

The Presence of Kam Mueang on Public Signs as a Reflection of Lanna Identity

การปรากฏคำเมืองบนแผ่นป้ายสาธารณะในฐานะการสะท้อน อัตลักษณ์ล้านนา

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Abstract

This study explores and elaborates the identity traits of Lanna-Northern Thailand through signs in public places, especially on roadsides. The quantitative data on public signs were collected in urban, suburban and suburb (outskirts) areas of six upper northern provinces of Thailand (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao and Phrae). Out of 3,247 signs, 1,136 single Kam Mueang words were found, and were classified to find the top ten most frequently used Kam Mueang words which appear on signs 404 times. Twelve identity traits of Lanna are reflected in significant Kam Mueang words in the top ten words found in this study including *motherhood/female gender (Mae 'mother')*, *geography and fertile way of life (Na 'rice field')*, *ethnic and social unit (Ban 'village/community')*, *world/cosmos view on things (Lan and Luang 'million and great/enormous')*, *proper geography (Phayao - a northern province)*, *geographical settlement (Doi 'mountain' and Huay 'creek')*, *economics as well as social behavior (Kad 'market')*, *economic and social status (Huean 'house', and Kham 'gold')*, and *mind-center of life (Jai 'mind or heart')*. According to the results, particular identity traits of Lanna were discussed based mainly on the concept of linguistic landscape proposed by Cenoz and Gorter (2006) and Curtin (2009) in integration with knowledge on Lanna studies referred to, for example, Nimmanhemim (2004), Rungruengsri (2004), Penth (2010), Ongsakul (2010) and also with the concept of identity proposed by Abrams and Hogg (1990), Bucholtz and Hall (2004), and Santiwutmethee (2002). All of these identity traits highlight the world vision and social perspectives of people in Lanna displayed via Kam Mueang written language on signs in public places.

Keywords: Kam Mueang, Identity, Linguistic landscape, Lanna

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้เป็นการสำรวจและอธิบายอย่างละเอียดเกี่ยวกับอัตลักษณ์ด้านต่างๆ ของล้านนา-ภาคเหนือของประเทศไทยผ่านแผ่นป้ายในพื้นที่สาธารณะ โดยเฉพาะริมถนน ได้มีการเก็บข้อมูลแผ่นป้ายเชิงปริมาณในบริเวณเขตเมืองรอบเมือง และพื้นที่รอบนอกเมืองของจังหวัดในภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย 6 จังหวัด ได้แก่ เชียงใหม่ เชียงราย ลำพูน ลำปาง พะเยา และแพร่ จากแผ่นป้ายจำนวน 3,247 แผ่น พบคำเมืองแบบคำเดี่ยวจำนวน 1,136 คำ คำเหล่านี้ถูกนำมาจำแนกประเภท เพื่อหาคำเมืองที่ใช้มากที่สุด 10 ลำดับต้น ซึ่งเป็นคำที่ปรากฏออกมา 404 ครั้งบนแผ่นป้าย ลักษณะด้านอัตลักษณ์ล้านนาจำนวน 12 ประการสื่อสะท้อนออกมาในคำเมืองที่มีนัยสำคัญในคำ 10 คำที่พบในการศึกษานี้ ได้แก่ ความ เป็นแม่/เพศหญิง (แม่) ภูมิศาสตร์และความอุดมสมบูรณ์ในชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ (นา) หน่วยทางสังคมและชาติพันธุ์ (บ้าน) โลกทัศน์ที่มีต่อสรรพสิ่ง (ล้าน และ หลวง) ภูมิศาสตร์ที่มีลักษณะเฉพาะ (พะเยา) ลักษณะที่ตั้งทางภูมิศาสตร์ (ดอย และ ห้วย) เศรษฐกิจและพฤติกรรมทางสังคม (กาด) สถานะทางสังคมและเศรษฐกิจ (เฮือน และ คำ) และจิตใจ-คุณค่าสำคัญของชีวิต (ใจ) จากผลการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับลักษณะเฉพาะของล้านนานี้ ได้นำมาอภิปรายตามแนวความคิดเกี่ยวกับภูมิภาคนี้ ภาษาศาสตร์ที่ Cenoz and Gortor (2006) และ Curtin (2009) ได้เสนอไว้ โดยบูรณาการเข้ากับองค์ความรู้ด้านล้านนาที่ดีที่ อ้างถึง Nimmanhemim (2004) Rungruengsri (2004) Penth (2010) Ongsakul (2010) รวมกับแนวความคิดด้าน อัตลักษณ์ที่เสนอโดย Abrams and Hogg (1990), Bucholtz and Hall (2004) และ Santiwutmethee (2002) เป็นต้น ลักษณะอัตลักษณ์ทั้งหมดนี้ฉายให้เห็นภาพโลกทัศน์และมุมมองทางสังคมของผู้คนในล้านนาที่แสดงออกมาผ่านภาษา เชียงนาคำเมืองบนแผ่นป้ายในพื้นที่สาธารณะ

คำสำคัญ: คำเมือง อัตลักษณ์ ภูมิภาคนี้ภาษาศาสตร์ ล้านนา

Introduction

The presence of Kam Mueang or Lanna language (simply Northern Thai) on signs in public places during a decade has still been less explored and in terms of sociocultural/sociolinguistic perspectives like identity issue. *Kam Mueang /kammuan/* is the language of the Khon Mueang or Tai Yuan people who are the majority inhabitants of Lanna. This study particularly examines the use of frequent Kam Mueang words on public signs and explains the sociocultural identity traits of its home language, Lanna. The Kam Mueang or Lanna language belongs to the Tai-Kadai language family of the southwestern branch along with its counterparts, Lue, Thai, So, Lao and Shan (Tai Yai) languages, based on the Tai-Kadai language family chart proposed by Diller (2008, p. 7). It shares some linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics with Thai, the national language of Thailand (such as monosyllabic word type). There are Kam Mueang words corresponding to Thai ones in terms of both structure and meaning like the words ‘แม่’ /*mæː*/ ‘mother’, นา /*naː*/ ‘rice field’, ล้าน /*lám*/ ‘million’. There are, however, words with the same structure with different tone, like บ้าน /*bāːn*/



'house /village/ community' having a high-level tone whereas in Thai it has a high-falling tone. Kam Mueang, written in the Thai alphabet and its own alphabet (called "Tua Mueang"), has recently been used much more widely than before in public places. It is used for some place names, shops or advertisements, for example. Those names or possibly short texts are in Kam Mueang only or in a mix with other languages: Thai, English, etc. Transliteration in English is often given for the names.

The use of Kam Mueang on signs in public places highlights its particular linguistic landscape as it most directly contributes to its social identity as stated by Cenoz and Gorter (2006). Kam Mueang indexes certain identities proposed by Curtin (2009) as its linguistic landscape related to its typical socio-cultural contexts, as well. Kam Mueang words used for typical persons, places, and things, for example, indicate their Lanna identity as language is considered the most prominent marker proposed by Abrams and Hogg (1990). *Identity* being also considered a process of ideology organizing and enabling beliefs and practices is the production of a particular language, both of which are interconnected, referred to by Bucholtz and Hall (2004). It is therefore possible that certain particular beliefs and practices of Lanna people can be recognized through their language on public signs as identities distinguishing them as having own characteristics, according to Santiwutmethee (2002) and Phakdeephasuk (2018). Some characteristics presented in Kam Mueang may possibly correspond to others of a similar co-culture, Thai; with regards, however, to its own particular contextual meaning.

Lanna, or the upper northern region of Thailand, is an area of ethnic diversity though the majority is Khon Mueang, or Tai Yuan. Their cohabitants from a variety of backgrounds has resulted from the movement of people of various groups namely Tai people (Tai Lue, Tai Yai and Tai Khuen), other groups (Khmu, Karen, Hmong, Yao, Lahu, Akha, Tai Yai and Yunnanese Chinese) as stated by Ongsakul (2010) and Setthakul (2009). Later there were other groups such as the Burmese, Chinese, English, Hindi, Karen, Lisu, Hmong, Akha, and Yao, as mentioned by Wichiankhiew (2012), and till present time people from the western and eastern parts of the world. Lanna people have maintained their unique culture like ways of living, vision, belief as stated by Penth (2009), Ongsakul (2010), Saicharoen (2014), and Phanitchapan (2005). There are certain unique characteristics involved in Kam Mueang or Lanna words on signs such as '*Huean, Luang, Doi, Kad, Kham*'. Meanwhile Lanna society has also adjusted itself to cope with modern lifestyles. Modernity and locality have interacted as is reflected in the frequent use of bilingual signs between English and Thai (Srichomthong, 2014),



and also as found by the same author in 2012 in the areas of Chiang Mai. Thongtong (2016), with a concentration on tourism and business interests, found that multilingual signs between Chinese, English and Thai were the most used at Nimmarn Road, the favored hangout area of Chiang Mai city. Public signs in Lanna would also involve its language, *Kam Mueang* which is beneficial to explore widely and intensively to obtain particular identities of the region.

Data Collection

The data of this study includes any public signs which were collected by photographing and taking notes, especially on the roadsides in urban, suburban and suburb (outskirts) areas of six upper northern provinces of Thailand including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao and Phrae, as shown in the map. This sign data was added to data collected for a previous study on “Language Globalization in Northern Thailand” (Srichomthong, 2014).



Figure 1 Map of six provinces of Lanna of the upper northern region (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao and Phrae). (Map: Provinces of Northern Region, 2018)

All signs were considered as either permanent or temporary, some were static and some were moving, and were made of various materials: cotton, paper, wood, metal, cement, vinyl, etc. They were mostly written in the Thai orthography, and on some English was given as a transliterated language. The signs were place names, shop or business names, road names, advertising, announcements, etc.

All present and former data in the same areas of the six upper provinces of Northern Thailand were combined together. They were counted in number, and 3,247 signs were found.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by applying an approach to linguistic landscapes proposed by Gorter (2006). All 3,247 signs were classified by the author who is a native speaker of Kam Mueang to find words which contained Kam Mueang. Those words containing Kam Mueang were either monolingual signs or mixed signs of bilingual and multilingual forms of the compound type with the same language or other counterpart languages, Thai or English. Data excerpts will be shown below to exemplify monolingual and mixed signs. Language patterns containing Kam Mueang words on signs found in Chiang Mai vary the most. There were bilingual signs which mixed Kam Mueang and various other languages.

Single Kam Mueang words were carefully taken from all types of both monolingual and bilingual or multilingual word patterns types. They were counted in number. As the result, 1,136 single Kam Mueang words were found. These single Kam Mueang words were classified by way of frequency ranking to find the top 10 most frequently used Kam Mueang words. Then, these words which appear on signs 404 times were calculated in percentage. Single Kam Mueang words of the same frequency were grouped together. Finally, the top ten most frequently used Kam Mueang or Lanna words are taken into consideration.

Data excerpts (with and without photos) are given to exemplify types of signs, findings and discussion issues throughout the study. The phonetic font used in transcribing the data was Charis SIL. Language types besides words in Kam Mueang only of each word in the data excerpts will also be shown.

Following are some data excerpts (with and without photos) shown as examples on each type of signs.

1. monolingual Kam Mueang signs

1.1 ผ้ายเฮือนแก้ว /*fāihwankǎ:w*/ (figure 2)

Fai (cotton) Huean (house) Kaew (crystal)

'Huean Kaew Cotton' (In this context, "Huean Kaew" is a shop name, as shown in the figure below)

1.2 บ้านกาต /*bā:nkā:t*/ (figure 3)

Ban (village) Kad (market) 'Market Village'



Figure 2 A shop sign, “Fai Huean Kaew”



Figure 3 A sign on a car roof, “Ban Kad”

(Market Village)

1.3 น้ำแม่ปิง /ná:mm&:piŋ/

Nam (water) mae (mother) Ping (or Phing-Name)

‘Ping River’ (the river which flows through Chiang Mai)

2. mixed signs of bilingual and multilingual forms of compound type

Two types of mixed signs between Kam Mueang or Lanna language, of which some words are correspondent to Thai and other languages include bilingual and multilingual ones.

2.1 Bilingual signs

2.1.1 ธาตุคำวิลเลจ /thâ:tkhamvileŋ/ (figure 4)

/thâ:tkham/-Kam Mueang, /vileŋ/-English

Tad (Buddha relic) Kham (gold) village ‘Tadkham Village’ (a community next to a temple named “Tadkham”)

2.1.2 เหือนซาลปะเป่า /huansa:lapau/ (figure 5)

/huan/-Kam Mueang, /sa:lapau/-Chinese

Huean (house) Salapau (Chinese bun) ‘House of Chinese bun’



Figure 4 A community, Tadkham Village



Figure 5 A shop, Huean Salapau (House of Chinese bun)

2.2 multilingual signs

It is noted that multilingual signs between Kam Mueang and other languages appear in many forms as shown in the data excerpts below.

2.2.1 กาดขัวมุง OTOP ลำพูน /kâ:tkhũamuŋotɔplamphu:n/ (figure 6)

/kâ:tkhũamuŋ/-Kam Mueang, /o:ɔp/-English, /lamphu:n/-Thai

Kad (market) khua (bridge) mung (top roofed) OTOP Lamphun

‘The market of OTOP on the covered bridge, Lamphun’
 OTOP is an abbreviation for “One Tambol One Product” a program that promotes the sale of local products.



Figure 6 The market of OTOP, Lamphun

2.2.2 12 เม.ย.ม่่วนใจßเต้ßเต้ßน กำนßงßจßสะßบßก หนึ่งßเดียวßในßโลก สะßบßกเมืองßแป้ (figure 7)

/sipsß:ŋme:jßw:mßußantßǎißilß?tßuß:ntßen kß:nkhß:ŋßtßɛß?sßàß?pßô:k nß:ŋßdißawnßailßôk sßàß?pßô:kmußanßpßâß:/
/sipsß:ŋ/-Arabic /me:jßw/-Thai, /mßußantßǎi/-Kam Mueang,
/ilß?tßuß:ntßen/-Thai, /kß:nkhß:ŋßtßɛß?sßàß?pßô:k/-Kam Mueang,
/nß:ŋßdißawnßailßôk/-Thai, /sßàß?pßô:kmußanßpßâß:/

Sibsong (twelve) meyo-Abbreviation (April) muan (feel comfort) jai (heart/mind) lae –Conj. (and) tuenten (be excited) kankhaeng (competition) ji-V. (fire) sabok (firework) nueng (one) diew (only) nai-Prep. (in) lok (world) sapok firework) mueang (town) Pae (Phrae) ‘12 of April, joy and excitement with a fireworks contest, the only one in the world, the fireworks of Phrae province’



Figure 7 A promotion sign for the fireworks contest at Phrae

2.2.3 Air Asia love เชียงใหม่ บินßเครื่องßใหม่ ม่วนßใจßขนาด (figure 8)

/?æß?e:ʃialßvßtßɛßiaŋßmßai binkhrußaŋßmßai mßußantßǎißkhßãß?nßã:t/
/?æß?e:ʃialßv/-English, /tßɛßiaŋßmßai/-Kam Mueang,
/binkhrußaŋßmßai/-Thai, /mßußantßǎißkhßãß?nßã:t/-Kam Mueang

Air Asia love Chiang Mai bin-V.(fly) krueng (machine) mai (new) muan (feel comfort) jai (heart/mind) kanad-Adv. (very) ‘Air Asia loves Chiang Mai, great joy flying new planes’.



Figure 8 A sign of Air Asia 'Air Asia loves Chiang Mai, great joy flying new planes'.

Findings and Discussions

Findings of the top ten most frequently used single Kam Mueang words obtained from the analysis of Kam Mueang words of the single type are shown as follows. Discussion of these top 10 used words will be based on integrated knowledge of linguistic landscape, Lanna studies and identity, with reference to some scholarly work.

Single Kam Mueang or Lanna words that were used in the top ten most frequent words appeared on signs a total of 404 times. These include แม่ /*mæ:*/ 'mother' (12.38 %), นา /*na:*/ 'rice field' (11.14 %), บ้าน /*bā:n*/ 'village/community' (10.64 %), ล้าน /*lǎ:n*/ 'million' (10.64 %), พะเยา /*phajau*/ 'Phayao' (9.90 %), กาด /*kā:t*/ 'market' (7.92 %), ดอย /*do:j*/ 'mountain' (7.67 %), เฮือน /*huan*/ 'house' (6.68 %), คำ /*kham*/ 'gold' (6.19 %), ห้วย /*hūaj*/ 'creek' (6.19 %), หลวง /*luang*/ 'large/great/enormous' (5.69 %), ใจ/ใจ /*cai/cai*/ 'mind/heart' (4.95 %), respectively. All were monosyllabic words that were incorporated as word elements of compound words such as, "Mae + Tha > Maetha", "Lan + Na > Lanna". Those 12 Kam Mueang words are in the top 10 most frequently used words and shown in the table below.

Table 1 Top 10 most frequently used words.

Order	Word	Meaning	Number of Uses in Per Cent
1	/ <i>mæ:</i> / Mae	mother	12.38
2	/ <i>na:</i> / Na	rice field	11.14
3	/ <i>bā:n</i> / Ban, / <i>lǎ:n</i> / Lan	village/community, million	10.64, 10.64
4	/ <i>phajau</i> / Phayao	Phayao (a province)	9.90
5	/ <i>kā:t</i> / Kad	market	7.92
6	/ <i>do:j</i> / Doi	mountain	7.67
7	/ <i>huan</i> / Huean	house	6.68
8	/ <i>kham</i> / Kham, / <i>hūaj</i> / Huay	gold, creek	6.19, 6.19
9	/ <i>hūaj</i> / Luang	great/enormous	5.69
10	/ <i>cai/cai</i> / Jai	mind/ heart	4.95
		TOTAL	100

Sociocultural Identities of Lanna-Northern Thailand

The twelve sociocultural identity traits of Lanna on public signs involved in single Kam Mueang words of top 10 most frequently used words, indicate the perspectives on society and worldview of Lanna or northern Thai peoples. Those identity markers through the local language include *motherhood and female gender: Mae* (mother and female gender), *worldview on things: Lan* (million) and *Luang* (large/great/enormous), *fertility and/or typical geographical settlement: Na* (rice field), *Ban* (village/community), *Phayao, Doi* (mountain) and *Huay* (creek), *economics and social behavior: Kad* (market), *economic and social status: Huean* (house) and *Kham* (gold), and *importance of mind/heart: Jai* (mind/heart).

As noted by Curtin (2009) and Cenoz and Gorter (2006), the local language used in the linguistic landscape on signs indexes the social identities of an ethnolinguistic group. The local language of Lanna being used in public places in northern Thailand clearly indicates the uniqueness of this society. Language has a salient role as the marker which characterizes human activity, as proposed by Edwards (2009), and Abrams and Hogg (1990). The use of language including Kam Mueang is influenced by sociocultural factors and also, **identity** is considered a sociocultural phenomenon being constructed from within humans, or as a fixed social category, as stated by Clark (2013, p. 7). Accordingly, those 12 Kam Mueang words on public signs reflect Lanna identity, which can be regarded an ideological process and interconnected with language, as proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2004). Those Kam Mueang single words involving identity features, written in either its own orthography, Thai or other languages on signs in public places of the Northern region of Thailand are also evidence for language maintenance.

Kam Mueang or Lanna language is known as the heritage language of Khon Mueang or Tai Yuan people referred to Sunthornphesat (2003), Rungruengsri (2008), Wanthanaphuti (2012), and Charoenmuang (2012) who originally lived in Yunnan of southern China (Witthayasakpan, 2000). Written Kam Mueang is in continued use, although mostly in the Thai orthography. Kam Mueang in its own orthography is generally used for the names of wats (Buddhist temples) together with Thai. It is more widely displayed in public places of the northern Thai area in this decade than before.



Motherhood and female gender: Mae (mother)

Lanna society gives a high value to motherhood and female gender reflected in the most frequently Kam Mueang used word, “Mae” meaning ‘mother’ on public signs (12.38 %). This identity trait through the highest use of the word “Mae” in public is influenced by and indicates the image of Lanna as having fundamental structure as a *Matriarchal Society*, the term stated by Phanitchapan (2005, p. 11) paying respect to female gender since women have looked after the family way of living and survival. Hence, Lanna society remarkably makes use of the word “Mae” in several meanings as Rungruengsri (2004, p. 561) shows. Some meanings are concern with the family relation and role in the community such as, *mother, respectful female relatives, women who are in charge with some duties/occupation, head of material things management*. Other meanings deal with beliefs in naming *female gods*, and *big rivers* like “*Mae Wang*”, as well as a *classifier for rivers*. The word “Mae” is also used as an initial word element combination of the compound word for the word “woman”, ‘Mae-nying’. “Mae-nying” or “Mae”, both have uniquely determined patterns of living, customs, beliefs and rites and ceremonies of Lanna.

A high identity marker of the word “Mae” Lanna people value is often involved in the word “Mae” in public places. This word is usually a combination element in “Nam Mae”, which means ‘river’ (Rungruengsri, p. 366), for example ‘Nam Mae Ping’ which flows past the city of Chiang Mai. The word *Nam Mae* can be two-headed compound word and classified within the *coordinate compound* word type, proposed by Bisetto and Scalise (2005, pp. 329 – 330). Tai people as well as Lanna people have usually preferred to settle down on the plain, near rivers, or near a creek (Kettthet, 2003 and Phanitchapan, 2005). *Mae* in the compound word of three constituents, as in some sign data “Nam Mae Kha” (in Chiang Mai), “Nam Mae Tha” (in Lamphun), and “Nam Mae Sai” (in Chiang Rai), for example explains the high respect Lanna people give to important things or persons. Therefore, they follow their communities’ names as the particular river’s name they locate nearby. The two following data excerpts of place names containing the noun word “Mae” show a high identity marker of the word “Mae” Lanna people value in public places.

1) อำเภอแม่สาย /*Pamphə:mæ:sǎj*/

/*Pamphə*:-Thai, /*mæ*:-Kam Mueang, /*sǎj*:-Kam Mueang

Amphoe (district) Mae (mother) Sai (river’s name) ‘Mae Sai district’ (Mae Sai is a river name in Chiang Rai)

2) คลองแม่ข่า /*khloːŋmæːkhāː*/

/khloːŋ/-Thai, */mæː*/-Kam Mueang, */khāː*/-Kam Mueang

Klong (canal) Mae (mother) Kha ‘Mae Kha canal’ (Mae Kha is a canal through the inner city of Chiang Mai)

Worldview of geography and things: Lan (million) and Luang (large/great/enormous)

The worldview that the Lanna or northern Thai people have of their geographical region and things is reflected in the words “Lan” (million) and “Luang” (vast/great/enormous) on signs in public places. The word “Lan” usually used in combination with “Na” to form the compound proper name “Lanna”. The word *Lan* is used for the perspective on the fertile vast region, and the adjective *Luang*, which means “large/great/enormous” is used for the size of things, in both concrete and abstract meanings. The adjective *luang* in Lanna corresponds to the noun “luang” in Thai which refers to what is “royal”. An example of the use of “luang” in Thai, which is different from that in Lanna is a well-known organization โครงการหลวง /*khroŋkaːnlǔaŋ*/ ‘The Royal Project Foundation’, a non-profit organization based in northern Thailand.

The vast amount in million: Lan (million)

The worldview of the Lanna people on unique characteristics of the geographical settlement of the region is reflected on “Lan”, the third most frequent word (10.64 %) as it connotes a vast region of fertility in an approximate amount of *Lan or million*. Rungruengsri (2004, p. 646) says that the word *Lan* /*láːn*/ refers to the amount of a million. In terms of linguistic structure, this word is an element combination in the compound word “Lanna/Lan Na”. The single word, “lan” is the second (11.14 %) in the top ten most frequently used words, whereas its combination, “na” is the third (10.64 %). Hence, *Lanna* refers to the vast land of fertile-rice cultivation as well as the main agricultural and economic area. In terms of lexical meaning, the compound word *Lanna* means the rice fields in the amount of a million rais; a “rai” refers to the unit of area equal to 1,600 square metres (Rai, 2018). A raised position which is part of the royal name of King Kawila’s son being named by King Rama the IV of Siam (former Thailand) to be the sixth King of Chiang Mai (1856 – 1870) was “สุนทรพิศลักษ์ภระเกษตร” /*sǔːnthoːntótláksàʔkràʔkàʔsèt*/, which all together means ten one hundred thousand rice fields, that is, *Lan Na*, according to Huapcharoen (2005, p. 59). This title corporates with the finding of the use of the word “Lanna” /*láːnnaː*/ by Penth (2009) in the inscription written in 1553 and other palm leaves from Nan province and other places saying /*tháʔsàʔlákkhàʔáhèːttàʔnáʔkhɔːn*/ is translated as “city of ten one hundred thousand rice

field” (The Kingdom of Lanna, 2018). The compound word, Lanna is usually and widely used in various contexts, as the region’s name, for things belonging to the region, for organization names (state or private), for handicraft products, etc. on public signs shown in the data excerpts below.

- 3) หละปุ่นเมืองบุญหลวงแห่งล้านนา /lâ?pu:nmūangbu:nlǎnghæ:ŋlâ:nna:/
 /lâ?pu:n/-Kam Mueang, /mūangbu:nlǎn/ -Kam Mueang, /hæ:ŋ/-Thai,
 /lâ:nna:/-Kam Mueang
 Lagoon (Lamphun) Mueang (town) Boon (merit) Luang (great) haeng-Prep. (of)
Lanna ‘Lamphun, a great merit making town of Lanna’
- 4) ยินดีต้อนรับสู่สถาปัตยกรรมล้านนา (Welcome to Lanna Architecture)
 /jindi:tǎ:nrâpsù:sà?thǎ:pàttà?jǎ?kamlá:nna:/
 /jindi:tǎ:nrâpsù:sà?thǎ:pàttà?jǎ?kam/-Thai, /lá:nna:/-Kam Mueang
 Yindi (pleasure) tonrab (welcome) su –Prep. (to) architecture Lanna
 ‘Welcome to Lanna Architecture’

The great/enormous size: Luang

The worldview of Lanna people on vast or great or enormous things is reflected in the use of “Luang” on public signs. *Luang* is an adjective characterized both in concrete and abstract meaning. Everything, either object, place, position like mountain, community, building, ceremony or event, and place of big size are usually named with “Luang”. It is noted that an important Buddhist temple and the oldest and biggest market in the city of Chiang Mai are named in the local language as “Wat Chedi Luang” (temple of the big pagoda), and “Kad Luang”, or Warorot market being named as in a big sign, “Maha Kad” (see figure 9) which means a big market. The word “Luang” is part of compound words on signs in various places of northern Thailand as can be seen in two data excerpts below.



Figure 9 Maha Kad ‘the great market’

- 5) วัดพระธาตุลำปางหลวง /wátphrá?thâ:tlampa:ŋlǎn/
 /wát/-Kam Mueang and Thai, /phrá?thâ:tlampa:ŋ/-Thai, /lǎn/ -Kam Mueang
 Wat (Buddhist temple) Phrathat (Buddha relic) Lamphang Luang-Adj.

(great/enormous)

'Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang' (a well-known Buddhist temple in Lampang)

6) ไอติมสูตรโบราณ ปอยหลวง /*Paitimsù:tbo:ran pɔ:jluǎn*/

/Paitim-/Kam Mueang and Thai, */sù:tbo:ran*^-Thai, */pɔ:jluǎn*^-Kam Mueang

Aitim (ice cream) Sut (recipe) Boran Adj. (old) Poi (festival) Luang-Adj. (great)

'Old style ice cream-Poi Luang' (great festival)

Typical geographical settlement and community: Na (rice field), Ban (village/community), Phayao, Doi (mountain) and Huay (creek)

The typical geographical settlement of Lanna or northern Thailand found through Kam Mueang words on public signs, which indicates certain identity features includes the words *Na* (rice field), *Ban* (village/community), *Phayao* (a northern province), *Doi* (mountain), and *Huay* (creek), respectively. These geographical characteristics also imply fertility of the land, a typical place, and unique geography of the region and community.

Fertile geographical settlement: Na (rice field)

A geographical settlement of Lanna implying a fertile land and being widely used for various places and business names in the word "Na" on public signs indicates that Lanna has vast rice fields as a prominent characteristic and property, as also discussed on the word "Lan" earlier. The Lanna "Na" or rice fields of Lanna region lie in the low lands in between the mountains. There is especially a big fertile basin for rice cultivation of Lanna, "the basin of Lamphun-Chiang Mai" which is settled in between the Thong Chai and the Phi Pan Nam chains of mountain wherein the Ping River flows, according to Ongsakul (2010).

Na, or rice field, represents the main agricultural culture of the Tai people, who have cultivated rice throughout their history. Therefore "Na" indicates the typical and traditional way of life of the Tai people, also including the Tai Yuan or Khon Mueang, who prefer to live near water resources like rivers in order to cultivate rice. The word "Na" is used the second most (11.14 %) of the top ten most frequently used words. It is usually used in combination with the word "Lan" to form the compound word, "Lanna" referring to the region's name. The compound word "Lanna or Lan Na" has been used throughout the region as an element of the proper name, as in the following sign data. The word "Na" also appears as an element combination of other words as shown in the second data example. A sign reflecting the unique region's name and ethnic social unit is shown in figure 10.



- 7) โรงเรียนสารสาสน์วิเทศล้านนา /ro:ŋriansǎ:rǎ?sà:twí?thê:tlá:mna:/
 /ro:ŋriansǎ:rǎ?sà:twí?thê:t/-Thai, /lá:mna:/-Kam Mueang
 Roonrian (school) Sarasat Withet Lanna 'Sarasat Withet Lanna school'.
- 8) นาก่วมการพิมพ์ /na:kùamka:nphim/
 /na:kùam/-Kam Mueang, /ka:nphim/-Thai
Na Kuam (a place) kan-Nominal prefix (of) phim (print)
 'Na Kuam Publishing House'.



Figure 10 Sarasas Withet Lanna School

Ethnic and social unit/community: Ban

A social unit or community of Lanna that appears on public signs in Kam Mueang is the word “Ban” /bā:n/ which means community/village (with the third top 10 use as the word “Lan”, 10.64 %). The *Ban* in Lanna (northern Thai) language implies a large unit of place of living and ethnic identity of the individuals – the place to which they belong, as well as their birth place. It refers to village, as Rungruengsri (2004, p. 392) gave the meaning as *the place of residence of humans*. This word also corresponds to Thai, which may mean house or community/village. But the word in Lanna for house is “Huean”. Lanna villages or communities have traditionally been settled near water resources, including rivers (Phanitchapan, 2005). The word “Ban” in two Kam Mueang data excerpts (9) and (10) shows the use of the word “Ban” as the name of the community or village. Those two communities belong to the sub-districts of Nong Khway, in Hang Dong, a district of Chiang Mai.

- 9) บ้านสันป่าสัก /bā:nsǎnpā:sāk/
Ban (village) San (hill) Pa (forest) Sak (teak) 'San Pa Sak village' (It implies a village on the hill of teak forest)
- 10) บ้านต้นเกว๋น /bā:ntōnkwě:n/
Ban (village) Ton (tree) Kwain (a kind of wild fruit tree)
 'Ton Kwain village/community' (It implies a village having trees of Ba-Kwain)

Proper geographical settlement: Phayao

A proper characteristic of the geographical settlement in Lanna is reflected in the word “Phayao” on signs. *Phayao* is a proper name, the name of Phayao province. It is situated, as a particular place, along the long cliff or mountain, which may be clearly seen at twilight. There are three opinions about the origins of the name: the characteristics of the settlement, the characteristics of the mountain (Pha Yao) /*phǎ:ja:w*/'long cliff', and time and distance (Thirathammo, 2010, pp. 10 - 11). Explanation for each opinion is as follows. The word “Phayao” was slightly distorted from the word *Phu Kam Yao* /*phu:kam:ja:w*/'- Phu (mountain), Kam (village), and Yao (long), therefore “the village being lined along the long mountain”. It might also be the combination between “Pha” (cliff) and “Yao” (long) or the town of long cliff. It was distorted from the word “Fa Yao” /*fǎ:ja:w*/, the word *Fa* means “sky” and *Yao* means “twilight”. A bilingual sign of Thai and Kam Mueang in Phayao having the same word, น้ำพุดนตรีที่กวานพะเยา /*ná:mphú?donri:kwá:nphajau*/' (*ná:mphú?donri:*/'-Thai, /*kwá:nphajau*/'-Kam Mueang) ‘Music fountain of Phayao Lake’ is shown in the figure below (figure 11).



Figure 11 Music fountain of Phayao

Unique geography: Doi (mountain) and Huay (creek)

Some unique geographical characteristics of Lanna are represented in Kam Mueang words on signs in urban and suburban areas, which include *Doi* (mountain) and *Huay* (creek). “Doi” and “Huay” represent Lanna natural resources as Lanna is situated in an area of high mountains alternating with valleys and plateaus. In the plains, city centers like Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Phrae and Nan are situated. The plains of Lanna remarkably lay between chains of mountains, especially Dan Lao, Thanon Thong Chai, Khun Tan, Phi Pan Nam and Luang Prabang (Thai geography, 2020). Those mountains and plateaus have influenced the way of living and beliefs of the inhabitants (Setthakul, 2009, p. 1). “Doi” or mountain was usually used in combination with other words showing its history or characteristics such as a mountain in Chiang Mai, *Doi Suthep* (the place where the hermit Suthep lived). Doi provides a water source for rivers, basins or “Huay” (creeks) in between the mountains.

Northern Thai people appreciate “Doi” or mountain as meaningful geographical settlements, places that are worth living in. Certain buildings or offices are named with the word “Doi”. Sign data on the photo (figure 12) shows an apartment’s name having this Kam Mueang word in Chiang Mai, /doːjiɲmæːntʰán/ (/doːjiɲ/-Kam Mueang, /mæːntʰán/-English) ‘Doi Ping Mansion’ (Ping refers to the Ping River which is the river of Chiang Mai city).



Figure 12 Doi Ping Mansion in Chiang Mai

Figure 13 Huay Tueng Tao
(Huay Tueng Tao, 2018)

Other names of the buildings or offices on signs having the word “Doi” found in Lanna included the data excerpts of mixed word type below.

11) เคียงดอยเฟล็ด /khiangdoːiɲples//khiang/-Thai, /doːi/-Kam Mueang, /ples/-EnglishKiang-Adj. (adjacent) Doi (mountain) place ‘Kiang Doi Place’12) ดอยพืงค้ก้วยเตี้ยวกะลา /doːiphiɲkũatǎwkà?laː/

/doːi/-Kam Mueang, /phiɲ/ (or /piɲ/)-Kam Mueang, /kũatǎw/-Chinese, /kà?laː/-Thai

Doi (mountain) Ping (Ping river) Kuaytiaw (noodle) Kala (coconut shell)‘Noodle soup in coconut shell of Doi Ping’13) กาแฟดอยช้าง /kaːfæːdoːitʰáːŋ//kaːfæː/-Thai, /doːi/-Kam Mueang, /tʰáːŋ/-ThaiKafee (coffee) Doi (mountain) Chang (elephant)‘Doi Chang Coffee (Doi Chang refers to a place name)’

Another geographical characteristic of Lanna used on signs is the word *Huay* /hūaj/. “Huay” is a natural source which indicates as it is a kind of basin or pond which flows from the mountain and mostly has water throughout the year (Royal Institute of Thailand, 2018 and Rungruengsri, 2004, p. 817). “Huay Tueng Tao” (see figure 13) which appeared in one sign, is an example of a creek near the city of Chiang Mai that has become a tourist place. It refers to a basin which has plenty of “Mai

Tueng” or “Pluang” which is the large timber tree, *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus* Roxb (Tree Management System in Chiang Mai University, 2020) with large leaves that are used for roofing.

The use of the word “Huay” on signs reveals a natural source caused by the geography of Lanna as mentioned above, *mountain, valley and plateau*. Lanna people intuitively recognize it and apply it in naming places. Accordingly, there are residences that have received their names from each particular water source close to which they settled down. Two signs that use mixed words exemplify the use of the word “Huay”.

- 14) ห้วยตึงเต๋ายินดีต้อนรับ *hūajtuŋthāujindi:tō:nráp*
*/hūaj/-*Kam Mueang, */tuŋthāu/-*Kam Mueang, */jindi/-*Thai, */tō:nráp/-*Thai
 Huay (creek) Toeng (a kind of tree) Tao-Adj. (old) Jindi (be pleased) Tonrab
 (welcome) ‘Welcome to Huay Toeng Tao’
- 15) ห้วยแก้วเรสซิเดนซ์ *hūajkæ:wretsiden*
*/hūaj/-*Kam Mueang, */kæ:w/-*Kam Mueang, */retsiden/*(in Thai
 pronunciation)-English
 Huay (creek) Kaew (crystal) Residence ‘Huay Kaew Residence’

Economic and social behavior: Kad (market)

A unique aspect of daily life highlighting economic and social behavior is reflected in public signs with the word “Kad” or market. It is unique as it has been recognized in Lanna not only as a trading place, but also a place for societal interaction (Srichomthong, 2017). The high frequency of the word “Kad” (7.92 %) used in combination with other names displayed on signs in public places emphasizes the high value Khon Mueang or northern Thai people give to the place. They are fond of spending time at several kinds of markets not only to sell or buy things, but also to encounter with people. This social behavior shows their hospitality mind in having pleasure in interacting and welcoming people in various occasions. The word “Kad” has been used in combination with other place names in naming each particular market, such as “Kad Luang, Kad of Chiang Mai people”. Kad Luang or Warorot market was founded by the royal family of Chiang Mai, related to King Inthawitchayanon at the place of the royal cemetery on the bank of the Ping river, and was developed later by his daughter, princess Dararasmi (Nimmanhemin, 2004, p. 3). At this old and big local market, a very big sign having the word “Kad” in a combined word มหากาต */má?há:kā:t/* (*/má?há:/*-a prefixed-like Thai, */kā:t/-*Kam Mueang) ‘*Great Market*’ as shown above (figure 9) can be clearly seen.

A few other data excerpts in various language patterns involving the significance of “Kad” (market) in northern Thailand are shown as the following.

- 16) โรงแรมโลตัสกาดสวนแก้ว /rojɾæ:mlo:təskā:tsǔankǎ:w/
 /rojɾæ:m/-Thai, /lo:təʃ/-English, /kā:tsǔankǎ:w/-Kam Mueang
 Rongraem (hotel) Lotus Kad (market) Suan (garden) Kaew (crystal)
 ‘Lotus Kad Suan Kaew Hotel’
- 17) กาดกลางเวียง /kā:tkla:ŋwian/-Kam Mueang
Kad (market) klang-Adj. (middle) Wiang (center/capital)
 ‘Klang Wiang market – the market at the heart of the city’
- 18) กาดขัวมุง OTOP ลำพูน /kā:tkhǔamunjo:tɔplamphu:n/
 /kā:tkhǔamun/-Kam Mueang, /o:tɔp/-English, /lamphu:n/-Thai
Kad (market) Khua (bridge) Mung (be roofed with) OTOP Lamphun
 ‘Market named Kad Khuamung OTOP Lamphun – the market on the
 covered bridge in Lamphun’

Kad or ‘market’ has long been an important place in people’s daily life, for which several kinds of “Kad” are the evidence (Srichomthong, 2017). Several *Kads* have been organized in public and private places including *Kad Ngai* (morning market), and *Kad Laeng* (afternoon market). There have also been other small *Kads* called *Kad Kom* (a small market for a short period) and *Kad Kong Khong* (a temporarily market where customers have to bend down to look for the goods), and *Kad Nad* (an appointed market). Two signs found in Phrae and Lampang show the word “Kad” as a favorite place of northern Thai people (figures 14 and 15). The sign data in figure 14 contains “กาด 3 วัย ห้าโมงแลง ทุกวันศุกร์” /kā:tsǎ:mwajhā:monlæ:ŋtúkɰwansùk/ (/kā:t/-Kam Mueang, /sǎ:mwaj/-Thai, /hā:monlæ:ŋ/-Kam Mueang, /túkɰwansùk/-Thai) ‘The market of 3 generations at five p.m. every Friday’. The sign in Kam Mueang only in figures 15 is on กาดม่วนใจ๋ /kā:tmǔantǎi/ ‘The market of pleasure’.



Figure 14 The market of 3 generations



Figure 15 The market of pleasure

Economic and social status value: Huean (house) and Kham (gold)

The importance and value northern Thai people give in their social life is reflected in the two most frequently used Kam Mueang words on public signs including *Huean* /*huan*/ (house) and *Kham* /*kham*/ (gold). These two Kam Mueang words have been considered important as these two things mark the status of the owner in finances as well as in society. That is, the owner of the house or the gold (in the form of ornaments) is regarded as being rich and respected.

Huean (house)

The value Khon Mueang or northern Thai people have given to their place of living is involved in Kam Mueang word “Huean” /*huan*/ or ‘house’ in Lanna. The “Huean” shows the social as well as the economic status of the owner (Srichomthong, 2012). The traditional Lanna house in teak which is expensive and rare is built on stilts surrounded by a fence. Next to the fence is “Khaung Ban” or house yard in front of the house. An earthen jar is placed next to the stairs for washing feet before going up into the house. The house is surrounded by fruit trees like longan, mango, jackfruit, and betel trees. The important part of the house, “Toen” can be described according to Chanhom (2004, p. 137) as the hall in front of the sleeping room. Traditionally it is used for many purposes, such as eating, offering a meal to the monks, an interacting place between the daughter and her boyfriend, and can be arranged as a guest sleeping place, etc. On one side of the wooden wall, a Buddhist altar is hung and is accompanied by photos of respected monks, etc.

The important economy and value for Lanna society on house highlight in the use of the word “Huean” on public signs for several purposes. The economic and social value of “Huean” in Lanna have been recognized and applied in promoting businesses. As seen in a temporary mixed sign between Thai and Kam Mueang produced by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phrae and two other organizations to promote a tourist event at an opening ceremony “นั่งสามล้อ ฝ่อเฮือนเก่า เล่าขานตำนานเมืองแปะ” /*nâṅsǎ:mǎw: phò:huankāu lâukhǎ:ntamna:nmuangpæ:/* (*/nâṅsǎ:mǎw:/*-Thai, */phò:huankāu/-*Kam Mueang, */lâukhǎ:n/-*Thai, */tamnan/-*Thai, */muangpæ:/*-Kam Mueang) ‘Take a tricycle to see old houses and tell the chronicles of Phrae’ (figure 16). Another sign shows the use of Huean denoting a shop in the shop name เฮือนกาแฟ */huanka:fæ:/* (*/huan/-*Kam Mueang, */ka:fæ:/*-Thai) ‘house of coffee’ (figure 17).



Figure 16 Take a tricycle to see old “Huean” (houses) and tell the chronicles of Phrae



Figure 17 Huean Kafee - House of coffee (Photographed by Jamras, 2014)

Kham (gold)

Another value of northern Thai people is put on things reflected by the Kam Mueang word, *Kham /kham/* or ‘gold’ on public signs. Northern Thai people have regarded the element or ornament, gold as precious, valuable and even holy. Various traditional place names and people names have been given the word “Kham”, either as a compound element or a complete single word (Srichomthong, 2017). Some Buddhist temples are named with the word “Kham” as in “Wat Phra That Doi Kham”, “Wat Nong Kham”, “Wat Ou Sai Kham” in Chiang Mai. Old people, either male or female, may have “Kham” as their first name. The word *Kham* in combination with *Thiang* (right/true) for example, appears on a sign of a company’s name in Chiang Mai, บริษัทคำเที่ยงพัฒนาจำกัด /*bɔ̌rɨsàt̚khamthiãnp̚hátthá?na: t̚amkàt̚*/ (*/bɔ̌rɨsàt̚*-Thai, */kham*-Kam Mueang, */thiãnp̚*-Thai, */phátthá?na:t̚amkàt̚*-Thai) ‘Kham Thiang Phatthana Ltd’ (see figure 18).



Figure 18 The word “Kham” in the company name ‘Khamthiang Phatthana Ltd.’

Some other signs having the word “Kham” in combination with other word elements exemplify the importance of “Kham” or gold Lanna or northern Thai people give towards this object as can be seen in various different public places. A few data excerpts are shown below.

- 19) ธาตุคำวิลเลจ /*thá:t̚khamvileç̚*/
/thá:t̚kham-Kam Mueang, */vileç̚*-English
 Tad (Buddha relic) *Kham* (gold) village
 ‘Tadkham Village’ (a community next to a temple named “Tadkham”)
- 20) ถนนแก้วคำ /*thà?nɔ̌:mwɛ:nkham*/
/thà?nɔ̌:n-Thai, */wɛ:nkham*-Kam Mueang

Thanon (road) Waen (mirror) Kham (gold) ‘Waen Kham Road’ (Waen Kham is a proper name)

21) บ้านร่องเรือคำ */bā:nrō:ŋruakham/*

/bā:n-Kam Mueang, */rō:ŋrua*-Thai, */kham*-Kam Mueang

Ban (village) Rong - or long (canal) Ruela (boat) Kham (gold)

Rong Ruela Kham Village (Rong, or Long Ruela Kham is a proper name.)’

Importance of mind/heart

The worldview of Lanna people on the importance of the mind in caring between people in the society is reflected on the word **Jai** (mind) */tʃai/*, that is */tʃǎi/* on public signs. This word shows the high value Lanna people give to the mind. “Jai” is used as an adjective which means ‘feeling, comfort’ (Rungruengsri, 2004, p. 540). The word “Jai” in the repetitive form, “มีความสุขใจ” */mūan?ōkmūantʃǎi/* ‘be happy/pleasure/joyous’ is preferable among northern Thai people, and widely used in public. The word “Jai” referring to mind or heart */tʃǎi/* or */tʃai/*, and can be considered the center of social life, as well. Therefore, the city pillar, known as “Jai Ban, or Inthakhin, or Sao Lak Mueang”, which has been placed in the center of the community. The city pillar, as in the case of Khon Mueang or Lanna people in Chiang Mai was built to unite the mental center of the community members (Purakhom, 2002, p. 40); it mentally supports the Tai people. The worship ceremony Tai people have still organized towards their “Jai Ban” to show the fertility and economic status, as well as co-operation and sharing of the village (Satayawatthana, 1990, p. 221). Khon Mueang at first received the belief about paying respects to *Inthakhin*, or the city pillar, from the Lua or Lawa people. This group of Mon-Khmer people lived in northern Thailand before the Tai Yuan people.

The word “Jai” also appears in some place names, such as a village in Chiang Rai, “Mae Jai” showing the importance of the mind along with the mother/female gender, and a well-known local restaurant in Chiang Mai, “Huean Jai Yong” (House of Yong mind) also implies its origin as belonging to a Tai Yong group. On the sign data as shown below (figure 19), the word “Jai” is combined with the word “Nam” (water) resulting in a coordinate compound word which means *be sympathetic to* in the sentence in Kam Mueang “มีน้ำใจหื้อเพื่อนฮ่วมตาง” */mi:ná:mʃaihū:pūanhūamta:ŋ/* ‘be sympathetic to those who share the road with us’. “Jai” connoting a state of mind as ‘enjoy’ can be recognized in a sign data of mixed languages text “Air Asia love เจียงใหม่ บินเครื่องใหม่ ม่วนใจ๋ขนาด” */ʔæ:ʃialvʔciɑŋmāi binkhrwaŋmāi mūantʃǎikhā?nā:t/* (*/ʔæ:ʃialv/*

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