

Paper title: Village Names in Chiang Saen: A linguistic-dominated multidisciplinary view on the study of village names

Sub-field: Ethnolinguistics

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Abstract:

The present study aims to investigate linguistic characteristics of village names in Chiang Saen District across three critical periods: Period 1 (before 1958): before the formal announcement as a district, Period 2 (1958-1983): before the division of its sub-districts from three to six, and Period 3 (1984-present). The data used in this study were retrieved from governmental and academic documents, together with in-depth interviews of seventy village headmen from the fieldwork. The findings show that village names in Chiang Saen District consist of mainly words from nominal domain i.e. geography, specific names, nature, religious, occupations, living places. The most preferable pattern of naming is GEOGRAPHY + SPECIFIC NAMES (such as /sop1 kok1/ = 'mouth of the river' + 'Kok River'). From the investigation of the establishment of villages, it was found that the formal formation of new villages in early period (Period 1 and Period 2) was from the settlement of new communities in the new areas. However, in later period (Period 3), the formation of new villages was from the expansion of the existing communities. The trend in naming new villages in Period 3 is the addition of relational words, mostly words refer to direction, after the names of the existing villages (such as from /paa1 khaa0/ to /paa1 khaa0 nua4/ (/nua4/ means 'north'). History and way of life in Chiang Saen are also discussed.

References

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