

Abstract

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Language documentation of the minority language Kuy

Sociolinguistic field research methods to identify politically-forced and contact-induced change

The aim of this talk is to share the methodological planning of research on the western Mon-Khmer Kuy minority dialects, which are presently spoken mainly in border near areas of Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia on the Southeast Asian Mainland. This situation is unique, as it allows comparing the parallel study of the minority language Kuy and its specific evolution in each country. So far, in language documentation little research was done on contact-induced change of the great linguistic variety of minority languages in Mainland Southeast Asia. Similarly, the question of particular sociolinguistic and sociocultural settings leading to parallel or contrary structural development is under-researched. The presented talk concerns how sociolinguistic methods cannot only be used for the documentation of the minority language Kuy but also for comparing the situation of three parallel developments of the minority language. Besides the documentation of the Kuy dialects spoken in Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia, the sociolinguistic situation of the specific contact-situation in the political border is central to the research design. The methodological approach is based on previously successful used methods and research design, such as sociolinguistic interviews. The investigation includes two sides: Firstly, the speakers' language ideologies, language awareness and language attitudes and secondly, the relationship between sociocultural and sociolinguistic conditions and political and economic language planning. The key concern is to document the present state of the Kuy minority language in each country in order to gain a better understanding how language-contact induced change is influenced by political and economic developments. Further, the question how these goals can be reached methodologically is discussed.

Keywords: *Kuy, Mainland Southeast Asia, sociolinguistic methods, language documentation*

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