Thailand at the Heart of Mainland SEA

- Bordered by Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia
- Complex area of languages and ethnicities
Research Project on Ethnolinguistic Map of Thailand

Objective

To provide a language database as a point of reference for mapping the distributions of ethnolinguistic groups in Thailand.
Survey Questionnaire

- Collecting ethnolinguistic data at the mùu bāan level (number of speakers of various languages in each village)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Areas</th>
<th>Genetic Relationship</th>
<th>Language Hierarchy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• By region</td>
<td>• By family</td>
<td>• Major regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• By province</td>
<td>• By group</td>
<td>• Marginal</td>
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<td>• By district</td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>• Enclaved</td>
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<td>etc.</td>
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<td>etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
More than 60 Languages, 5 Language Families

- Tai – Kadai
- Austroasiatic
- Austronesian
- Sino – Tibetan
- Hmong - Mien
Tai-Kadai Family

The majority of the population in Thailand speak Tai – Kadai languages (24 dialects and languages).
The more numerous and smaller groups are scattered all over the country are speakers of Austroasiatic languages, the indigenous language of SEA (23 languages).
Austroasiatic
The Sino – Tibetan speakers are mainly concentrated in the north and northwest (15 languages).
Hmong-Mien Family

The Hmong – Mien speakers are found in the northern part of Thailand (2 languages).
Austronesian Family

The Austronesian speakers are found in the south (3 languages).
Austronesian
Smalley’s (1988 and 1994) Language Hierarchy

Standard Thai
Major Regional
Marginal
Displaced
Enclave
Major Regional Languages

- Thai Klang
- Lao Isan
- Kammuang
- Pakaty
Displaced Languages

For instance, ‘Lao’ languages in the central region.
Non-Thai minority languages found near the border with a majority of speakers living on the other side of the border.

- Khmu
- Khmer
- Karen
- Malay
ENCLAVED ➔ ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

- Lawa
- Bisu
- Mpi
- Gong
- Moklen
- Urak Lawoi’
- Mlabri
- So (Taveung)
- Nyahkur
- Chong
  - Kasong
  - Samre
- Chung (Saoch)
- Sakai
Enclave Languages

- Language Shift
- Socio-economic problem
- Mass media
- Language policy & educational policy
- Marriage pattern
- Speaker’s attitude

Endangered Languages
So (Taveung)
Chong, Kasong & Samre
Mpi & Bisu
Urak Lawoi’ & Moklen
Chong Language Revitalization Project

- Indigenous language, Chantaburi Province, about 2,000-4,000 speakers
- Austroasiatic language family
- Famous for four *registers*
- Rapid decrease in speakers last 20 years
- Stage 7 of Fishman’s GIDS
CLRP beginnings

• Small cooperation between Chong elders & Mahidol linguists
• Community motivation & commitment
• Financial support from TRF; community-based research
• Technical support from academic institution, ILCRD-Mahidol University
• Spiritual & emotional support
CLRP Components

• Orthography development
• Literature production
• Curriculum development
• Teaching Chong as a subject in school
• Chong Community Learning Center
Chong Orthography

• Based on linguistic research
• Based on Thai writing system
• Tested to make sure it is readable and acceptable
• Tool for recording Chong language and local knowledge, for teaching younger generation
• Symbol of ethnic identity
ภาพที่แสดงเป็นเด็กที่ถือกระดาษที่มีข้อมูลทางภาษาไทย
Literature Production

- Story writing (different levels)
- Editing (story writing, language)
- Illustrating
- Book binding
Curriculum Development

• Teaching Chong as a second language
  – Students be able to use Chong as well as Thai (official language)
  – Enjoyable atmosphere
  – Proud of their part in CLRP

• Preparation of teaching materials
Curriculum Development (cont.)

• Total Physical Response (TPR)
• Shared Reading (with Big Books)
• Cultural Activities (cooking, bush walking, rice harvesting, etc.), Songs and Dances
• Transfer Primer (with ILCRD, SIL)
• TPR-Storytelling
Monday 9th June 2003
Teaching Chong in School as a Subject

• Teacher selection criteria
  – Good pronunciation of Chong
  – Dedicated to the CLRP
  – Accepted by the Chong community
• Teacher Training
  – Teachers learn TPR
  – Teachers learn Shared Reading
  – Teachers learn to teach Transfer Primer
  – Individual reading time
  – Cultural activity time
  – TPR-Storytelling
เนื้อแท้เห็น วัดเห็น เหมาะ
อิคกิท เศนกิท ห่วงแม่
เลี้ยงดีให้ ใส่เดือน ทั้งแม่
เงิน มากมาย
Chong Community Learning Center

• Supplementary language activities for students and adults
• Information about the CLRP, the Chong people, language & culture
• A meeting place for the Chong language committee, writers workshops
• A site for cultural activities and a local museum
Impact of CLRP

- Community empowerment
  - Self confidence & self esteem
- Promotion of minority language education in school
- A model for other struggling endangered groups
- Students could pass the National Standard Test in Thai and math for the first time
- Reconsideration of national education policy