

Abstract

Language and Ethnic Diversity in Chiang Saen District

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Chiang Saen is one of the most diverse districts in Chiang Rai in term of number of people and its ethnic groups since it has been set in a good location, being a border of Thailand and connecting with Laos and Myanmar. However, the studies about its ethnic groups done by local officers are not certain as the results has shown that there were 6 ethnic groups in year 1995 and 9 ethnic groups in year 2002.

This research will study about language and ethnic diversity in Chiang Saen district which may benefit local people to know and preserve their own cultures and languages and may benefit local and provincial organization to know how to set proper policies to help preserve and promote the unique culture of each ethnic group and how to set a teaching and learning policy in local schools.

This research aims to study language and ethnic diversity in Chiang Saen district and to contribute language maps. The researchers collected information from three sources which are collecting popularity reports done by Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) from 6 Tambons, interviewing leaders of each village, and collecting language information from informants using Swadesh's wordlist (Swadesh, 1971) and Gedney's wordlist (Gedney, 1972). After analyzing data, the results showed that there are 16 languages which are Tai Yuan, Yong, Lue, Tai Puan, Tai Yai, Lao, South Eastern Thai (Esarn), Akha, Mien, Whith Hmong, Black Hmong, Chinese, White Lahu, Yellow Lahu, Lawa and Black Wa. The first three groups that have the highest population are Tai Yuan (67%), Tai Yai (5.3%) and Tai Lue(4.3%) respectively.