

**LANGUAGE ECOLOGY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING
IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE, THAILAND**

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ฝนเอ๋ยทำไมจึงตก ฝนเอ๋ยทำไมจึงตก
จำเป็นต้องตก เพราะว่ากบมันร้อง
Oh Rain! Why do you have to rain?
I have to rain because frogs are croaking.

.....

กบเอ๋ยทำไมจึงร้อง กบเอ๋ยทำไมจึงร้อง
จำเป็นต้องร้อง เพราะว่าท้องมันปวด
Oh frogs! Why do you have to croak?
I have to croak because my stomach is aching.

.....

ท้องเอ๋ยทำไมจึงปวด ท้องเอ๋ยทำไมจึงปวด
จำเป็นต้องปวด เพราะว่าข้าวมันดิบ
Oh stomach! Why do you have to ache?
I have to ache because rice is raw.

.....

ข้าวเอ๋ยทำไมจึงดิบ ข้าวเอ๋ยทำไมจึงดิบ
จำเป็นต้องดิบ เพราะว่าพื้นมันเปียก
Oh rice! Why are you raw?
I have to be raw because wood is wet.

.....

พื้นเอ๋ยทำไมจึงเปียก พื้นเอ๋ยทำไมจึงเปียก
จำเป็นต้องเปียก เพราะว่าฝนมันตก
Oh wood! Why are you wet?
I am wet because it is raining.

.....

ฝนเอ๋ยทำไมจึงตก
ฝนเอ๋ยทำไมจึงตก
Oh rain! Why do you have to rain?
Oh rain! Why do you have to rain?
.....
จำเป็นต้องตก เพราะว่ากบมันร้อง
I have to rain because the frogs are croaking.

To the songwriter whose name remains unknown.

A Thai nursery rhyme

Abstract

Language Ecology and Language Planning in Chiang Rai, Thailand had three main aims: to study the language ecology and sub-ecologies of Chiang Rai province, to study the factors and forces that affect the language ecology, and to study language plans and language policies in Chiang Rai.

This study employed two main frameworks: theoretical and methodological framework. The theoretical construct is based on a parameter rich linguistic theory, Ecolinguistics, where concepts and parameters from linguistics and non-linguistics disciplines are employed. The parameter rich theory assists immensely in the understanding of language as it believes that language is interconnected with the world and the world with language. The study was conducted using ethnography as the methodological framework due to it allowing a wide array of data collection methods which include document studies, observation, participant observation, recorded and unrecorded interviews, personal communications and field notes. Moreover, ethnography provided an opportunity to reflect on the researcher's multiple identities and in varying degrees as insider and outsider. Data collection was conducted in Chiang Rai and six villages in three districts; two districts in the Greater Mae Khong Sub-region (GMS) area namely Chiang Khong and Chiang Saen; and one district in a special economic border zone area – Maesai district. The districts were chosen based on economic influences while the six villages were randomly selected. The villages studied were Wiang Mok and Huay Kok villages in Chiang Khong district; Sop Ruak and Santhaat villages in Chiang Saen province; and Phamee and Payaang Chum in Maesai district. Data were also collected from stakeholders concerned in language planning namely government and non-government organizations.

There were two main findings in accordance with the research aims. Firstly, it was found that the language ecology and sub-ecologies of Chiang Rai province and the six villages were dynamic and multiplex. The dynamics and complexities of the ecology and sub-ecologies were dependent on numerous interactions of different factors and forces. The factors were social, educational, geographical, economic, and political/geopolitical. There were four main levels of forces: world level, national level, regional/provincial level, and home level. The interaction of forces could be positive, negative or neutral to the health of the language ecology. Secondly, with regards to language planning and policy, it was found that there was

no explicit minority language policy or planning in Thailand. Two types of language policy were found in Chiang Rai and Thailand: a top-down policy and quasi-bottom up policy. Both policies were education related. The top-down policies were comprised of an implicit national language policy and an explicit foreign language policy, especially for English and Chinese. The quasi-bottom up policy was the only local policy found in Chiang Rai where a Chinese language curriculum was developed at the local level but with a national economic related strategic vision.

The study also suggested that future language planning and policies in Thailand should take into account the findings of language ecology and sub-ecologies in Chiang Rai. Language plans should recognise the effect of those factors and forces that will affect other languages within the same ecology.

Declaration

This work contains no materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Signed.....

Date.....

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Definitions of terms

In this study, different terms have been used. These terms were defined by the researcher based on document studies.

1. Siam

The word Siam used in this thesis refers to Thailand pre-1939, after this date the country is referred to as Thailand.

2. Burma

The word Burma used in this thesis refers to Myanmar prior to the change of the country's name. Incidents occurred after the name change in Burma is referred to as Myanmar. The country is referred to as Myanmar while the people and language are referred to as Burmese.

3. Thai

Thai means the Thais who were born and live in Thailand. Anything connected to Thailand is referred to as Thai.

4. Thai: standard Thai or Bangkok Thai

The use of the word Thai when strictly used in the context where regional issues are discussed in terms of compare and contrast strictly refers to standard Thai only. Standard Thai is also known as Bangkok Thai or the Thai spoken in Bangkok.

5. Tai

Tai means a group people who share the same origin, culture and language family. The Tai language family is spoken in Thailand, Laos, Assam of India, parts of Burma, parts of Vietnam, and the southern part of China. It is believed that the people of these countries once lived in a kingdom called Nanchao in Yunnan, China and later on migrated south. Therefore, when the Term Tai is used in this thesis, it is mean the collective identity of this ancient society whereas the use of Thai will refer to the Thai people in Thailand only.

6. Lanna

Lanna is a term referring to a former kingdom of the Yuan or Yonok of the Tai race in the northern region of Thailand. Lanna at present is used to mean the following: the northern region of Thailand with distinctive culture, the people of this region, and the collective identity of this region.

7. Muang or Khon Muang

Muang literally means city. Khon Muang in this thesis refers to Lanna people. Khon Muang (people city) literally means city dwellers. The term is a self identification term of the Lanna people. There are two theories on the use of this phrase. The first theory believes that this term initiated when Central Thai first had its influence over Lanna in order to distinguish the Lanna people from the valley or hill tribe people who inhabit the northern region. Therefore, the term refers to the Yuan or Yonok of the Lanna culture and later on the word acquired the meaning of the people of the Lanna culture in general. The other theory is that the term refers to the Lanna people but as a contrast to the Burmese because the Burmese were known to the Lanna people as ‘maan’ (with a rising tone). However, the first theory was more welcomed among northern Thai scholars and the Lanna people. This thesis adopts the first theory. Moreover, in today’s use for the Lanna people when talking about food, words or names as being too muang, this may connote the meaning of being too traditional or, the worse scenario, as backward.

8. Esarn (Isarn)

This word literally means ‘the east’ and refers to the northeastern people and region of Thailand. The people in this region prefer to be called ‘khon Esarn’ as a contrast to the term Laos. They want to be distinguished from the Laotian of the Laos.

9. Pak Tai (Puk Tai)

Pak Tai or Puk Tai refers to the southern region of Thailand. The word khon Tai (with a low tone) is used to refer to the southern people.

10. Mae Khong

Mae Khong refers to a river that flows between Thailand and Laos. Since this word is spelt differently in the sources such as Mekong, Khong, Kong, and Me Khong, the river will be spelt as Mae Khong in this thesis unless it is quoted from other sources.

11. Positive, negative and neutral

The terms appeared in the Abstract and in Chapters 9 - 15. These terms are used in the discussion of factors and forces that affect the language ecology. Positive refers to factors and forces that create an advantage to languages and their ecology. Negative refers to factors and forces that cause impacts and create an unfavorable result to the languages and their ecology. Neutral in the context of this thesis does not mean that there will be no effect but in fact the factors and forces are already present in the language ecology and have tendencies to change but are still not active. In other words, the factors and forces are dormant and can erupt any time if there are changes or movements in any of the factors and forces. The eruption can either be positive or negative.

Explanatory notes

1. Abbreviations and symbols used in this thesis

GMS	= Greater Mae Khong Sub-region
T	= Tai language family
AA	= Austroasiatic language family
AN	= Austronesian language family
HM	= Hmong-Mien language family
ST	= Sino-Tibetan language family
BE	= Buddhist Era
H	= High variety (See explanation in 5)
L	= Low variety
S. Thai	= Standard Thai
N. Thai	= Northern Thai
△	= House

2. Citations

This thesis cites and references a significant number of Thai sources written in standard Thai. Thus, the thesis distinguishes sources written in Thai by citing the full name of the authors. For those papers written in English, only last names of the authors are used.

3. Transliteration of Thai into Roman letters

The transliteration of Thai language used in this thesis is based on the standardized transliteration as formally announced by the Royal Institute of Thailand on January 11, 1999. This latest version can be downloaded from the Royal Institute's website at www.royin.go.th Details of transliteration guidelines are attached in Appendix I.

4. Buddhist Era (BE)

Buddhist Era is used throughout Thailand. To convert BE into CE, a sum of 543 is subtracted from BE. Thus, $BE - 543 = CE$. For example, $2552 - 543 = 2009$.

5. High (H) and Low (L)

In this thesis, there are varieties of languages at work in a community. Each variety functions differently in the community and sub-communities. Some variety function as

high language as they are used for religious and formalities purposes; while some functions as the low variety as they are used in daily communications. In multilingual speech communities there can be many high and low languages. For example, in this thesis H and L languages are sometimes identified as H1, H2 , L1, and L2. These H and L abbreviations appear in Figures 9.2, 10.2, 11.2, 12.2, 13.2, and 14.2.

6. Chinese form:

Chinese form used in this thesis is represented using pinyin without tones as tones are unnecessary in the contexts.