

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to identify the problems Kammuang speakers experience when they learn the Lanna script, to survey how Kammuang and the Lanna script are used currently in Northern Thailand, and to investigate the attitudes of students and their parents in two schools in Northern Thailand towards Kammuang and the Lanna script. This section summarizes the findings and the conclusions of this research project.

#### 6.1 Problems Kammuang speakers experience when they learn the Lanna script

Kammuang speakers experience a variety of problems while they are learning the Lanna script. The first problem is Lanna letters do not correspond to their Central Tai equivalents with which they are typically transcribed in scholarly works. Kammuang speakers may have difficulty dealing with these consonants. The second problem is words with initial consonant clusters. There are many words that are written in the Lanna script with initial consonant clusters, but in spoken Kammuang the words are pronounced with a single initial consonant. Thus, when Kammuang speakers are asked to write these words, they may write them without the cluster. The third problem is words that end with /n/ in spoken Kammuang. The problem of Kammuang speakers is to figure out which consonant  $\text{ᨾ}$  /r/ or  $\text{ᨿ}$  /n/ should be used in which word. The fourth problem is the use of  $\text{ᨾ}$  /r/ as an initial consonant. Such

words are pronounced as either initial /h/ or /l/ in modern spoken Kammuang and the Lanna script learner has to learn the rules to pronounce each word. The fifth problem concerns a number of words where spoken Kammuang does not follow the way of written Lanna. The sixth problem is the changing pronunciation of spoken Kammuang because the pronunciation of the spoken forms change over time as compared with the written form.

While these problems pose challenges to the Kammuang speaker learning the Lanna script, they must be balanced against the advantages gained from a knowledge of spoken Kammuang. The books written in the Lanna script that are now available are, in effect, Kammuang books. Thus all native speakers of Kammuang will be able to understand the content of such books readily when they have mastered the script. The challenges noted above must become the focus for primer writers, enabling Kammuang speakers to quickly become Lanna readers.

## **6.2 Attitudes towards Kammuang and the Lanna script**

The questionnaire administered to the Northern Thai students brought out many interesting points about language use and language attitudes. The first section explored language use patterns. The 120 students showed some significant differences, especially when separated by place of residence. City-dwellers used more Central Thai, where people living outside the city used more Kammuang. Program of study was also significant with Lampang Kanlayanee English-Social Science and Lampang College students using more Kammuang and Lampang Kanlayanee English-French students using more Central Thai.

The next section asked subjects how important Kammuang was for various activities. Living in the northern part of Thailand is the only activity for which the majority of all subjects said Kammuang is an important language. For other activities, the majority of all subjects are neutral as to the value of using Kammuang. Talking to

teacher at school is an activity in which Kammuang is not so important, especially for the students who are in group one (English-French program from Lampang Kanlayanee School) and the students who live in the city. For one often activity, that of making friends, the students from Lampang city gave statistically significant higher responses Kammuang being important. Subjects living outside the city also ranked Kammuang as were important for making friends than did city-dwellers.

Next, in the questionnaire, when one hundred and twenty subjects were asked about their attitudes towards statements about Kammuang and the Lanna script, the majority of the subjects (combining those who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the statements) had positive language attitudes. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the 120 subjects have quite positive attitudes towards both Kammuang and the Lanna script. Even those subjects who said they were neutral toward the statements may one day change and become more positive if they experience Lanna for themselves and see Lanna being supported by the government or their families.

Thereafter, those one hundred and twenty subjects were divided by gender. The scores were almost identical. There were no statistically significant differences between male and female responses for the attitudes towards Kammuang, while there was only one statement that showed statistically significant differences between genders in regards to the Lanna script. Thus, gender does not interact with attitudes in this study.

This research also found that the students in the survey, whether they lived in the city or outside, had similar attitudes towards Kammuang and the Lanna script. There were no statistically significant differences between people who live in different places for each attitude towards Kammuang and the Lanna script statement. However, according to the raw scores, the students who lived in the city had better attitudes towards the Lanna script than those living outside the city.

The major area of study seems to be the strongest factor among three factors that influenced or manifest statistically significant differences for the attitudes of the students towards Kammuang and the Lanna script. Two out of five statements show statistically significant differences for attitudes towards Kammuang and three out of eleven statements show statistically significant differences for attitudes towards the Lanna script between those who study in Lampang Kanlayanee School and the Lampang College of Commerce and Technology. The attitudes towards the Lanna script of the students from the Lampang College of Commerce and Technology in the computer program were slightly lower than those of the students in the English-French and English-Social Sciences program in Lampang Kanlayanee School. Most likely this is because the students from Lampang Kanlayanee School have a chance to study the Lanna script, so they have mildly more positive attitudes. The students from Lampang College of Commerce and Technology have slightly better attitudes than the English-French and English-Social Science programs in Lampang Kanlayanee School towards spoken Kammuang, which they tend to use more than the Lampang Kanlayanee students. The perspective of looking at the data is also important because some statements may have statistically significant differences when they are looked from the perspective of gender, but may not be statistically different when they are looked from the perspective of place of residence or major of study. For example, in this study, the statements 'People who speak Kammuang and Central Thai can have more friends than those who speak only Central Thai' and 'To speak one language (Kammuang) is all that is needed' found statistically significant differences when looked at from the perspective of major area of study, but there were no statistically significant differences when looked from the perspective of gender or place of residence.

In the section of language ability separated by gender, major area of study and place of living, there were some statistically significant differences. When the set of data is looked at from the perspective of major area of study, there are no statistically

significant differences for the ability of speaking Kammuang but there are statistically significant differences for the ability of reading and writing the Lanna script. Thereafter, according to the raw data, the students in group three speak Kammuang better than other two groups. The ability of the students in group one (English-French program who have a chance to study the Lanna script at school) in reading and writing the Lanna script is better than the other two groups. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see that although the students in group three (Computer program who have no chance to study the Lanna script at school) have much less ability in the Lanna script, their attitudes to the Lanna script remain about equal with the other two groups (the students who have a chance to study the Lanna script in class). Gender was also significant for the ability of speaking Kammuang, but not for the ability of reading and writing the Lanna script. Residence patterns were significant for both abilities of speaking Kammuang and reading and writing the Lanna script. The majority of the subjects, regardless of gender or residence or major said they "may" buy a computer program with a Lanna font if it was sold in the market.

The majority of student comments showed positive attitudes towards both Kammuang and the Lanna script. The majority of the student comments contained similar statements: for example, it is very important to preserve Kammuang and the Lanna script for people in the next generation to know and use. These statements further prove that the majority of the students are interested in Kammuang and the Lanna script and they see the importance of Kammuang and the Lanna script. They also want to continue to study Kammuang and the Lanna script and see this language be preserved in the Northern Thai community in this generation and generations to come.

According to the study of parents' questionnaires, the majority of the parents have quite positive attitudes towards the study of Kammuang and the Lanna script by their children. The majors of study of their children were significant for the parents'

attitudes towards the study of Kammuang and the Lanna script in only one of fifteen cases. Regardless, the parents in every group have positive attitudes towards Kammuang and the Lanna script, and they are supportive of the study of Kammuang and the Lanna script in their childrens' schools.

In conclusion we can see that the majority of the students, whether male or female, living in the city or outside the city, and studying in any major, have quite positive attitudes towards both Kammuang and the Lanna script. Thus these results help the reseacher be optimistic about the future of Kammuang and the Lanna script. The people in this generation have a good attitude towards the use of Kammuang and the Lanna script and it can be predicted that in the future, the tendency to use Kammuang and the Lanna script will increase.

The majority of students and parents would support Lanna classes in schools because both students and parents have positive attitudes towards both Kammuang and the Lanna script. The students want to continue to use Kammuang and study Lanna classes at school. The parents would also be proud of their children if they have a chance to study the Lanna script at school and are thus able to read and write the Lanna script.

### **6.3 Current use of Kammuang and the Lanna script**

There are six major domains where Kammuang and the Lanna script are used. The first domain is in the names of shops. The second domain is in the mass media, in which three types of mass media were examined, including newspapers, radio, and advertising signboards/ leaflets. The third domain is in the names of places, including names of educational institutions and temples. Only two places use the Lanna script exclusively when their names are written, the others had both Lanna and Thai scripts. The fourth domain is in educational institutions. Within the educational institutions, there are many courses, projects, and seminars that are about Kammuang and the

Lanna script. The fifth domain is the internet, where many Lanna-related websites may be found. The sixth domain is more general, for example bumper stickers, names of products, and in festivals.

In all there is very little use made of the Lanna script in public domains in Northern Thailand. This seems to be based on the assumption that very few people can read the Lanna script. As more people learn the Lanna script, more businesses and government institutions could begin using it. Kammuang written in the Thai script is much more common, and serves to promote the use of Kammuang as a living language in its Northern Thailand homeland.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for further research**

As a result of this study, the researcher has learned a great deal about the attitudes of students and their parents towards their own language. The majority of the students and parents have quite positive attitudes towards Kammuang and the Lanna script. Even some of the students who have had no chance to study the Lanna script at school or would not understand the Lanna script if they saw it on a signboard still want to preserve it, and want all schools in Northern Thailand to teach the students to read and write the Lanna script. Thus the researcher feels that Kammuang and the Lanna script definitely have a chance to survive in Northern Thailand together with other languages, for example, English and Standard Thai.

Additional studies may be focused on subjects of different ages, occupations and social classes. In this research age was not used as a factor because the ages of the students in each group were very similar. If social factors such as different ages, occupations and social classes were explored, the result may be more interesting. The government would learn how the people in general feel about Kammuang and the Lanna script. Then the government would know how to deal with Kammuang and Lanna preservation.

## **6.5 Recommendations for ways in which the language could be better preserved**

The results of one significant statement, 'All schools in Northern Thai area should teach pupils to write the Lanna script,' reveal that almost 66% of the students would like to see Lanna in their school curriculums, while a large number are "neutral" and only a small number "disagree" with this statement. This finding could help the government educational policy to meet the felt needs of the 66% who are very positive (those who "strongly agree" 15% and those who "agree" (51%) with this statement). Thereafter, this policy would probably be accepted by the neutral group, who might become more positive once they experience Lanna for themselves. This would be supported by their parents because, according to the result of the parents' questionnaires, they have quite positive attitudes towards Kammuang and the Lanna study of their children. This would also be in accordance with the government's 'child-centered' education policy. The Lanna script should be one of the subjects that is included in the school curriculum at all levels, and it should be one of the subjects that the students can choose to sit for the university entrance examination.

Another way to help preserve Kammuang and the Lanna language is that the government should have a biligual policy for road signs. The signs should be written in Lanna font along with Thai script in order to make them easy to read. Kammuang and the Lanna script should be used in the signs more often along with Thai script in order to help people get used to this script. Then people may be interested in this script and they may try to figure out what the words that are written in the Lanna script mean or how they are pronounced<sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>25</sup> Similar bilingual and even trilingual signs can be found in other countries such as the United Kingdom (English, Gaelic, and Welsh), the southern United States (English and Spanish), Canada (English-French), Switzerland (German, French, Italian), etc.



In addition, more interesting books should be written in Lanna (as one of the student comments recommended). These books could include Northern Thai guide books, cartoon books, newspapers or Northern Thai cookbooks written in the Lanna script.

TV and radio programs may be another way to help preserve Kammuang and the Lanna script. TV programs teaching people how to write Lanna or comedy programs that use Kammuang may be easy ways to attract people's attention to become interested in Lanna.

The internet, which is very popular among people now, can also be one interesting tool that the government or the private sector can use in order to preserve Lanna. Now there are many web-sites about Lanna, including history, important people, food, interesting places, culture and traditions. However, there are not many web-sites that teach the Lanna script. Thus, web-sites to teach the Lanna script should be designed in interesting ways. Then the students or others who are interested will feel that it is easy to learn the Lanna script.

These are several ways that the Lanna script could be preserved. The more Kammuang and the Lanna script are used, the more chance this language will survive as a beautiful symbol of Northern Thailand, admired and cherished by many people.