages one being the standard Thai and the other being Chinese, especially with owners of Chinese origin. Other than this they are either in Thai per se or both Thai and English. The exception is with Kasemrad Sriburin Hospital, a private hospital in the city, where most of the signs in the hospitals are in Thai,
English, Chinese and, interestingly, Burmese and Laotian. Burmese and Laotian have no role in the city except in this hospital (see Pictures 4.6 and 4.7). Use of these languages is due to the hospital’s business policy of serving the patient-customer. Chinese, Burmese and Laotian mean business. Moreover, the hospital does have a clinic in Maesai district, which is the border district of Thailand and Myanmar, and the clinic provides brochures and pamphlets in Burmese and sometimes refers their patients to the hospital in the city.

From the city as we move out to the three districts in the border areas, language use patterns in the signs change. In Maesai, most shops signs have two-four languages namely Thai, English, Chinese and Burmese respectively. The signs appear on doctors’ clinics, clothing stores, musical instrument stores, hotels, optometrists and the customs check point (See Pictures 4.8-4.17). Moreover, there are temporary signs in Burmese in front of the stores and shops in the market areas that read “Do not park here”, or “Do not block the entrance.” (See Pictures 4.8 and 4.9). These signs are meant for Burmese vendors with tricycles. In one case, a sign in Burmese written on cardboard, was put up to advertise an international phone service, since the Burmese phone signal coverage can be received across the border on the Thai side, and it appears to be cheaper than calling from an international landline phone service in Thailand (See Pictures 4.10 and 4.11). The sign was aimed at the Burmese workers working in Thailand who needed to call families in Myanmar. Moreover, Burmese signs are also found in Tesco Lotus, a shopping Mall, for example in the food court, coffee kiosk and customer service information desk. This is not seen anywhere in the city centre. For first time Thai tourists to this border district, the shop signs in Burmese startle visitors. This is not only for Thai tourists but also for the
people from Chiang Rai city as well, as this was not the case a decade back. Burmese has a role as the language of business in Maesai while it has no role in the city centre. However, the language in the signs of the other two districts seems to present a different picture.

Shop signs in Chiang Saen district can be seen having three languages namely Thai, English and Chinese. The business sectors will have signs with three languages. Interestingly, the signs do not have Laotian although the district is across the River from Laos. This may be due to the similarity in the writing system and a little guesswork can be applied. The only place where Laotian appeared in signs was in a government-owned district hospital. The hospital also had signs in Thai and English but not in Chinese. This may be due to only Thai and English being acknowledged in official contexts. In this case, Laos is not tied to business but in fact to a technical issue. The signs in Laotian were hand-written and found only in hospital restrooms and delivery rooms requesting patients to discard waste products in the bins provided to avoid obstructions of pipelines.

Shop signs in Chiang Khong have three main languages: Thai, English and Chinese, which is rare. It is worth noting that shop signs with Thai and Chinese, usually have a Chinese ethnic origin, whereas in new tourism businesses such as trekking tours and guest houses, signs do not have Chinese on them. Chiang Khong district hospital has signs in Laotian and Burmese, used in the same context as Chiang Saen hospital, for technical purposes. In addition, Laotian appears on the sign of the Customs and Immigration check point office at the Mae Khong River, and, in one dental clinic saying “pua kiew” which literally means “fixing teeth”.
Picture 4.8 “Do not block the entrance” in Thai and Burmese.

Picture 4.9 “Do not park here” in Burmese.

Picture 4.10 Advertising Burmese mobile phone service.

Picture 4.11 Mobile phone service. Come in and ask inside.

Picture 4.12 Burmese sign with Thai and English (only “al” is visible) at the optometrist.

Picture 4.13 Sign of a gold shop.
4.3.3 Shop sign tax

Shop signs are taxed on a language criterion. Language and symbols used in the signs are to be considered in accordance to the 1991 Sign Tax Acts. Two Sign Tax Acts, one issued in 1967 and another in 1991, are compared as follows (Office of the Official Information Commission, 2007):
According to the Acts, signs were to be in “Aksorn Thai” or Thai letters which inevitably is standard Thai. What about northern Thai? I made inquiries about northern Thai letters to the Head of the Chiang Rai local tax office, Bongkote Janpongstri, via phone calls and email exchanges, about how northern Thai letters would be taxed according to this criterion if I were to open a shop of my own and have a shop sign put up in northern Thai letters. The answer was it should be in standard Thai letters, and, as the present Act does not state anything about regional languages, thus, signs might have to be taxed as a foreign language. In later email exchanges, the answer was as northern Thai is one of the regional languages, and any regional Thai language should be considered a Thai language. However, this answer still did not address two things of concern: the northern Thai letters as opposed to the standard Thai letters and the position or row of northern Thai letters. I questioned about the names of temples and schools in northern Thai letters. The reason given for why those signs were not taxed was that they were official and religion related, but that shop signs would be a different case. I do agree with it being a different case and in fact consider that northern Thai letters should be exempted from sign tax. I was told that since this is a new case, and it will need a legal interpretation of this Sign Act. I do agree with the need for a legal interpretation of the Sign Act and also propose the reinterpretation and amendment of the Sign Act, but only with the involvement of regional people, linguists, academics concerned such as historians and sociologists and outsiders with neutral perspectives.
The first Sign Act was enforced in 1967 which was the era that regional and ethnic studies of any sort was still a sort of forbidden topic due to nationalism ideology. The language criteria in the first Sign Act enforced in 1967 reflected the Thai-ness ideology behind it. The criteria still exist in the second Sign Act in 1991. Although it was 40 years after the first Sign Act had been passed, and there had been a number of amendments, none of the amendments concerned languages (See ministerial orders under Kot Krasueng (กฏกระทรวง) in Office of the Council of State at www.krisadika.org). Therefore, an amendment to the Sign Act should require a body of people with fresh perspectives to this delicate issue.

4.4 Auspicious names

Apart from political and economic discourse, Thai names do have certain values and meanings attached to them. Thai people believe in auspicious and inauspicious names. Therefore, Thai names nowadays are often chosen by people who have knowledge of languages, especially Pali and Sanskrit, and astrology such as monks and the learned persons whom Thais would consult for naming. When names have been given or letters and vowels in a name have been given, people give money or things prepared to monks or the learned persons as a token of appreciation. The amount varies and is dependent on the will of the persons requesting names. A number of people have taken this naming practice into business. Some have their services available on websites and some without any fees.

This naming practice, based on Indian astrology, is called Phoomtaksa a Sanskrit term meaning the positions of the eight planets. The Phoomtaksa is a complex naming practice that classifies Thai consonants into eight main categories with specific meanings attached to each sets of letters. Birthdays and dates including time of birth are the main factors in determining which letters are to be used in names. Not all letters and vowels can be used in names as some of the letters can bring bad luck to the owner of those names. See details of auspicious naming practice in Appendix C.

Personal names in Thailand can be changed. It is believed that if hardship falls on a person, one of the reasons may be that the name ‘is not good’ for that person, and one can change his/her name for a better life and luck. Apart from personal names, auspicious names also apply to naming of shops and stores. To some, the letters and vowels are given
by monks or learned people. However, many people, choose their own names and give them to monks for blessings.

4.5 Conclusion
Names reflect political, economic and cultural influences. Politics or state influenced names are seen in the change of first names and last names, institution names, and the country’s name from Siam to Thailand. The change of names was for hegemony and assimilation purposes. In the case of economics influenced names, name changes in Chiang Rai only occur in small scale businesses. The influence of economics and the signing of FTA with China has changed the face of language used in road name signs in Chiang Rai. Politics may be seen as the old force or constraint in creating the change of names while economics may be seen as the new power that is creating the change. Auspicious names are also considered when changing names and this seems to be showing that perceptions of auspiciousness are attached to the letters and vowels that make up personal names.
CHAPTER 5

LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN THAILAND AND CHIANG RAI

5.0 Introduction

This chapter describes language families in Thailand, in northern Thailand, and in Chiang Rai and discussions on concepts that arise from the study of language families. The discussions consist of: discrepancies arising from *The Ethnologue* and the *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand*, linguistic and indigenous concepts of language boundaries; local knowledge and the concept of language, and language hierarchy, negotiation of powers and language layers. To set my point clear from the start, this chapter, specifically the parts that draw information and data from *Ethnologue* does in part aimed at critiquing the *Ethnologue* material rather than using it as a definitive source1.

5.1 Language Families in Thailand

Apart from standard Thai, *The Ethnologue* (2004a) lists 74 living languages in Thailand while a research report titled *Paenthi paasa khong klum chartipun tang tang nai prathet Thai* or *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand* (Premsrirat et al., 2004) lists slightly more than 60 languages2. Despite the differences, the languages listed were similarly classified into five main language families of Southeast Asia (Bradley, 2007; Ethnologue, 2004a; Premsrirat et al., 2004; Wongthes, 2005):

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1 This chapter was written and analyzed before the information on the Ethnologue was updated. Even though the information was updated, the point does not lay in the updated figures but that the database relies on information from outer sources, and the sources differ in terms of criteria and underlying linguistic thoughts used in defining languages whereas the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand relied on one type of data collection.

2 In the *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand*, the difference is the exclusion of languages spoken in town and cities, and in market areas in Thailand.
The table above provides an overall picture of language families in Thailand; and there are two main points worth mentioning. Firstly, 93.5% of Thailand’s population speak only one language family whereas 5.02% of Thailand’s population speak the other four language families. This number coincides with the world trend in language loss as listed by UNESCO which states that “96% of the world's 6,000 languages are spoken by 4% of the world's population” (UNESCO, 2007). Secondly, apart from Thai and Chinese, only a few languages have an orthography such as northern Thai and Akha (romanised form of orthography). There are languages that share the same orthography known as aksorn thum or tua dbam such as northern Thai, Tai Lü and Yong; while Hmong, Mien and Akha share the roman script but use it with different writing systems according to the languages.

The following paragraphs provide details of the five language families.

5.1.1 Tai language family

This language family is also referred to as Tai-Kadai or Thai-Kadai. In the study of the Tai-Kadai language family, one faces a number of confusions, and one of which is the use of the three terms “Dai”, “Tai” and “Thai”. Different sources use different terms, such as French sources (Benedict, 1975; Briggs, 1949) prefer “Dai”, while other sources such as Matisoff (1986) and Thurgood (1994) opt for “Tai”, and Benedict (1942, 1975) and Bradley (2007) prefer “Thai”.

3 Ethnologue database uses Daic as a term for Tai or Thai language family. In this thesis Dai language family is referred to as Tai.

4 The total number listed here is according to the numbers and total numbers as given in The Ethnologue, but on total calculations, the total is 98.52%.

5 The name is also written with other variants as Aksorn Dham, Tua Dham, Aksorn Dhamma and Tua Dhamma.
The Tai language family is divided into three sub-groups: Northern Tai, Central Tai and South Western Tai. Northern Tai and Central Tai are found mainly in China. Apart from China central Tai languages are also found in northeastern Vietnam. South Western Tai languages are mainly found in Western Yunnan in China, Burma, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. In 2004, according to Ethnologue (2004a) and Premsrirat et al (2004), 93.5% of the Thai population are speakers of 24 languages that belongs to the South Western Tai sub-group. The number is an increase from Matisoff’s (1991) language survey. The survey reported 15 languages and dialects. The increase in the number of languages may be due to the stability and security of ethnic groups. The higher the security and stability of the ethnic groups, the more they reveal their true identity (ibid.). The 24 languages are found scattered all over Thailand (Ethnologue, 2004a; Premsrirat et al., 2004) with some being regional languages and some as minority languages. The languages are placed in the Tai language family as in Figure 5.1.

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 99 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 5.1 Tai Language Family in Thailand adapted from Premsrirat et al (2004)
According to the *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand*, a Thai source (Premsrirat et al., 2004), the 24 languages group can be classified into three main categories: Thai/Tai group, Laotian group and Others. Firstly, the Thai/Tai group consists of ten languages which are: Central Thai, Thai Korat, Thai Loei, Thai Takbai, Southern Thai, Yuan/Kammuang/Northern Thai, Tai Khün, Tai Lü, Tai Ya, and Tai Yai/Shan. Secondly, the Laotian group, this group comprises of six languages spoken in the eastern region of Thailand: Lao Esarn, Lao Krang, Lao Lom, Lao Ngaew, Lao Ti, and Lao Wiang/ Lao Klang. Thirdly, the Others group, this group consists of eight languages: Nyaw, Phu Thai, Phuan, Saek, Song/Thai Dam, Kaloeng, Yoy and Yong.

### 5.1.1.1 Regional languages

There are four major regional languages in Thailand: northern Thai, central Thai, northeastern Thai and southern Thai. These languages are used as the language of wider communication within the region. Smalley (1994, p.67) mentions that each of these languages is used as the:

> “...language of wider communication by speakers of minority languages within the region. Each dominates those minority languages in the sense that minority language speakers tend to learn the regional language, but not vice versa. Each regional language is dominated by standard Thai”.

The following table is the percentage of the total population of Thailand in relation to speaking regional languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. 2 Percentage of regional languages spoken in Thailand (Premsrirat et al., 2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: This table is included on page 100 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2 Austroasiatic (AA) language family

From approximately 150 AA languages in Southeast Asia, 22 languages are found spoken in Thailand and all of them are reported to be in the Mon-Khmer family, a sub-branch of the AA language family. The percentage of speakers in this language family is 4.3% according to Premsrirat et al (2004) and 2% according to *Ethnologue* (2004a). The languages found in Thailand were: Lamet, Wa, Lawua, Palaung, Plang, Khu, Mul/Prai, Mlabri, Vietnamese, So (Thavoung), Chong, Kasong, Samre, Saoj, Northern Khmer, Kuy/Kuay/Gooy, Nyer, So, Bru, Mon, Nyargur and Kensiew/Mani/Sagai. (See AA language family in Figure 5.2)

Nine out of the 22 languages in the AA language family are considered enclave languages and are highly endangered due to the languages being small and spoken in remote areas or surrounded by other languages and cultures (Ethnologue, 2004a; Premsrirat et al., 2004; Smalley, 1994). This, coupled with the influences of the mass media, education and socio-economic factors results in the younger generation abandoning their language for a language of wider communication such as Thai and the regional languages. The nine endangered AA languages were Lawua, Mlabri, So (Thavoung), Chong, Kasong, Samre, Saoj, Nyargur, and Kensiew/Mani/Sagai.

5.1.3 Sino-Tibetan (ST) language family

Among the 200 or more ST languages in Southeast Asia, 15 languages (excluding Chinese and its dialects) were found spoken mostly in the northern and western regions of Thailand. According to Premsrirat et al (2004) the speakers of these languages amount to 1.1%. The 15 languages are Jingphaw, Burmese, Ugong, Lisu, Lahu, Mpi, Bisu, Akha, Sgaw, Pwo, Bwe, Pa-o, Kaya, Padaung and Kayo. Of these, three languages, Mpi, Bisu and Ugong, are considered as enclave languages and endangered. In the case of Lahu languages, four dialects were found: Lahu Na, Lahu Si, Lahu Shele and Lahu Yi (Premsrirat et al., 2004). (See the ST language family in Figure 5.3)

5.1.4 Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian (AN) language family

Austronesian, taken as a whole, consists of more than 1,300 languages (Matisoff, 1991, p. 201). The AN language family is mostly found spoken in the Archipelago of Southeast Asia and also in the southern region of Thailand. According to Premsrirat et al (2004)
speakers of this language family in Thailand amount to 0.3%. Only three languages were found spoken in Thailand: Melayu/Yawi, Urak Lawoy and Moken/Moklen. The latter two are considered enclave languages and endangered by Smalley (1996). (See the AN language family in Figure 5.4)

5.1.5 Hmong-Mien or Miao-Yao (MY) Language Family

Hmong-Mien consists of 30-40 languages as a whole (Matisoff, 1986). In Thailand, two main languages, Hmong (Black Hmong and White Hmong) and Mien, were found spoken in the northern region of Thailand with 0.3% of the population (Premsrirat et al 2004). (See Hmong-Mien language family in Figure 5.5)
NOTE:
This figure is included on page 103 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Figure 5.2 Austroasiatic language family in Thailand adapted from Premsrirat et al (2004)
Figure 5.3 Sino-Tibetan language family in Thailand adapted from Premsrirat et al (2004)

NOTE:
This figure is included on page 104 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.
NOTE:
These figures are included on page 105 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

**Figure 5.4** Austronesian language family adapted from Premsrirat et al. (2004)

**Figure 5.5** Hmong-Mien language family adapted from Premsrirat et al. (2004)
5.2 Language families and language distribution in northern Thailand and Chiang Rai

The northern region of Thailand is considered the most complex and diverse region in terms of its languages and cultures (Premsrirat et al., 2004; Smalley, 1994). This is due to the region being bordered by Myanmar, China and Laos where there has been constant migration from the past to the present. In Chiang Rai province the district offices hold a yearly Thai nationality ID card presentation to the new migrants or the Thais who have missed the census due to the rugged terrain, unreported birth and other circumstances.

The northern region is comprised of 16 provinces and is classified into two categories: the upper and lower northern regions. The majority of the population of the upper northern region uses northern Thai as the language of communication, whereas the lower northern region’s population uses central Thai or standard Thai as the language of communication (Premsrirat et al., 2004, p. 134). The lower northern region language will not be discussed here.

5.2.1 Language families in the upper northern region

Out of the five main language families in Thailand, four language families are found in the upper northern region: Tai, Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Mien (Premsrirat et al., 2004). Firstly, the Tai language family, this language family has 92% of speakers with 12 languages. There are approximately 60% of Kammuang speakers. Apart from Kammuang, 11 other South Western Tai languages are found spoken in the upper northern region, as a result of migration. These are Tai Lü, Tai Yong, Tai Yai, Tai Khün, Tai Ya, Song, Puan, Lao Esarn, Lao Lom, Thai Loei and central Thai. The number of speakers of these languages is comprised of a little under 2% each, with the exception of central Thai, comprising 27%. Secondly, the Austroasiatic language family is comprised of seven indigenous languages of the region: Lawua or Lawa, Lua (autonym as Mul/Prai and the Thai official name as Tin), Khmu, Mlabri, Plang, Palaung and Lamet. The number of

---

6 The upper northern region is comprised of eight provinces: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Sorn, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao, Phrae and Nan. The lower northern region consisted of eight provinces: Taak, Uttaradit, Kampaphet, Sukhothai, Piitt, Phitsanulok, Petchaboon and Uthaithani.

7 Northern Thai has other names such as Kammuang, Thai Yuan and Lanna but most widely used and used interchangeably are Northern Thai, Lanna and Kammuang.
speakers of each of these languages is estimated as 1%. Thirdly is the Sino-Tibetan language family, comprised of Lisu, Lahu, Akha, Mpi, Bisu, Jingphaw and the Karen languages group including Yunnanese Chinese. The number of speakers of each language is estimated as less than 2%. Finally, the Hmong-Mien language family comprised mainly of Hmong and Mien languages with the speakers of each language estimated at 2%. Below is a table summarizing the percentage of language speakers found in the upper northern region of Thailand adapted from Premsrirat et al (2004) and Ethnologue (2004a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This table is included on page 107 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.3** Percentage of language speakers in the upper northern region (based on Premsrirat, 2004)
5.2.2 Language families and language distribution in Chiang Rai

According to Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand (Premsrirat et al., 2004), Chiang Rai has the highest number of languages spoken in the northern region (See Table 5.4) . Its states there are 21 languages in three language families namely Tai, Austroasiatic and Sino-Tibetan. The 21 languages according to the families are:

Tai: Northern Thai (Kum Muang), Central Thai, Lao Isarn, Tai Lü, Yong, and Tai Khūn

AA: Khmu, Palaung, Taungtsu, Wa


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Region Provinces</th>
<th>Lang of wider Communication*</th>
<th>No. of other langs.</th>
<th>Other languages found in the provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Northern Region Provinces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Chiang Rai</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chiang Mai</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Naan</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Phayao</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Phrae</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Maehongsorn</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lampang</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lampoon</td>
<td>Kum Muang</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Northern Region Provinces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kampaengpet</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Pijit</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Taak</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nakornsawan</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Sukhothai</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Uttaradit</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Uthaithani</td>
<td>Central Thai/KM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 The distribution of languages in the Northern region provinces

* The data presented in the diagrams and bar charts in the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand and the data in the description of the source did not very well match. The description section (p. 134) stated that the language of wider communication in the lower northern provinces was central Thai whereas in the charts the language given was Kummuang which is a regional language. Therefore, for the lower northern provinces, both central Thai and Kum Muang were entered in this table as the language of wider communication.
However, interestingly, the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand missed out the Hmong-Mien language family in Chiang Rai. As a native of Chiang Rai I confirm that the Hmong-Mien ethnic group does exist in Chiang Rai and thus the language speakers do exist and they reside mainly in Mae Suai and Wiang Kaen districts. Therefore, I would like to conclude at this point that there are four language families in Chiang Rai: Tai, Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Mien.

The omission of this crucial information in the Ethnolinguistic Map of Thailand may have been a result of the scale of its study. Firstly, the study was conducted on a large scale and it was inevitable that some details may have gone unnoticed such as the Lamet language speakers of Huai Kok village in Chiang Rai, including the Hmong-Mien language speakers as mentioned above. Secondly, having been conducted on a large scale itself, the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand had to exclude languages used in town and market areas. Thirdly, identity issues may have been one of the factors as some villagers may not have wanted to be identified linguistically and culturally. For example in my fieldwork, a Wa speaker in Wiang Mok village did not want to be identified as a Wa speaker but, chose to be identified as a Yunnanese Chinese due to ethnic status.

5.3 Discrepancies in Ethnologue and Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand

The tables listed below are details of language families and percentage of language speakers in Thailand adapted from the Ethnologue (2004a) which is considered the most up to date and most referenced database, including Ethnolinguistic maps of Thailand (Premsrirat et al., 2004) which is the most up to date database from a Thai source. The data in the two sources are compared and their discrepancies are discussed.

Notes to reading Tables 5.5-5.9:
1. (E) = Ethnologue database
2. (P) = Premsrirat et al. database
3. Dialects are in Italics.
4. “Not listed” is used here to mean the language mentioned is not listed in that particular database.
5. “Not stated” is used to mean the language is listed but the numbers of speakers are not stated in the databases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language family</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnologue(E) 2004</td>
<td>S. Premririt (P) 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Tai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thai [tha]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Central Thai</td>
<td>20,182,571</td>
<td>20,650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Thai Korat</td>
<td>19,782,571</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Thai Korat</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Southern Thai [sou]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Thai Takbai</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Thai Malay</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Listed as AN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Northeastern Thai [tts]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Central Isarn (Kalerng*)</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Southern Isarn</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Korat</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thai song/Lao song [soa]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Lomi</td>
<td>32,307</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Isarn</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Khrang</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Lom</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Ngaew</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Ti</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lao Wang/Klang</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Northern Thai [nod]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Nan</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Bandu</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Tai Wang</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Khün [kkh]²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Lü [kkh]³</td>
<td>6,281</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Ya [ceu]</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not found in Thailand**</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shan/Tai Yai [shn] ⁴</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Niua [tdd]</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Dum [blt]⁵</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nyaw [nyw]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phu Thai [ph]</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phuan [phu]</td>
<td>156,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98,605</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sae [ske]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yong [yom] ⁶</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yoy [yoy]</td>
<td>12,561</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Tai language family and its speakers in Thailand
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language family</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Austroasiatic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palaungic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lamet [lbn]</td>
<td>100 (E) 100 (P)</td>
<td>1. one village in Wiang Pa Pao district, Chiang Rai (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Upper Lamet</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lower Lamet</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wa</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2. In Chiang Rai only (E) + (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eastern [lfl]¹</td>
<td>7,000 (E) 400 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lawua</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>3. Language not in (E) database and there is no language code given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Western [lpq]</td>
<td>5,000 (E) 2,000 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Palaung [pce]</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• La-oon*²</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blang/Plang [blr]</td>
<td>1,200 (E) 1,200 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Khmuic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Khmu [kjg]</td>
<td>31,403 (E) 12,000 (P)</td>
<td>4. 500 found in Cambodia, related to Chong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mal [mlf]</td>
<td>3,000 (Mul-Prai 4,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Phai, Pray 2 [prib]</td>
<td>6,281 (E) Not listed</td>
<td>5. 500 found in Cambodia, related to Samre, also spelled Sauch and saotch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pray 1 (lpr)</td>
<td>31,000 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pray 3 [lpry]</td>
<td>38,808 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mlabri [mra]</td>
<td>300 (E) 200 (P)</td>
<td>6. Ethnic pop. 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vietic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vietnamese</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>7. Nearly extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o So (thavoung, Aheu) [thm]</td>
<td>750 (E) 1,500 (P)</td>
<td>*in Thai source,Dara-ang and Da-ang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chong [cog]</td>
<td>500 (E) 2,000 - 4,000 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kasong [kog]²</td>
<td>Not listed in (E) Not found in Th. 50 - 1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Samre [sxm]²</td>
<td>Not listed in (E) Not found in Th. 50 - 1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Saoj [scq]²</td>
<td>Not listed in (E) Not found in Th. 50 - 1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Khmeric</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Northern Khmer [kxm] (Thai dialect)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Barirmau</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sabin</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sreiakot</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Katuic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Kuy [ktd]</td>
<td>1,117,588 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chang</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nheu</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kuay</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Nyer [nyl]</td>
<td>300,000 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So [ss]</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So Tong</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So Shuey</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So Phong</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So Makon</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Bru, Eastern [bru]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dong Saa Kaeu</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Saat</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tr</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kok</td>
<td>5,000 (E)</td>
<td>(Bru) 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Bru, Western [brv]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mon [mwa]</td>
<td>45,000 – 50,000 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Nyarkar [chn]</td>
<td>400,000 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aslian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Kensiew, sagai [kms]</td>
<td>20,000 (E) 4,000 – 6,000 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Tonga [mt]</td>
<td>107,630 (E) Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Kintaq [kms]</td>
<td>10,000 (E) 50-100 (P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Angkuic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mok [map]²</td>
<td>300 (E) 300 (P)</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 5.6 Austroasiatic language family and its speakers in Thailand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Languages found in Chiang Rai only.
²Languages not found in Ethnologue (E) database.
### Table 5. 7 Sino-Tibetan Language Family and its speakers in Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language family</th>
<th>Ethnologue (E) 2004</th>
<th>S. Premsrirat (P) 2004</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Sino-Tibetan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Hakka [hak]</td>
<td>58,800</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>1. Ethnic pop. 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mandarin [cmn]</td>
<td>5,880</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Cin Hau</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2. Languages not in (E) database and language code not given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mindang [edo]</td>
<td>1,081,920</td>
<td>1,058,400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Minnan [nan]</td>
<td>17,640</td>
<td>5,880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chaouchow 18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fujian 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hainanese 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Yue, cantonese [yue]</td>
<td>29,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Burmish Lolo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ugong [ugo]</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kok Chiang</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>3. Some in Chiang Rai, a language of Laos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Suphanthuri</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Karen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Pwo northern [pww]</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Muang</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Omkai</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mae tariang</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Pwo western [kip]</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Katschanthuri</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ratluri</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Pwo Phrae [kit]</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Sgaw [ksw]</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Patuaba</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Palakhi</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Bwe [b]</td>
<td>743</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pa-o [bla]</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kaya eastern [ksy]</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Padaung [p]</td>
<td>98,642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Jinghaw [kac]</td>
<td>L. of Myanmar</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Burmese</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Southern Loloish</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Phunoid [pho]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Black Khoany</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- White Khoany</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Muang</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hsawbhom</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Khaoeklong</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Lisoid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Lisu [lis]</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lu ihi</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Lahoid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Lahu [llu]</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lahu Na (black)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lahu Yi (Red)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lahu Sheheb</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Lahu Shi (yellow) [ksd]</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Mpooid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Mpi [mpz]</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Bisoid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Bisu [bii]</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Akhoid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Akha [akh]</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o L. of Myanmar</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Ethnic pop. 500
2. Languages not in (E) database and language code not given
3. Some in Chiang Rai, a language of Laos
4. Ethnic pop. 1200

In compiling the above tables, the researcher confronted one major problem, that was the discrepancy in determining what a language and a dialect is between the two sources: the web-based language database, the *Ethnologue*, and the *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand* report.

The problem is with the names used in the two databases. In some cases names were language names and in other cases names belonged to cultural group names such as Lù and Yong. These discrepancies resulted in the two sources producing a different category of languages and dialects. To name a few, first in the case of the *Ethnologue* which listed Thai Malay and Thai Takbai (see Table 5.5) as dialects of southern Thai regional language whereas the Thai source listed Thai Malay as an Austronesian language (see Table 5.8).
Another example is that Ethnologue listed Kalerng as a dialect of northeastern Thai whereas the Thai source listed Kalerng as a different language (see Table 5.5). Furthermore, in the Thai source, the languages spoken in the northeastern region of Thailand are considered as a cluster of Laotian languages - Lao song, Lao Lom, Lao Ngaew and Lao Ti; Thai languages – Thai song (Lao Song), Thai Loei; and others with specific cultural names such as Nyaw, Phu Thai, Phuan and Saek whereas the Ethnologue did not recognize the division.

In addition, Yong and Lü languages (see Table 5.5) are listed as two different languages in both the sources, but according to my interview of a Yong person in a Yong village in Maesai District, they are the Lü cultural group who migrated from Xixuangbanna in China into the Yong city of Myanmar, and they still call themselves the Lü of Yong city and call their language Lü. The elders in the community teach Lü to their children. Books and texts including language learning CDs are imported from Xixuangbanna Dai prefecture, Yunnan, China, or sometimes can be bought at Tachilek Province in Myanmar, a border town near Maesai District. How would this be explained by Ethnologue and the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand researchers? Moreover, Charin Jamjit, a local linguist, mentioned in an interview that the Lü living in Chiang Rai were:

“Lü who migrated from the Yong town of Keng Tung in Myanmar about one-two generations back. This Lü group was then called Yong. Therefore, the Yong ethnic group never existed. They were the Lü from Yong city who also migrated to Chiang Mai and Lampoon provinces and established a community called Muang Yong (Yong town) in Lampoon. There is a Yong town or Yong community in Lampoon also known as Lü Wiang Yong (Lü of Young town) and this was later shortened into Chao Yong (Yong people). Thus, in later articles and documents, the Lü people of this origin was then called Chao Wiang Yong (the Yong town people) or the Thai Yong. The sound “y” in the word Yong is indeed a nasalized sound, or a ñ.” (Jamjit, 2006, 30 January, interview)

Interestingly, Ethnologue (2004b) suggests that Yong phonology is similar to Lü. Apart from the Lü from Yong town, Charin Jamjit, also mentioned that there are Lü people from

9 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 5.1
other cities living in Chiang Rai province as well such as the Lü from Muang Luang (Luang town). A research probing into this issue is needed urgently.

Another interesting case worth mentioning is the case of northern Thai regional language. As an insider and a northern Thai regional language speaker I have not heard of the three dialects which are Nan, Bandu and Tai Wang as mentioned in the *Ethnologue* (see Table 5.5). Also these dialects are not mentioned in the Thai source. To me, the accent considered to be distinct would be the Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai or Lampang accents, with Chiang Mai being slower in delivery and considered more of a high form of speech and more polite than the Chiang Rai and Lampang accents which are faster and more abrupt. To my observation, the concept of slowness and politeness is not only present in speech but also in the dance movements, as in Fon-tien (candle dance) and Fon-lep (brass fingernail dance), which is also considered as the highest form of art. It is the ‘timing’ factor which is involved and perceived by the speakers. In fact the accent could be divided on a western and eastern basis with Chiang Mai, Lampoon as the western accent and dialect and Chiang Rai, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Payao as the eastern accent or dialect. This is particularly evident in the polite ending word ‘jao’. The Chiang Mai speakers would lengthen the vowel while the Chiang Rai and Lampang speakers would shorten the vowel. However, this kind of insider’s point of view may not be favored by linguists for example Holzknecht (cited in Mühlhäusler, 2006, p.31) whom in Mühlhäusler’s words “appears to have ignored indigenous opinion in her studies”. This issue is addressed in section 5.4 on linguistic and indigenous concepts of language boundary.

There are other discrepancies. Three new languages have been found in the Thai source which have not been encoded in the Ethnologue namely Kasong (see Table 5.6), Bwe and Padaung (see Table 5.7). Some languages listed in Ethnologue were not listed in the Thai source, for example the Angkuic sub-family language called Mok (the last entry in Table 5.6), listed as having only seven speakers left, was not listed in the Thai source. Moreover, the Bru languages were classified in the Ethnologue whereas in the Thai source they were

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10 One of the most often heard jokes on the differences in the delivery style is that of a tricycle rider, who was hired by two women at different times, one being a Chiang Mai speaker (representing the western accent – slow delivery of speech) and the other being a Chiang Rai speaker (representing the eastern accent – quick and abrupt delivery of speech). The rider picked up the women from the market and was directed by them to their houses. On one occasion, a Chiang Mai woman, directed him to turn left and with her slow speech delivery he had already passed the turn she wanted him to make. On another occasion, an other woman, a Chiang Rai woman, asked him to turn left and it was such sudden and abrupt speech delivery that he got so shocked he turned all of a sudden and knocked the tricycle into an electricity pole.
grouped as one language (see Table 5.6), which was the same case as the Karen languages (Table 5.7) in the Thai source.

The discrepancies raise concerns whether the languages and dialects have in fact died out (in the case of Mok), or they have been grouped in with other cultural groups, or were a result of differences in the two sources. There are two possible reasons for the discrepancies in the two sources. Firstly, the differences in criteria used by the two sources may have resulted in different numbers. It has been observed that the *Ethnologue* had no clear criteria on how the numbers should be obtained and under what conditions. The *Ethnologue* data were merely compilation of research, all with different criteria, while the *Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand’s* numbers came from a single study. Even though it was from a single study there could still be differences in the perception of the concepts of language between linguists and indigenous people, including the authorities completing the survey questionnaires sent. This leads to the second reason which is the difference in “boundary drawing” (Mühlhäusler, 2006, p. 30). The *Ethnologue* and the *Ethnolinguistic maps of Thailand* may have used similar language, “boundary drawing”, but have differences in many contexts. Language boundaries drawn by linguists and indigenous people may also be different as discussed in the next section.

### 5.4 Linguistic and indigenous concepts of language boundary

There are differences in the language boundary perceptions of linguists and indigenous people. I would like to begin with the linguists’ view of language followed by the views of indigenous people.

Mühlhäusler (2006, pp. 24-39) mentions that the linguists’ view of language boundary and knowledge of language may not be the best means to achieve linguistic diversity if it contradicts the metalinguistic notions practiced in indigenous cultures. His arguments are:

“(1) Linguistics was set up to address a number of issues – optimising grammatical description, exploring history and development of grammar, looking for structural communalities across languages, and so forth. Such aims have little or nothing to do with language maintenance and preservation.

(2) Linguists have resorted to abstractions and idealization that have forced them to ignore a large number of parameters relevant to the task of language maintenance. Linguists have assumed that the metalanguage of linguistics is relatively
unproblematic and neutral. This is ethnocentric and simplistic: our terminology of “language”, “dialect”, “native speaker”, “grammar”, “phoneme”, “sound segment”, or whatever is highly culture-specific and suited best to situations involving established official languages, not the ways of speaking found in traditional small communities.

(3) Linguists have confused the constructs of their discourses, terminologies and professional practices with realities out there. By imposing boundaries, names and standards, they have not been neutral recorders but language makers. Their observations have had a major effect on what they observed.

(4) Linguists have assumed that humans are essentially monolingual, speakers of a single mother tongue or at least that single languages can exist in isolation from other languages. They have ignored the complex fabric of vernaculars, local pidgins, regional lingua francas, dual-lingualism, bi- and multi-lingualism which may be essential in sustaining the independence of smaller vernaculars.”

My own description of northern Thai dialects and boundary of language in the preceding section would clearly reflect the view of linguists as described in Holzknecht’s words (cited in Mühlhäusler, 2006, pp. 31-32) as follows:

“It is important to mention here perceptions of differences between the dialects. The folk perceptions of dialectal difference do not always coincide with those of linguist. The linguistic differences perceived by the speakers were frequently those of intonation, stress, or speed of delivery. They were also sometimes based on a single item of vocabulary, for example the word “no”. The boundaries of the “in-group”, that is those who speak “the same way”, were frequently drawn for me by speakers according to boundaries of ancient political alliances rather than strictly linguistic criteria. Clearly minor linguistic differences are exaggerated in order to express “in-group” affiliation, and to exclude the “out-group” population. The “in-group” is as inclusive or exclusive as an individual or group wants it to be in any given context.”

The discrepancies in all the cases mentioned above and in the preceding section could be explained and summed up in Mühlhäusler’s (2006, p. 30) words as:

“The major problem with drawing boundaries is that the units identified by outsiders are typically not those recognized by indigenous users. … Not only is there a discrepancy between indigenous and expatriate views on language names and boundaries, the solutions proposed by outsiders often do not take into account that people communicate (an activity) rather than being owners of language (objects). … This would seem to confirm that the names and boundaries of languages reflect expatriate practices, not local knowledge.”

In the same manner, an insider like myself would state the corollary of the first part of the quote, “The major problem with drawing boundaries is that the units identified by insiders are typically not those recognized by non-indigenous users”. More from my point of view,
the slowness of speech delivery reflects the subtleties of the timing factor. Moreover, what Holzknecht (cited in Mühlhäusler, 2006, pp. 31-32) saw as, “…minor linguistic differences are exaggerated in order to express “in-group” affiliation and to exclude the “out-group” population”, is in fact a difference in the views of the concept of language between the linguist and the cultural group she was referring to. Although the “in-group” and “out-group” affiliation is a rough parameter, it is significant in identifying the boundary of language and culture in the indigenous or other cultures. When probing into the “in-group and out-group concept”, the issue appears to be based on significantly well-structured metalinguistic terms and thoughts in that particular language and culture, which apparently is different to what linguists expected to see. This is clearly seen in Stross’ (1974, pp. 213-239) study of the elicitation of speech event words of Tenejapa Tzeltal metalinguistic terms which listed 416 speech event words. He (Stross, 1974, p. 226) concluded that:

“In conclusion I should state that the Tenejapa metalinguistic inventory shows very clearly a propensity on the part of native speakers to view speech as a crude key to reading the thoughts and characters of others. Speech can sometimes conceal intent, but it is always the intent that the hearer is trying to find out about, except in the highly formalized genres of pokö k’op, and even here the individual performers and performances are evaluated on the basis of formal correctness, voice quality, speed, and so on. Speech is felt to be potentially very powerful, to the extent that a person could fall ill and die from the talk of someone else. Little wonder that the Tzeltal talk about it so much.”

In addition to Stross, a similar study has been conducted by Carbaugh (1989, pp. 93-120) but in this study, 50 cultural terms for talk in different cultural communities have been analyzed. His findings suggest that the cultural terms or labels are used to “identify speech at three distinctive levels, as acts, events, and styles,” and “are used to convey multiple levels of meanings”. Examples by Stross and Carbaugh of language in cultural communities illustrate significant metalinguistic concepts relevant to each language and culture.

In contrast to the indigenous and cultural views, interestingly, Holzknecht unintentionally implies in her quote regarding indigenous language that language is not seen as having a static or fixed boundary but that it is seen as having an adjustable boundary. Thus language boundary constantly changes and moves. What is worth probing into is how the indigenous people and cultures see or detect those changes. What are the parameters that mark the changes and movements in that adjustable boundary? More studies are needed.
5.5 Local knowledge and the concept of language

As Mühlhäusler (2006, pp. 25-39) states, there are “disappointingly little” studies on the views on language in Papua New Guinea. He believes the reasons may have been because:

“most outside observers did not bother to enquire or ( in the case of professional linguists) held the view that a science of linguistics should overcome animistic views and ignorance and that secondary or tertiary responses to language should not be confused with knowledge of language.”

In the same manner, very limited studies on indigenous views of language have been done in Thailand. The only available data at hand is an Akha hilltribe teaching material manuscript prepared by Mr. Kraisit Sittichodoke, known in Akha as Aatoo Pawchae, Director of Akha Life and Culture school in Chiang Rai and Director of the Association for Akha Education and Culture in Thailand (AFECT). The concept of language as mentioned in his manuscript seems to suggest many types of communication activities and the classification of types of communication activities found in Akha culture.

The following is an example of how language is classified in his manuscript of Akha Language or Akha Daw, or, as written in Akha romanised script as Aq Kaq Dawq. This language teaching material was written in standard Thai where the explanation is concerned and in roman script for Akha language. The concept of language encompasses the following communication activities or language (dawq):

Characteristics of Akha language and how to use the language (Sittichodoke, 2006, pp. 2-7):

1. Spoken language (Ngeb Dawq): is the most widely used language.

2. Silent language (Lavq Jawl dawq): this language is used to communicate with people with a speech disability and also in instances where silence is a must, especially when gathering food and hunting in the forest.

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11 The orthography used in this manuscript was developed by Mr Kraisit Sittichodoke known as the Akha Association way of writing. The “Q” in “AQ KAQ DAWQ” is a low tone marker.

12 Translation of the text is solely the researcher’s work.
3. Singing language (Cal dawq): this language is used on special occasion and is used to communicate knowledge, love, sadness and happiness through songs.

4. Chanting or ceremonial language (Tol dawq): used on special occasions as in religion related ceremonies for example auspicious ceremonies, funerals, healing patients, and praying.

5. Symbol language (Al bovq dawq): this language is used both in ceremonies and when in the forest, for example symbols called “ta laew” or, in Akha’s term “dal lehl”. The symbols are used to represent the speech and concept of ‘do not trespass or destroy’. In the case of going into the forest in a group when unfortunately someone is left behind, the symbols will be made and placed on pathways signifying the group’s decision which is called “Al paaq qehvq coeq”; in some cases marks will be carved on tree bark to communicate to the people.

6. Calling language (Tel Sal dawq): An example of this language is to make a loud calling sound called “Col oq” when hunting animals. It may involve instruments like bamboo flute, fingers, palms, leaves and etc.

This, however, bring attention to the issue that if all these characteristics are considered as means of meaning making or communication, then, how would these communications and meaning making, or registers in linguistics terms, be communicated in Akha language variety? Will there be any differences in each Akha variety? When asked, apart from the spoken language, what else can be used to distinguish the Akha varieties, Kraisit Sittichodoke stated in a personal communication that that the Cal Dawq or the singing language can also be used to distinguish differences in varieties.

13 Ta laew is a northern Thai term meaning a symbol made from wood, grass or rattan and placed at specific places. The term “ta laew” literally means falcon (laew) eyes (ta).

14 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 5.2
“[we] …have Burmese, [Chinese – mentioned elsewhere in the interview], Thai and Laotian accents. But this does not mean that Laotian is very different, it still is very similar but if songs are sung then it is really different. If they sing, from what I have heard the Laotian Akha, it sounded like women singing in the rituals. Akha has shamans. When there are sick or ill people, the songs are sung (chanted). Here in Thailand, we use the same singing/chanting style when we go to the village ground or known as Laan Sao Gord…” (Sittichodoke, 2006, 7 March, interview)

However, these social and cultural practices are diminishing (Daily News Newspaper, 2000; Trakullertsathien, 2005). Kraisit Sittichodoke cites a reason in a newspaper interview:

“...วัยหนุ่มสาวอาข่าเริ่มไม่อยากพูดกันด้วยภาษาอาข่าและมีความขัดแย้งกับพ่อแม่ในเรื่องของความเชื่อ เพราะไปโรงเรียนได้รับการสอนไม่ให้เชื่อฟังความคิดที่ไม่สามารถพิสูจน์ทางวิทยาศาสตร์ได้ เมื่อพ่อแม่จะทำการพิธีการแบบที่เคยปฏิบัติมาต้องการไม่ได้อะไร แต่เด็กๆจะไม่ยอม พอฝ่ายพ่อแม่รู้สึกเสียใจที่เป็นเช่นนี้อาจเป็นเพราะเด็กๆที่ไม่มีความรู้ความเข้าใจในวัฒนธรรมประเพณีของตนเองที่ไม่ได้รับการอธิบายที่ถูกต้อง หรือที่เด็กๆไม่รู้ว่าจะทำอย่างไร ถ้ามีพิธีการหรืออัธยาศัยที่เชื่อว่าเป็นปัจจุบันและมีความสำคัญ พ่อแม่มักจะรู้สึกเสียใจที่ไม่ได้รับการอธิบาย”

“…The young generation of Akha nowadays have refused to speak Akha language and they also run into conflict with their parents regarding the belief system. This is due to being taught in schools not to believe in the ceremonies that cannot be proven by scientific methods. When the parents wanted to do any ceremonies which have long been practiced, the kids would not allow that to happen and that disheartened their parents deeply. This may also be because our young generations do not know or do not understand the culture of their own tribe. They were not given or equipped with the explanation of the meaning and value of their culture and ceremonies. This may also be because the elders do not know how to explain or cannot explain the importance or the meaning of the ceremonies, and some simply just do not want to explain it.”

Kraisit Sittichodoke further stated in an interview (Trakullertsathien, 2005, p. 1) that:

“…They [youngsters] no longer speak the Akha language, they look down on their traditional costumes and they know nothing about Akha art, culture and traditions. They don’t know who they truly are. They ignore what happens in their native land…”

These diminishing cultural practices reflect the ecology of the Akha language and culture as the language becomes active through these social practices. When the ecology is disrupted language transmission weakens. What should be done?

15 Larn Sao Gord is a cultural space where cultural songs and dance are performed for the purpose of entertainment and it is the place where the young people, both male and female, get to meet, talk and spend time together.
16 See transliteration and three tiered quotes in Appendix A under 5.3
I would suggest that the two views, the “linguist” and “the indigenous view”, should collaborate. Many things have been done in order to preserve languages in Thailand, such as recording the languages, language counts and ethnolinguistic details have been mapped out. Also, the language ecology of Thailand has been studied by Smalley (1994) and showed a diverse linguistic group in Thailand – an ethnography of communications in Thailand. However, it should be noted here that the Ethnolinguistic Maps of Thailand bases itself more on the “linguist” view and less on the indigenous view of language. The report (Premsrirat et al., 2004) states that:

“This Lao Lom, Thai Loei and Law Krang group all had the same name but the language speakers felt that they were different for example the Chong of Chantaburi province and Chong of Traad Province. Linguistics research will reduce the confusion of names and will therefore shed light on it whether they belong to the same group or different group.”

This is mentioned here with two intentions: one is to agree with the fact that linguistic research should be done. Secondly, the linguistic research should be done but with an eye for the indigenous metalinguistics concepts of language as well.

Languages in Thailand have been studied following linguistic in the “linguist views” but none have tackled how the concept of language is viewed in different languages and cultural groups and very little has been done on the ecology that should assist language survival. An understanding of how language works (the concept of language) in a particular language and culture would be a parameter that will assist in determining the ecologies of language survival in Thailand. Studies probing into the ecological conditions that help in language survival in the northern part of Thailand should also be conducted.

Having said that, I would like to end this section with Mühlhäusler’s (2006, p. 36) words:

“…the question, ‘How can we preserve languages?’ should be reframed as, ‘How can we preserve the ecological conditions which make it possible for a diversity of ways of speaking to continue to exist?’”

17 See transliteration and three tiered quotes in Appendix A under 5.4
5.6 Language hierarchy, negotiation of power and language layers

Smalley (1994, pp. 67-69, 361-364) classified languages spoken in Thailand according to the social hierarchy observed in Thailand and proposed a language hierarchy and categories in Thailand as follows:

a. *World*/ *International languages*/ *External language*: English is the primary international language whereas other languages are considered as secondary languages.

b. *National language*: The national language is standard Thai and it is so because it is used as an “internal language of the country” and also as “the external language of the regions”.

c. *Regional languages*: There are four languages spoken in four different regions. The regional languages are the internal language for the regions and also the external language for the “lower-level linguistics” within the regions.
   i. Central Thai (Thai Klang)
   ii. Northeastern Thai (or also known as Lao in Thailand)
   iii. Southern Thai (Pak Tai)
   iv. Kammuang (Northern Thai/ Thai Yuan)

d. *Marginal regional languages*: The languages that fall in this category are languages spoken in the marginal regions of Thailand. It is the internal language for the marginal region and also the external language for other “lower-level linguistics” groups. The languages are:
   i. Phlow
   ii. Northern Khmer
   iii. Pattani Malay
   iv. Sgaw
   v. Tai Yai (Shan)

e. *Other categories*: The languages in this category are internal languages only.
   i. *Enclave languages*: The languages spoken in remote places scattered around the country in the mountainous areas surrounded by other languages and cultures. Speakers of enclave languages are multilingual. The populations of the speakers are small.
   ii. *Town and city languages*: The languages spoken in town or at the market places and in this category refers to Chinese and Vietnamese especially in the upper northeastern
region. Languages other than the two languages mentioned above, if used in town or market places, do fall in this category.

iii. Displaced Tai languages: The languages of the migrants whose mainland is not Thailand for example: Tai Lü, Yong, Phuan, Yoy, Sack and Song.

iv. Marginal languages: The languages spoken at the borders or margins of Thailand and other adjoining countries such as Cambodian (Khmer). The language is known as Kamen thin Thai or Khmer Thai variety.

I agree with Smalley’s language hierarchy to a certain extent as it reflects the social hierarchy in Thailand, which is the Thai-centric. However, the language hierarchy is static, a mere snapshot or description of what happened at a certain time. Interestingly, there are signs of change in the language situation by which Smalley’s language hierarchy can be disrupted. The disruption is due to power negotiations. Data collected from the fieldwork shows movements in the language hierarchy when consideration is made within the discourses of economics, ethics and politics. The language situation in Thailand should be explained in terms of power negotiations. As this explanation also addresses that the social hierarchy itself is a result of multiple negotiations of power. Therefore, it is not power alone that negotiates but power coupled with the prevailing discourses of politics, economics, ethics and history. There are two main categories of power negotiation: external and internal. The sections below discuss one external politics power negotiation and two internal power negotiations: economics power negotiation, and ethical and political power negotiation.

5.6.1 External politics power negotiation

Prior to the confrontations of western powers, Siam’s vassal states were given a high degree of freedom in terms of language and administration (Ongsakul, 2001; Wittayasakphan, 2006). It was the confrontations with the external powers which created the internal power or nationalistic ideology. Thainess, Thai-ization and the state of not being colonized had given the Thais a sense of pride and therefore framed the point of view (See Chapter 3 on Thai nationalism and the relationship with neighboring countries). With this point of view present, the social hierarchy in Thailand was thus formed. This is a reasonable explanation of the underlying forces of Smalley’s language hierarchy in Thailand, as Smalley (1994, p. 69) mentions that the hierarchy is “based on language learning patterns and aspirations, as adults tend to learn languages higher than their own
but not ones on their level or lower.” This applied to the learning of languages of the neighboring countries as well. Thais are less likely to study Laotian, Burmese or Cambodian. What Smalley mentioned in the above quote is clearly a result of political influenced social hierarchy of one nation one language at work and its effect on people’s perception.

5.6.2 Economic power negotiation

As for economic power negotiation, in Chiang Rai it can be clearly seen that Chinese has stepped up as a world language side by side with English. The school curriculum in Chiang Rai has Chinese as a compulsory language for students (See Chapter 2 under 2.4.2). A provincial committee has been set up especially to deal with the Chinese curriculum to be taught uniformly in Chiang Rai schools. Road signs have accommodated Chinese characters in addition to Thai and English. Another instance is Burmese, slowly and increasingly becoming the language of trade in the border area of Myanmar and Maesai district, Thailand. Furthermore, a Tai Lü group, categorized as a “displaced language” according to Smalley, has managed to establish a Tai Lü Cultural Centre, for the purpose of Tourism, with support from the district office and the provincial office of cultural affairs. I attended the Tai Lü Annual Cultural Fair and found out that it had gained ground in tourism. Tai Lü script was used as labels on cultural items and Tai Lü was spoken throughout the fair, on and off stage. The head of the Tai Lü Association of Maesai mentioned that the attempt to revive and teach the language to children and younger generations is of the utmost concern and will be worked out as soon as possible (See Chapter 11). Considering it in terms of ecology, the marginal languages such as Khamu, Lamet and Akha in Chiang Rai (See Huay Kok and Phamee villages in Chapters 10 and 12) although having its speakers across borders, have developed their own vocabulary which is based upon the standard Thai vocabulary or the northern Thai vocabulary depending on the contacts of each language group. These languages are slowly shifting from that of their “displaced” homeland.

5.6.3 Ethical and political power negotiation

There are cases where there are changes in social perception, as a result of ethical and political power negotiations. Changes in social perception can be seen in name change. Names and nicknames in regional languages were out of use as they were looked down
upon (See Chapter 4 for names) or else were taboo according to standard Thai or Bangkok Thai. Today, the change has been noticed. An online newspaper dated July 4th, 2007, reported a recent survey conducted by the Khon Kaen Provincial Office of Cultural Affairs, revealing that regional names and nicknames have been neglected and therefore are out of use. 54.13% of people surveyed had Thai names as nicknames and 45.87% had English nicknames. There is an encouragement from the Office of Cultural Affairs to use northeastern Thai nicknames, once considered vulgar to the Bangkokians like ‘buk hum noi’ which means a boy or a small boy (literally male penis small). However, the question is will it work and to what extent?, since the “functional link” (Mühlhäusler, 1998, p. 154) had long gone.

Another example of ethical and political power negotiation is in northern Thai where the language is loosing its “functional link” to standard Thai. This is due to Standard Thai is the language of instruction and also the language of internal communication. The ethnic groups in my fieldwork villages such as Phamee village and Wiang Mok village do not speak northern Thai in their daily lives when in contact with people outside their villages. They were raised in their respective native languages and attended schools with standard Thai as the language of instruction. Being a northern Thai speaker myself, I had to use standard Thai when communicating with the villagers. Two of the hilltribe student informants I interviewed mentioned that when they started high school in town where northern Thai is spoken, they were not able to communicate in the language. The only language for communication was standard Thai. They later learnt the language through mingling with fellow students at school but still at a very limited level. For some who attended boarding schools, where there were students from different hilltribe language backgrounds, standard Thai would be used as the language of communication, not northern Thai. Most of the interviewees felt more comfortable using standard Thai than northern Thai.

Making matters worse, the new generations of northern Thai people are now speaking northern Thai with standard Thai vocabulary with the northern Thai accent (See Chapter 7 for northern Thai language change). Northern Thai scripture is no more taught and only studied among the academic circle. Even the scripts in pub laan or pub sa\textsuperscript{18} (Dhamma

\textsuperscript{18} Pub Laan, literally book laan, is a book made from the bark of a tree called Laan while pub sa is made from the bark of Sa tree. Originally pub Laan was used for dhamma inscription and associated with temples while...
scrolls) in northern Thai temples have been transformed into standard Thai. Therefore, monks nowadays can rarely read northern Thai script. There is a tradition in northern Thai that one of the highest forms of merit making is to manually copy the Buddhist text or Jataka and donate it to the temple as to *sueb for pra puttasassana* – to lengthen the life of Buddhism. When the texts are copied manually, they are taken to the temple together with other food offerings to monks. Monks will have to read the text copied in the merit maker’s presence as an acceptance of the merit. This is still done, but rarely, since there are very few learned ones to copy the text or the monks who can read it. One elderly informant expressed his deep disappointment that it was what he had wanted to do most in life but there were no monks who could read the script. Upon hearing that, I initially felt disappointed but later on was even more concerned while interviewing a monk in a temple I found out that there are published dhamma texts and Jatakas booklets in the form of scrolls in both Thai and northern Thai script sold in shops for Buddhism related business. The point here is that the scrolls are sold in the shops. This means the sacred links between people, religion, language and script have been lost.

All these examples suggest that the “functional link” has indeed been diverted and lost. Northern Thai shifted once and is now shifting again. The “functional link” of northern Thai as a regional language is diminishing. This will affect the language ecology of northern Thailand sooner or later. As Mühlhäusler (1998, p. 154) points out that:

“…The diversity of languages is located in a complex ecology which comprises two main layers of language. Layer one consists of a very large number of small languages typically of an esoteric type and often structurally highly complex. Superimposed on this layer is a second not less complex layer of languages of intercultural communication enabling the speakers of small esoteric languages to communicate with other groups numbering one, two, or more. What is surprising is not only the large number of such esoteric languages but differences in their range of coverage, structural complexity, degree of institutionalization, and life span. …The layer of intergroup forms of communication thus protects the diversity of local languages. …An ecology is defined not just by its individual inhabitants and their physical support system but also by the functional links between these inhabitants. It is intergroup pidgins and other solutions that provides these functional links and keep the ecology balanced.” [My emphasis]

*pub sa* was used for secular texts such as novels and Jatakas. However, later the separated functions have merged and both *pub laan* and *pub sa* are associated with temple and traditional use.

19 The scrolls were sold both separately and sometimes in the form of a *chud sangkataan* or *sangkataan set* which means a gift set for making merit to be offered to monks. The set normally includes a yellow container (usually a bucket), medicine, rice, milk, cooking oil, juice, toothbrush, etc.
Although Mühlhäusler’s description was of pidgins, this can be applied to the situations of northern Thai and regional languages as well. The scenario is that if northern Thai is the protective layer then this layer is thinning. Fourteen “layer one” or small languages in Thailand have been reported as endangered (Khaosod Newspaper, 2007; Premsrirat et al., 2004).

Apart from the abovementioned power negotiations, there are two interesting power negotiations at the micro level which is the household level. Firstly, knowledge of a language changed the role of the household members. In Akha Phamee Village a son of one household aged not more than 13 years became the head of the household due to his knowledge in standard Thai. He was the only person who had gone to Thai school therefore all the contacts to be made with this household had to be via the boy. When the boy was not at home the members would not give information. “Look bor you”, a northern Thai phrase meaning my children are not home, was an expression often used (See Chapter 12 under 12.13). Secondly, the matrilineal/patrilineal power negotiation of language use in the household as seen in Wiang Mok village assists in language transmission (See Chapter 9 under 9.17 for details of discussion).

Power negotiations occur at all levels from the macro level to the micro level. It is not only the revision of the language hierarchy that we need but also a different set of approach and parameters to maintain or revive the languages. Language cannot be assigned to a static hierarchy especially when it is based on power, as power constantly negotiates. It is a dynamic state. Therefore, language in Thailand should be viewed as a result of power negotiation.

5.7 Conclusion

Thailand has five main language families comprised of approximately 60-74 languages. Approximately 94% of the population speak one language family, Tai, while 6% of the population speak the remaining four language families.

Chiang Rai has four main language families spoken in the province: Tai, Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan and Hmong-Mien. Chiang Rai has the highest numbers of languages spoken in the upper northern region of Thailand: 21. Eleven languages are Sino-Tibetan languages,
followed by Tai with six languages and Austroasiatic with four languages while the Hmong-Mien was not included but the speakers did exist.

The use of any language databases should be with caution and users should take into consideration the possibility of discrepancies with databases in terms of underlying perceptions of language boundary, and differences in view: “linguists view” and “indigenous view”. Some of the databases such as the *Ethnologue* rely on information from outer sources, and the sources differ in terms of criteria and underlying linguistic thoughts used in defining languages.
CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.0 Introduction

This section provides a brief conceptual understanding of the research methodology, time frame of study, study sites, interviews, participant observation, and discusses issue arising in the fieldwork in relation to the research methodology. The issues discuss are: defining myself; identity: “implicit condition of plurality”; and outsider/insider: varying degrees of an insider.

6.1 Research methodology: ethnography

This research required a method that would assist in extracting information from different sources, especially from participants speaking the minority languages to government sectors and education institutions concerned. The methodology used should allow varieties of data collection methods in order to get different sets of data for a better understanding of the language situation. Moreover, the methodology should allow for high flexibility to accommodate the changing nature of the research environment because of the unknown nature of the situation and what it might reveal at later stages. Given this, I have chosen ethnography as my primary research methodology. Thus, this chapter aims to provide the background knowledge and justification for the selection of ethnography.

I would first like to address the question of what is ethnography? There have been numerous efforts in describing what ethnography is (Brewer, 2000; Massey, 1998) due to heavy criticism on ethnography as not being a proper methodology but an adjunct to quantitative methodology and mere journalism writing. Ethnography was defined by Brewer (2000, p. 6) as:

“Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or “fields” by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally”.
The definition of ethnography stated above is clear in terms of its philosophical underpinnings, researchers’ participation, and data analysis and has implications for the duration of research.

Another well-defined and elaborated explanation of ethnography is a paper presented by Alexander Massey at the Ethnography and Education Conference, Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (OUDES) conference. Massey (1998) mentions that research with an ethnographic essence has to have at least seven core components: study of culture, multiple methods and diverse forms of data, engagement, researcher as instrument, multiple perspectives, cycles of hypothesis and theory building, and intention and outcome. The seven components are illustrated below with relevant ideas from other sources added in to clarify the points made.

### 6.1.1 Study of culture

An ethnographic style of research is distinguished by its principle that a person or a community should be studied and interpreted within their own socio-cultural context. All details are studied for their meaning and their importance to the society. Ethnographers are required to look at the setting or culture the way the insider sees it and not to judge using the researcher’s own perspectives. With regards to setting and socio-cultural contexts Brewer (2000, p. 11) mentions ethnographers need “…to understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given “field” or setting, and its approach, which involves close association with, and often participation in this setting”. In order to be able to understand the meanings and the settings researchers should not confine themselves to their own world but they should be open to new knowledge and thinking systems. The questions asked in this kind of research are usually of the ‘quest for meaning’ type embedded in simple questions. Deal (1985) provides a few examples of simple questions like:

“What does it mean to be the [sic] member of this group? What makes someone an insider or an outsider here? What’s going on here? How does this work? How do people do this? And hopes to be told by those people about ‘the way we do things around here’.”
6.1.2 Multiple methods and diverse forms of data

As it is generally known that cultures are structurally complex and have encapsulated different views to and of the world, in order to understand cultures, researchers will have to be open and accept cultures as they are without any prejudices, and explain them. To be able to explain cultures, a number of data gathering techniques will have to be used as there is no single method, which will explain the complex nature of culture. Researchers’ data will thus be both qualitative and quantitative with the major emphasis on qualitative information. Data may come from varieties of sources such as published or written documents, field notes, observation, recorded interviews and discussions, conversations (both intended and overheard) and include surveys and other experimental findings. When data collection has started it requires researchers’ time and energy. The field data collection phase is said to be complete only when researchers find no new information relevant to the questions asked (Massey, 1998).

6.1.3 Engagement

The core of ethnography is to study cultures or objects of study as they are. Many ethnographers believe that to observe cultures or study objects as they are in their situations is the best way of getting to perceive cultures profoundly (Denscombe, 1995; Massey, 1998; Woods, 1994). Researchers are required to situate themselves in the community long enough to gain insights that underpin actions, activities and knowledge. Staying in the community for a long term then creates the obvious characteristics of ethnographic research as having a long term engagement with culture or community.

Massey (1998) states that theoretically the concept of engagement requires two rudimentary elements: the researchers’ bond with participants and time contribution. Creating a bond between researchers and participants is a process that builds on the basis of familiarity and trust. He asserts that the more the participants trust the researchers the more accurate and overt the participants will be with their information. They will reveal more features of their lives. This bonding is very important to the research and the process of creating trust and a true bond consumes time.

To understand any culture, takes extreme effort and time since culture is a complex venue where numerous thoughts and accomplished experiences have been crystallized.
Therefore, researchers have to be well aware of time used to reveal the encapsulated experiences. When time is concerned, the question arises of how long an ethnographer should spend on a research. At this point a number of ethnographers unequivocally assert that it is not the duration of the researcher staying in the venue that counts but instead it is the understanding of the context that all researchers should focus on (Garfinkel, 1984; Jacobson, 1991; Madison, 2005; Spindler & Spindler, 1992; Walford, 1991). If researchers are satisfied with the quality of their data, or, in other words, data shows some kind of repeated pattern and nothing new can be detected then it is said the work is completed.

6.1.4 Researcher as instrument

While conducting research, researchers involve themselves in the venue and culture of their research and inform the world of their interpretation of data. Researchers’ subjectivity is undeniable (Massey, 1998). Massey touches on the element of subjectivity saying that “experiencing the world subjectively is a way of life, and not one that we can choose, and is therefore an inevitable feature of the research act”. However, it may be argued that this could lead to not being “open” to the new knowledge. Interestingly, Massey (1998) and Dey (1993) argue that ethnographers should maintain equilibrium between “suspending preconceptions” and employing their immediate comprehension of the knowledge in situ. Dey (ibid) makes a reasonable and lucid argument that being open minded is not the same as being empty headed, “…to analyse data, we need to use accumulated knowledge, not dispense with it…”.

I would add one other perspective to researcher as instrument, the plural identity of me as the researcher. The plural identity of the researcher plays a significant role in data collection. See further discussion on the researcher’s identity under section 6.7 for Identity: implicit condition of plurality.

6.1.5 Multiple perspectives

Ethnographic researchers have to be well aware of the apparent fact that every single person’s knowledge of the world has its own internal validity (Massey, 1998). One of an ethnographic researcher’s roles is to gather and select those multiple accounts from participants and construct the ultimate framework. Doing this reduces the risk of being a single observer. This role can only be fulfilled when researchers take into account at least
three crucial facts. Firstly, all ideas given by participants have values. Secondly, all formulated declarations of the event must be based on practical data and overtly provided as proof of claims. This is done so that outsiders can assess the formulated claims made by researchers. Finally, researchers must understand ideas that underpin participants’ performances.

6.1.6 Cycles of hypothesis and theory building

Due to the underpinning idea of openness and susceptibility to changes of ethnographic research, it is obvious that constant formation and reformation of hypothesis and theory building occur on a regular basis (Massey, 1998). As participants and events slowly reveal themselves, more information is released and hypotheses are then formed on a continual basis based on the emergence of the information. This forms a cycle in the construction of hypothesis and theory.

6.1.7 Intention and outcome

According to Massey (1998) and Brewer (2002) ethnographic research, being qualitative in nature, has two main aims: firstly, to seek understanding of particular event, case, culture, people including setting. Findings are specifically for the cases observed and are not intended to be generalised to any other situations or cases. This particular characteristic, the inability to generalise to a larger population, has long been a controversial issue among the ethnographers themselves; that is, that ethnography is limited to a “single case study approach” (Brewer, 2002, p. 6). However, ethnography does have a particular exception, that the findings can be generalised when there is “typicality” of cases. Secondly, this type of research aims to combine the views of both parties, participants and outsiders, for better and more profound understanding of the fields.

6.1.8 Criticism of ethnography

Ethnography does, however, have a huge discourse of criticism. There have been conflicting views from researchers of the natural sciences, social science and the arts disciplines with that of ethnographers (Brewer, 2000; Massey, 1998). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the time that gave rise to what is now called ethnography, there have been numerous discrediting remarks from non ethnographers that “Anything anyone wants to do that has no clear problem, no methodology, and no theory is likely to
[be]called ethnography around here” (Massey, 1998, p.1). Furthermore, the criticism goes as far as saying that ethnography is merely a method that supplements quantitative research. Moreover, ethnography has had a heavy attack on its framework as being so loosely constructed that it almost disintegrates into thin air. Some quantitative researchers go as far as saying that data gathered by means of ethnography is mere journalism data and writing and finally that ethnography has no system and did not meet the standard of proper research (Brewer, 2002, p 10-16).

However, some ethnographers have had their turn to counterclaim these arguments. They interestingly defend themselves by saying that the predominant models of quantitative research have pitfalls. They do not provide full account of the social reality because they control three significant attributes, namely, researcher’s roles, data collection methods and the concept of nature of data (Massey, 1998). This view is also echoed in Brewer (2000, p. 5) saying that “…Ethnography being qualitative in nature emerged as an answer to the disappointment in the prevailing quantitative method and its inability to provide insights into the problems”. Massey (1998), strongly opposed to the ideas expressed by quantitative research followers, argues that there is an established culture of ethnography. The discipline of ethnography is expanding and at an “impressive rate”. Due to the complex nature of culture, the prominent characteristic of ethnography is flexibility. The methodology is flexible enough so as to accommodate the perpetually changing research nature. Ethnography is extensively used by researchers and students, and, importantly, it has proved relevant to policy makers (Brewer, 2000).

To sum up, ethnography varies according to different researchers or ethnographers but the basic concept is essentially that it is a method that “aims to extract knowledge from people, society and culture” (Jacobson, 1991, p. 6). However, the end result is not a mere report, but is both description and interpretation of the data working in accordance to a theoretical framework. The methodological procedures in ethnography may vary according to each ethnographer. Nevertheless, the procedures basically centre around a problem, a research population, data collection, data analysis and the writing up of the outcomes (Jacobson, 1991; Madison, 2005). The description of the data is a result of “prolonged and direct participation in a social life of a community” (Duranti, 1997, p. 85) and should “imply two contradictories”: the outsider and insider points of view of ethnographers. Following the above methodology, I had to identify myself on the dichotomy of outsider’s
and insider’s points of view. This identification of identities will be discussed later in this chapter under the title Identity: “implicit condition of plurality”.

6.2 Time frame of study

This study was conducted over the course of 5 years from 2004-2008. The study included background study and literature review, and fieldwork of 10 months at different periods. The fieldwork was conducted for 7 months in December 2004 until June 2006 and a period of 3 months from November 2006 to January 2007. The researcher spent at least one month in each village in the initial field work visits and a return visit in the 3 months of the second visit. Prior to the fieldwork, the researcher had to ask the researcher’s home university in Chiang Rai for a letter of introduction and permission to conduct the research in the specified districts and villages in order to inform the authorities concerned. The study was then conducted and consisted of three main tasks which were literature review and document study, interviews and participant observation. The interviews were transcribed and all the data were then analysed and reported.

6.3 Study sites

The study sites were three districts of Chiang Rai province namely Maesai, Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong districts. The three districts were selected due to the districts being in the so-called Greater Mae Khong Sub-region (GMS) and the Economic Quadrangle (See Chapter 1 for details of districts and study sites). To narrow down the study sites, two villages from each district were selected based on the diversity in terms of language, culture and economic scale. Altogether there were six villages from three districts as follows:

1. Maesai District: Phamee and Payang Chum villages
2. Chiang Saen district: Sop Ruak and Santhaat villages
3. Chiang Khong districts: Wiang Mok and Huay Kok districts

6.4 Interviews

Multiple interview questionnaires were constructed according to the diversity of interviewees and organizations to be interviewed, such as head of the villages, the villagers and heads of organizations in both government and private sectors. Interview questionnaires were then translated into Thai and are attached in Appendices G and H. During, fieldwork some interviewees were interviewed on the spot and some on
snowballing and the questions were instantaneous. If any questions arose after the interviews the researcher had opportunities to make appointments for later clarification and talk on certain topics. However, while conducting interviews the researcher confronted a few problems which should be noted.

The first problem was mainly to do with the tape recorder being present at the interviews. Most of the interviewees, who were villagers, would speak freely without the tape recorder being placed in front of them. Therefore, the researcher had to have both a notebook and a tape recorder ready at the same time. Also, the smaller the recorder, the more likely the people would agree to the use of recording. The researcher chose to use a 2 by 1 inch mp3 recorder rather than a normal sound recorder in those cases. However, the normal recorder was a requirement as a back up. The reason interviewees and villagers respond to the two recorders, cassette and mp3 recorders, differently, may be because the size of the mp3 recorder, which is smaller, reduces the effect of the-conversation-being-recorded. Moreover, whenever the interviews came to the issue of language attitudes it was usually asked to be off the recording. This may be due to the opinions given being strong that it was requested to be off record. Therefore, the researcher opted for a notebook in these cases which was agreed to by all the interviewees. In some cases, note taking alone was preferred.

The second problem came from the researcher relying heavily on the interview questions. Relying heavily on the interview questionnaires prevented the understanding and following up of certain cues given by the interviewees. Sometimes the interviewees did not answer the questions asked directly. Interview questionnaires should be considered as guidelines for asking questions and not as an instrument on its own. At the very beginning of the fieldwork, the researcher had to go back to the interviewees who were villagers and important informants a number of times and talk instead of interviewing. ‘Asking’ and ‘talking’ were the key concepts of the fieldwork. The talk covered all the questions in the interview questionnaires. Most importantly, asking and talking, to the researcher, was more like knowledge construction based on the interviewees and the situation at that very moment. It was a two way process where negotiation of meaning between two parties was at work instead of the one way interview questionnaires.
The third problem was when the researcher had to decide upon the language used in conducting the interviews. The language that the interviewees were most fluent in would be the choice, which was usually either northern Thai or standard Thai. While interviewing, there were language switches. The researcher started the interview using standard Thai in a formal context even though the interviewee was a northern Thai speaker. By the time the interview got to some point the language had switched into northern Thai by the interviewee and the researcher had to switch to northern Thai accordingly. In one case, the interviewee used northern Thai from the very beginning, mentioning that he felt he could speak freely and fluently. However, when interviewees started with standard Thai, in many cases when the topic was close to the speaker in terms of domestic domain the language switched to northern Thai. In informal contexts the language used was northern Thai for northern Thai speakers and standard Thai for the majority of the hilltribes people. The majority of the hilltribes use standard Thai as a result of schooling where standard Thai is used as the language of instruction. The hilltribe people do not speak northern Thai which is the regional language. Only limited numbers of the hilltribe people would use northern Thai (See Phamee village). However, there are many cases, in fact the majority, when the interviewees would ask which language the interviews would be conducted in. To my observation most northern Thai speakers were more comfortable with northern Thai while the hilltribes were more comfortable with standard Thai. In some cases the interviewees could not speak either Thai or northern Thai and could only speak hilltribe languages. In these cases, two interpreters from the villages were needed.

6.5 Participant observation

My role as a researcher in the communities was mainly observing and participating in the communities’ activities. Taking these roles assisted in the understanding of the importance of language and how the different languages were used in the communities. There were questions that could not be asked but only to be understood by living in the community, and in some villages I was provided with a helper and a guide during the stay in the villages.

Being both an insider and an outsider I participated in the communities’ activities in different contexts. I was an insider in the context of northern Thai and Chiang Rai resident and also when speaking northern Thai in the communities. As an insider, for example, I
participated in the midnight offerings to novice monks, which was a northern Thai custom and witnessed the symbiotic relationship of this custom between language, religion and people in different generations. However, even though speaking northern Thai and being a resident of Chiang Rai, I was still an outsider to the six villages in the sense that I did not live in the village, but just recently entered and joined the community. I became an outsider in the villages.

6.6 Defining myself

Clutching my official passport and boarding pass, I got onto the plane and was given a seat near the aisle, and next to a woman. “Pen khon Thai ru kah?” Her question was accompanied by a surprised and startled look on her face asking “Are you Thai?”. “If I hadn’t seen the word Thailand on your passport I wouldn’t have known that you are a Thai, you don’t look like a Thai?” “Kha” a word meaning yes was an obvious answer but my thoughts had gone further than the answer. Yes! I don’t look like a Thai. I am of an Indian origin but born in Chiang Rai, on Thai soil, with Thai citizenship, and I was on a Thai government scholarship to do my PhD. in Linguistics in Adelaide, Australia. She responded “So you can speak northern Thai then! Can you show me how you speak northern Thai; I like the sounds of the language and the Jao¹ at the end”. In Thailand, the situation would not be surprising if she heard me speaking Thai, but in Adelaide, it is rare to see someone not obviously from Thailand speaking Thai in town in 2004.

Yes! I can speak northern Thai. However, I felt awkward to say things in the language I grew up with, just for the sake of showing that I could speak it. Also, I could not be sure if she truly appreciated the language or was just another Bangkokian² seeing my language as a plaything to look down upon. It reminded me of one of my students with an ethnic background, who denied, and refused to identify herself with her own ethnic background. Movies, jokes, television series and songs against languages were enough to have anybody hide this marker of identity.

¹ “Jao” is a northern Thai polite ending term and is often used to mean, “yes”.

² This was a general concept that northern Thai people have been looked down upon by Bangkokiains when northern Thai is spoken, but at the moment many would say this concept is fading. However, it still used to effect in TV series and movies. Movie or TV soaps characters speaking regional languages or ethnic languages are presented as comedians or in lower status than the standard Thai language speakers.
It is not only me who has that feeling but in fact the regional dwellers. Mary Haas (1951) and her paper on interlingual word taboo clearly illustrated this issue. The simple, normal everyday use language and names in those days become taboo when the northeastern region people go to Bangkok. Their names were likely to be changed for a more proper language-standard Thai or Bangkok Thai. This issue has recently been explicitly pointed out by a distinguished Buddhist monk, Phra Maha Wutthichai Wachiramethi, in a seminar on the 26th of May, 2007, as quoted by an online newspaper (www.manager.co.th) as:

“...พระมหาวุฒิชัยยังแสดงความเป็นห่วงสภาพ "วัวลืมตีน" ของเด็กไทยในทุกวันนี้ว่าเด็กไทยจากหลากหลายภาคที่จะพูดภาษาตนเอง เพราะในภาคเหนือ เมื่อมายังกรุงเทพแล้ว เนื่องจากต้องการผูกมั่นกับภาษาไทยที่นิยมมากกว่าภาษาภาคเหนือของเด็กเองเป็นมตร์ ที่มันมักจะมีพฤติกรรมการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ เพราะสังเกตได้ว่าเด็กไทย ซึ่งเป็นเด็กที่มีหลายภาษา แต่ที่จะพูดภาษาอังกฤษ เนื่องจากมันมีการอินเทรนด์ดีกว่าภาษาไทย แต่การที่มันมีการลืมหายที่รากเหง้าของภาษาไทย หลังเนื่องจากต้องการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ พวกเด็กนี้มักจะมีการรู้สึกว่าเราขาดผู้นำทางจิตวิญญาณ ขาดหลักการให้ยึดเหนี่ยว ขาดรากเหง้า…” (Manager Online Newspaper, 2007b)

“Phra Maha Wutthichai expresses his concerns over the issue of “Wua Luem teen” of the Thai youth today. Thai youth from the regions are embarrassed to speak their own language because they have forgotten their origin. When they come to live in Bangkok they feel that their regional language is inferior, therefore, they tend to forget their homeland. When they study English, they feel that it is “in trend” and “goh geh” than the Thai language. Therefore, they abandon their own language. When they go to foreign countries for their studies, they tend to forget their languages and the country. All these tells us that we lack the spiritual leader, philosophy and origin to hang on to…”

On that flight from Adelaide, a Thai citizen, born, bred, and a resident of Chiang Rai for more than thirty years, who has seen and witnessed firsthand what comes and goes in the locality, returned home to Thailand and Chiang Rai, as a researcher and an insider, a relative role. The relative identity appears to be complex and there were varying degrees of adjustments in my village sites and with my interlocutors. I would now like to address the notion of identity and what is meant by identity.

6.7 Identity: “Implicit condition of plurality”

Winichakul (2000, p. 40) states that identity is an “intrinsic quality” or an essential quality of people and has to have certain “markers”. These markers of identity can be

3 Wua Leum Teen or “cow forgot feet” a Thai proverb which means a person who forgets his/her roots or origins.

4 The expression “Goh Geh” means “looks better” and gives the image of being better than the others, a sort of elevated status, and modern.

5 See transliteration and three tiered quotes in Appendix A under 6.1
anything that varies from “knowledge of science such as biology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, and others”. Thus, identity has to have certain markers. Is it singular or plural? Identity was initially understood as having a unique or single fixed identification, but in the last three decades identity in anthropological studies has a new sense where singularity no longer is relevant in the criterion. Identity has its new sense as the condition of having multiple identifications, in Choong Soon Kim’s (Kim, 2003, p. 195) words, “the implicit condition of plurality… can be identity only if there is more than one identity and in this sense difference constitutes and precedes identity.” Therefore, identity is not a static condition, identity shifts.

Kim also provides examples of ethnographers who had experienced “shifting identifications” during their fieldwork. Those who experienced the shifts largely were of mixed ancestral origins such as Kiri Narayan, an Indian–American ethnographer, doing her research in India who experienced a “peculiar background”. However, Kim asserts that even a “fully Indian” researching in India could experience a shifting identity. Kim himself confronted the shifting identities during his fieldwork as a Korean anthropologist working in the American South and also as a Korean who had worked in Korea. This shifting of identity is due, he claims, to “the identity of the fieldworker is created and recreated because of various structural factors in the context of adjustments in the host society” (Kim, 2002, p. 195). In conclusion, a person can have multiple identities and these identities shift as a result of adjustments to contexts.

### 6.8 Outsider/insider: varying degrees of an insider

I have adopted the notion of “implicit plural identities” and “shifting identifications”, to discuss my shifting identity in my fieldwork. I, too, experienced the case of multiple identities and the recreation of identities through various contexts. Adopting ethnography as a research method required the re-identification of my self, to borrow Kim’s phrase, in “contexts of adjustments in the host society”, which is my own society, apart from the insider/outsider or native/non-native dichotomy. To be reflexive, an outsider or researcher role assisted me in reflecting on the situation, attitudes, thoughts and knowledge from the field, from an outsider point of view; while being an insider allowed me to gain access to materials and understanding of the attitudes of the people. However, being an insider can be deceptive.
Being an insider can be deceptive in the sense that in many contexts and worksites, an insider is turned into a relative outsider. Often things and situation were so familiar that I did not see the strangeness in them. A number of times, the crossing of the roles between the insider and outsider points of view had to be worked upon at the conscious level to be able to see the strangeness in the familiarity. I had to constantly ask myself ‘What is the strangeness in this familiarity? or What is the underlying essence of this familiarity in this particular incident?’. On this issue Garfinkel (1984) mentions that this is common for researchers researching everyday activities in familiar settings, households or work places. He (Garfinkel, 1984, p. 36) refers to it as “seen but unnoticed” of the “background features of everyday scenes”, while Alfred Schultz (cited in Garfinkel, 1984, p. 37) refers to the same kind of phenomenon as “attitude of daily life” and “world known in common and taken for granted”. Garfinkel (ibid, p. 37) further states that:

“Demonstrably he is responsive to this background, while at the same time he is at loss to tell us specifically of what the expectancies consist. When we ask him about them he has little or has nothing to say”.

Thus, seeing the strangeness in the common of everyday life has to be worked upon consciously for researchers working with the familiar in fieldwork. In my case, it became a conscious process so that I would not be lost without things to say.

All the identities and roles relatively play their parts in the fieldwork. There were times that I had to re-identify and consciously analyse my own self between roles and identities. It was not only once or twice, but it recurred as I approached the six villages and my informants, who consisted of various groups of people such as the people in the government sectors, private sectors, temples, schools and individuals. The contexts changed, roles changed, and the identities too shifted. My multiple identities shifted from one to the other and sometimes while questioning the government sectors other identities and role interplayed and the questions were asked and responded to based on those identities.

Identity in Thongchai Winichakul’s (2000) terms “is complex and relative”. The trio: deceptive, complex and relative were revealed when I, as my own self, confronted different contexts. There were “different degrees of insiders” (Vila, 2003). Even while comfortably calling Thailand and Chiang Rai home, and myself a northerner, I was called one of “the
others within” (Nation Newspaper, 2005a; Winichakul, 2000) in Thai society. This “the others within” receives a different recognition in Thai society. Mani (Mani, 1993, p. 910) states that Indians in Thailand today “…seem to stand quite apart from the indigenous people of Thailand and their culture” due to “elements of Indian civilization are evident in Thai language, religion, culture and daily life”. Being Indian in Thailand is often associated with good command of English, business skills, the textile trade and economics (Nakavachara, 1993). According to Mani (1993) Indians in Thailand are well-assimilated an indigenized. I was also called ‘kru farang’ in one of the villages; the term means a foreign or western teacher, due to my Indian looks, and my other identity as a university lecturer in Chiang Rai. I never thought this marker would play a role in my research in the place I called home, but it did. I was surprised to hear people referring to and addressing me as ‘kru farang’. The village children that I mingled with were the very first group who started using the term and later the people in the village referred to me using the same term. I, later, realised that there were not many Indians around in the town of Chiang Khong district, in fact none during the course of my stay in the village and Chiang Khong town. The adults knew very well the difference between Indians and westerners but not the very young generation who rarely got to go to Chiang Rai city and the only foreigners they saw in Chiang Khong town were western tourists. I had no objections to that at all, in fact it turned out to be my advantage to be seen as a teacher, a learner, researcher and a foreign teacher. An exchange of English and Thai words for Kammu words with the children and the village people was often a language study playground for me and was also a good discussion starter.

My ethnic background also played an important role in earning the trust of the people in sharing their language background. In one case, one informant initially identified himself as an ethnic Yunnanese Chinese, descendant of the Kok Min Ton 93 battalion, but as time went by, the more time I spent with the villagers, the more they were willing to share their life stories. They too were ethnographers, as they observed me. This informant later asked me about the Indian identity marker in me, and the languages that I speak at home and he too shared with me the other side of his story, that he actually was not a Yunnanese Chinese but a Lawa ethnic who could still speak and understand the language. There was a mutual connection with ethnic identity in both parties. At the very beginning there was distance but later on this distance diminished.
One marker, which is neutral but crucial while in the field, was being a teacher/lecturer. The concept of a teacher is highly respected in the villages since it is associated with assistance. I received immense cooperation being a teacher and a student at the same time. Exchanges and feedback from the elders in the villages were of great value. Although I had university lecturer status I had to be extremely careful with the other status attached to a lecturer, that of a government official. I left the government official status behind and went to the villages only being a teacher and a student. This is because being an insider I knew very well that the government official status would pose a problem and alter the data I would get from the villagers, especially the ethnic people. The same case as the above informant, who would not revealed his true identity until he was assured on his own terms that I was not working for any sector that would harm him on revealing his true identity. In one case, while visiting an informant in the same village for the first time, on seeing me with my notebook, he quickly searched for his Thai Citizen Identity Card. He, in fact, had all his family members’ identity cards and handed them to me as proof of their Thai citizenship. Although fully aware of why, I was dumb struck and speechless, although it was probably due to the fact that this village was at the border area, and strict border control was administered to prevent illegal border crossings. Also the village was notorious for drug trafficking in the past.

One interesting identity shift occurred when I interviewed a monk in a temple in Chiang Saen district. The monk had been extremely helpful in trying to explain the similarities and differences of four languages, Burmese, Shans, Khün and northern Thai. He showed me dhamma texts written in the four mentioned scripts in Pub Sa paper Scrolls and Pub Laan Scrolls. However, I was well aware that I, although taking a researcher role, am a female. Women are not allowed to touch the scrolls. The monk acknowledged that I went in as a student and a researcher and allowed me to study the Pub Sa and Pub Laan scrolls and take any pictures that I wanted. It was not me who shifted because I only had two roles which I could not shift anymore: researcher and female. It was possible because the monk himself adjusted the role in that particular context for study purpose.

My personal experience examples mentioned above also illustrate another point made explicit by Marcus (Marcus, 1998) and Behar (cited in Vila, 2003) with which I am in total agreement. This is that the “powerful motivation of personal connection …[and]..the extended exploration of existing affinities between the ethnographer and the subject of
study is indeed one of the most powerful and interesting ways to motivate a research
design” because it creates what Behar (cited in Vila, 2003, p. xxviii) believes, that “the
intertwining of the ethnographic account with the personal experience of the ethnographer
...is only interesting if one is able to draw deeper connections between one’s personal
experience and the subject under study”. In my case the connections to the people made
were multi-connections: the Thais, the regional Thais and the ethnic connection.

From my field experience, it was not only me who experienced the shifting of identities in
contexts but these shifts of identity also happened to my informants. No matter how we
shifted from one identity to another by switching our languages, we still had the Thai
identity that binds6. Standard Thai language identity penetrates into ethnic languages. Thai
vocabulary has entered minority language bringing innovation and mechanical terms into
the languages for example Phamee village headman, Charnwit Rungtaweepithaya (2006, 17
May, interview) mentioned that Akha language did not have a word for wheels but “we
only have a word which means something that moves in a circular motion”. Thus, it was
inevitable that a Thai word “ล้อ-lor” was used. Other borrowed words from standard Thai
and northern Thai are such as: ‘รถเครื่อง-rod krueng’ or motorcycle from northern Thai,
“การบ้าน-karnbarn” or homework, and “ยางลบ-yaang lob” or eraser, from standard Thai
(Assawayingtaworn, 2002).

It is inevitable that the national language will be the inextricable link that binds all the
Thais and its ethnic citizens. However, this does not mean that giving ethnic languages
their space to prosper will undermine the national language and identity, and the national
security. The concept of identity is not a single and fixed identity; there is an “implicit
condition of plurality”. It is a matter of acknowledging that plurality of identity exists and
social space should be provided for that plural identity. That social space needs to be
recognized and provided by the state and I cannot agree more with Professor Nidhi
Eiewsriwong’s argument below:

“ผมคิดว่าอัตลักษณ์ที่มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งของคนที่นี่คือความเป็นมลายูซึ่งไม่มีพื้นที่ในความเป็นชาติไทย
เพราะฉะนั้นถ้าเริงเป็นการยกมาที่คนที่เป็นทั้งมลายูและเป็นมุสลิมจะไม่ได้รับรองโดยการรัฐไทยโดยไม่กระทำโครง
สร้างแล้ว…”

6 The phrase “Thais that bind” comes from Knecht’s (Knecht, 1994) article title “Thais that bind”.
“…I think the most important identity for the people here is being Melayu and being Muslim which has no social space in the Thai nation, therefore, it is very difficult for the Melayu and the Muslims to ask for anything from the Thai states without having an impact on the state structure. …” (Gliangglao, 2007).

Salman Rushdie and Choong Soon Kim share the same view on this concept of identity and social space. Rushdie (cited in Kim, 2003, p. 195) in his East, West stories refuses to choose between the East and the West and compares them to ropes around his neck:

“I too have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose. I buck, I snort, I whinny, I rear, I kick. Ropes, I do not choose between you. Lassoes, lariats, I choose neither of you, and both. Do you hear? I refuse to choose.”

Choong Soon Kim’s expression:

“… it is too difficult for me to choose between the two worlds: Korea, which gave me my birth; or the south, where I have studied, lived, and created a wonderful family. Since I know the strengths and weaknesses of both worlds, I cannot choose one of them and ignore the other.”

I am writing here, in this thesis, about my own country’s language situation and the people with whom I shared all the language labels or markers; who are both the majority and the minority language users. We all are still bound by the Thai in us. It is the view of the in-between people, or the people who cross language and identity boundaries, that the government and the policy planners will have to take into consideration at a greater depth. My voices of different identities, a Thai, a northern Thai and the “others within” will be heard throughout this thesis.

6.9 Conclusion

This study employed ethnography as a research methodology. Data were collected from six villages and the methods of data collection included recorded and unrecorded interviews, observations, participation observation, field notes and mental notes, and document studies. Methodological problems encountered were analysed. Problems were mostly concerned with mechanical problems and the researcher’s identities. With regard to identity, it is not seen as single and fixed but rather as plural and shifting. The researcher’s own self illustrated her plural identity and the shifting of those identities. Her plural identities played significant roles in data collection throughout the data collection period.

7 See transliteration and three tiered quote in appendix A under 6.2
CHAPTER 7

LANGUAGE ECOLOGY OF CHIANG RAI CITY

7.0 Introduction

This Chapter gives an overview and discusses the language ecology of Chiang Rai province emphasizing language used in the city area.

7.1 Some general observations: Bangkok airport to Chiang Rai city

After an eight hour flight, I finally landed at Bangkok International Airport\(^1\), one of the busiest airports in the world. As soon as I was out of the aircraft into the building I felt the change in language use. Announcements were made first in Thai, the standard and national language, followed by English. While waiting to board the Thai Airways\(^2\) flight to Chiang Rai at the domestic terminal I noticed something which I had never heard on my travels in Thailand.

Flight information was announced in regional languages together with standard Thai and English. Flight information and boarding calls for flights heading to the southern region of Thailand were announced in Standard Thai followed by English and then southern Thai. The same announcements for flights bound for the northeastern region were made in standard Thai followed by English and then northeastern regional language. This wasn’t only new to me at that particular moment but was new to people traveling on those flights as well. A number of people I interviewed instantly on the spot found it pleasing to hear the regional languages and felt more at home. One did feel the sense of diversity. A few questioned the use of announcing in the regional language when everyone understood Thai. However, having sat there for over four hours I began to hear a specific pattern in the announcements made.

\(^1\) This trip for data collection was at the end of 2004 to mid 2005 and the airport still in use at that time was Bangkok (Don Muang) International Airport. But in September 2006, the new airport or Suvarnabhumi Airport was opened for public use.

\(^2\) The National airline and not a low cost airline.
All the announcements made in regional languages at the Bangkok domestic terminal that I heard were from the low cost airline operators and apparently were not from Thai Airways which is the national airline. Surprisingly, while waiting for my flight, I did not hear a single announcement from Thai Airways in standard Thai and English followed by northern Thai, not even on my own flight bound for Chiang Rai which happened to be a TG – a Thai Airways. The announcement I heard was in standard Thai followed by English. Has regional language really become accepted or was it just another economic tool employed for a solidarity effect? Two contrasting concepts appeared right in front of me: low cost airline and regional languages as economic tool while the national airline adhered to the nationalistic concept. In other words, collateral damage to the national airlines caused by the low cost airline’s marketing idea.

When the TG landed at Chiang Rai International Airport, the announcement was made in standard Thai and English and, no surprise, not in the regional language. Signs and posters in the terminal were in standard Thai and English including restrooms signs. The airport is approximately 8 kilometers from the city centre and on the drive to the city was also an interesting sight to see.

Road names, street names and lane names along the way were in three language scripts: Standard Thai, English and Chinese consecutively. The signs themselves had a order of language appearance: standard Thai in the top row, English in the second row and Chinese in the third row. Thus, was explained the order of importance. The signs were particularly interesting because signs and language had expanded dramatically during the ten months that I had been away from Chiang Rai. Prior to February 2004 the signs had only been installed in the city area and only on the main streets and their connecting lanes. In December 2004, they had expanded almost 10 kilometres away from town. The economic collaboration in the past, such as the collapsed Economic Quadrangle, had not enabled the project to get this far. This kind of sign was not seen in any nearby city such as Chiang Mai or Phayao.

### 7.2 Language use in Chiang Rai

There are three main language categories in use in Chiang Rai: standard Thai, northern Thai and ethnic languages. This section discusses the use of the first two categories of

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3 Such as Nok Air, 1-2-GO, and Air Asia
language use, standard Thai and northern Thai. The ethnic languages will be discussed in later chapters on the villages concerned.

7.2.1 Standard Thai

Standard Thai as the national language, both spoken and written, is the dominant language used in formal situations. Spoken Thai is used in schools, government offices and other institutions. Classrooms are conducted in standard Thai and teachers are expected to communicate to students and other teachers in standard Thai. School announcements and assemblies are conducted in standard Thai. Written Thai is used in all cases in Chiang Rai such as filling in government forms and all other types of forms, bank transactions, signs, and newspapers including local or regional newspapers, magazines, local pamphlets, leaflets, and northern Thai language learning textbooks. However, in many formal situations there are some exceptions.

In almost all government offices and other institutions northern Thai can be used at the very first inquiry. I had to be at the Identification Card section at Chiang Rai Municipal Office to renew my ID card, and while waiting for the service, I observed language used in the organization. At the information desk, explanations of procedures and directions were given in northern Thai when the questioner used northern Thai and if the officer at the information desk was also a northern Thai speaker; but when approached with standard Thai, it was usually reciprocated in standard Thai and in many cases the language negotiation process took place slowly. During the conversation, if any of the interlocutors slipped or used northern Thai words or phrase, then the other interlocutor would switch into northern Thai. In one case the switch came instantly after the word ด้วย [duːi] due to the change in the vowel sound of the speaker from ด้วย [duːi] to โด้ย [doːi] which is typical of northern Thai speakers.

Conversely, if the information desk officer was a standard Thai native speaker then the northern Thai interlocutor would slowly switch into standard Thai. Moreover, the language used by officers who are northern Thai speakers in the organization when talking to each other, was also northern Thai. Standard Thai appeared to be spoken by officers assigned to read out names on the ID over the microphone for the owner to collect. In some cases the people waiting in the queue would know beforehand what language they were able use
with the officers by observing the officer’s language use while servicing other people before them.

Standard Thai was used in signs posted in the municipal office. However, there was one sign written in Thai but with a few northern Thai words. At the ID card processing unit, a sign that says “กรุณาถอดแค๊บ/เกิบ - karuna thord khaep/kerb” which means, “please take off your slippers/shoes” was put up. This was because there were a few elderly hilltribe people who did not understand the Thai word for shoes or “รองเท้า - rong tao” so the words khaep/kerb were used.

Northern Thai speakers felt more relaxed and at ease when using northern Thai regardless of place and career position. A number of my interviewees, teachers in government schools, head of departments, university lecturers, a high rank officer in the provincial education office, asked me prior to the interview in what language the interview would be conducted. Knowing that northern Thai speakers would feel at ease speaking northern Thai, my answer was any language that the interviewee was comfortable in. A number of the interviewees sighed and uttered phrases like “อู้ก้าไทยแล้วมันเจ็บเขี้ยวเก๊า - oo kum thai laew mun jeb kbiew gaang” which means “When I speak Thai, I have toothache”. Other phrases with the same meaning were also used such as “เจ็บแอว - jeb aew” or strained waist, and “เจ็บเขี้ยวเจ็บกาง - jeb kbiew jeb gaang” tooth ache and jaw ache. All three metaphors conveyed the same concept that speaking standard Thai was stressful and unnatural and speakers needed a lot of effort in speaking the language.

Standard Thai was also used in chain convenience stores and supermarkets at the cashier counters. The conversations between customers and cashiers were very limited. The cashiers’ speech was formulaic with specific purposes. At the entrance to a well-known chain convenience store, Seven – Eleven, the customers would be greeted with “sawaddee kha” and the pattern in the chain store went like this:

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4 In some places shoes are referred to as khaep and at some other places they are referred to as kerb. However, some distinguish them as khaep being slippers while kerb means shoes.
However, when an enquiry about any items in the store was made in northern Thai, northern Thai would be reciprocated, with the exception that if the cashier was not a northern Thai speaker then the customer would switch to standard Thai. This type of Thai language use and conversation can be expected at any Seven-Eleven store all over the country, it goes with the store. I have not inquired whether it was the store policy or not but it seems likely as there was a pattern. Regional varieties could have been added by substituting the polite ending from ‘kha’ and ‘khrab’ to ‘Jao’ – a northern Thai polite ending for both genders. However, the regional variety did occur in the local owned supermarkets and also at foreign-owned supermarket chain like Big C.

When the regional variety was added to the formulaic and limited conversation at these supermarkets, the conversation extended slightly and on a limited scale which directly depended upon the queue at the cashier. The slightly extended conversation included the best offer in the store that particular week, comments on the number of customers compared to other days, the cashier’s shift and the shopping pattern of customers, also suggestions of places to get items that were not available in the stores. At some local owned stores conversations did extend to family well-being, politics and local news. At

Example 1:

1 Cashier: Sawaddee kha*
   (Greetings kha)

2 Customer: (Customer entered the store without returning the greeting. When the customer came back to the cashier with the purchases,)

3 Cashier: Rub foot-long** paem mai kha
   (Would you like to also have the sausage?)

4 Customer: Mai kha
   (No kha)

   (Altogether is 80 baht. Received 100 baht and here is your change 20 baht. Thank you.)

Note:

*Kha is a polite ending for females and for males, the ending is khrab

**Foot-long is a kind of sausage which is indeed a foot long. This item can be changed depending on what items the cashier wanted to introduce to customers.
foreign-owned stores the cashier’s accent shifted from standard Thai to northern Thai whereas at the local owned stores conversations would begin with northern Thai and the switch to standard Thai would come later depending on customers and store-owner. If customers were standard Thai speakers then the owner would switch to standard Thai.

7.2.2 Northern Thai

Northern Thai has both the spoken form and a written script but to date the written northern Thai is considered “dead” by Lanna scholars like Saraswadee Ongsakul (2001, p. 10). The script is used in limited circles and only by a few scholars, monks and traditional healers. The spoken northern Thai is still in use by all people. In this section, spoken northern Thai will be discussed while the written northern Thai will be discussed in 7.2.3.

Spoken northern Thai can only be addressed with the understanding of its people in terms of generations and language change. Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006), a leading Lanna studies scholar in Thailand, not only made an interesting observation of the generational language change but also incorporated the dimension of historical impact that had created three groups of people in the society.

The first group is the new generation who had their schooling in the national and official language but had no knowledge of the regional script. This group according to Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006) was brainwashed through education and was molded in a modern nation-state fashion and thus did not see the importance and value of regional language and culture. However, it can be argued that this was dependent on where and what lifestyle they have lived and whether they live in the city or the districts.

With regards to the first group in Chiang Rai, their language use has entered the phase of language change and a pattern can be seen. This change mostly occurred in the city area while the outer area or districts area do maintain traditional vocabulary use and dialects. In the city area younger generations tend to use more Thai vocabulary with northern Thai dialect while youngsters and other generations in the district areas still use traditional northern Thai words such as:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Northern Thai words</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Standard Thai words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kumbur (กําเบ)</td>
<td>Butterfly</td>
<td>Pisua (ผีเสื้อ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon (หม)</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>Klom (กลม)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mui (มุย)</td>
<td>Axe</td>
<td>Kwaan (ขวาน)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam (ผีเสื้อ)</td>
<td>Sharp</td>
<td>Laem (แหลม)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luang (เหลี้ยม)</td>
<td>Big, huge</td>
<td>Yai (ใหญ่)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derng (เดิ้ง)</td>
<td>Tall</td>
<td>Soong (สูง)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaang (ยาง)</td>
<td>Sticky</td>
<td>Nieaw (เหนียว)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si-on (สีออน)</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Si chompoo (สีชมพู)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.1 Some traditional northern Thai words compared with standard Thai words.**

There have been some changes in word-meanings which probably happened a long time ago but it is apparent that old forms still exist and used by those who were raised in the districts area amidst the use of real northern Thai. I will first provide examples of word-meaning changes. When standard Thai words were borrowed into northern Thai, there appeared to be a change in meaning such as northern narrowing down of meaning. For example, in word pairs like *kumbur* and *pisua*, and *si-on* and *si chompoo*. Details are as follows:

**Example 1:**

Kumbur and Pisua

Kumbur ----------- meaning  butterfly in general in northern Thai
Pisua            ----------- meaning  butterfly in general in standard Thai

When pisua was borrowed into northern Thai, the meaning shifted to:
1. Kumbur ------ big and ugly butterfly
2. Pisua        ------ small and beautiful butterfly

Nowadays the younger generation in the city only knows of pisua and if the word kumbur is uttered it is accompanied by a puzzled look.

**Example 2:**

Si on and Si chompoo

Si = colour (both northern and standard Thai)

Si on ------------------------meaning  pink in general in northern Thai
Si chompoo ------------------meaning  pink in general in standard Thai
When ‘chompoo’ was borrowed into northern Thai, the meaning shifted to:

1. Si chom-on ------ bright and considered unpleasant pink (Chom-on is a blended word formed from: the word ‘chom’ from the Thai word ‘chompoo’ and ‘on’ from the original Thai word.)

2. Si chompoo ------ light and pleasant pink

Words like kumbur and Si-on are still in use in the villages and among the generations who have been raised in the areas where northern Thai is spoken. They do, however, know the alternative terms.

The second group is the middle age generation neither old nor young who had been educated in schools but lived their life in the traditional or regional lifestyle. This group according to Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006) is the significant group who will revive the regional or local languages and cultures due to their being at the transitional stage and having seen both the stages of the changing culture. Although during their school years they were not allowed to study the regional script, some studied the language and script while at university. They acknowledge the importance and value of the language and are the ones who played a significant part in the revival of the script. They attempted to study the script and transliterate the Tua Dham script into standard Thai script. Leading Lanna scholars like Sompong Wittayasakphan, Udom Rungruengsri, Saraswadee Ongsakul, Panpen Kruethai and Charin Jamjit are examples from this group. Udom Rungruengsri has compiled the largest Lanna Dictionary to date and Saraswadee Ongsakul is a leading Lanna historian based at Chiang Mai University.

The third group are the people who have been ordained and schooled at temples (Wittayasakphan, 2006). They are the group who directly experienced and appreciated the long tradition of learning the knowledge, language and script. The experiences they had were associated with being old-fashioned, outdated, and ancient. This was also transferred to the script, language and culture. Arts and culture including script seem to be passing with this generation.
Most members of this group were traditional medicine healers, who had learnt the content together with the language and script at temple, and are now in their 70s and above. Traditional healers are the people who hold the key to the knowledge content as well as the script. In a research project on Lanna medicine at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, a number of healers passed away before the project was completed leaving a big gap in knowledge on medicine.

7.2.3 Northern Thai scripts

Northern Thai has four main types of script with different functions to society. Different scholars have different views on the scripts but most agree with three scripts: Phakkhaam, Lanna or Tua Dham, and Thai Nithet (Boonmuang, 2003; Kiatpreecha, 2001; Ongsakul, 2001, pp. 15-17; Rungruengsi, 1984) whereas one source mentions four scripts and adds Sukhothai script to the list (Kruethai, 2002). The scripts will be discussed in the following order: Sukhothai, Phakkhaam, Tua Dham, and Thai Nithet scripts.

7.2.3.1 Sukhothai Script

According to Panpen Kruethai (2002), Sukhothai script, as the name suggests, derived from the Sukhothai script of the Sukhothai kingdom. It was introduced by a Buddhist monk from a Raman or Monic sect named Phrasumonathera and his followers during their spread of the Monic school of Buddhism in Lanna.

The script came with religion and the Sukhothai norms of stone inscription. There was a clear distinction of the content and the material used for inscription. Dhamma teachings or Buddhist jatakas would be written on palm or sa paper scrolls but stories or anecdotes on people, monks, Kings and the nobles’ offerings or a donation to Buddhist activities were inscribed on stone slabs. Due to the fragility of palm and sa paper scrolls, damage was obvious and only stone slabs survived time.

The script later was limited to stone inscription on two counts: characteristics of the script and inscription material, and the emergence of a new script known as Tua Dham. The characteristic of Sukhothai script, which was square and edgy, made stone inscription easier when compared to writing on the palm and sa paper due to the tissue lumps in

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5 There are very few scholars who study Lanna letters in depth. These sources are the main sources in Lanna studies and in this section data was drawn from these sources.
handmade paper scrolls. The complication of using Sukhothai script on palm or sa paper scrolls led to the use of a rounder script which was Tua Dham that made writing less complicated. Thus, in later days the functions were clearly separated between the Sukhothai and Tua Dham script. Tua Dham was used with palm and sa paper scrolls while Sukhothai with stone slabs.

Archaeological records suggested that the earliest recorded use of Sukhothai script in Lanna was on a stone slab inscription found at Prayuen temple in 1370 which was probably at the same time as Tua Dham script which was in 1376. Sukhothai script was found mainly inscribed on stone slabs excavated in temple compounds. However, stone slabs dated from 1457-1507 were reported as having slight changes in the script used.

7.2.3.2 Phakkhaam script

Slight changes in Sukhothai script gave rise to the use of the second type of script called Phakkhaam script which means tamarind pod. The script used was Sukhothai-like but with “ผรมสูง - phorm soong” or slim, elongated letters (Rungruengsri, 1984, p. 12) when compared to the square and broader Sukhothai script. Phakkhaam was a hybrid between Sukhothai and Tua Dham Script. Phakkhaam differed from Sukhothai in a few ways: in character forms and the writing system, especially the combination of letters, including curvy strokes which have been added to the letters. The script was also found in Lanchang kingdom (in present day Laos) and Keng Tung in Burma during 1487-1525. The function of the script remained as script for stone inscription, the same as Sukhothai script, until the invasion of Burma in 1558.

The fall of the script may have been a result of two factors: Tua Dham script reform (which will be discussed under Tua Dham script) and the invasion by Burma. According to Sompong Wittayasakphan (2006), Phakkhaam script was forbidden during the Burmese occupation from 1558 – 1774 (216 years) as it also served as the language for political communication. He further explained that Tua Dham was a perfect substitute for the Phakkhaam script as it was similar to that of Burmese, rounded in shape, both were Mon derived and both were used in Buddhist texts. Both Sukhothai and Phakkhaam scripts have no use in present day Lanna.
7.2.3.3 Tua Dham script

Tua Dham, literally means script used in dhamma texts. It was later called Lanna script or northern Thai script. It was first found to be recorded in 1376 on Lanthong stone slab inscriptions. This Mon derived script was first reformed by a Buddhist monk called Phrayanakumpeera in 1431 following his return from pilgrimage in Sri Lanka. The reform made was at the script and phonological representation level. Nine letters were added to the already existing 32 letters in order to comply with the rules of Pali used in Lankan Buddhism traditions.

Ongsakul (2001, p. 15) mentions that initially this Mon derived script had no tone markers and when adopted into Lanna, the Lanna script too did not have tone markers accordingly, but the Lanna language does have tones. Tone markers were invented in the late 16th Century although Lanna scholars in those times were not strict with the use of tones due to the unfamiliarity in adding tone markers. I recall an incident in the late 1980s where the absence of tone markers caused confusion to the Thais and the government concerned with the pronunciation of the word “Lanna”, whether it was called Lanna without a tone or Lanna with a high tone. The resolution was Lanna with a high tone. Not long after the script was reformed, during the reign of Phraya Muang Kaew (1442 - 1487), a great many religious Buddhist texts in Sukhothai script were copied into Tua Dham, script leaving the later developed Phakkhaam script to function only for stone inscriptions and later it went out of use.

The advent of Tua Dham script was due to religious necessity. It initially functioned as the script of religious communication in Pali language but the function later shifted to writing northern Thai language. The script was and is considered sacred because it was used in recording dhamma, jatakas and other literature in Buddhism and therefore gained the name of Tua Dham. As a result until today, script and books were treated with great care. Children were taught not to place books on the ground, not to sit or step on books and to not throw away books in the bin or at the garbage dump. I was told by a monk during an interview, that in the old days when books were damaged, there were two ways to deal with them, either burn those books or wrap them in a cloth and give them to the temple.

When the society expanded, the necessity to record other contents apart from religion arose, such as medicine, herbology and astrology. Thus, Tua Dham’s function shifted to
other content domains as well but it was still in the temple sphere since traditional schooling and knowledge based institutions were in the temple domain. Only those ordained as novices or monks would have the opportunity to learn one script and two languages: religion written in Pali and general knowledge written in northern Thai language. An interesting point is that since script and language studies were in the temple compound, it irrevocably was a male domain. Thus, women had no place when it came to knowledge learning. During its heyday, Tua Dham spread, together with the Sri Lankan school of Buddhism, as far as Lanchang Kingdom in present Laos, Keng Tung in present Myanmar and in present day Xixuangbanna in China.

Slightly before the Burmese invasion in 1558, the development of the script encountered staggering moments due to the political situation in Lanna. But the script was able to survive due to the Burmese not interfering with the use of Tua Dham script. Tua Dham script lost its significance when the government of Siam enforced the 3rd State Preference in 1940 on language and citizen duty. Since then it was forbidden to learn local script. Thus, an end was put to Tua Dham. Palm and sa paper scrolls and books were burnt, and, according to Charin Jamjit (2006, 30 January, interview), a truckload of scrolls were taken to Bangkok for research purposes and were never returned. Monks had to do the teachings and praying in standard Thai, even blessing verses were uttered in Thai. The tune and pronunciation of the verses can be distinguished. Nowadays, more northern Thai blessings can be heard in temples. Since the 1970s there have been attempts to bring back the script by teaching it both at schools and universities but it has not been successful (Boonmuang, 2003; Kiatpreecha, 2001; Kruethai, 2002; Ongsakul, 2001; Rungruengsri, 1984; Wittayasakphan, 2006).

7.2.3.4 Thai Nithet script

Thai Nithet is the fourth script used in the Lanna kingdom and its function was to record poetry and other secular literature by scholars. The reason for the invention was scholars wanted to clearly separate the function of the script as they perceived that Tua Dham had already been used for religious purposes and it was improper to use dhamma script for secular purposes. Therefore, a new script was invented. Thai Nithet was a hybrid script between Sukhothai and Tua Dham with “sok” or serif added to the letters thus making it very similar to the Khmer or Khom script. This new script was then named “khom Thai” or, as recorded in one of the palm paper prose scrolls, as “Thai Nithet”. Thai Nithet script
was invented around late 1556, slightly before the Burmese invasion in 1558. The use of Thai Nithet did not last long due to people being familiar with Tua Dham script and Thai Nithet script was not known much outside the scholars' circle. To date 14 literary texts in Thai Nithet script have been found and studied by Panpen Kruethai (2002).

To conclude, of the four scripts, Tua Dham is the only script that has remained in use until today, but with limitations in terms of people and domains of use. With regard to people, it is limited to only a handful of Lanna scholars and a handful of monks, traditional healers or common people who had learnt the script, both males and females. The script has almost lost its function to society, leaving only one domain of use to engraving on two categories of things: certain charms and key rings; and on yantras, candles⁶, and bottle gourds⁷. The former is for souvenir purposes while the latter serves as an emotional value to the northern Thai people, as they once functioned as emotional and mental healers in traditional medicine. I once asked a young man who was buying the candles and bottle gourd from an elderly lady that if the candles and gourds were written in standard Thai would he still buy them. He gave a thought to the question and uttered that it would be just ordinary candles. Doing so would have also taken away the function to the society as sacredness was attached to Tua Dham. To the northern Thai people, Tua Dham is much more sacred than standard Thai script. Most of the dhamma books used in temples are now printed in standard Thai script and can be found in stores. Tua Dham is also used in writing temple signs. Any non-temple signs with Tua Dham have not been noticed during data collection in Chiang Rai.

Tua Dham script has lost almost all of its functions to society due to the political situation in Lanna and the three reforms (education, religion and administration) of Siam since 1884 when Tua Dham was forbidden in official premises and education institutions. Traditionally, Tua Dham script was learnt at temple schools but as Siam’s Buddhism association took control over Lanna’s Buddhism, the functions of the ancient script, which were linked to Lanna culture and temple schooling, have been reduced, and in Sompong Wittayasakphan’s (2006, p. 4) words, “ประกาศิตที่กําหนดความตายของอักษรท้องถิ่น -pragasit

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⁶ It is part of traditional healing, that when lighting a candle with mantras written in northern Thai letters, which are considered sacred, people lighting the candles will be cured or their wish fulfilled.

⁷ A gourd is a symbol of fertility, fulfilment and good luck. Mantras would be written in Tua Dham script on the gourd. It can be used to decorate the house or else housed together with the Buddha image altar in shops and houses.
ti kamnod khwamtaai Khong aksorn tongtin” which means “it was a death sentence to regional Thai script”.

Another interesting factor that played a part and led to the extinction of the script was the missionary-introduced-printing system in 1868 (Rungruengsri, 1984). See northern Thai and printing house in 7.5.

7.2.4 Language mixing: khorbkhun jao

Let us return to the spoken northern Thai. Language mixing is observed in northern Thai speech. Language mixing between northern Thai and standard Thai is often heard. The most common mix is for example khorbkhun jao where khorbkhun is a standard Thai term and jao is a northern Thai polite ending.

\[
\text{khorbkhun} \quad + \quad \text{Jao}
\]

thank you (standard Thai) + polite ending (northern Thai)

The phrase is used instead of the northern Thai phrase yindee jao. Yindee jao is the equivalent to khorbkhun kha. The point of interest is that the word yindee exists in standard Thai but with a slightly different meaning and collocation. The word yindee in standard Thai means delighted, glad and happy; while in northern Thai the same meaning exists but the meaning extended to thank you in the sense that ‘I am happy, glad or delighted that you have shown your kindness towards me’ and thus the word yindee is used to mean thank you which is equivalent to the standard Thai khorbkhun.

Yindee, is rarely used by younger generation. The young generation is familiar with the use of khorbkhun, and using yindee to mean thank you often confuses them. When yindee is used, often my interlocutors from this young generation especially high school students, they exchange looks among their friends and express that they thought it meant congratulations. One student who lived in a district said that in northern Thai it was a “กับ่าเก่า - kum bagao” which means traditional word. It appears that the younger generation living in the districts or country towns tend to know and use more of the original or kum bagao versions of the northern Thai language whereas, the city dwelling generations use more standard Thai words.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yindee</th>
<th>Standard Thai</th>
<th>Northern Thai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>Delighted, glad, happy</td>
<td>Thank you but with the core meaning as delighted, glad, happy that kindness has been given towards the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collocation</strong></td>
<td>• ยินดีที่ได้รู้จัก (Glad to meet you.)</td>
<td>• ยินดี (Thank you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ยินดีที่มาเป็นเกียรติ (Pleased to have you here as an honour).</td>
<td>• ยินดีจัดให้ (Thank you very much)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ปลาบปลื้มยินดี (Very happy and ecstatic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ปิติยินดี (happiness and joy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ขอบคุณยินดี (Congratulations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.2** The word ‘Yindee’ and the differences in its meaning in northern Thai and standard Thai.

This generation’s language use pattern illustrates a huge amount of code mixing. The code mixing falls into two main patterns. Type I uses more standard Thai words and fewer northern Thai words with northern Thai accents. The Type II pattern shows the use of more northern Thai words and fewer standard Thai words with Thai accent. Whether Type I or Type II, they are language shift at work. Type II is particularly interesting due to the tones in northern Thai words being changed to standard Thai tones. This kind of language use can be observed and heard among high school students in Chiang Rai and one can distinguish the differences almost instantly. For example:

**Words in bold are northern Thai words** and words not bolded are standard Thai words.

**Type I:** more standard Thai words, fewer northern Thai words, northern Thai accent

1. **Tam yang ni bor chai gah** ทำอย่างนี้ใช่ก๊ะ
d หาอย่างนี้ใช่ก๊ะ

Literal translation:  Do how this yes gah (gah is a northern Thai question word)
Translation: Isn’t it done this way?

**Type II:** fewer standard Thai words, more northern Thai words, Thai accent
1. **Ya baeb ni bor man gah** ยะแบบนี้บ่แม่นก๊ะ  
**Literal Translation:** Do way this no right gah  
**Translation:** Isn’t it done this way?

2. **ha kab king pai tuai gun nah** ฮากับคิงไปตวยกั๋นหนา  
**Literal Translation:** I (masc.) and you (masc.) go together nah (nah a statement ending)
**Translation:** You and I are going together.

3. **kaojai gorh** เข้าใจ่ก่  
**Literal Translation:** Understand gorh? (gorh northern Thai question word)  
**Translation:** Understand?

In Type II e.g. 1 in the word ‘ya’, the “y” sound is pronounced differently. The sound gets the standard Thai pronunciation as a palatal approximant [j] while it is pronounced as a palatal nasal [ɲ] in northern Thai. The tone in the word ‘gah’ is often pronounced with standard Thai mid tone or in some cases gets a high tone instead of the northern Thai tone called “สูงสั้น - soong san” or high-short tone (Rungruengsri, 1984, p. 26). According to Udom Rungruengsri (ibid.) the northern Thai high tone is further divided into 2 levels: “สูงยาว” or high-long tone and “สูงสั้น” or high-short tone. The difference is very subtle. There is a case where the change of the high-short tone in a northern Thai word [pʰi] to a high tone in standard Thai changes the meaning. The word [pʰi] with the northern Thai high-short tone means sister or elder sibling which also extended to a male self-address term when addressing a younger person or a lover while the same word with a high tone means sexual intercourse.

In Type II e.g. 2, the word ‘gun’ has a falling tone in northern Thai but has a mid tone when spoken with standard Thai accent.

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8 A statement ending which is known to be typically spoken only by Chiang Rai and Lampang northern Thai speakers. There are jokes centred on the used of “nah” (which has a second meaning as thick) saying who is thicker between Chiang Rai and Lampang speakers?

9 This word was brought to my attention by Patipan Uttayanukul, a standard Thai language lecturer and a northern Thai speaker. The word was in a song sung by a standard Thai singer (male) in a phrase “…hak ni dai bor...” which was suppose to mean “Can you love me?”.
In Type II e.g. 3 the tone of the second syllable in ‘kaojai’ is a falling tone in northern Thai and was changed into a mid tone to match the standard Thai accent.

The use of standard Thai was a preferred language in some restaurants. At a Moo Kratha buffet restaurant, I noticed conversations that took place in the restaurant. The waiters and waitresses waiting at the tables used standard Thai with customers, other waiters/waitresses and to the owner seated at the cashier. However, the language spoken spontaneously informed me that the speakers were from a different language background especially with final consonant deletions, the substitution of [d] for [l] sounds etc. The owner mentioned that his workers were mostly from different hilltribe groups and therefore had different language backgrounds. Also some were from Myanmar. Initially, he had no language preference, but the more people he hired the more language background increased and the workers started speaking their languages among their own groups. Comprehension problems arose between employers and employees. There were other problems such as since they were teenagers, groups could form and too many same language speakers in one workplace can form a dominant power group. The problem had been solved by using standard Thai, so that all people can comprehend in the workplace since they all had at least been to a Thai school.

An interesting point is that the workers at this place were hilltribe youths who learnt standard Thai at schools, entered work at very early stages and started work not long ago. And for those who have been in the work industry for quite some time, will be able to comprehend and use northern Thai. Those who continue school in the city area where there are more contacts with the regional language, will learn to speak the language when with friends. Naang, a university student, mentioned that she learned the language from friends at school and many of her friends from the village learned northern Thai in the same manner. However, when given a choice, Naang opted for standard Thai as she felt more comfortable with standard Thai and could express herself more in standard Thai.

Maeying Yonok (2007), a northern Thai speaker who visited Chiang Rai in 2006, wrote in her online article *Riuenlao Chonpao (Stories told hilltribe)* about a hilltribe university graduate she met during her research fieldwork that:
He spoke clear northern Thai and that is what amazes me. Hilltribes people that I know were more comfortable with using standard Thai when communicating to non-tribal members. ..”10.

She quoted the young man saying that since he studied agriculture, he had to speak northern Thai due to the work requiring him to do so, but that in his first year at university, he had not understood much of northern Thai. He later acquired the language at university through peers.

At another work place, a noodle shop owner, a northern Thai speaker herself, made three interesting comments. She said that she had to switch to standard Thai when she first hired new workers. When both the parties were familiar with each other’s language then the regional language could be used. In one case, a newly hired worker was a Burmese who had limited knowledge of standard Thai and the owner had to speak very slowly to the worker. She also mentioned that sometimes she was not familiar with the names of the workers so new nicknames were given to them so that both the parties were happy. The third comment was that when workers had very limited vocabulary and knowledge of the Thai language, they would come up with their own strategy specifically for work purposes. They would memorize terms that were often used in the noodle shop such as the menu, numbers, names of drinks, desserts, price, and a few formulaic sentences such as taking and repeating orders. Being a regular customer to the noodle shop myself, the reaction from the customers in general was also interesting and worth pointing out.

Customers have strategies to deal with this kind of communication issue as well. Customers would slow down their speech. In one case, having already slowed down the speech and the waitress still did not understand the order, the customer changed his strategy. He repeated the same word. However, still the problem existed. He then pointed to the same kind of drink that he wanted at another table. Finally, the meaning was successfully made. Despite this, regular and local customers did not mind the effort to communicate since they knew that workers doing service and housekeeping jobs and the like were difficult to find.

10 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 7.1
7.3 Language use in hospitals and clinics

This section first addresses language used in hospitals and later on in the section deals with language used in clinics in Chiang Rai city. Language used in hospitals and clinics in Chiang Rai varies. There are three types of hospital in the city: one government hospital, one military hospital and two private hospitals. There are differences in language use in government and private hospitals. The main languages used in these hospitals are standard Thai and one international language which undoubtedly was English.

7.3.1 Language use in government and military hospitals

As a native of Chiang Rai, I dislike going to the government hospital, as it involves extremely long wait for a sick person. This time the feeling was different from usual as I was willing to wait, the longer it took the better it would be. Even though I am familiar with the language use in this hospital as I have been frequenting the hospital since my childhood, I now observed it.11

Language used at this government hospital was mainly standard Thai including language used in pamphlets and brochures. Languages used in the signs were both standard Thai and English. Standard Thai is used in hospitals but almost all the time communication took place in northern Thai at service and information counters. Nurses in charge of initial contact with patients will ask questions in northern Thai. When meeting doctors in the examination room, if doctors were northern Thai speakers then northern Thai would be used in the communication, if not, then standard Thai would be used. If the doctor had been in the northern region long enough, he would have a number of northern Thai vocabulary items to work with.

Even though having enough vocabulary to start with things can go wrong through misunderstanding words and meanings. According to Dr. Vichai Panich, a retired doctor originally from the south of Thailand, whom, in a personal communication, told of his experience when he first came to work in Chiang Rai, he and his colleague misinterpreted 11 Permission to observe was asked, but the thesis proposal had to be submitted in order to ask for ethical clearance at this hospital. I had informed of the Adelaide University ethical clearance but a submission of thesis proposal and ethical clearance was still required. In order to do that took a significant waiting time which would have affected my field research. Therefore, I decided not to collect data from that point of view chose to collect personal data as a patient.
two northern Thai words, *payaat* (พยาธิ) and *Mueai* (เมื่อย). Payaat, according to Dr. Vichai\(^{12}\), medically refers to some kind of parasites that live in the intestines – or worms - and the like, but the northern Thai term has a different meaning. In northern Thai traditional medicine *Payaat* means disease or is the equivalent to the smallest living organisms that may have caused the sickness. Dr. Vichai was surprised every time at his elderly northern Thai patients stating that they may have had the *payaat* “ท่าจะเป็นพยาธิ” - *tah ja pen payaat* – I think I may have the payaat”.

*Mueai*, medically refers to body aches, muscle aches and the like. Dr. Vichai often had patients telling him that they were *Mueai* “ท่าจะเมื่อย - tah ja mueai - I think I may have the Mueai”. In northern Thai traditional medicine *mueai* means having fever and not feeling well. The pronunciation may vary as [məi]. Thus, two different meanings existed from the same word.

The Military hospital, or Rongpayabaal Kai Mengrai Maharaj Hospital, was initially responsible for military staff in the Chiang Rai area but later on the military expanded its service to serve the local people and the neighboring provinces. It is a small hospital with 60 beds. At this hospital, three languages were used: standard Thai, northern Thai, and English. The main language used was standard Thai. Documents, pamphlets and brochures were in standard Thai. Signs in the hospital were in Thai and English.

The communication pattern in this hospital is dependent on service providers, such as doctors and other officers, and patients. According to the Head of the Academic Unit (2006, 12 February, Interview), communication in the hospital aimed to ease the patients. Doctors with northern Thai language background would switch to northern Thai depending on the patients’ preferred language. In cases where doctors did not speak northern Thai, standard Thai would be used but with a few northern Thai words. The hospital does have hilltribe patients but the patients would be accompanied by military officers who could speak the language and worked in those villages where the patients were from. The hospital does not have any interpreter for this purpose. However, approximately 10-20% of the military officers and nurses have had experience in living and

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\(^{12}\) Thai norm of addressing people is by the use of the first names. Last names are not used to address people.

\(^{13}\) This is written in the northern Thai way of speaking in the standard Thai script.
have worked with hilltribe villagers. Therefore, the language ability of the officers can be used when the circumstance arises.

In addition, in 2004, the hospital issued a language policy which encouraged medical and nursing staff to publish articles in English and Thai. The registrar section had to enter patients’ records in English. Spoken English was also highly encouraged. There were also grants for English courses for hospital staff.

7.3.2 Language use in private hospitals

There are two private hospitals in Chiang Rai, Overbrook and Sriburin Hospitals. Due to the hospitals in this category being in the health-care business, the hospitals aimed at wider customer groups. One of the determining factors was language.

Overbrook is similar to the government and military hospitals in terms of language use and communication. Overbrook has a clinic in Maesai District and the clinic provides interpretation in Burmese and Chinese since a significant number of people in this area speak Burmese and Chinese. The interpretation provided was not from interpreters hired for this purpose but were other patients who could speak the languages. The clinic signs were in Thai, English, Burmese and Chinese.

At Sriburin Hospital, things went significantly further than other hospitals in terms of language as part of the health care business. This hospital is a chain hospital with its headquarters in Bangkok. Chamrian Wongtheptian (2006, 15 February, interview), the manager of Sriburin hospital, stated that there was an annual 5% decrease in customers; the hospital had to employ a public relations policy of advertisements in different languages. The hospital, therefore, had a policy of being an international health care hub, both in Bangkok and in Chiang Rai. According to her, international patient numbers rose 50% when compared to domestic patients. Languages used in this hospital included standard Thai, northern Thai, English, Chinese and Burmese. Brochures and pamphlets about the hospital and diseases were in standard Thai, English, Burmese and Laotian. Sriburin hospital had opened a clinic in Maesai district and also had advertised in Chiang Khong and Chiang Saen district where prospective customers were Burmese and Laotians. Signs in Chiang Rai hospital were written in Thai, English, Chinese and then Burmese.
consecutively. Signs were put up at certain places like emergency room, examination room, pharmacy unit, fees unit, phone booths and also restroom signs.

The hospital did not have a Burmese interpreter nor was there one at the clinic in Maesai district. This was because most of the Burmese can speak Shan language or Tai Yai. And according to Chamrian Wongtheptian, the language was similar to northern Thai. The Burmese who lived at the border areas were already familiar with northern Thai spoken in Maesai area and also the Thais in the Maesai area were already familiar with Shan spoken in Myanmar. Therefore, both parties had minor problems understanding the Burmese speakers or northern Thai speakers. The problems would be pronunciation and a few words which when communicated could be explained. Staff at the clinic in Maesai were also local northern Thai speakers who were familiar with the languages spoken in the area. However, the hospital did not hire any Chinese interpreters due to most of the Chinese living in Chiang Rai being able to speak standard Thai or northern Thai. There were a number of cases where the hospital had French tourists and had to call the SOS service for interpreters via phones. As for other languages such as hilltribe languages, the hospital had no problem because most hilltribe customers, especially the elderly, can speak Chinese and also northern Thai. Moreover, when they come to the hospital they are accompanied by relatives who can speak Thai or northern Thai.

With northern Thai, the hospital encouraged the use of northern Thai in a policy called “นโยบายอู้กําเมือง” or ‘speak northern Thai’ policy. Chamrian Wongtheptian explained that when northern Thai was spoken with patients it built a sense of belonging to the same group, linking both patients and staff, including the hospital. All parties were connected. In her words:

“รู้สึกเป็นคนเดียวกัน” (Ru suek pen khon diew gun), literally means feeling like the same person but the meaning is feeling as if from the same cultural background, with the same set of cultural beliefs and values.

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14 The Burmese state at this border of Thailand is the Shan state.

15 An interpreter service via phone-calls.

16 รู้สึกเป็นคนเดียวกัน (Ru suek pen khon diew gun)
“It felt like we were the same people, like ones’ own sons, daughters, nieces and nephews, for example when we address the patients as “อุ้ย - ooi” [grandparents] or “ลุง – loong” [uncle]. It is a familiar language and if Thai is used, it feels tensed”.17

Chamrian Wongtheptian, however, warned that if patients were speakers of standard Thai then northern Thai or address terms as mentioned must not be used. Titles such as khun18 or ranks should be used instead.

7.4 Decoding medicine puzzle: prisana ya

Outside the hospital is traditional medicinal knowledge. The gap in the traditional medicinal knowledge was due to books written by healers and their teachers. These books were double coded and were typical of northern Thai medicinal related texts. It is known among the traditional healers that they were written in a special genre called “ปริศนายา – prisana ya” or medicine puzzle. This was an exceptional technique in those days to prevent knowledge theft. It was, in other words, copyrighted through the use of script. Yingyong Taoprasert, Dean of Traditional and Alternative Medicine Faculty, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, mentioned that medicine puzzles were “the acts of safe guarding intangible cultural heritage” (Taoprasert, 2006, 27 January, interview).

With regard to the double-coding, the first code is known as ‘ต ัวเสี ยบ - tua siab’. Tua Siab is a systematic play on word and letters. It is the substitution of one letter for another, such as ‘น’ for ‘ง’, and ‘ย’ for ‘ส’19, throughout the text or used at all times when medicine related knowledge was to be recorded. It was dependent on the preference and stylistics of the individual teacher how the codes were systematized (For detailed examples see Prapan Boonmuang, 2003). Once the first code has been cracked then the readers run into the second problem, the second coding, which was that the content itself had also been coded and written in the form of puzzles. Readers were often confronted with weird herb names such as “เป ๊ อะร่องม่อน - pur rong mon”, “หย่อนถุงปลา - yorn thoong pla” and “ขมเหมือนเพี้ย -khom muean phia” (examples provided in an interview by Yingyong Taoprasert, 2006).

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17 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 7.2

18 Khun is a title for both genders and can be used with or without the last name such as Khun Simmee or Khun Simmee Oupra. When Khun is used it is usually considered respectful. When two people are familiar enough the title is usually dropped.

19 Roughly equivalent to ‘k’ for ‘ng’, and ‘y’ for ‘s’
For example:

\[
\text{Puzzle} = \text{khom muen piah (ขมเหมือนเพี้ย)}
\]

\[
\text{Bitter \ as/like \ feaces in the small intestine of a cow}
\]

The puzzle created was dependent on the distinct characteristic of the plant and in this case the distinct bitter taste of the herb became the puzzle. Therefore, the herb is \textit{boraphet} or known in English as \textit{Heart Leaved moonseed} and its scientific name is \textit{Tinospora Crispa Miers} \textit{Menispermaceae}. Some of the puzzles have not yet been cracked. This type of puzzle was not only limited to medicine but was also used in daily life of the northern Thai people where only people in their late 50s onwards are likely to have heard about.

Puzzles used in the old days that are still known today are puzzles used in courting. Some of these puzzles are food related. When girls and boys wanted to express their feelings but were embarrassed to say it directly often these were the phrases used to express their indirect feelings:

For example: 1. Kin ba phak = hak

\[
\text{Eat fruit gourd} = \text{I love you}
\]

This particular example uses the [a:] sound alliteration of ‘phak’ and ‘hak’ to indirectly tell the listener one is loved by the person who uttered the phrase. Courting in the old days would happen in the evenings after dinner and boys went to visit girls and their parents at home. Therefore, the phrases which symbolically and indirectly expressed the feelings tend to be about food and dishes. For example, if a boy stayed too long and it was late then the girl may use an expression like “\text{แลงนี้กินข้าวกับหยัง แกงบ่าหนุนก้า} - \text{lang ni kin kao kub yang? kang ba nun gah?”}” – “what have you eaten this evening? Banoon curry?”. The phrase “kang banoon” or banoon curry means the boy has stayed too long and it was time to consider leaving.
For example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kang} & \quad \text{banoon} = \text{time to go home, you have been here too long.} \\
\text{curry} & \quad \text{jackfruit}
\end{align*}
\]

The reason why jackfruit is used is that when peeling the edible part from the fruit mass, it is a sticky process. It has white gum sap which stains and is difficult to clean. Therefore, jackfruit was compared to visitors who were glued to one place for too long.

Example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kang kai pu khiew hang dork} = & \text{Choysum curry/soup} \\
\text{Kaeng kai pu khiew hang dork} \\
\text{Curry chicken male green tail flower}
\end{align*}
\]

The above is an example of a daily use for a local dish in which a green leafy vegetable with a flower at the top was cooked with chilly paste. This was due to meat being expensive for people in those days and to address a vegetable curry/soup with the name ‘chicken’ sounds like the food of the rich. For example, if A asks B what would B be cooking for dinner? B then answers, “แล้งนี้แกงไก่ปูเขียวหางดอก” - laeng ni kaeng kai pu khiew hang dork” A will know right away that B means “I’ll cook vegetable curry/soup this evening”.

This kind of language use is dependent on the socio-economic situation and the knowledge of the environment, herbs and plants in particular places. In the same way that many medicine scrolls were from eight northern provinces of Thailand, so were the varieties that would occur in medicine texts. Therefore, in order to thoroughly understand and crack the codes, readers have to have thorough knowledge of the culture, environment, way of life, stylistics of each healer and language use in those days to be able to successfully decode the texts. Even though people in their 50s may have the knowledge of language or script, they lack other knowledge types. The only group of people who has this inclusive knowledge is in their 70s and above, and sadly, they are in limited numbers. Thus, decoding northern Thai medical texts is a race against time.
7.5 Northern Thai and printing house

The printing house played an important role in enriching northern Thai as well as lessening the sacred status of the language and its script.

According to Udom Rungruengsri (1984), Presbyterian American missionaries to Lanna in 1868 knew fairly well that the Tua Dham script used was not only for communication purposes but also was revered as a sacred script. Therefore, making Tua Dham script or text available to all through printing was an attempt to break the sacred ties of the script from religion. The innovation of printing was used to illustrate the fact that printing texts in Tua Dham was a no sacred matter. Having known that, the missionary was able to print religion-related texts in Tua Dham script (ibid., p. 17). The Tua Dham script was initially created for printing in 1872 but was not successful until a few years later. The success was mainly due to the effort of Dr. S.C. Peoples, an American missionary based in Lampang. The American Presbyterian missionary then decided to build the printing house at Wang singkham sub-district in 1892. 90% of the publications were religion and education related. However, the opening of the printing house was considered late due to in 1883, Siam announced that standard Thai would be used as the official language of Siam. Therefore, the missionary decided not to clash with the Siam government over language policy and sided with the Siam government in assimilating Lanna with Siam through language. The printing house was later sold in 1926 (See timeline in Appendix D).

The American missionary printing house, named “Rong Pim American” or “The American Printing House”, did however publish a significant amount of Lanna literature in Tua Dham script which is an asset to language studies (Rungruengsri, 1984). In 1903, a monthly magazine titled Laos20 Christian News was published with a circulation of approximately 1,000. An opening of a new publishing house in 1906 had forced the American printing house to also publish local Lanna literature in 1910, called “ kristiyan - Krao Saw” in Tua Dham. When taken over by Muangjai Chainilaphun, the American printing house published over 20 valuable Krao Saw titles. When Tua Dham met its downfall, Lanna literature in Tua Dham was not welcomed by the public. In 1952, standard Thai was first used to publish Krao Saw and other Lanna literature genres. The printing house was sold in 1967 to Prathueng Paowattasuk, who later re-published the Tua Dham scripted Krao saw into standard Thai. Even though, there are folklore publications

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20 In those days, Lanna was known as “Lao Chiang” or the northwestern Laos.
in northern Thai scripts these days, they are published in limited volumes and also for particular group of people for example the academics and those involved in Lanna studies.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses extensively and in detail language use in Chiang Rai city area. Standard Thai and northern Thai are widely used.

Standard Thai is used in all formal domains while northern Thai is used in all informal domains. However, northern Thai is also used in formal domains when interlocutors are northern Thai speakers. Northern Thai has continually faced changes due to standard Thai influences.

There were four types of northern Thai script used at different times with different functions throughout the Lanna history. Three of the northern Thai scripts namely Sukhothai, Phakkhaam, and Thai Nithet have no use today. Only Tua Dham survived time due to its importance in recording Buddhist texts. However, Tua Dham script has no direct use in Chiang Rai or northern Thailand today.

Language use differs slightly in government and private hospitals. At government hospitals standard Thai and northern Thai are used which is also dependent on the interlocutors. English is also emphasized as an international language. At private hospitals languages other than standard Thai and northern Thai such as Burmese and Chinese are also used. Foreign languages other than English used in the hospital are seen as having economic value to the health business.

Traditional medicinal puzzles illustrate the inextricable link between language, culture and environment. The people who hold the key to this inextricable link are the elderly traditional healers. Thus, it is a race against time.

Printing house played two significant roles in northern Thai language: enriching, and lessening its language, script and status.

The language ecology of Chiang Rai city is thus complex and changing.
CHAPTER 8

LANGUAGE USE IN HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CENTERS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses issues concerning language use in hospitals and health centres in Chiang Khong. It includes similar health communication problems to those found in six villages in the other two districts of Maesai and Chiang Saen.

8.1 Language use in hospitals and health centres

Generally two main language varieties are used in hospitals: standard Thai and northern Thai. The former is used as the national language, while the latter as the regional language. Northern Thai was used by northern Thai speakers whereas standard Thai was mainly used by hilltribe groups. However, there were differences in the standard Thai language used between two age groups: over 40 and under 40 years of age.

Dentist Aree (2006, 3 March, interview), mentions that hilltribe patients over 40 years of age had problems communicating in standard Thai while those under 40 had no problem due to their schooling in standard Thai. With regard to those over 40, male patients had little to no problem in communication at hospital due to their work requiring them to use northern Thai or standard Thai, whereas the female hilltribe patients had more problems as they were at home and had limited access to other languages apart from languages spoken at home. Therefore, they could only communicate in their tribal language. When the latter were at the hospital they would be accompanied by their relatives who could speak either northern Thai or standard Thai but mostly the language used would be standard Thai. Standard Thai was viewed as a short cut to communication where hilltribe speakers do not have to take the longer communication route of speaking northern Thai. This was expressed by the dentist as follows:

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1 The content of this chapter has been presented at a conference in China.

2 Data is this section is mainly from Chiang Khong district hospital. There should be more of this type of communication in other hospitals as well but there were time constraints and lack of permission to collect data given by hospitals and health centres. This chapter's main aim is to illustrate that even though data collection was done in a limited time frame and from limited health centres and hospitals the problem is evident. However, this topic deserves an independent study in itself.
An interesting point is that hilltribe people acquired northern Thai through work, social interaction and through friends while standard Thai was through schooling. Those who go into the work force later develop their northern Thai language skills. This is exactly the same as the situation found in the restaurant in Chiang Rai and with other hilltribe language situations. This particular instance clearly illustrates that the national language has resulted in the loss of the functional link of northern Thai language for the hilltribe community.

8.1.1 Dental field trip at remote schools

A communication problem was observed by the dentist during dental field trips to remote schools where children’s dental care would be taken care of at schools. The dentist mentioned that a communication problem did exist especially when communicating to students from hilltribe backgrounds at kindergarten levels up till Grade 2. According to the dentist the dental team would be provided with interpreters who were older students from Grade 5-6 from the same language backgrounds of the patients to help interpret dentists’ messages.

“...When we go for school trip dental care, we have to ask for help from Grade 5 and 6 students; for examples students from Grade 1 cannot really communicate [in standard Thai], kindergarten and Grade 1 students not quite yet but Grade 2 can slightly communicate ...they can communicate in standard Thai...we would have to ask for help from Grade 5 and 6 ...teachers would organize them as interpreters. The interpreters will have to interpret things like “take them to gargle and bring

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3 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 8.1
them back here”, and giving advice for example a student just had his/her tooth 
pulled out, then the advice would be what to do and how to take care of themselves 
after tooth extraction. Dentists needed the student interpreters to tell their student 
patients”.4

It can be clearly seen that younger students at kindergarten to Grade 2 have not acquired 
adequate standard Thai or dental care concepts to be able to comprehend the process as 
yet. A bridge between the national curriculum and the minority’s first language is needed. 
The national curriculum, where standard Thai is taught as the first language to all students, 
has to be reconsidered. The objectives in the curriculum, according to grade level, cannot 
be reached if the language problem is not tackled. An alternative system of teaching 
language and literacy skills is needed, together with teachers who have minority language 
background. (A similar problem occurred in Phamee village as well and is dealt with in 
Chapter 12 under 12.11).

8.1.2 Distance and language

Distance from villages to hospital contributed to the hospital’s language use. The nearer 
the villages were to Chiang Khong town, the better the people’s northern Thai and Thai 
language skills, and vice versa, the hospital staff’s knowledge of the hilltribe language. It is 
a two way effect both to the people and to the hospital staff. According to the dentist, 
hospital staff had more problems communicating to the Lahu (Muser) than to the Hmong. 
This was probably because the Lahu lived further into the hills (in terms of distance to the 
town) than the Hmong who lived about five kilometres from town such as the Hmong in 
Thung Na Noi village. Furthermore, there was more Hmong population than the Lahu in 
Chiang Khong district. Therefore, the frequency of contact and familiarity to the Hmong 
language by dental staff was more than with the Lahu language skills. Due to the frequency 
of contacts, dental staff had their Hmong vocabulary lists (but not Lahu), that included 
dental terms and processes such as “เหอยี่ค่อน เหยา” or “gargle”, “สว่าเนี่ย - swaniah” or “brush frequently”. On a few occasions the dental team incorrectly pronounced 
the words and the errors were instantly corrected by the patients. According to the dentist:

“เขาจะแปลประโยคในภาษาฮันน่ามาให้ ถ้าเข้าใจต้องระวังคำ thận  เพราะคำสั่งดังกล่าวถ้าเข้าใจผิด ไม่ใช่ ไม่ใช่ 
แล้วขอโทษล่ะค่ะ ถ้าพังแตกขึ้นมา ให้พยาบาลเรียกผู้เชี่ยวชาญที่รู้จะรักษาภาษา 
แล้วให้ผู้เชี่ยวชาญสอนคำสั่งคำอื่นๆ เราย่ารู้ว่าจะไม่พังผิด เราย่าเร้นคำสั่งล่ะดีที่เราใช้ประโยคๆ”

4 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 8.2
“Patients would be surprised hearing dentists speaking to them in their own language...sometimes they laughed at us because we made pronunciation mistakes and they would say no..no..and then taught us how to correctly pronounce “yao kon yao” and we had to practice pronouncing correctly. We all laughed and had fun, both the patients and dentists. The language we could speak was already good enough and we noted down all the vocabulary we frequently use.”

Moreover, when patients were asked to review dental care procedures to be conducted at home, older hilltribe patients would say in northern Thai “...เฮาฟังเข้าใจแต่เฮาอู้ออกมาบ่ได้…” which means “I understood it but I could not say it out”. Instead of having patients go through the complete verbal review of procedures, dentists then changed their strategy to simply asking yes or no questions. Some questions required patients to show their understanding by doing the actions such as brushing a model teeth set. According to the dentist, “เป็นก็เข้าใจนะ แต่เป็นอู้ไม่ได้เป็นก็เหมือนเฮาที่ฟังภาษาอังกฤษได้ แต่พอจะอู้มันอู้บ่ได้ – pern kor khao chai na tae pern oo mai dai pern kor muean hao ti fang phasa angkrit dai tae phor cha oo man oo bor dai” which means “patients understood the message conveyed but they cannot put it in words and its just like us; we understand what is said in English but when its time to speak we just can’t”. Apart from yes and no questions, flip charts of activities were also used.

8.1.3 Health volunteer

At this hospital there were no officially hired interpreters. The only equivalent to an interpreter was a health volunteer or aasa samak satharanasuk (อาสาสมัครสาธารณสุข) or known to the hospital and health personnel in short as or sor mor. All volunteers were stationed in their own villages and when needed would accompany patients to the hospital or health centres. However, not all villages had volunteers. Moreover, not all volunteers had time to conduct their job completely. Volunteers’ lack of time was mentioned in Renard et al.’s (Singhanetra-Renard, Chongsatitmun, Aggleton, 2001, p.176) article that “two or three out of 10 health volunteers in each village were active…” but “most professed to not having time to pass on what they had learned through training to other villagers”.

Having volunteers in Thailand was a good attempt to overcome communication problems but problems still existed at both language and conceptual level.

5 “Or sor mor” or อสม. is an abbreviation of the term อาสาสมัคร or volunteer. The volunteers had to attend a six month course on health and health related issues provided by the Provincial Health Department.
8.2 Good blood, bad blood: complexity of communication

The HIV/AIDS situation in northern Thailand, specifically Chiang Rai, has been significantly serious in the past decades. The first case of HIV/AIDS in Chiang Rai was diagnosed in June 1988 (Chiang Rai Global AIDS Program Office, 2008) and a few years later in the early 1990s, Chiang Rai was identified as “the province with the highest HIV prevalence rates” in the country (Tsunekawa et al., 2004). From 1984 to 2002, there were 266,554 cases of HIV/AIDS and 61,204 deaths reported in Chiang Rai. HIV/AIDS infection rate reported in 2001 was 93.3 per 100,000 population (Department for the Control of AIDS and Venereal Diseases Public Health Office Chiang Rai, 2002). Studies in antenatal HIV care in Chiang Rai provincial hospital and health centers estimated a 10.8% of antenatal HIV prevalence (Talawat, Dore, Coeur, & Lallemand, 2002).

Due to the high prevalence of HIV in antenatal women, nurses and health officers who were directly involved with antenatal hilltribe women had to provide information of blood test results and of HIV/AIDS and Thalassemia related issues to the patients. The medical staff who were in constant and daily contacts with HIV/AIDS and Thalassemia antenatal hilltribe patients provided an insight into the complexity of the communication attempt made between them and the patients.

A nurse (2006, 3 March, interview) in charge of the Gynaecology Department informed that most of the problems encountered were related to giving advice and informing patients of blood test results. Patients were mostly from tribal backgrounds and they had limited knowledge of contemporary healthcare. She mentioned that:

“...[Patients]…don’t know anything about AIDS. They have no idea what is meant by sexual intercourse. They don’t know the meaning of it. The majority of the people...”

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Data from this section are mainly from hospital and health centres in the three districts near the villages where data collection occurred.
were hilltribe and we don’t understand them and they don’t understand us. …Usually if they were here on their own without the volunteers then doctors and I would solve the problem by asking their relatives or other patient’s relatives who know the patients’ language to help interpret for us. …However, if it has anything to do with syringe based, then having interpreters are not good since it is confidential and if we have any interpreter in that process it is forbidden. Interpreters are not allowed to know the confidentiality matter of the patients such as blood tested was positive for AIDS. We do have serious problem with the blood test results since it is considered highly confidential. This is a big problem. This is the point where I get so worried because if I have the volunteers with me they will absolutely know the confidentiality matter of the patients”.

The nurse and her team confronted more than just a surface problem of communication. The problem was at language and conceptual level, ethical level, and culture and worldview level.

8.2.1 Language and conceptual level

Problems at the language and conceptual level, when explained, can be understood if the concept exists in the interlocutor’s language, but if the concept does not exist then word sets uttered by nurses may not make any sense which seemed to be hovering around meaninglessly. Moreover, when certain concepts such as AIDS and Thalassemia do not exist in the interlocutor’s conceptual scheme of things, communication breaks down and nurses dealing with this situation with up to 15 patients a day become stressed. The explanation has to start all over again without guarantee that the message would be successfully transferred or if it simply became a mere relay of information like a Chinese whispers game. However, sometimes, some concepts existed but were hidden in the culture and labeled as taboo. The concept of “sexual intercourse”, mentioned by the nurse in the above quote, made in public even in the presence of a nurse may seem inappropriate according to the cultural scheme of things in that particular culture. Although words and phrases such as “sexual intercourse” in Akha and Hmong languages were noted and written down for communicative use this did not seem to help. According to the nurse the patients had no idea about the word and concept at all and that was tiresome for her.

7 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 8.4
“As for me, I would note down that this is how to say sexual intercourse in Hmong and this is how to say it in Akha, and this is how we say no sexual intercourse in the two languages. …but when we talk about sexual intercourse issues, they do not understand it at all. Prior to that, I would ask them, if they know what AIDS is. They had no idea about it and then after that no more questions. Door closed. It is very difficult to explain. It takes a lot of time and I was always burned out. In a day, if I have to explain the blood test of 4-5 patient couples with communication problems I would get so tensed and stressed. It wasn’t just only one notion that I have to explain but my job deals with pregnancy women, therefore, I have a whole series of things to talk about starting from Thalassemia. Thus, any day if we have 10-15 new ANC patients I would really feel sick and I would be worn out by the evening …This is about concept. Even northern Thai people do have problems understanding concepts. The concept of AIDS is fine, they understand it but Thalassemia was a problem. Even staffs were stressed with this type of communication”.

8.2.2 Ethical level

Nurses at the Gynaecology department ran into a dead end when confronted with communicating confidential medical results of blood tests to patients when volunteers were from the same village. Ethically, the presence of volunteers from the same village may cause problems, but staff were left without any choice as the message had to get through even if patients may not like it. There was no choice and therefore it was acceptable.

The same type of communication problem, but an extended one, also appeared at a health centre in Phamee Akha village in Maesai district. The head of the health centre mentioned that when the blood test results of pregnant women were sent to the village health centre, there were two strategic ways to deal with the results to overcome the communication problem of explanation: tell the patients whether their blood was either good or bad. Good blood meant they were HIV negative and bad blood meant HIV positive. Although this seemed to be a simple solution, this strategy had a loop-hole when the second variant, Thalassemia, was tested and the blood test showed a positive result; then the question arises as to which criteria they would use between good and bad since the issue did not fit either of the two criteria of good and bad blood. Villagers have already had the pre-built concept of good blood and bad blood in which the latter - to the villagers - meant death.

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8 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 8.5
with HIV/AIDS. How would Thalassemia be explained under the pre-built concept whether it was a good blood with condition or bad blood with condition? This is not a simple matter of a communication problem but it was about language and concepts to be constructed in that culture. According to Good and Good (1981, cited in Csordas, 1988), the “illness realities” are “fundamentally semantic”.

8.2.3 Culture and worldview level

However, it can be argued that the illness realities are not solely “fundamentally semantic”. The communication problem mentioned above clearly reflects differences in the worldviews of the two health cultures: one being that of the hilltribes (Akha and Hmong in this case) while the other is the modern medical view. With the thought “illness realities are fundamentally semantic”, the medical view initially resorted to words as problem solvers and later realised that difference by having volunteers do the mediation between the two health related worldviews: medical and indigenous worldviews. Problems solved? No, certainly not. Early hilltribe language learning booklets, prepared by the hilltribe Welfare Office together with the Health Department, were full of health related phrases and vocabulary sets on body parts. However, none of the booklets mentioned anything on ethnic worldviews. The manual on learning Akha language prepared by Kraisith Sittichodoke still has similar typical wordlists with very detailed body parts names while the worldview remains untouched. Volunteers, however, did not differ much from the booklet as they were trained to impart knowledge from modern medicine and not from the indigenous world view to the medical staff. It was a one sided flow of information from the prestigious to the non-prestigious.

The one sided flow of information may have been the result of the centralised system in Thailand and in Singhanetra-Renard etal’s (Singhanetra-Renard, Chongsatitmun, & Aggleton, 2001) words “Like all government systems in Thailand, the health volunteer system is organised hierarchically from national to regional, provincial, district, and village level”. The result of the centralised system and the medical discipline’s attempt to solve the problems was that the problems still existed. Why was that so? It may have been because the speech communities and other disciplines were not included in the attempt to solve the problem. The problem is complex in nature and suggests a different approach is needed – an ecological one.
8.3 Not in our language not in our world: effort to make meaning

The imparting of health or disease information should take into consideration both language and health worldview or practices of the locals, and other disciplines. Lyttleton’s (1994) research on an AIDS education campaign in a village in the northeastern region of Thailand provides an insight into the interrelatedness of language use, view of the disease and practices in that community. Lyttleton mentions that the use of central Thai language instead of the northeastern language - the speech community’s language which is similar to the Laotian language - in HIV/AIDS information publications and in mass media, debilitate the perception of the disease and its existence in the community. He (Lyttleton, 1994, p. 144) mentions that there is a “need for the locally targeted campaigns” due to:

“any message in the Central Thai dialect arriving via a new technology, television, is registered by people in Isarn as belonging to a different world - both physically and socio-culturally. Increased exposure to these messages simply reinforces the perception that they are not locally pertinent. Most villagers state that they are afraid of the disease because it has no cure; but all add they have never seen it. Men who visit CSWs feel it is not a local problem but something belonging to the city life styles. The abstract knowledge is present but the concepts are not associated with personal behaviour in any immediate way… For knowledge of AIDS to be an effective motivation for safe behaviour, it must be common knowledge, socially shared to such a degree that the local community itself participates in bringing a sense of appropriate behaviour to its members. When knowledge becomes shared meanings, the information is contextualised in local-specific conceptual networks with direct links to daily practices. Knowledge does not remain abstract, but rather, is actively generated by regular interaction with the people who form part of one’s immediate social world. Individual’s subjective assessment of risk is effected by locally generated meaning, not by the induction of knowledge from afar.” [Emphasis added].

This kind of communication problem also occurs in other countries as well. The view that if the concept is not in the language, people cannot talk about it is echoed in Marker’s (2003) work on truth negotiation between the US government and the Lummi speakers. Marker mentions that at the beginning of the contact the US government defined what was counted as truth and how that truth “would be spoken”; the truth “would be spoken” in Chinook language and not in the Lummi’s language. Thus, the Lummis were not allowed to use their language in the negotiation. As a consequence of the restriction, the Lummis could not speak about their fishing and their environment in Chinook as it was not their language. When they could not speak about fishing and their environment using the Chinook language, it did not mean that truth did not exist. Marker argued that the Lummis could not speak about the truth in Chinook because the language was not equipped with
appropriate lexicon. The truth was deliberately suppressed and constrained through the use of the Chinook language.

“In the 1850’s, territorial governor Isaac Stevens, under directives from Washington, DC … refused to allow the tribal leaders to voice their perspectives in their own languages. Instead, Stevens insisted that the land and resources be talked about using the Chinook Jargon, a crude trading language of approximately 400 words. Developed for negotiations between trappers and Indians, and useful for transactions involving horses, canoes, and utensils, it had an early utility for Indians and Whites. However, relying strictly on the jargon, it was impossible to convey deep and subtle meanings about coastal Salish cosmology, relationships, and the sacred meaning of the land. Using the Chinook Jargon at the Point Elliot treaty negotiations reduced the discourse about land, people, and desire to a hurried, commodified exchange which resulted in compressing Native people onto small reservations to be served by a team of government agents, missionaries, and businessmen who would eventually find ways to carve even more land from these destitute communities. … Deloria (1977), in writing about the treaties, emphasized how the Jargon favoured the Whites not only because the Indians could not communicate their deepest understandings of land and history, but because the actual intentions of the treaties were obscured by the rough and simplistic quality of the language… The Native voice had to be filtered through the crude language of commodification”. (Marker, 2003, pp.364-365)

Lytleton’s “locally generated meaning” mentioned above can happen if the community is given enough time to reflect, evaluate and re-analyse the health-related knowledge system present in the local health system and cosmology, and to make sense of the problem in the community. For example, northern Thai speech communities came up with their term such as Phia Hoob (เพี้หู บ) to refer to HIV/AIDS. Phia Hoob is a result of the community’s interaction with the world of modern medicine and their effort to make sense of what was happening around them and to bring the sense of “appropriate behaviour to its members”. Phia Hoob, literally ‘parasites eat’⁹, was referring to a deadly plant disease caused by parasites that suck the vital food out of plants and cause the plants to weaken, turn black, thin and die. A complex concept, HIV/AIDS, expressed in a simple manner as Phia Hoob is a locally generated meaning through the use of a linguistic device called metaphor. People observe things around them and make sense of them. The disease, HIV/AIDS, exists in northern Thai speech communities with a metaphorical concept of farming.

There are other HIV/AIDS related metaphorical concepts used in Chiang Rai public education. The metaphors used have been observed by one NGO in Thailand over a

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⁹ The northern Thai word hoob in “phia hoob” can also mean more than just simply the word “eat”. It can mean dwells on, lives on, sucks out.
decade of HIV/AIDS public education in Chiang Rai, Maesai and Thailand-Myanmar border (Clarke, 2002). Clarke mentions that five metaphorical concepts were used: social engineering, war, farming, building and family. The former two were mainly used by World Vision’s10 programmers while the remaining three were primarily used by the affected communities.

However, sadly, this locally generated meaning process was seen as mere local belief.

“In this respect it is interesting to observe that despite more than ten years of public information about the causes of AIDS, modes of transmission, and the steps that can be taken to prevent infection, a range of more popular perceptions continued to prevail in the villages where fieldwork took place. These beliefs included ideas about the cause of AIDS, the disease of the moment (rok hit), its links to perceived promiscuity, and its similarity to fatal diseases affecting crops (rok pia hup).” (Singhanetra-Renard et al., 2001, p. 170)

Singhanetra-Renard et al.’s (2001) did not see the speech community’s effort to make sense of HIV and AIDS. Two things can be argued. Firstly, the quote clearly echoes what Lyttleton attempted to convey, that the public education campaign needed to go local as “despite more than ten years of public information” the knowledge of the people remained the same. This reflects two main flaws with two decades of ineffective management by the government. Firstly, was the one sided flow of information, and in one language –standard Thai. An awareness of other worldviews, language and concept engineering was overlooked by the government and the people concerned. The community’s struggle to make meaning had been overlooked. *Rok hit* (disease of the time) and *Phia Hoob* were two examples of the struggle to make meaning by the speech community. The same effort also appears in other languages as for example in Malawi “*matenda amasiku and*” or “the disease of these times” (Muula, 2005), which is similar to the northern Thai “*rok hit*’ or “the disease of the moment” and examples of HIV/AIDS related language use were also found in urban Kagera in Tanzania (Mutembei, Emmelin, Lugalla, & Dahlgren, 2002). An awareness of worldviews is an essential component which is needed to be communicated together with the language (Trudgen, 2000, p. 97).

Secondly, the struggle to come to terms with the disease and the risk behaviour through the coining of new words, the “contests for meanings” as defined by Koestenbaum (1990)

10 This World Vision is a bilateral partnership between World Vision Australia and World Vision foundation of Thailand (Clarke, 2002).
was not limited to the northern Thai, minority or hilltribe languages per se but was also clearly seen in English and in a significantly large number of terms. It can be seen in the shift in meanings of words, and the coining of new words to describe new concepts. Treichler (1993, pp. 302-303) points out that “…the scientific inquiry loaded phrases like “promiscuous” soon gave way to more neutral behavioural descriptions…”. This is a recognised problem, the struggle to make meaning of AIDS appears in phrases in journal articles and books such as an article titled, “AIDS: The Linguistic Battlefield” (Callen, 1990).

“From the start, AIDS posed vocabulary difficulties. Should it be called GRID, gay cancer, the plague? Is it caused by the “AIDS Virus,” by HTLV-III, by the African Swine Fever Virus? These problems in nomenclature disguise the questions of who owns AIDS, who has the primary right to speak of it. As cultural capital of escalating value, it has become a contested body, claimed by countries, doctors, writers, politicians, celebrities, and quacks. …AIDS must borrow the rhetorical strategies of the cold war because it was not born with its own vocabulary. No disease has an intrinsic language; it assumes an identity within a society. …I have, so far, assumed a singular language. But because AIDS is borderless, it is futile as well as arrogant to consider the disease from a solely English-speaking point of view”. [Emphasis added] (Koestenbaum, 1990, p. 163, 165) [Emphasis added]

“The advent of AIDS as a socially meaningful fact has generated an enormous outpouring of words” (Grover, 1990, p. 142)

Interestingly, English has a vast amount of HIV/AIDS vocabulary coined as biomedical scientists, infected patients, and people in general struggled to come to terms with the virus and the cluster of symptoms caused by the virus. Word coinage proliferated as well as the contests for meanings in English as scientists began to probe into the nature of the HIV virus (Callen, 1990; Cribb, 1993; Grover, 1990; Hodgkinson, 1992; Kingsman, 1992; Koestenbaum, 1990; Leech, 1993; Richardson & Ragg, 1994; Treichler, 1993; Watney, 1989). Terminologies, concepts and interpretations will be in constant contest for meanings by various group members of the society.

Society or speech communities without the self-generating-power to constantly “contest for meanings” and terminologies in societal and environmental problems loses a vital function of a healthy language, which will finally lead to the loss of other life support entities of the language. Therefore, the aetiology of language death is the inability of the
community to self-generate the negotiation of meanings, the inability to think, rethink, formulate and conceptualize their environment in their own worldview and language.

8.4 Tiresome, burned out and door closed: need for alternative solution

When explanation of diseases, symptoms and processes are not made based on the world view of the patients and/or the speech community, this risks what the nurse had expressed as “tiresome”, “burned out” and “door closed”. The door was not only closed to the patients but paradoxically and with unawareness to the medical staff, government and academics themselves. Their doors as well were never opened beyond word level. To put it differently, never open beyond the health discipline. At one health centre located across Wiang Mok village, one of the staff did not even care to know the fact that the village under their care had eight main languages spoken in the village. “So what? They have to learn Thai and understand the language use. They can’t get anywhere without standard Thai.” was the answer. The answer may probably be right but one has to distinguish between the national language and good communication. Good communication for the well being of the people transcends the boundaries of national language and the “superficially monolithic biomedicine” (Pelto, 1988).

8.5 Biomedicine: the dominant worldview

The above situation may have been the result of the status of modern\textsuperscript{11} medicine in Thailand which had been given a high status due to its scientific advancement and the “politics of the biomedicine”\textsuperscript{12} in the “biomedicine hegemony” (Estroff, 1988, 423). According to Ida (2005) the “biomedicine hegemony” is associated with the “nation-state ideology”. Ida argues that modern medicine in Thailand has extremely high status when compared to traditional medicine and other local and indigenous medicine or healthcare which in a sense have been devalued for a while, that is until the government’s

\textsuperscript{11} According to Hahn and Kleinman (1983, pp.305-306) there are many names that refer to western medicine apart from modern medicine, “By the name Biomedicine we refer to the predominant medical theory and practice of Euro-American societies, a medicine widely disseminated throughout the world. Each of its many denominations, “western”, “Cosmopolitan”, “Modern”, “Scientific”, “Allopathic”, and “Biomedicine” as well…” . Biomedicine with the capital B is used to refer to scientific or western medicine while biomedicine is used to refer to other medicine practices like Chinese medicine which shares the same human biology focus but with a “different orientation”. Hahn and Kleinman also claim that Biomedicine is indeed a “sociocultural” system, thus making it an “…ethnomedicine, albeit a unique one”.

preservation project. According to Ida (2005, pp. 9-25) traditional medicine or Thai traditional medicine has been promoted as Thai wisdom and there is a call for its preservation. The project however does not seem to be mere local cultural and wisdom preservation but in fact the traditional medicine has been absorbed into modern medicine. In Ida’s case, it is the “medicalization” of local and Thai massage, in order to follow the rules and regulations of the royal court’s system. The local wisdom was reintroduced to the public under the watch of modern medicine experts. The preservation project was “medicalized” and became “nation-state ideology tool” (Ida, 2005, p. 16). In Wieland and Baer’s (1986, p. 100) words “Both medicine and education are instruments of ideological hegemony in our society, and academics, like physicians, play a significant role in legitimising existing social relations”.

The communication problems as found may seem to the Thais as making a mountain out of a molehill but it is about time that the bodies concerned truly sit and talk. Why? From an Ecolinguistics point of view the situation risks the well being and the health of the languages, language diversity, concepts, worldviews and cultures of the minority people in Chiang Rai. When concepts such a good blood and bad blood are mistakenly built in a culture, consequences can not be avoided. Language is the central concern for effective health-related communication. Effective health communication is significant to the survival of indigenous languages.

The core of the communication problem lies at discipline based thinking. Each discipline looks at a problem from their demarcated boundary and when they reach the backyard and fences of the discipline they can go no further. What if the problem is a stinking garbage dump that is just behind their fence?. Thinking in terms of discipline based will not solve the problem as none of the disciplines dare to venture into the stinking garbage dump as it is not within their boundary. A complex and multidimensional problem as such cannot be approached from a single discipline, neither the health nor the linguistic discipline. With the complexity of the problem, the issue has in this section been tackled with an “ecological thinking” (Mühlhäusler, 2003; Mühlhäusler et al., 2004) and therefore I suggest the problem now be sorted out with a transdisciplinary framework.

The reason for proposing both ecological thinking and a transdisciplinary framework is because the two paradigms are similar in their philosophical underpinnings – they see
things as interrelated and they go beyond a single school of thought or discipline which is appropriate for the complex characteristic of the problem. Albrecht et al. (Albrecht, Freeman, & Higginbotham, 1998) also argue that the complexity of human health problems should best be solved with a transdisplinary thinking. According to them, transdisciplinary thinking involves four main determining factors: Health problems/problem boundary, teamwork/collaboration, role of conceptual framework, and how knowledge is applied. The characters of transdisciplinary research described in the table below have been adopted from Albrecht et al. (1998).

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<td>This table is included on page 191 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8.1** Characters of transdisciplinary research adopted from Albrecht et al. (1998)

The health communication problem in Chiang Rai has now been identified. The next step is to have an open ended collaboration from a variety of disciplines and people concerned such as health personnel, anthropologists, educationists, linguists and above all the medical profession staff should be included. The working team has to realise and remain aware that language does not only have an intrinsic and an inextricable link to social problems but is at the centre of this complex problem.

Finally and interestingly there have been no studies on health volunteers and their communication or interpretation problems in Chiang Rai or in Thailand as yet. It deserves an independent study in its own right as the study will help probe into the problems on all the dimensions.
8.6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses language use in hospital and health centres and the problems that arise from communication between the health personnel and patients from different language backgrounds. One communication problem confronted was communication related to HIV/AIDS and Thalassemia. There are three possible levels of health related communication problems: language and conceptual level, ethical level and worldview level. The complexity of communication presented illustrates the interrelatedness of language, social and environmental problems. The communication problem presented also illustrates the nature of the problem, that it is complex and cannot be solved from one single discipline. Thus, a transdisciplinary approach to a solution is proposed due to its similarity to ecological linguistics in its philosophical underpinnings.
CHAPTER 9

WIANG MOK VILLAGE

9.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the language ecology and sub-ecologies of Wiang Mok village of Chiang Khong district.

9.1 General background

Wiang Mok village is administratively under the jurisdiction of Huay Saw Sub-district. It is approximately 30 kilometres away from the town of Chiang Khong and 130 kilometers from the city of Chiang Rai.

![Wiang Mok village sign](image)

*Picture 9.1 Wiang Mok village sign*

The village is ethnically and linguistically diverse. The village consists of 11 ethnic groups: Yunnanese Chinese, Akha, Tai Lü, Hmong, northern Thai, Lisu, Lahu, Wa, Mien, Malay and Kammu. The Yunnanese Chinese were the majority followed by the Akha, Hmong, Lahu, Tai Lü, Wa, Lisu, northern Thai, Mien, Thai Malay and Kammu respectively. The numbers of households and an estimated ethnic population is given in Table 9.1.
Prior to the settlement at this location, the village had been situated in Chiang Khong town near the Mae Khong river on today’s Kosalawit district school’s football field. When asked to move by the authorities, the elderly set out to find a place surrounded by hills, and because in winter the village was covered by thick fog, it gained the name Wiang Mok or the fog town village. The relocated village was formally established in 1973 with only 30 Yunnanese Chinese households. Within three years the settlement had increased to approximately 80 households. In the 2004 survey the number of households was reported at 397 households with approximately 2,000 people (Huay Saw Sub-district Local Administration Office, 2004, pp. 295-296).

The location of the ethnic houses in the village send a clear message that the Yunnanese Chinese had been the first settlers while the Akha are relatively new arrivals. In terms of the location of the houses (See Figure 9.1) the Akha are clustered at the front of the village and are dispersed in small groups among the Yunnanese Chinese while the Yunnanese Chinese are clustered in the middle of the village and to the end of the village. The end of the village is the place where all community gatherings and the necessities of the community are situated such as Chinese temples, church, cemetery, market, nursery and ethnic schools while grocery stores are scattered all around the village. The Hmong, Wa, and Lahu houses are also located in small clusters. The Thai Malay household and mosque are relatively new because they are located at the front of the village. Interestingly, the Tai Lü, Tai Yuan, Lisu, Mien and

### Table 9.1 Proportion of population in correlation to their ethnic background and households in Wiang Mok village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yunnanese Chinese</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akha</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wa</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahu</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Malay</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.1 Wiang Mok village map
Kammu do not have any households due to all being women who are married into Yunnanese Chinese families and thus included in the Yunnanese Chinese group (excluding the Kammu who married into an Akha family).

9.2 Language use in Wiang Mok

Data collected suggests that Wiang Mok has a complex pattern of language use (see Figure 9.2 for a mapping of languages use in the village). There are 13 languages and dialects in use at different levels and domains which have distinct, clear functions in relation to the village, to the ethnic group and to the society at large. The languages used are: standard Thai, northern Thai, Mandarin Chinese, Yunnanese Chinese, Tai Lü, Arabic, Pali, Akha, Hmong, Lisu, Wa, Kammu and Mien. This section describes ten languages: three lingua franca languages: standard Thai, northern Thai and Yunnanese; and seven other languages used in seven sub-speech communities namely Yunnanese Chinese, Akha, Hmong, Lahu, Wa, Thai Malay and Lisu.
Figure 9.2 Language use pattern of Wiang Mok community
9.3 Standard Thai

As the national language, standard Thai has the highest status in the village. Standard Thai is the language of schooling, formalities, language of the media such as radio, newspapers and television and also the language of communication with the world outside the village. Standard Thai is spoken and understood by all ethnic groups but they differ in fluency and skills, which are dependent on multiple factors such as schooling, job and age.

Standard Thai is used in schools from a early age starting from nursery and kindergarten. Therefore, those who attended school were fluent in standard Thai. They consist of people in their late 30s downwards to today’s young generation. From my observation, this group of people still has mother tongue interference such as their speech being accented. For those who had not attended schools, they could understand standard Thai fairly well. As for the elderly, they understand what is said but can not speak the language fluently; the communication starts and ends in Thai mixed with northern words. This happens across all ethnic groups. Moreover, regardless of their communicative fluency, the elderly and the above 40s speech is heavily accented with Chinese or ethnic language characteristics. Their speech lacks certain Thai language attributes such as final consonants, the substitution of the sound [l] and [d] for example [dai] becomes [lai], and the lack of standard Thai noun classifiers, or incorrect use of noun classifiers, such as the use of ‘an’ after almost every noun as exemplified below:

Examples:

a. \[\text{paakk\(\text{a}\) 2 daam} = \text{pens 2 \text{daam}} \]

\[\text{paakk\(\text{a}\) 2 un} = \text{pens 2 \text{an}}\]

\[\text{noun classifier} \quad \text{noun classifier}\]

b. \[\text{dinsaw 2 taeng} = \text{pencils 2 \text{taeng}}\]

\[\text{dinsaw 2 un} = \text{pencils 2 \text{an}}\]

\[\text{noun classifier} \quad \text{noun classifier}\]

According to an elderly woman, “\[\text{มันง่ายดี อันกําเดียวปอละหลายกําเมาหัว} = \text{mun ngai dee, an kham diaew phor la, laai kam mao hua}\]” which means “its easier, using only one word \text{an}, too many words gives me a headache”.

Examples:

a. \[\text{paakk\(\text{a}\) 2 daam} = \text{pens 2 daam}\]

\[\text{paakk\(\text{a}\) 2 un} = \text{pens 2 an}\]

\[\text{noun classifier} \quad \text{noun classifier}\]

b. \[\text{dinsaw 2 taeng} = \text{pencils 2 taeng}\]

\[\text{dinsaw 2 un} = \text{pencils 2 an}\]

\[\text{noun classifier} \quad \text{noun classifier}\]}
As the language of the media, standard Thai is used in every media broadcast and publication. The village radio, or community radio, is conducted in Thai and in Yunnanese Chinese. Due to the majority of the villagers being Yunnanese speakers, news is also broadcast in Yunnanese especially news from the health centre. News from the health centre, located across the entrance of the community, would be delivered to the village radio in Thai where it would be announced in Thai followed by Yunnanese Chinese. Any news delivered or passed on from the village heads would be announced in the same manner. Villagers in general watch television, listen to radio and read newspapers in standard Thai. Discussions on television series among the people are mostly in Yunnanese and other ethnic languages but the language switches to standard Thai when topics of discussion shift.

9.3.1 Language switch to standard Thai

Standard Thai would be used when topics of discussion shifted from the domestic domain to news, politics, and other issues that required Thai lexicon to talk. Therefore, language-mixing is also frequently heard. One Yunnanese informant in his 40s told me that he had tried to discuss using Chinese words but that he had run out of words to express his ideas since he did not have much politics-related vocabulary in Chinese in order to discuss the issues. He lamented that if only he had learnt more of Chinese in ethnic school he would have been more fluent. He found it easier and more convenient to get his message across when using standard Thai vocabulary. This happened to other ethnic groups as well. Discussions in Chinese or any ethnic languages with Thai vocabulary often thrown in were often heard in discussions of such topics as tax, education, social issues, and government policies.

A similar language use and switch also occurred among children in the village, when gathering in the evenings after school, on weekends, and when playing in groups. There were two patterns in terms of the ethnic language speakers: the Yunnanese and the other ethnic language speakers. In terms of Yunnanese teenagers and young children, their language use was mainly Yunnanese but switched to standard Thai when the topics shifted to those associated with the Thai school domain. When topics were about domestic domains or communal domains it would be in Yunnanese.

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1 People in this age group grew up during the time when the Chinese ethnic schools all over Thailand were ordered to close down due to political purpose. Chinese studies in those days had to be secretly organized at people's houses and the studies shifted from house to house.
The switch of language when topics shifted by children can possibly be explained on three
grounds; firstly the children are encouraged to speak standard Thai in the Thai schools and
they spend most of their days in school with friends and without doubt the school domains
extend, with friends, to the village. Secondly, as the young children are from different
language backgrounds and they have not grasped the Yunnanese Chinese spoken in the
village as much as standard Thai compared to the teenagers, they tend to speak the shared
language used in Thai school. Moreover, as children realized that standard Thai is easier in
terms of familiarity when compared to Yunnanese spoken in the village, the children and
youngsters who have been to school tend to use standard Thai. There has been a significant
switch from Yunnanese to standard Thai in the village (see details under Yunnanese Chinese
as ethnic language). Finally, even though young children from all language backgrounds go
to Chinese ethnic school in the evenings, they are beginners in Chinese language and
characters, therefore, these young children had limited knowledge of Chinese language and
vocabulary. As a result, standard Thai was on the increase in the public domain among the
children in the village.

9.3.2 Standard Thai as language of formality and government business

Standard Thai is also used in conducting formalities and business with the government
officials in town. It is well known and well perceived in northern Thailand that almost all the
hilltribes speak standard Thai and not northern Thai due to schooling. The centralized
curriculum and the education system have been successful in teaching standard Thai. This is
a special characteristic of the hilltribes all across northern Thailand, not restricted to this
village only. Therefore, when officials or the northern Thai people in general happen to
come into contact with the hilltribes or the Yunnanese Chinese, the first language is always
Thai based on prior perception. In cases where both parties can speak northern Thai they
will switch to northern Thai, but this is rare. If, during the talk, northern Thai became
difficult, the words used would be simplified or standard Thai words would be substituted,
and in many cases if difficulties persisted, the interlocutors would switch to standard Thai.
This was frequently observed in many shops in town.

Standard Thai is also used in a health centre situated across the village. Villagers who had
been schooled had no problems when communicating in Thai. Those who had not attended
school comprised of both men and women. This group of people would be accompanied by
those who had the knowledge of standard Thai or northern Thai. When villagers went
without any company then the communication would be dependent on the type of illness. If they were minor illnesses then the communication would be comprehensible. Otherwise, an interpreter would be needed, and in several cases a motorbike rider at the rank in front of the village would be called for help. The health personnel at the health centre also mentioned that the biggest problem they confronted was patients often forgetting their appointments due to their inability to read standard Thai.

9.3.3 Standard Thai as the language of identity

Another important role of Standard Thai to villagers and teenagers of not only this village but to the hilltribes as a whole is identity – language and identity. Standard Thai is viewed as very important and it is more than just speaking or learning a language but to them it is more of a broadcasting of their identity as a Thai citizen. Being descendants of a community of early migrants, the acquisition of a Thai citizenship was something to be highly valued. Moreover, geographical-wise they are near the border, status-wise they were once viewed as the “others within” by the state. Thus, speaking Thai is a way to reconfirm and re-establish the self and space in Thai society, as a Thai citizen. Speaking the national language is an explicit act of making a statement that they are not illegal immigrants but rightful Thai citizens. Thus, Standard Thai is equated with security and status elevation among the hilltribes and minorities. Speaking Thai is a way to be included in the ‘Thai-ness’ society.

However, due to ethnic language backgrounds, there is the first language interference in the people’s standard Thai speech. Acknowledging the importance of the national language coupled with the influence of ethnic language pronunciation puts pressure on the people. The pressure is due to the Thai concept of speaking correct Thai. By correct Thai it means correct pronunciation with no interference of ethnic language. Thus, by wanting to be included in the Thai-ness language boundary, they are in fact marginalized. The people are caught in between two notions of being Thai and not being Thai by the pronunciation. By wanting to be included, they have once again been marginalized by the language they speak.

This pronunciation pressure is certainly felt by children and parents. Caught in action in a classroom in the village orphanage, were students quarrelling over a small matter with

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2 Those who did not have the full entitlement of a Thai citizenship would be issued a special identification card with conditions. The conditions vary, for example, some were not allowed to travel out of the province. In cases where a need to travel arose, special permission would have to be sought at the district offices for a certain length of time, under the consideration of the district office. Sometimes, they would be stopped by highway police on the way to check for their permission pass.
friends. One boy used a snobby phrase in passing “ยังไงกูก็พูดชัดกว่ามึงล่ะวะ – yang ngai koo kor phood chud kwa mueng la wa” which means “at least I had better Thai pronunciation than yours”. The same phrase was used over and over again during the class observation.

This correct Thai pronunciation concept has been in the Thai consciousness for at least a decade. Pronunciation awareness went to the extreme at one point with the idea by a government organization to set up standard Thai language clinics to correct speakers’ pronunciation. Interestingly, this idea went hand in hand with the Ministry of Education in a cultural fair in Chiang Rai almost a decade ago. I had a chance to test my pronunciation of standard Thai at that fair and I passed the test. Those who passed the test would be awarded a certificate as a fluent user of standard Thai.4

9.3.4 Standard Thai versus regional language: a language conundrum

Teenagers and those who use standard Thai, including those who attend school, run into a language conundrum. People in northern Thailand in general would expect to hear northern Thai from them although knowing very well of the perception that the minority ethnic tribes speak standard Thai. Many times these young people are asked by the general northern Thai people why they don’t speak northern Thai. People in Chiang Khong district would already be familiar with hilltribes speaking standard Thai but when out of the Chiang Khong district, but people in general would question why they speak standard Thai and not the regional northern Thai. Northern Thai speakers, all ages, prefer to communicate in northern Thai rather than standard Thai. As mentioned, northern Thai speakers speaking standard Thai is metaphorically compared to having body aches, tooth ache and jaw aches. The perceptions of the two parties, the hilltribe and the northern Thai speakers, on language were similar in terms of identity but in different contexts.

To conclude, standard Thai is the language of formality, schooling, and business transactions. Standard Thai is also used as the external language of the village. In this village, northern Thai was not used as the regional language as standard Thai had taken the role of regional language.

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3 *Koo* (I) and *Mung* (You) are impolite address terms and are not used in public in standard Thai.

4 There were two kinds of certificate: a ‘fluent user’ certificate and ‘a need improvement’ certificate. The former certificate was in purple while the latter was in yellow.
9.4 Northern Thai

Northern Thai was learnt outside the village. There were two main northern Thai language learning and language use patterns in association with the villagers: through attending schools in town and through working in town.

9.4.1 Northern Thai learnt through attending schools in town

The younger generations who study in the village primary school have minimal to no contact with the northern Thai language until they move to high schools in Chiang Khong town or in Chiang Rai city then they will come into direct contact with the language through school friends. Frequent interactions with northern Thai speaker friends assist in the teenagers’ northern Thai competence. Some were able to communicate in northern Thai in an extended conversation to the end of the talk, while some started with northern Thai and ended in standard Thai. Code mixing was a characteristic of the former group whereas the latter group heavily code mixed which resulted in the switch when the topics shifted to other domains in which they were not adequately equipped with the lexicon. A village teenager, Ti, expressed that the language becomes difficult when genuine northern Thai words were used in the speech.

The younger generation’s northern Thai competence and vocabulary choice are limited. In a personal communication, a mother of a high school student expressed concerns and at the same time amusement and relief that her son did not understand northern Thai and the expressions used among school friends in an outside village school in Huay Saw sub-district. She mentioned that if he had understood northern Thai he would have gotten into a serious fight at school. Her son was challenged by a school friend in northern Thai “king aow ka bah”\(^5\). Not knowing the meaning of the utterance he did not respond to the challenge. He later learned the meaning of the expression only when he asked his mother after school. This illustrates that, when communicating with school friends, words used are kept simple. Sometimes standard Thai words are substituted and spoken with a sort-of northern Thai accent. During my stay in the village, I tried to speak northern Thai to a few people. I later realized that I tended to go for simple northern words. Sometimes I had to use standard Thai words with a northern Thai accent. A number of teenagers said they felt more comfortable when standard Thai was used and that they could express what they wanted to express.

\(^5\) Means “Would you like to have a fight? I am ready”.
9.4.2 Northern Thai learnt through working in town

The second pattern of northern Thai language learning of the village people, that I encountered, was through work in town. The elderly and those who had not attended formal schooling went directly to work. This group of people could communicate and comprehend northern Thai at different levels due to the interactions with their employers and peers. Fluency was in direct correlation to the length of interactions: the longer the interactions the more fluent the speakers. However, this also depends on individual motivation, whether they wanted to learn the language or not. Those who wanted to learn the language and saw it as important would be fluent. It is worth noting that northern Thai spoken by this group had more of the genuine words and larger vocabulary sets and was more accurately pronounced than the younger generation. For example a middle-aged man, when communicating in standard Thai tended to mix northern Thai words and expressions into his utterances for example “มันอิดขนาด - Mun It Kanaat” instead of “มันเหนื่อยมาก - mun nueaih maak” which means “it is tiring”. A 70 year old grandmother referred to her first son as “ลูกชายคนเก่า - look chaai khon kao” where “เก่า - kao” is a northern Thai word which means “the first”. This northern Thai competence in the elderly may also possibly be explained by the migration route in early days. The elderly had lived in Yong town, in Myanmar and in Laos for quite some time before migrating to Thailand; the language used in Yong town was Tai Lü while in Laos was Laotian. The languages, as mentioned elsewhere, were similar to northern Thai in terms of lexicon, expressions and the script used.

9.4.3 Patterns of language use and illegal migrants’ identification

Interestingly, the pattern of language learnt at work and language learnt through social interaction assisted the head of the village in identifying recent illegal migrants. According to the village head, Mrs. Kanha Jairakbanna (2006, 27 April, interview), during the Thai new year or songkran festival 6 people crossed borders to visit their relatives in Thailand and some of them took advantage of the situation and did not return. When questioned, relatives would say that the person had been living in the area nearby for over 10 years. The village head argued that:

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6 The festival is official from 12-16 April but it would run for a week or more in northern Thailand or sometimes to the end of the month, especially visiting the elders and relatives as a matter of paying respect.
“…บางคนยังพูดภาษาไทยไม่ได้ด้วยซ้ำ คนที่มา 10 กว่าปีแล้วอย่างน้อยต้องพูดภาษาไทยได้บ้างและต้องได้รียนหนังสือ...ถ้าไปทำงานรับจ้างต้องได้คำมือ ต้องได้คำเมือง ภาษาไทยดีอีก”

"Some of them can’t even speak Thai. Those who lived here over 10 years had to at least be able to speak standard Thai at some level and had been to school…. If they took up any service or labour job in town they will definitely know northern Thai and Tai Lü words".7

The village head later added that if they had been in the village for that long, she would have somehow run into them.

9.5 Yunnanese Chinese

Apart from recognizing the national language as having supreme importance, the villagers also recognized the role and importance of Yunnanese Chinese in the village. Yunnanese Chinese plays two major roles: as the language of the majority and as an ethnic language.

9.5.1 Yunnanese as the majority language

As the majority language, Yunnanese Chinese is used in almost all communal domains, in all age groups at different levels and by both genders in the community such as in the morning market, grocery stores, playground, Baptist church, evening social gatherings of men and women and meetings as discussed in language of the meetings under Section 9.18. Most of the vendors in the morning market are villagers and only a few were northern Thai speakers from Chiang Khong town. Northern Thai vendors do not have any problems since everyone in the village can communicate in Thai but the vendors themselves have a good and sizable Chinese vocabulary specifically related to their goods. At the grocery stores, people would communicate in Yunnanese and Thai. Sunday services in the Baptist Church are usually conducted in Chinese where the attendants are both Chinese and Akha members; the services in Akha would be conducted every other week.

9.5.1.1 Age, language competence and language switch

Age groups showed differences in language competence and language shift. The elderly and middle-aged generations were more fluent in Yunnanese when compared to the younger generations. The elderly of almost all the ethnic language backgrounds speak Yunnanese fluently. The middle-aged also use Yunnanese fluently in conjunction with standard Thai.

7 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 9.1
The switch from different ethnic language backgrounds to Yunnanese and vice versa was instant by the elderly and the middle-aged. I once was in the middle of a talk where all the women were Akha who joined in one by one after seeing their children off to school. Due to the cold weather they gathered to sit in the sun. The conversation was in Akha and when a Yunnanese person joined in with a Hmong person, the language was immediately switched to Yunnanese Chinese. When the conversation or the question was directed to me, it would be immediately translated to standard Thai by any of the group members. Sometimes if the topic involved me or language topics that all of them wanted me to hear, they would all switch to standard Thai. In some cases, when a person could not express her opinions or ideas in standard Thai, the group would lend a hand in trying to express it. The effort to explain in standard Thai would be discussed in their ethnic language or Yunnanese Chinese and then translated to me. This explanation effort only happened in the case where the person had no formal schooling in standard Thai and had limited knowledge of the language. As far as the younger generation is concerned, Yunnanese is still used but the language has started shifting to standard Thai. (See in standard Thai under Section 9.3.1).

However, the use of the language is dependent on the family’s view. In one Hmong family, the parents spoke Yunnanese to their children due to the parents’ recognition of the importance of the language. They viewed that Hmong would not be worth speaking outside the home. Most of the Akha children and teenagers attend Chinese ethnic school in the evenings as the parents foresee the future use of the language, their children’s studies and future work. Many ethnic groups from other provinces send their children to study at the ethnic Chinese school in a boarding program where in the daytime students get to study in Thai schools in town.

Most of the villagers who had schooled in the Chinese traditions can read Chinese whereas those who had not been schooled cannot read, especially the elderly from the ethnic groups. Some elderly from an ethnic background memorize the characters instead. Men, from different language backgrounds who gather in the evening after work to play Mahjong communicate in Yunnanese Chinese. An elderly Hmong man in the group could play the Mahjong on the Chinese board with Chinese characters. Although he did not know what the character reads but he knew that the characters written on the Mahjong board were numbers. Upon being asked how he know that they were numbers, he replied “It is there, written there number one, two and three”. When asked about other Chinese characters, he could not read. He only recognized the Chinese characters on the Mahjong board as
symbols. Therefore, elderly people from Yunnanese Chinese background may have had some Chinese schooling, while the elderly or middle-aged from other ethnic backgrounds, like the Hmong elderly, may not have had the chance to attend Chinese ethnic school. One of the reasons that the middle-aged had not had proper Chinese schooling could be because of the national policy to close down all Chinese ethnic schools in the 1970s.

9.5.2 Yunnanese as an ethnic language

Yunnanese Chinese also serves a second purpose, that of an ethnic language spoken at home by all ages in all domestic domains. There are two main patterns of Yunnanese language use in accordance to marriage in the Yunnanese speech community: exogamous and endogamous groups. In the exogamous group, fathers were Yunnanese while mothers were from six different ethnic groups namely: Tai Lü, Akha, Hmong, northern Thai, Lisu and Mien. In the endogamous Yunnanese family where both the parents were ethnically Yunnanese Chinese, children were raised speaking Yunnanese as their first language and used the language in all domestic domains. In contrast, children from intermarriage in Yunnanese family domestically displayed bilingual competence in Yunnanese (father's language) and one ethnic language (mother's language).

9.5.2.1 Exogamous: language use in Yunnanese and Tai Lü intermarried families

Children in a Yunnanese family of Tai Lü mothers could speak Tai Lü fluently and in all domains. The mothers spoke Tai Lü to their children but switched to Yunnanese Chinese when talking to their husbands, while the children spoke Tai Lü to their mothers and switched to Yunnanese when talking to their fathers and when as a family Yunnanese was used. As for fathers, they used only Yunnanese both with their children and wives. When the mothers addressed the whole family as a unit, Yunnanese Chinese was used. At times, the languages switched automatically in the cultural-related ceremonies; if it was Chinese related then the terms or language used to refer to that topic would be in Yunnanese, but if the ceremonies were Tai Lü ceremonies the language or terms would be Tai Lü. As the Yunnanese live in an extended family, the grandparents also play an important role in strengthening the Yunnanese fluency.

Apart from the grandparents, the Tai Lü community of Tai Lü housewives and elders also help in strengthening the children’s Tai Lü competence. The Tai Lü housewives and elders community consists of 22 native Tai Lü women who are married into the Yunnanese
Chinese families. Fourteen of them are widows. All of them speak Tai Lü in their group and also Yunnanese in the presence of a Yunnanese person. Some of the Tai Lü women, especially the elderly, were originally from different towns in Xishuanbanna, Yunnan and thus speak with different accents. They migrated in their teenage years; therefore, they could speak Yunnanese. Some Tai Lü women were from Yong city, Burma, and some were born in a nearby district. Those who were born in Burma and in Thailand initially had no knowledge of Yunnanese. One informant told of her learning experience after marriage that "แต่งงานมาอู้บ่จ้าง ใหม่ๆก็ตีนๆมือๆไปค่อยฮู้ไป ตอนแต่งงานน่ะ 16 ตอนนี้ 60 ละ อู้ได้หมด"\(^8\), which means when she first got married at 16 she could not speak Yunnanese and she had to sign\(^9\) but she later learned the language and could communicate anything. The Tai Lü community often get together to practice certain Tai Lü traditions and customs among the Tai Lü wives and one which I attended and was of interest to me was the Sueb Chata, or longevity ceremony\(^{10}\) (see under topic language and gender).

### 9.5.2.2 Language use in Yunnanese and other ethnic groups intermarried families

In the cases of the remaining Yunnanese families with mothers from other ethnic groups, the pattern of language use differed from the families with Tai Lü mothers in which the mother’s language was used but on a very limited scale. With the family whose mothers were northern Thai, the language use was very similar to Tai Lü in all respects. However, there were very few (2-3) northern Thai housewives in the community, therefore, the children’s language was not strengthened as much as in the Tai Lü community. Despite this, the children and the northern Thai mothers got together collectively with the Tai Lü community due to the similarity of the language and culture. Therefore, their language use tended to shift to the Tai Lü variety.

In the other four remaining families with mothers from Akha, Hmong, Lisu and Mien, the language use pattern differed from the Tai Lü and northern Thai. The intermarriage in this group happened a long time ago, in the first generations after migration. Children born from this generation were taught Chinese in the households but had very limited knowledge of the mothers’ languages; limited to the extent that they could not communicate in their mothers’

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\(^8\) This expression is with a Tai Lü accent but the words used are the same as northern Thai.

\(^9\) The phrase that tells of signing is “teen teen mue mue” which literally is “foot foot hand hand”.

\(^{10}\) The Sueb Chata ceremony or longevity ceremony is a Buddhist ceremony practiced in northern Thailand among the Tai ethnic groups where all the community gathers at the person hosting the event’s house. This ceremony was organised on the village head’s birthday.
language. Their mothers did not teach them the languages apart from limited vocabulary picked up from when their mothers communicated with their language communities, especially in Akha communities. Those in communication with Akha communities will later learn the Akha language from the Akha community. Whereas, the other communities of the Hmong, and Lisu were in a very small number while there was only one Mien. Therefore, the language ability of these groups was mainly Yunnanese Chinese with limited knowledge of their mothers’ language in the case of the Akha, while in the Hmong, Lisu and Mien the language use was almost none.

9.5.3 Yunnanese Language change

Regardless of Yunnanese language abilities, the younger generation was showing signs of language change and change in attitude towards the language. One informant expressed deep concerns, in standard Thai, that the younger generation Yunnanese had started mixing standard Thai in their Yunnanese speech:

“เด็กเขาพูดจีนค่ะไทยค่ะผสมกัน จีนก็พูดไม่จบไทยก็พูดไม่จบ ยังคิดอยู่ ยังห่วงอยู่ว่าข้างหน้าจะเป็นอย่างไร”

“They speak one Yunnanese word and one Thai word. They didn’t even finish the sentence in Chinese and not even in Thai. I am worried about the future what would it be like”.11

Moreover, the head of the village added, on the concerns of future language loss in the younger generation that:

“ห่วงภาษาจีน เพราะว่าละอ่อนบ่าเดี่ยวนี้ไปเรียนภาษาไทยกับภาษาจีน มันมีคนเคยเรียนจีนก่อนของเด็กนี้จะมาเอ่ยภาษาไทยกับภาษาจีน ใน 20-30 ปีข้างหน้าที่ภาษาจีนอาจจะหายไป แต่ว่าในโรงเรียนที่มีจีนจะยังคงมีอยู่ ภาษาจีนอาจจะหายไปในอนาคต แต่ภาษาไทยไม่หายไป ครอบครัวจะยังยอมรับภาษาจีน แต่จะไม่ยอมรับภาษาจีนที่มันหายไปในอนาคต...”

“I am worried about Yunnanese because the kids today study Thai and Chinese [Mandarin]. Even when at the Chinese ethnic school when they speak to their own people they now use standard Thai. In 20-30 years time the spoken language [Yunnanese] will gradually be gone but the written ones in school will still be there. The spoken one, in the future, may be gone. …Even Lü, other families do not accept Lü. They won’t speak Lü to their parents. They will only use either standard Thai or Yunnanese to their parents”.12

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11 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 9.2
12 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 9.3
One teenager informant agreed with what the elders had said and added that “เป็นจริงครับ ภาษาจีนเวลาเรียนมีน้อย เราจึงได้ภาษาไทยกันมากกว่า” which means “It’s true. There isn’t much time to study Chinese. We are more fluent in Thai”.

With regard to attitude towards standard Thai, the villagers have positive attitudes towards the national language. One informant explained that most of the families sent their children to study in town at an early age and not at the village school due to wanting their children to be proficient in standard Thai. Some of the parents believed that if their children start school in town late it will affect their children’s language learning, pronunciation and proficiency. The interference of first language pronunciation on standard Thai could cause problems for these students, because the students in town would instantly recognize that they were from the hills and would address them with derogatory terms like maeng doi (literally ‘hill insects’; แมงดอย), or dek doi (literally ‘hill kids’; เด็กดอย). The village children may find problems in making friends in the teenage years. Therefore, parents see that it is better to have their children schooled in town at an early age.

To conclude, Yunnanese is used as the majority and an ethnic language within the community. Yunnanese is also gradually facing changes.

9.6 Akha and language use in Akha community

The Akha community consists of approximately 100 households with an estimated number of 500 people. The Akha language functions as a domestic language. Interestingly, as a language of work. The language also has a literary tradition.

9.6.1 Akha as domestic language

As a domestic language, Akha is spoken fluently by all generations. All three generations, the elderly, the middle-aged and the young, still strongly communicate in Akha in the Akha community. Apart from Akha, the people also speak other major languages such as standard Thai and Yunnanese. In the case of the elderly, and those who went straight to work without schooling, they also can communicate in northern Thai, while the younger generation learnt northern Thai from peers in school, and also at work.
In the case of a Kammu married into an Akha household, there was no intergenerational language transmission from the Kammu mother to the children. The mother speaks Akha to the husband and the children. The mother only spoke Kammu when visiting her parents’ family in another village.

9.6.2 Akha as language of work

In terms of the language of work, this is so because the Akha from this village make up most of the workforce in many jobs; such as agricultural related jobs, labour and service jobs both in the village and outside the village. Therefore, communication in the work place or in the farm area among the workers is mainly in Akha. One Yunnanese employer (personal communication) regretted not having learnt Akha when he was younger. At the time of hiring he saw the importance of the language in order to communicate with his workers. He also mentioned that at different places where different ethnic hilltribes inhabit an area, the language used in the lower level jobs also varied according to the tribes and area, dependent on what tribal language background the majority inhabitants of that area belonged to. In certain places, if there were Lahu, then Lahu would be the language of work. This employer’s work was based in this village, therefore the language he needed was Akha.

9.6.3 Akha literary traditions

In terms of literary traditions, the Akha community has a Bible, storybooks and a language learning manual. The Bible is written in Roman script. It has been translated by an American missionary for use. Akha is also used in Church services in the village. Akha stories, books and other materials are written and published in Roman script by the Akha Outreach Program in Chiang Rai. The publications are used as teaching materials in the Akha language class to 20 students in the village. According to the head of the Akha community – who is the teacher - children find the language easy to learn due to the romanised script, since students are already familiar with English at school. They only have to learn additional consonants and vowels, tone markers, vocabulary and cultural literacy and knowledge. Thirdly, there are books and stories written by the head of the Akha community and also by other sources such as the Akha Foundation and the Akha Outreach Program. Finally, there are brochures, pamphlets and other public information published in Akha in Roman script.
However, one major problem in using the texts provided by various sources is the unstandardized writing systems. There are 5-7 differing writing systems and rules (Sittichodoke, 2006). When different texts are used in the study group, confusion arises. Therefore, the head of the community familiarized himself with one particular style: the style in use at the Akha Outreach Program. This was because the organization had formal schooling for Akha students in Akha language, and also published textbooks and other materials for the school and the Akha community as a whole.

Although the younger generation can speak and understand the language very well, and the language is still strongly transmitted from generation to generation, the Akha community also encountered the problem of language change. According to the head of the community children do not like to speak Akha. They tend to use more Thai in their daily conversations both at home and in the community. They do use Akha but language use is on the decline.

9.7 Hmong and the language use in Hmong community

There are 15 Hmong households with an estimated population of 75. There is only Hmong Dawb or white Hmong living in this village. Hmong in this village use Hmong in domestic domain as their first language.

9.7.1 Hmong and Maew

Hmong in general is known in Thailand as Maew. The term now is not used as it has a derogatory connotation in Thailand as backward and uncivilised. The word Maew was, at some point in time, used in northern Thai phrases inclusively to mean people from the hill like Maew Long Doi (literally Maew came down the hill) and Taeng Tua Yang Maew (dressed like a Maew). According to one Hmong informant the term was an exonym used by the Chinese in the old days to mean barbarians and cats. This was due to the Chinese character used in writing the name representing a cat. Additionally, Maew was onomatopoeic; it referred to the sound made by cats. By addressing the Hmong as Maew was to devalue them. Therefore, being called a Maew was despised by the Hmong in Thailand. The Maew are now addressed as Hmong.

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13 Maew Long Doi (literally Maew came down the hill) was used to mean to carry a lot of things and covered in red dust as if traveling a long way on a dirt road. Taeng Tua Yang Maew (dressed like a Maew) was once used to mean to dress inappropriately or put on too much jewelry and decoration. These phrases are not generally used nowadays due to the derogatory meanings attached.
9.7.2 Hmong as domestic language

As a first language, the three generations, namely the elderly, the middle-aged, and the youngsters, can speak Hmong. This community can also speak other languages such as standard Thai, Yunnanese and northern Thai but the language abilities and pattern of learning are different among different age groups. Those over 50s and the elderly, including those who did not go to school, use Yunnanese as the lingua franca, while the middle-aged and the younger generation who have been to Thai school, use standard Thai as the lingua franca. Those who went straight to work in town knew northern Thai to an appreciable degree.

9.7.3 Hmong literary tradition

In terms of literary tradition, there is only a Bible. The Bible is written in White Hmong. There are two versions of the Bible; one written in Roman script and the other in standard Thai script. The Roman version titled \textit{White Hmong Standard Bible 2004 Edition} was the first one used in the Hmong Church in Wiang Mok. However, not all Hmong in the village can read the Roman script. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, the Roman script was in limited use as there were no other publications whatsoever in Hmong available in the village or northern Thailand. If there were, they were extremely difficult to get. The only publication in Roman script in Wiang Mok was the Bible. Secondly, the younger generations do not want to study the script, as they see no extended use of the script when compared to the standard Thai version. The younger generation and those who have been to school favour the Thai version of the Bible. One informant mentioned that today's teenagers, when going to church, will take with them the Thai version but not the romanised version. With regard to the elderly, they do not know the romanised script and according to one informant, they have no time to study. Therefore, a large number of the people opt for the Thai version Bible. Due to the recognition that the romanised script is not popular among white Hmong teenagers and villagers in Thailand, the \textit{Hmong Njua} or the green or blue Hmong Bible variety emerged in Thai script entitled \textit{Phra Chritsadham Kamphi Phusaa Hmong Dum} (black Hmong). One of the villagers had it for reference. It was specifically designed for the younger generation by the green or black or blue Hmong majority in another province. The adaptation of the Thai script for Hmong has not been studied in this thesis.
Secondly, although there is a missionary, or as known to the villagers Ajarn Farang, to teach white Hmong script and Christianity in the village, the Ajarn Farang did not stay long as there were not many people interested in learning the script. With the backdrop of the language situation his presence eventually became irrelevant. One informant expressed that the romanised script will be out of use in the future if the teenagers do not study it “นานๆไปมันจะหาย – naan naan pai mun ja haai” which means “It will disappear in the long run”. Moreover, it will disappear with the teenagers if they do not speak the language, as there are signs of language shift in Hmong families.

9.7.4 Language change in Hmong community

Language change was observed in the Hmong community. Firstly, Hmong teenagers switch to the use of standard Thai in their conversation. Secondly, Hmong elders clearly recognise the Hmong language shifts. One elderly informant expressed that, “ถ้าคนแก่ตายหมดน่าจะหายตราบใดที่ยังไม่ตายก็ยังไม่หาย – tha khon kae taai mode kor na ja haai, traabdai ti yang mai taai kor mai haai” which means “If all the old people die, the language will be gone. If they still live, the language lives”.

Hmong language change is not only happening in this village but the same change is happening at other villages in Chiang Rai as well. Chuamsakul (2006) being a Hmong himself wrote about Hmong language change among the youth. He states that Hmong teenagers refused to be identified with their ethnic background when in town. They refuse to speak their language in public. He states that, “Hmong are caught between the contradictory forces: their ethnic identity and the modern Thai education” (ibid., p. 9).

The denial of one’s identity happens to all ethnic groups across the board. From my teaching experience, I encountered one student in the classroom that I was teaching who denied her own identity saying that she was not from a hilltribe. She later told me the reason for her denial. It was because she was confused between leaving her own identity and embarking upon a new one as expected by the nation. She asked why one cannot have more than one identity. She said that if she left her roots behind, she would have no home to go to, and no home ahead of her as people would make fun of her with the way she spoke.

14 Ajarn Farang, literally referred to a white, western teacher or foreign teacher.
Chuamsakul (2006) also states that although the young Hmong grew up in a Hmong speaking environment they switch to standard Thai as a result of its power:

“…many of them [the Hmong youth] preferred to speak Thai to Hmong because of the influence of the Thai, a ‘symbol of powerful language’ of the main stream society. Some of them hardly speak Hmong or do not want to speak Hmong. For example, during the Hmong New Year Festival in December 2003, many young Hmong in the Sky Village who came back from cities to join the New Year, spoke only Thai, sang Thai songs, and played guitars. The Hmong women elders said that the young people rarely speak Hmong…The Hmong youth in Sky village always speak Thai to one another and they speak fluently. During my field work in the village, many times I could not differentiate that they were Thai or Hmong’ (Chuamsakul, 2006, pp. 295-296).

The contest between the two ethnic identities, the primordial or the ones they were born with and the constructed identities will continue.

9.8 Lahu and language use in Lahu community

There are only 7-8 Lahu households with an estimated 35-40 people in the village. The pattern of Lahu use is mainly in the domestic domain between family members. The Lahu members also speak Yunnanese, standard Thai and northern Thai to a certain extent. With regard to writing, the language does not have a script or a Bible in Lahu at this village but the language still has the literary traditions of song and story telling.

9.8.1 Lahu as domestic language

All the three generations speak fluent Lahu but at different levels. Teenagers and children use Lahu with the elders in the community but switch to standard Thai from time to time in certain contexts when referring to issues that have no concepts in Lahu, usually school related and news. Despite the switch in language, the younger generations are still proud of their ethnic language. Some youth are able to tell stories and sing Lahu songs.

9.8.2 Other languages used in Lahu community

The elderly and the middle-aged use Yunnanese in the community while the younger generation use more standard Thai than Yunnanese. The younger generation use Yunnanese only when talking to the elderly from different language groups. However, a young woman translated my questions to her father into Yunnanese and not Lahu. This was because she had learnt Chinese at school to be able to communicate with her father using concepts in
Chinese. Some concepts were not readily available to her in Lahu. She was more comfortable in Yunnanese on topics outside of the domestic domain while the domestic domain would be in Lahu. She also jokingly added that Lahu in the family should be well transmitted and alive as long as her mother still yells at her children in Lahu.

The exception in the village is six people who recently migrated from Laos and who cannot speak Yunnanese. There are two solutions for the family: ask for help from other Lahu speakers and use Laotian. As Laotian spoken on the other side of the Mae Khong River in Laos, is to a certain extent similar to northern Thai and Tai Lü, help can come from many sides.

Language switch also occurs when a household member marries a member of another tribe. A few younger generations Lahu married Yunnanese in this village. Therefore, the language used in their domestic domain also shifted to Yunnanese. One Lahu family had a Yunnanese son-in-law and the language used switched to Yunnanese when the son-in-law was present. The son-in-law did learn to speak Lahu but was still at beginner’s level and was unable to maintain a conversation.

Additionally, the Lahu in this village attend the Baptist Church. Attending Baptist Church, one has to know Yunnanese, Mandarin Chinese and Akha. Therefore, Yunnanese also functions as the language of religion for the Christian Lahu in this village. Recognizing the importance of Yunnanese, the Lahu community encourages their children to study Yunnanese as the language of wider communication and also encourage their children to study Chinese at the ethnic school for future use. This is in contrast to the view of their ethnic language. Lahu was seen as not having any real use in the future. This may be because the Lahu are the minority in the village and not the majority, while in villages with majority Lahu dwellers, the attitude would be different. This language community made way for the wider communication language – Yunnanese, Mandarin Chinese and standard Thai.

9.9 Wa and language use in Wa community

There are only two Wa households in the village with 17 members. The two households are related. This family has three generations: a 60 year old grandmother, her children, and her grand children who are in their teenage years and younger.
The grandmother is the only fluent speaker of Wa in this village. She stopped using Wa when her husband passed away and that was when her children were young, so the language was transmitted to only a certain extent to her children. Her children can still communicate in Wa but not in an extended conversation with her or with any Wa person from a different village. She expressed her frustration to me in Thai when we met at the Noodle stall in the village that “ตั้งแต่พ่อเสียไปแล้วก็ไม่ได้พูดกับพ่อพอดีไม่เข้าใจ เข้าใจแต่พูดไม่เป็น พูดไม่ได้ – Tang tae phor sia pai laew kor mai dai phood Wa, phood kub khrai kor mai khao jai, khao jai tae phood mai dai” which means “since father [her husband] passed away, I didn’t speak Wa. Nobody understands me. They sometimes understand but they don’t know how to speak. They can’t speak”. After telling me that, she switched to Yunnanese in order to mind her grandchildren’s noodle eating behaviors. The grandmother communicates to her grandchildren in Yunnanese. Her children also communicate to their children in Yunnanese. Therefore, the children are being raised with Yunnanese and have no knowledge of Wa. In terms of other languages, the family can speak standard Thai but not northern Thai. One family member mentioned that when hear it they can identify the language as northern Thai and know what was communicated but cannot speak. The exception was the grandmother, who, being a market vendor, can speak many languages to a functional extent.

One of the family members recalled that they used to live in a Wa village in Myanmar before they moved to Thailand in search of doctor and hospital due to his illness. He recalled having communicated in Wa in the Wa villages both in Myanmar and in Chiang Mai. The family later moved to this village. He also mentioned that his elders in the Wa villages used to threaten children who did not speak Wa that “ถ้าไม่เป็นภาษาว้า เอาน้ำร้อนมาลวกิ้งก็เป็นภาษาว้าแล้ว - tha mai pen Phasaa Wa, aow nam ron ma luak lin kor pen phasaa Wa laew” which means “those who do not know Wa, just burn their tongue with hot water and they will be able to speak Wa”.

When I first met this family member, he told me that he was a Yunnanese; in fact the entire family was a Yunnanese family. The longer I stayed and the more I talked to him, he later revealed that he was a Wa. He hid himself in the language (See language as identity hideout in Section 9.18).

In terms of script, Wa has a writing system based on the Roman script and none of the family learnt the script and its system. The language is not taught in this village or in Chiang Rai villages but interestingly it is taught in the military barrack in Chiang Rai town. The
organization had Wa taught as a language of a neighboring country. The teacher was an army
officer. It was an intensive Wa language class and when students finished their course they
were expected to learn the language in a real situation in a Wa village in Chiang Rai. Students
were expected to compile words and vocabulary sets and submit at the end of their
fieldwork. I was told that the course was once opened to the public but there were no
applications or interest. The Roman script for Wa is not studied in detailed in this thesis.

9.10 Thai Malay

Thai Malay is the Malay language spoken in the southern region of Thailand. Interestingly,
although it is classified as a Malay language in the Ethnologue, the language was classified as
a Thai Malay and was sub-stratified under Thai (See Chapter 5). The village has only one
household that speaks Thai Malay.

The family, Thai Muslim, migrated from Pattani, a southern province, for the purpose of
setting up a mosque since there was no mosque in Chiang Khong district. The family, apart
from looking after the mosque, and holding services also takes care of a small orphanage
housing at least 10 children from various tribal language backgrounds from all over Chiang
Rai. This family uses Thai Malay with the family members but standard Thai with the
orphans or children who were there for religious study purpose. Therefore, standard Thai
has to be used as the intercommunication language of the children.

Classical Arabic is taught at the mosque to children and teenagers. In my observation the
students were all male. This young generation has to take daily evening classical Arabic
classes. They are trained to read the Quran.

However, when communicating with the villagers as a whole, standard Thai is used and also
the whole village switches to standard Thai when in conversation with the family and the
children. Students also study Chinese, as the language is important for the youngsters in
terms of being a community language and the language of recent economic power which
would be of future use.

9.11 Lisu

There were mainly 3 elderly Lisu speakers in the village and few children who were from
other villages living in one of the village’s orphanage. The 3 elderly Lisu speakers were
housewives and all were married into Yunnanese Chinese family. The three speakers do not
use Lisu in their daily lives, only Yunnanese Chinese is used with the family members and also village members. Yunnanese Chinese became their main language. An elderly grandmother mentioned that even when the three elderly meet they would use Yunnanese Chinese. However, the elderly grandmother frequented the orphanage to speak Lisu to the Lisu Children. Please see details of language use and attitude under language use in the orphanage at 9.15.1 paragraph 2.

**9.12 Language of the meetings**

Languages used in meetings vary and are dependent on two main variables: the meeting attendants and the agenda to be discussed.

According to the village head, a meeting will be conducted in standard Thai if there are government officials or any outsiders attending. In the cases where the villagers are involved together with government officials or outsiders, the meetings will be conducted first in Thai followed by Yunnanese Chinese translation. In a village function, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the new meeting hall, where the attendants consisted of Thai officials, military representatives, outsiders and villagers, the formalities were conducted in standard Thai and immediately translated into Yunnanese Chinese. All other announcements related to the function were in the same order. At the same function, elderly villagers communicated in Yunnanese Chinese.

In cases where the village meeting is targeted at the villagers then the language used will be Yunnanese Chinese followed by standard Thai. In order to ensure the understanding of the villagers with regard to any serious matter then each ethnic head will be prepared for the translation. In cases where only the head of the sub-speech communities are the attendants then the language will be in standard Thai. Later on the head of each sub-community will call for the meetings in their own respective community and languages.

Although communication in a multilingual community seems difficult, according to the village head it is not as difficult as it seems; it is a matter of understanding and being the head of the community one should understand the language and cultural diversity “เราให้ความสนใจกับวัฒนธรรมทุกแห่งเท่าเทียมกันฉะนั้น -- rao hai Kwaam son jai kab took watthanatham thao thiam kan mod loei” which means “we value and give equal attention to all cultures alike”.
9.13 Language use in village signs

On my first visit, a sign at the front of the entrance to the village looked slightly odd to me. The village sign was in Thai, English and Chinese. The reason was the village signs along the way from Chiang Rai were never seen in Chinese apart from the road signs in Chiang Rai town. I first thought the sign might have been used to create the same effect as the road signs, as it was obvious to me that geographically Chiang Khong district was on the Mae Khong river bank which was also ideal for the economic ties with China. Therefore, the district was geographically strategic for economic development and was in the national and provincial strategic plan. Moreover, the discourse on Chiang Khong district was apparent in both local and national newspapers, radio and other media. The talk of the town was about China and Chiang Rai city; that both parties had settled on building an industrial estate. Apparently, what I had first thought had not been the case. The sign was specific to this village only and to my knowledge it was not seen at any other village in Chiang Khong district.

Other signs in the village also reflect the communication characteristics of this village, as the majority of the villagers are Yunnanese Chinese speakers and above all the language is used as the community language between the ethnic groups in the village. As I drove further into the village, the signs changed and English was not seen again in the village signs leaving only two types of signs: Thai and Chinese signs, and Chinese only signs. English became irrelevant in the village.

In the first category, Thai and Chinese signs, as usual the first row in signs is reserved for the national language and the second row for Chinese (See Pictures 9.3 and 9.4).
This, the correlation of position of row and language, is a fairly reasonable one since the national language is the most powerful language while Chinese is the second powerful language in the community.

The second category of sign is Chinese only signs, of which there are only a few, and which, interestingly, are in the culturally specific domain. Especially one sign aimed at a specific target – car drivers in the village only. The culturally specific signs are found in Chinese ethnic schools (See Pictures 9.5 - 9.7); signs on Chinese New Year blessing flags pasted outside houses (See Picture 9.8); and names of the deceased engraved on stones in the cemetery (See Picture 9.9). The sign targeted only at village dwellers, were signs that say “Kids are not afraid of cars, drive slowly” (See Picture 9.10). The latter sign was the one that I had to stop and asked the villagers what it meant. The sign is not targeted at outsiders.

Mandarin Chinese was used in the above signs. However, the Mandarin Chinese that was used in the signs reflects the variation that is used in Taiwan, which is the traditional form of the Chinese characters instead of the developed form of Chinese characters of mainland China, or known as ‘the abbreviated form Chinese’ to the villagers.
Picture 9.5 Display board in Chinese.

Picture 9.6 Chinese ethnic school sign at the entrance.

Picture 9.7 Chinese writings and notice board in Chinese.

Picture 9.8 Chinese New Year flag.

Picture 9.9 Names of the deceased engraved in Chinese.

Picture 9.10 Chinese only “Kids are not afraid of cars, drive slowly.”
9.14 Language use in temples, churches and mosques

There are four religions in the village: Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Animism. Each religion has their varieties and the varieties use differing languages and scripts.

There are three churches: two Catholic and one Baptist. The two Catholic churches belong to the Akha and Hmong communities. One uses Akha and the other uses Hmong in conducting the services. Their Bibles are in Roman script. As for the Baptist Church, there are both Yunnanese and Akha Baptists attending church. Therefore, the languages used are Yunnanese and every fourth night the services are conducted in Akha. The Bibles are written in three languages: Mandarin Chinese, Thai and Akha.

There are four Buddhist temples: one Thai Theravada temple, one Chi Gong (Chinese) temple, one Confucius temple and one Mahayana Buddhist. The Thai Theravada temple is a typical Thai temple which is under the jurisdiction of the National Buddhism Committee. The religious texts are written in Pali using the standard Thai script and the accent used during the chanting services is also standard Thai. The communication in the temple is also in standard Thai. For Chi Gong temple, the services are conducted in Yunnanese Chinese and Buddhism related texts are written in Mandarin Chinese. The Confucius temple services are conducted in Yunnanese and Mandarin Chinese. Religious texts are written in both standard Thai and Mandarin Chinese. As for the Mahayana temple, Yunnanese is mainly used and texts written in the Taiwanese version of Mandarin. Monks and nuns including visitors from the village communicate in Yunnanese.

In the case of Islam there is only one mosque in the whole district. Islamic people from all over the district attend the services every Friday. Standard Thai is the language for intercommunication because people attending services are from different language backgrounds. In terms of religious texts, the language used is classical Arabic. However, there are also attempts underway with other languages especially Hmong. Mr. Asaman Masaw mentioned that he is also conducting some Hmong language research in the area. Many of his students are Hmong and as they like to sing Hmong songs he also has translated and composed a few religious songs in Hmong, with the help of his students. This is because Hmong was the majority in Chiang Khong district in relation to other minority groups. He also envisions that in the future there may be more Hmong interested in Islam.
With regard to Animism, ethnic groups such as Akha still practice certain animism rituals together with Christianity. There is a mixture of the two religions. In the animism rituals Akha is used. In church, Akha is also used. In other tribes, their ethnic languages are used in animism related customs.

9.15 Language use in orphanages

There are two orphanages in the village: the Mahayana temple orphanage and the Islamic orphanage.

9.15.1 Mahayana temple orphanage

The Mahayana temple orphanage accommodates 22 children from different language backgrounds: Thai, Akha, Lisu, Mien, and southern Thai. The children are sent for formal schooling in the village school on weekdays and are expected to attend weekend schools at the orphanage. At the village government schools students learn standard Thai and use the language to communicate with friends and teachers in school and when they return to the orphanage the language is still Thai among the children but when communicating to the monks and nuns the language switches to Yunnanese. Monks and nuns in the temple cannot speak standard Thai. The language used with the orphanage personnel is Yunnanese. During weekends the children have to attend extra classes in Chinese.

The Abbot often encourages children to speak their ethnic language to the elders of their tribe in the village. The elders from different tribes often visit the abbot to pay respect and talk to the children. One Lisu elder said that she went to the temple on weekends to pay respect to the abbot and nuns and also talk to Lisu children. The grandmother mentioned that she was a Burmese Lisu who migrated a long time ago and had been living in this village for 40 years, speaking only Yunnanese since her marriage to a Yunnanese. She cannot speak to her children and grandchildren because they have no knowledge of her language. She expressed that “...ไม่คุย [ภาษาลีซอ] เขาเรียนหนังสือไทย เราก็คุยกะเขานะเป็นหนังสือไทย เขาเป็นคนไทยแล้ว เขาก็พูดไม่ได้ – mai kui, phasaa Lisaw, khao rian nungsue Thai, rao kor kui ka khao pen nungsue Thai, khao pen khon Thai pai laew, khao kor phood mai dai ” which means “No they don’t speak [Lisu]. They studied Thai and I also talk to them in Thai. They are Thai now. They cannot speak [Lisu]”. For that reason she has to come to the orphanage to speak Lisu to the children “เด็กๆที่นี่มีหลายคนที่พูดลีซอได้ ยายก็มาพูดกับเด็กๆที่นี่ – dek dek thi ni laai khon ti phood lisaw
dai, yaai kor ma phood kub dek dek thi ni” which means “There are many children here who can speak Lisu. I come here to speak to the kids”.

**9.15.2 Islamic orphanage**

Languages used in the Islamic orphanage are mainly standard Thai, Classical Arabic and the children’s ethnic languages. Standard Thai is the main language of intercommunication between the caretaker and the children, and also between the children themselves. Standard Thai is also the language of wider communication with the Wiang Mok community. Classical Arabic and the Quran are taught in the evenings at the mosque. Children in this orphanage do not go to the Chinese ethnic school due to having to study and attend Arabic classes. During the day, they attend Thai schools either in the village or in town.

**9.16 Chinese ethnic school**

Chinese Ethnic School in Wiang Mok is an attempt by the Yunnanese Chinese community to teach language and culture to their children. The school has experienced its rise and fall due to the shift in power driven by politics: from world power driven politics to economic driven politics (See Chapter 3 on Thaization). The shifts in politics put the school in a position to make a critical decision with regards to the school’s future.

**9.16.1 World power driven politics era**

The school was first established in 1962 and moved to this village along with the villagers. When the school was first established, teaching was still not prohibited. A few years later the school was ordered to close down. The teaching and learning of Chinese in the school had to be stopped. All the teaching had to be done secretly at the villagers’ houses. Later on when the school was rebuilt, in fear of risking the closure of the school again, it was built in such a way that half of the wooden building was hidden in the hills. As a result only the roof could be seen from outside so it looked similar to the villagers’ houses. Also it could not be noticed from above the ground. Currently, parts of the hidden building are still visible as a backdrop to the contrastive three story concrete building under construction. The hidden wooden building marks the world power driven politics era while the concrete three story building marks the economics driven politics.
9.16.2 Economics driven politics era

Since the signing of the FTA with China, the school had a rise in the number of students and a large number of them were from many provinces. The school, in 2006, had 485 students ranging from kindergarten to Grade 12. Apart from village students, other students were from other provinces such as Bangkok, Mae Hong Sorn, and Tak. Students from other provinces and districts would stay in the school dormitory. During the day, students attend formal government schooling in the village or in town and in the evening they attend the Chinese ethnic school. The principal of the school mentioned that those attending the Chinese ethnic school are not only of Chinese origin but a large number are from other ethnic groups such as Akha, Hmong, Mien and Lisu. They understand that Chinese will open doors for them in the future apart from Thai and English. Moreover, they would be able to continue their studies in Taiwan. There were a few Akha students who had already gone to Taiwan for studies and that had established a solid ground for other students. Wilaiporn Shangyu, the school principal, mentions in an interview that:

“They are interested in Chinese because they knew that if they know Chinese the world outside will be a wide-road for them. This is also because currently their children are also communicating in Chinese, even though it is not an international language like English but there are more speakers than English…this is Chinese, more speakers…At this school, the majority of students are Akha. We do have Mien too. Some Akha students are now studying in Taiwan universities. …but some didn’t go to Taiwan because they think that by learning the language it will be easier to get a job…”.15

9.16.3 Language use in school and implication for Thai bilingual classrooms

In terms of language use at school, the language of instruction is Chinese. Students are required to communicate in Chinese except the early years where many languages are used. Mrs. Wilaiporn Shangyu, the principal, also shed light on teacher characteristics in government schools at ethnic villages and in any bilingual schooling in Thailand. She argues that since the school has been accommodating students from kindergarten, and the

15 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 9.4
languages used by students in kindergarten and in early years are diverse; the very first and most important characteristic of teachers should be multilingualism or bilingualism. Multilingual or bilingual teachers are the most important bridge to a successful language and literacy learning. She states that:

“…We have students from all tribal backgrounds. When teachers teach especially the early years of schooling, teachers will have to be fluent in many languages. Teachers teaching the early years will have to also teach many languages. They have to be able to speak Chinese and Thai. Besides, they have to know tribal languages to a certain extent. That was because when students first come to school they just can’t communicate. We don’t understand them and then teaching becomes extremely difficult. Even I have to learn many languages. I can also speak Akha when there is a need to speak in the school”.

9.16.4 Support

In terms of support, the school support fluctuates. The School has no support from the Thai government. In the past support was mainly from the Taiwanese government when it was the KMT government but since then things have changed and there is now limited to no support from the Taiwanese government. Support for the school is mainly from businesspersons including international support which is mostly from private organizations in Taiwan that the school and the community still have close ties with. The support includes teaching materials and curriculum.

9.16.5 Curriculum conundrum and inclusive marginalisation

Changes in economics driven politics coupled with the provincial Chinese curriculum plan which was mainland China based drove the school into a conundrum filled with critical decisions to make regarding historical attachments to Taiwan, curriculum, and financial support.

The school curriculum, which has been used for 44 years, was based on the Taiwanese model of education due to political and historical attachments. In terms of language used,

16 See transliteration and three tiered quote in Appendix A under 9.5
the Mandarin Chinese used in school was the Taiwanese version of Mandarin Chinese where the traditional characters are still used. To change the curriculum also means to change the village’s political-historical attachments. If the school does not change it, the school risks not being financed by the Thai government in the future. Although the government does not provide that much support as yet, the risks are high. Moreover, the school has been receiving international support from Taiwanese organizations in building school buildings, and in teaching and learning materials. Currently, the school is a privately run school for the community and the fees are minimal, 1500 baht (approximately 50 AUD), to keep the school going. If the school decides to follow the provincial and national plan the school will have to get new teaching materials and well-trained new teachers. This will cause the school fees to rise and many families will not be able to afford this ethnic education for their children. These issues are critical because they are identity related and not just merely for economic reasons as projected by the provincial government. Although the provincial government attempted to include all the Chinese ethnic schools into the system and asked them to use the provincial curriculum, they have indeed marginalized this school. Marginalization does not only result from exclusion from the language and curriculum used in the society but also from the inclusion as well.

During the course of the fieldwork decisions had not been made. Multiple meetings were conducted in town with all the ethnic Chinese schools.

9.17 Factors affecting intermarriage language use pattern

The two factors that result in the differences in the patterns of language use between the two intermarriage groups in Yunnanese community are: Matrilineal/patrilineal social structure background, and the size of the sub-communities.

9.17.1 Matrilineal and patrilineal social structure backgrounds

The main difference between the two groups - the Tai based culture (Tai Lü and northern Thai), and Sinitic based culture (Hmong, Lisu and Mien) – is in the socio-cultural structure. The traditional Tai based culture was matrilineal prior to the Indic influences and the matrilineal social organization still leaves traces today in the division of power between the
two genders\textsuperscript{17}. Therefore, from their Tai socio-cultural background, the Tai Lü and northern Thai women still have the gender power balance in the household and that is shown in the power to negotiate and use their language in the household. However, the Tai Lü could blend in well with the Yunnanese family due to the shared social background from China before migration. On the contrary, the Sinitic based culture is patrilineal and the power division favors the male. The Sinitic based cultural group’s use of language is very limited which may possibly be the result of a lack of power to negotiate, or, in other words, is in the patrilineal mentality both prior and post marriage. One informant expressed her view on language and the intermarriage system as “เอาผัวคนใดก็เป็นอย่างนั้น - aow phua khon dai kor pen yang nun” literally “which husband you marry you become one like that” which implies the language use is dependent on the husband’s culture and language. Therefore, patrilineal and matrilineal socio-cultural system has an influence on the pattern of language use in the domestic domain of an intermarriage family in this village (See matrilineal effects in intermarriage in Santhaat village in Chapter 14 under 14.5.1).

\textbf{9.17.2 Size of the sub-communities}

Apart from being matrilineal and patrilineal, the one other factor is the number of people in the sub-communities that assist in the extended use of language outside domestic domains. Tai Lü has 22 people. Although limited, the number is, to some extent adequate, in the assistance of strengthening the language. A few northern Thai speakers in the village also joined the Tai Lü community due to the similarity of the languages and cultures. One drawback in this community would be the lack of male adult speakers. The language

\textsuperscript{17} Matrilineal importance is still evident in certain social practices such as marriage where the groom moves in to the bride’s and her parents’ house. In the rural community usually the groom will have to work for 2 years for the bride’s family before they can move out. Additionally, the division of power is still seen in the rural areas in northern Thailand such as certain ancestral spirit houses \textit{or phi po yab are} matrilineally inherited. As a direct experience, my maternal grandmother was the keeper of the ancestral spirit house but when she passed away her sister inherited the ancestral spirit house. The inheritance came with a responsibility to regularly offer food, regular cleaning and decorating as an act of paying respect and taking regular care. If the inheritor failed to do so it is believed that the ancestral spirit will wander in search of food and in turn bring bad luck to the inheritor. Moreover, women’s power is also evident in a large amount of vocabulary where words with meanings involving controlling, importance, strength and power had a word \textit{mae} or mother as a prefix to words such as \textit{maenam} (literally mother water or river), \textit{maerang} (literally mother energy or a jack used to lift cars), \textit{maekadai} (literally mother stairs or the main stairs; in the old days stairs were the most important part of Thai houses), \textit{maekunchae} (literally mother key or a lock used to lift cars), \textit{maekhong} (literally mother river Khong or Khong river), \textit{Maesai, Maechan, Mae-ai} (names of districts where the rivers names - Sai, Chan and Ai -were made into place names by adding \textit{mae} in front of river names like \textit{maekhong}).
transmitted through the younger generations would then be a female language and considered a lower form. The higher form would be attached to Buddhism and males were the only gender allowed to be ordained as monks to study the language and script. Therefore, the language of wisdom and Buddhism was inevitably attached to the males. The males’ use of language is considered higher than the females’ use of language due to the attachment to Buddhism. Other ethnic language speakers do not have a sizable group of speakers for them and their children to speak to, apart from the Akha. As language learning is a social process, a language also needs a sizable group of speakers to survive.

9.18 Language and gender: Tai Lü’s Sueb Chata

Sueb Chata is a Tai based custom of longevity. This ceremony was organized on the occasion of the birthday of the head of the village who is a Tai Lü. This was because she was the head of the community and also a junior in the Tai Lü community. The elders of the community came to wish her good luck and longevity while those younger than her were also there to wish her good luck and to pay respect. It was not the ceremony that was of interest but it was the gender, language and culture that came into play in this particular Tai Lü speech community.

This is a Buddhist ceremony and Buddhist ceremonies require monks and Buddhist texts to get started. Although the village has a Thai Buddhist temple it wasn’t what the Tai Lü community wanted due to the monks in the temple being unable to read the Pali scrolls written in Tai Lü or Tua Dham, and there were monks who were not Tai Lü. Therefore, monks could not read the scroll in Tua Dham script with a Tai Lü accent. Even if a northern Thai monk could read the scroll, it was not a perfect fit for two reasons: Tua Dham in Tai Lü scrolls have certain variations that are different from Tua Dham in northern Thai. Secondly, when read by a northern Thai it would be in northern Thai accent, which is not a Tai Lü accent, and then the essence of being a Tai Lü is lost - their true identity would be lost. However, the ceremony does not need a monk to perform the reading and chanting from the scrolls, but a naan. An ex-monk and an elderly Tai Lü man highly respected by the community, who could read the scrolls, would be perfect for the job.

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18 Tai Lü and northern Thai shared the same script when used in Buddhist texts and scrolls but called it Tua dham which means the dhamma script.

19 A naan is an ex-monk who is considered as a learned one of knowledge such as dhamma, medicine, and mantras and is still believed so in northern Thailand until today.
Interestingly, those who could read the scrolls happened to be men who were ordained and had studied the script at temples. In the old days, women were not allowed to study dhamma script as it was all in the male domain. Therefore, none of the Tai Lü housewives in this village could read the script and unfortunately there were no men of ethnic Tai Lü in the village. Therefore, Lung Naan, or uncle Naan, had to be imported for this specific purpose from another district 30 kilometres away.

9.18.1 Divisions of gender domains

During the ceremony, divisions of domains and gender were observed. Lung Naan chanted certain verses from a seemingly very old Palm leaves scroll which ran for about 30 minutes. The verses were in Pali but were chanted with a distinct Tai Lü accent which was observably different from my northern Thai accent. When the Buddhism related reading of the scrolls finished, then the turn shifted to the women. The eldest of the women then started chanting in Tai Lü in a sort of traditional songlike tune from her memory, without any script or scrolls, wishing the head of the village and her family to be in good health and the devil defeated in all circumstances, also asking the deities of the mountains, rivers, and others to protect her and her family. The elderly woman also asked all the 32 Kwans 20 of the head of the village to protect her and also asked the strayed Kwans to return to her. The women’s domain was more of a blessing and seemingly attached to the physical and mental well being of the family whereas the domain of men was religion related.

After the elderly women had chanted, all the people who were at the ceremony then tied white cotton thread on the village head’s wrists wishing her the best of health and prosperity. All the elders tied the thread and blessed while the younger tied the thread as a matter of paying respect to the head of the village and in turn she blessed those younger than her for well being and prosperity. After the thread tying, Lung Naan then resumed his role again. He chanted a blessing from the scrolls and sprinkled holy water on the attendants’ heads as a

20 The belief that human beings are made up of 32 kwans or spirits and these kwans may stray away during certain hardships thus causing a person to be weak physically and mentally. Asking the strayed kwans to return to a person is to bring balance to the person. There are phrases with kwans used in northern Thailand and standard Thai such as kwans ma kwans ma (kwans return, kwans return), it is used in the circumstances when a person confronted something shocking and took their senses away momentarily then the phrase would be uttered either by the person or by the friends to call upon the kwans that was frightened away. There were also phrases that signified that the kwans was frightened and strayed away from the body such as kwans haai (lost kwans), kwans ni di for (ran away kwans and collapsed gallbladder - the incident was so frightening that the kwans ran away which also caused the gallbladder to collapse), kwans sia and sia kwans (kwans sia is a standard Thai way or word order while the latter - sia kwans - is the northern Thai way of word order, both means the kwans was shaken by the incident).
blessing. The water container was to be held by men only. The act of sprinkling water and chanting the blessings at the same time was to be done by men.  

9.18.2 Turn taking

After the ceremony had ended, the group started a Tai Lü entertainment called Kab Lü which was singing traditional, quick-witted, and impromptu Tai Lü songs. It sounds like a courting song. Men say things about women and women return the sayings in a quick-witted way. If the audience likes it, there is loud laughter. There are two important notes from this entertainment: turn taking, and generational language and cultural reduction. During the singing, there was only Lung Naan as the solo male singer but ten or so women took turns to sing. Being the only Tai Lü male in the group, the singing burden landed on Lung Naan. Turn taking requires two handheld fans: one for the male and the other for the females. The singer has his or her turn by holding a handheld fan; the rule is ‘no fan no singing’. When the fan shifts, the turn to sing shifts as well. There were turn snatchings; the women snatched the fans in order to snatch their singing turns.

What I noticed was that only the elderly in the community joined in while the younger ones sat enjoying the show. I later realized that this was because the younger generation did not have adequate Tai Lü language ability, including the required knowledge of this traditional Tai Lü culture, to sing. The younger generation was either born in Thailand or born in a Yunnanese family where only a functional ability to speak the language was evident. Moreover, one of the informants mentioned that the fun and the core of the humour was the use of traditional vocabulary, the fun could be ruined without the genuine Tai Lü essence – words and accents. This view reminded me of the similarity in a provincial northern Thai Saw competition in Chiang Rai. Saw is also a type of traditional singing with musical instruments. One informant who was a judge in the competition mentioned that the Saw sung by youngsters in the competition was impressive but still lacked something. When I asked what he meant, he said the words used were not genuine or traditional enough. If the words were genuine enough it would then bring the essence and also the fun. The winner of the Saw competition sang a year later at a function. The same judge mentioned that this time the boy’s Saw was more genuine and he could get to the core of being northern Thai. There

21 Being a native of Chiang Rai myself I have not seen any women performing the act of sprinkling holy water except in Kao Song practice. This practice is not a Buddhist practice. The practice is mainly about communication with a spirit. I noticed that a woman can only sprinkle holy water when she is believed to be possessed by a male deity spirit.
was more fun into it. It turned out that the winner had done tremendous homework on northern Thai vocabulary and thoughts.

Words are not just meanings but an encapsulation of a situated experience of thoughts and identity – the essence of being.

9.19 Language as identity hideouts

When language is part of a person’s identity, language can also be used as a tool for identity hideouts. One informant expressed his view about language as language being like clothes that we may borrow and wear, it is like transforming an Akha into a Hmong, “ภาษาเป็นเหมือนเสื้อผ้าที่เรายืมมาใส่ เอาอาข่ามาเป็นม้ง – phasaa pen muean suah pha ti rao yuem kun sai, aow Akha ma pen Hmong”. Knowing languages is therefore like changing clothes. When a person can disguise himself/herself in clothes why cannot a person disguise himself/herself in languages and their symbols? There were three cases in the village that led to this notion.

9.19.1 Case I

The first case was a man in his thirties called Sompong. When I first got to know him, he told me he was a Yunnanese and I believed him as his language use was like anybody else of a Yunnanese origin in the village. He spoke to the elders very naturally. Everybody in the village spoke to him either in Yunnanese or standard Thai. He was bilingual. One day, he asked me how I felt being of an ethnic background born in Thailand. When I answered him he then revealed himself as a Wa person. I was initially stunned that it was the ethnicity and human essence that we shared that brought about his Wa revelation. Sompong had hid himself behind language because he didn’t want to be questioned by the authorities; although he had had his Thai citizen ID for a long time he was still questioned from time to time. He then chose to be Yunnanese, as he was more fluent in Yunnanese, to get rid of the annoying problem.

The annoying problem was the name Wa and incidents that had happened in the past and recent past which still lingered in peoples’ minds. Firstly, Wa was well known in Thailand as a problematic group in Myanmar. If anything happened on the Myanmar side, the first news heard in Chiang Rai was always about the Wa army. More than a decade ago in the town of Chiang Rai there had been rumors that the Wa army attacked people in Chiang Rai at night. Frightened by the rumors, as soon as the sun sets, people stayed at home. The rumors were
so strong that it affected town people’s business and living patterns. People had to pick up their children from school instead of having their children return home on their own. People went home early; night bazaar shopping centre ran into the problem of not having customers. Restaurants and nightclubs had no patronage. Secondly, there were stories of Wa and their head-hunting in the remote past as Wa was notorious for head-hunting. Izikowitz (1979) also noted the head-hunting in the 1930s and mentioned that:

“[the Wa]…living in the northern Shan states have a culture which is in a marked degree untouched and rather ancient. …the Wa are notorious head-hunters, and the Europeans who have tried to penetrate their land have done so at the risk of loosing their heads, and have indeed in some cases been killed”.

However, today the name Wa has minimal to no effect to the general public in Chiang Rai, apart from being linked to narcotics smuggling.

9.19.2 Case II

The second case was an elderly man in his 80s. As I was talking to a Lahu family, he joined in at the stall. He was in a short-sleeved shirt, exposing tattooed arms in Tua Dham script.

When I saw the tattoo my first instinct was to greet him in northern Thai, even though if he were from any other Tai related language background, he would have somehow understood my greetings. I expected to hear him return the greetings in any of the Tai languages or dialects. However, he responded to me with a Yunnanese greeting and told me that he was not a Tai but a Yunnanese. That was a surprise. Chinese people in general do not tattoo and he had, and, the tattoos were in Tua dham script.

Tattooing in northern Thai or Tai Lü or any Tai related culture is seen as a protective talisman, having miraculous power, and being religion and spiritual related. Tattoos, despite how kaam22 or what powerful and enduring qualities they possessed, they are not to be tested and challenged. There are a number of ethical codes and conducts attached to the tattoo once they have been needled onto body parts. Tattoos are usually needled by monks and during the tattooing process sacred incantations specifically for tattooing to empower the tattoos are chanted by monks. Thus, tattoos encapsulate the culture and the belief system of the Tai culture. On the contrary, tattoos do not carry the same cultural load in Chinese.

22 There is no exact or equivalent translation for this northern Thai term except powerful in terms of protective qualities.
The elderly man further explained that when fleeing China he had had to enter Burma and in those days the Burmese would aim for the Chinese, and when caught, would sell them in China as in those days they were still priced. He mentioned that “เป็นลื้อบ่มีเจ้ามีนายเป็นคนจีนมีเจ้ามีนาย” which means “Tai Lü were the free people whereas the Chinese had masters”. The Burmese in those times, or anybody with the cultural background, could distinguish a Chinese man from a Tai Lü man by the tattoo. Tai Lü men were tattooed whereas the Chinese were not. As a matter of life and freedom, the elderly man and a few others went under the needle and ink, were tattooed in Tua Dham script and learned the language by staying in the Tai Lü village in the Tai Lü community in China before moving to Burma. For freedom, he assumed another identity – a Tai Lü. For freedom, he confined himself in language and culture. For the same reason, he found refuge in language and culture.

The elderly man had no idea what was needled on his arms. I asked if he would allow me to take photographs of him and the tattoo so that I could find an expert in reading Tua Dham tattoos. He refused. He refused on the grounds that the camera would lessen the miraculous powerful qualities of the tattoo.

9.19.3 Case III

The third case was an 85 year old informant, an ex KMT soldier, who recounted his soldier days stories. He mentioned that when being a soldier, he had to be very careful and alert, as there was no way that he could know who was the enemy. Therefore, he had to hide himself and the safest place to hide was in language and culture as they were the best camouflage. Language was seen as a tool for security. Therefore, this elderly man had to learn to speak many languages. The area in southern China, north of Burma and Thailand was hilly and no matter what hill he climbed, he encountered villages speaking different languages. He had to learn languages and hide himself in them. He mentioned that going up the hill one language was used and coming down the hill a different language was used. During the course of his escape he travelled up and down many hills and they were many languages to be learnt. People and villages were not far from each other and yet the languages were diverse.
9.20 Conclusion

The linguistic ecosystem of Wiang Mok is complex and multidimensional. The factors underpinning the existing complex language ecologies are of a multidimensional power structure at four different levels: home level, provincial and regional level, national level and international level. The majority of the language interaction and forces are in a mutually beneficial relationship. The four Tables (Tables 9.2 – 9.5) in the following pages summarize the factors that result in the existing language ecology and sub-ecologies in Wiang Mok village with their underlying forces. The interacting forces that underpin the language ecology of Wiang Mok have shifted once and recently started to shift again. The forces are dynamic. These dynamic forces when moved in conjunction with other forces and factors collectively change the ecology of a language community. Therefore, a change in any of the factors changes the language ecology of a community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Forces and factors</th>
<th>Positive or negative Effects on Wiang Mok language ecology</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home level forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Social factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Philosophical thoughts: diversity and equality</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>It enhances the language ecology of Wiang Mok Village (WM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. History and migration route</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>It enhances the language ecology and also provides profound understanding of the ecology of WM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Traditionally imposed social structure and power</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>It positively enhances only Yunnanese, but negatively influences other languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Matrilineal/patrilineal system</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The system positively enhances the languages in the matrilineal system when interacting with patrilineal system. In this village, it has negative effect on the languages in the same system such as the patrilineal and patrilineal system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Intermarriage</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>It can either be positive or negative as it is dependent on matrilineal and patrilineal systems of the intermarried couple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Gender</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Gender can have positive influence to WM language ecology. It also depends on matrilineal/patrilineal system. Female gender became positive to the language ecology of the village in the case of intermarriage of Yunnanese male and Tai Lü females. On the other hand, it can be negative within the same matrilineal system where language learning is domain specific and was attached to only the males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Number of languages</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>The number of languages positively enhances the ecology of the languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Number of sub-communities or sub-ecologies</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>This factor positively enhances the language ecology of the community and sub-communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Degree of intelligibility</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is both positive and negative to the language ecology. In WM Tai Lü enhances northern Thai but at the same time it changes the speakers towards Tai Lü. This is also dependent on number of speakers of the two languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Size of groups of language speakers</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is positive to the language ecology in terms of language transmission. However, it is negative to the ecology when a language becomes the majority then it would threaten other small languages. It also depends on how the community views language and cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Intergeneration transmission</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Intergeneration transmission is mutual language learning and there was intergeneration transmission in all sub-communities in WM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Religion</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Many ethnic groups have taken up new religion and the religion needed to be documented in the ethnic minority languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Identity</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Being proud of one’s own identity results in the use of minority languages but this is also dependent on the national “otherness” discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Attitude towards languages</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Status</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The high status correlates with vitality esp. for Chinese, both within the village and outside the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Clash of medical and cultural spheres</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>The clash causes people to look down on their languages as not being equipped with concepts and words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Economics factors</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Languages are learnt as a result of jobs. This is dependent on what kind of jobs and what statuses the jobs have. Mandarin Chinese is learnt more due to the opportunity of jobs overseas plus the national discourse on language and economics, the geo-economics and the geopolitics. Akha and northern Thai are learnt as a result of jobs as well but with lower status jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Job related languages</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Job related status</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education factors</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This is only positive for Mandarin Chinese. However, studying Mandarin Chinese gives numerous opportunities to other language speakers within WM community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Mandarin Chinese ethnic school</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Thai Schooling</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is positive in the case of attaining power as Thai citizens. It is negative in the case of the language learnt at school takes over domestic domain. This factor is interrelated with nationalism and attitudes to their languages in relations to standard Thai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Geographical factor</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is positive to national language while negatively making people abandon their ethnic language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Border Security</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.2 Home level forces and factors and their positive and/or negative influences on Wiang Mok language ecology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Forces and factors</th>
<th>Positive or negative Effects on Wiang Mok language ecology</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial/Regional level forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Social factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Thai/regional/otherness discourse</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Ethnic and minority languages domains diminish in favor of the national language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Regional language and discourse</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>There were no clear effects of regional language, northern Thai, on WM language ecology. The villagers can communicate in Thai to the northern Thai people. The only problem is the pressure to maintain and revive the language of the northern Thai speakers that became a pressure to the villagers and students when in northern Thai spheres. This pressure, however, is not very strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Attitude to northern Thai language</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>To speak northern Thai is in a sense good for villagers but it did not prove to have high importance as standard Thai can be used instead of northern Thai for the young generation. On the contrary, the older generations and those who had not attended school, northern Thai was the only medium to communicate with the world outside. Therefore, the attitude towards northern Thai is dependent on the age of speakers and schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Clash of medical and cultural sphere</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>It is negative in the case that people do not see the use of their own language and wisdom, and health related wisdom, therefore, look down upon their own languages and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Economics factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Border trade and special economic zone</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Chinese is seen as the language of trade in this area and more and more people are studying Chinese. Thus, people from this village are proud and enjoy an advantage of Chinese skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Provincial Chinese curriculum (mainland Chinese Curriculum)</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is positive in terms of support and status elevation to Chinese only. It is negative in terms of the school has to shift from Taiwanese Curriculum to mainland China’s curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Geographical factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Border security</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>It is positive in terms of it helps in strengthening the status of the national language. It is negative in terms of it lessens the statuses of other ethnic languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Geographically strategic province</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor is strategic in terms of trade, which favors the use of only Mandarin Chinese and not other minority languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.3 Provincial/regional level forces and factors and their positive and/or negative influences on Wiang Mok language ecology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Forces and factors</th>
<th>Positive or negative Effects on Wiang Mok language ecology</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National level forces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Social factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Nationalism</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>The discourse of Thai-ness gradually wipes out other small and minority languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Thai and otherness discourse</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>The concept threatens language diversity. Younger generations switch from ethnic languages to national language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Clash of medical and cultural spheres</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Mentioned above in Table 9.2 and 9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Economics factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. FTA with China</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>This factor elevated the language status of only Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Language and diversity deficient curriculum</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>The curriculum discourages other languages in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Geographical factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Geographically strategic province</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>This factor raises the status of Chinese. However, it did not raise the status of the minority languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Border security</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Mentioned above in Provincial/Regional level in Table 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Political factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. World power driven</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>The world power politics affected the status of Mandarin Chinese in late 1960s to early 1970s. Although the power did not directly affect other small and minority languages it is dependent on the national discourse of nationalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Economics driven</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>It is positive because it only elevates Mandarin Chinese. Other languages in this village were not elevated. The effect of economics on minority languages can be seen in Payang Chum village.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.4 National level forces and factors and their positive and/or negative influences on Wiang Mok language ecology.
## Table 9.5 World level forces and factors and their positive and/or negative influences on Wiang Mok language ecology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Forces and factors</th>
<th>Positive or negative attributes to Wiang Mok language ecology</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World level forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. World politics forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. World-power driven politics</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>When the world power shifts, the national policy shifts. The geopolitics changes. The fixation to any single country changes. The changes swing to either positive or negative. In WM village case, we see traces of the negative and then the positive when the fixation changes from politics to economics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Economics driven politics</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The economics driven politics positively influences the status of Mandarin Chinese but not any other languages in the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Mainland China and Taiwanese conflict</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>It is negative in terms of directions and critical decisions to be made in the village with regards to Mandarin Chinese to be learnt by all ethnic groups at the Chinese ethnic school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Change in geopolitics</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The direction of the politics changes towards China. Most of the national policy and planning centers around China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. World economics forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. China as emerging economic power</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Economic power comes with only Mandarin Chinese and its status and not any other minority languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Shift in geo-economics</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>The Taiwanese newly elected Prime Minister in 2008 has allied the country with mainland China whereas in the past it did not. This should also affect the decision to be made in WM village.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>