

Identity Maintenance of Lanna – North Thailand in Globalization

Amidst the mainstream of Globalization, the identity of Lanna–North Thailand is remarkably maintained through the northern language “Kam Mueang” in a context of cultural hybridity. This study was conducted in Chiang Mai, known as the capital of Lanna. Signages of any possible forms in public, single to large strings of utterances either permanent or temporary, especially on the side roads are collected data used in this study. Four pattern repertoires of signages are found including mixed utterances of different languages, Thai utterances only, foreign utterances only and Mueang utterances, mixed and non-mixed, respectively. Kam Mueang in public signages, though found at a low rate compared to the frequency of all utterances types, currently and remarkably displays salient phenomenon of social identities.

Khon Mueang people, confronted with the changing lifestyle, intuitively recognize their ethnic identity and express this sentiment in the public written language. Meanwhile, this linguistic and socio-cultural event involves the interaction and compromise between local and global power. The use of Kam Mueang in signages inbetween the changing episode of Globalization identifies the attempt of “Khon Mueang”, Lanna inhabitants in maintaining their socio-cultural identity.
