

การศึกษาการรู้จักสัญลักษณ์ล้านนาของเยาวชนในจังหวัดเชียงราย

A study of Lanna Symbols Perception in the Young Generation in Chiang Rai Province

นางผวรรณตรี หนูอ่อน¹
Mrs. Phawantree Noo-Un¹



บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการรู้จักสัญลักษณ์ล้านนาของเยาวชนในจังหวัดเชียงราย โดยยึดข้อมูลสัญลักษณ์ล้านนามาจากหนังสือ “คติความเชื่อพื้นบ้านล้านนา” มีการวิเคราะห์และคัดเลือกสัญลักษณ์ที่จะนำมาทำการศึกษาร่วมกับกลุ่มคนสูงวัย เป็นจำนวน 20 สัญลักษณ์ล้านนา โดยนำทฤษฎีสัญลักษณ์ของเพียร์ส (Peirce’s sign theory) มาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ กลุ่มเป้าหมายคือ เยาวชนที่มีอายุระหว่าง 15-25 ปี ซึ่งเป็นคนมีถิ่นฐานอยู่ในจังหวัดเชียงราย จำนวน 100 คน แบบสอบถามที่นำมาใช้นั้น แบ่งออกเป็น 3 ส่วนหลักๆ คือ ข้อมูลทั่วไป การรู้จักสัญลักษณ์ล้านนา และข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมอื่นๆ การศึกษาพบว่าทฤษฎีสัญลักษณ์ของเพียร์สสามารถนำมาใช้กับสัญลักษณ์ล้านนาได้ และพบว่ามีสัญลักษณ์เพียง 6 ชนิดเท่านั้นที่เยาวชนรู้จักคือ จี๊กกิม กีบ นกเค้าผีกะ ขวัญ ส้มป่อย และผีเอาเด็กซ่อน ในทางตรงกันข้ามมีสัญลักษณ์ล้านนา 14 ชนิด ที่เยาวชนไม่รู้จักคือ แมว แกวงข้าว ชันบันได ครก กาแล จี๊กโคร ฟักหม่น กล้วยแฝด ตากผ้า กินบกจกลอง การกวาด ตักโต เขม่น และหอยจูป ในจำนวนนี้มีผู้หญิงเป็นกลุ่มที่รู้จักสัญลักษณ์ล้านนามากที่สุด

คำสำคัญ: ความเชื่อล้านนา, สัญลักษณ์ล้านนา, สัญชาตญาณ, สัญศาสตร์, กลุ่มเยาวชน



Abstract

The objective of this study was to study Lanna symbols perception of young generations in Chiangrai Province. The data were based on book named “The Lanna Beliefs” and analyzed by the elderly people. Twenty Lanna symbols were selected in the study using Peirce’s sign theory in data analysis. The target group was 100 young generation aged between 15-25 years

¹ ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย

¹ Master of Arts, English, Chiangrai Rajabhat University

^{*} Corresponding author. Tel. 089-4865975 E-mail: ppakirana@gmail.com

old who were originally born in Chiang Rai Province. The questionnaires consisted of three parts including general information, perception on Lanna symbols, and additional comments. The results of this study showed that Peirce's sign theory could be applied in Lanna context. The results also revealed that the young people knew only six Lanna symbols: house gecko, flip-flops/slippers/shoes, evil owl, Kwan, Sompoi and spirit hid kids. Fourteen Lanna symbols were found to be unknown: cat, Kwaengkhaio, stair steps, mortar, Karlae, lemongrass, winter melon, twin bananas, hanging clothes, Kinbokjoklong, sweeping, gecko, twitching, and fresh water shell. The female knew the number of Lanna symbols meaning more than male.

Keywords: Lanna Beliefs, Lanna Symbols, Perception, Semiotics, Young Generation



Introduction

In the past, people employed beliefs in order to live together safely and peacefully. People believed in ghosts and spirits, and they were afraid of evil, mysterious powers, and were scared that bad things would lead them and their families into trouble. Thus, beliefs were created as teaching strategies for people within society to keep doing good things and most beliefs are related to religion, helping to shape certain traditions and behaviors of members within communities. As long as the old beliefs exist, it can be claimed that these beliefs play a consistent and important roles in particular society.

On the other hand, if some old beliefs vanished there should be some reasons that can be explained. The old beliefs have been carried from one generation to another through oral teaching and have also been published in books, many beliefs are in practical use. However, old people tend to lead in many beliefs, especially the religious sphere such as worshipping the guardians, or giving offering to monks, while the young may just follow. An ignorance of the language used in worship is one possible reason for young people's failure to join religious events. The language of worship in term of Pali or old local phrases are no longer in use. Many young people today gain more education makes them believe in reasoning not in beliefs. Therefore, in a research is being undertaken in order to provide more scientific explanations of the old beliefs (Kunanya Treeyasorasai, 2005: 3).

To provide reasonable explanation for young generations is one thing to help young generations beliefs. However, there are some other reasons that may cause what people believe. Kalaya Kulabkhao (2007: 2) states in her study that there are just particular group of people who are interested in learning Lanna language in some local areas. It also can be found learning this language in some schools or temples. However, learning Lanna language has been organized by the local people with their own style of teaching from one generation to the next. It can be said that they get less support from the government.

Moreover, young generation has been influenced by new technology and is living an era of globalization. This reason can pull young people out of their interests in learning Lanna language. It has been stated in the study of Chanakit Rachapiboon (2010: 1) that the high technology of computer plays an important role in society today. It becomes an essential part of daily life. Numbers of young people are increasing on using social devices for searching, chatting, and playing games. More and more, people are using social media to express their feelings, share their pictures and opinions, and make wishes on special days. Taking all these things into consideration: showed that young people pay less attention on Lanna culture. Moreover, they may do some activities against Lanna culture through social media.

Nowadays, the change in social activities make young people's behaviors differ greatly from the past which are influenced by new technology. This study aims to study their perception on Lanna symbols and adopted Peirce's theory to analyze the meanings and perceptions of Lanna symbols.



Objective of the Study

To study young people's perceptions of Lanna symbols in Chiang Rai Province.

Significance of the study

This study will use the theory of Charles S. Peirce on signs and symbols on main focuses.

The contribution of the study are as follows:

1. To test the semiotic theory or leaning of Lanna symbols perceptions.
2. To raise the awareness of young people in using Lanna symbols.



The Scope of the study

Lanna region includes 8 provinces including: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lumphun, Lumpang, Prae, Nan, and Phayao. Meanwhile, Lanna symbols can be found in province on many regions. This study will use Lanna symbols selected from the book named "The Lanna Beliefs", which is mainly in Chiang Mai province.

Peirce's sign theory was adopted to analyze Lanna symbols as it is claimed as a universal sign theory which can be applied in any languages as Deledalle (2000: 35) mentioned that: "I shall approach the question of interpreting Peirce or the way of understanding or translating Peirce in another language, your or mine, English or, French, or in and other context: linguistic, private, or ideological".



Methodology

Data Source

Lanna symbols are found in the book “The Lanna Beliefs” There are two main reasons for selecting this book as the main material: firstly, Chiang Rai can be referred as Lanna region, and this both in only particular published book on Lanna beliefs. There are 273 beliefs under 8 categories in this book. Twenty symbols were selected as the most representative of the explicitly Lanna symbols and claimed as common use among young people. The analysis process based on Peirce’s sign theory which presented by the elderly group.

Data Collection

Interview and questionnaire are mainly the collecting tools. Three elderly people were interviewed as pretext method in order to analyze and validate the twenty Lanna symbols

The questionnaires were designed applying the close-ended questions types (Sawer, 1994) with one best answer style. The questionnaires were completed by 100 students from Chiangrai Witthayakhom School, Dumrongratsongkroh School, Vocational college, and Chiang Rai Rajabhat University.

A set of twenty-three Lanna symbols with descriptions/meanings were used to interview with the elderly by focusing on their perceptions of Lanna symbols and their meanings. There were three Lanna symbols which the elderly confirmed that Chiang Rai people have a different meaning.

There are three main parts data of the questionnaire which were analyzed 1) general information, 2) Lanna symbols perception, and 3) the additional comments.

General information of young people will be analyzed age, sex, birthplace, family, and education which can determine the perceptions of Lanna symbols among young people in Chiang Rai Province. Lanna symbol perception questionnaire is targeted for the respondents to determine the perception of each Lanna symbol. Each question consists of one correct meaning/beliefs and two false meanings. Additionally, an open ended was left for the young people to specify the other meanings/beliefs they might know for that particular Lanna symbol. The numbers of the other two false meanings were also analyzed in order to learn what responses were given by the young people. The other meanings will be analyzed in order to learn about Lanna symbols with different meanings/beliefs.



Results

Lanna Symbols Analysis

The results of the study show that Peirce's sign theory can be applied to Lanna symbol. It confirmed that the theory can be used within the Lanna context. At the Lanna symbol analysis stage, one significant point is to test the relationship of each component of the triadic sign system in order to get the specific meaning. However, there is one symbol that leads to the confusion: "The spirit hid kids or Phi-ao-dek-sorn". This ambiguity links to more explicit sign theory, especially the position of "The spirit hid kids or Phi-ao-dek-sorn", is conducted as a sign or representamen, but it is not the representamen. The discussion of this ambiguity was raised in the focus group in order to find a conclusion on this symbol. Five representatives of the young generation group knew how to play hide and seek game but did not understand the meaning of "The spirit hid kids or Phi-ao-dek-sorn". This symbol was replaced by play hide and seek or Lern Sorn Har (เล่นซ่อนหา). The young people were then asked one more time and they understand the meaning of this Lanna symbol.

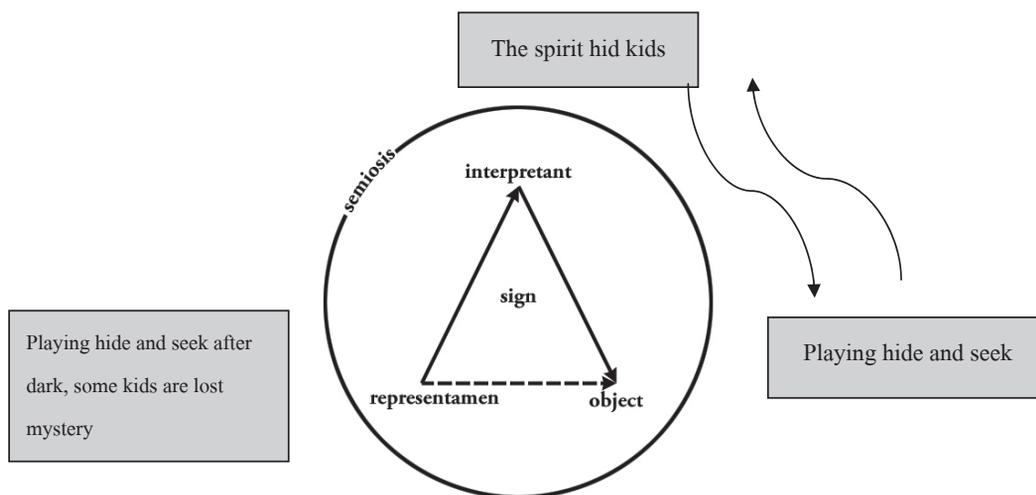


Figure 1: The three dimensional system of Lanna symbol: The spirit hid kids.

The figure (1) above how the symbol of the spirits hid kids takes place as a sign. It helps to confirm the relationship of three components according to Peirce's sign theory.

Perception of Lanna Symbols Analysis

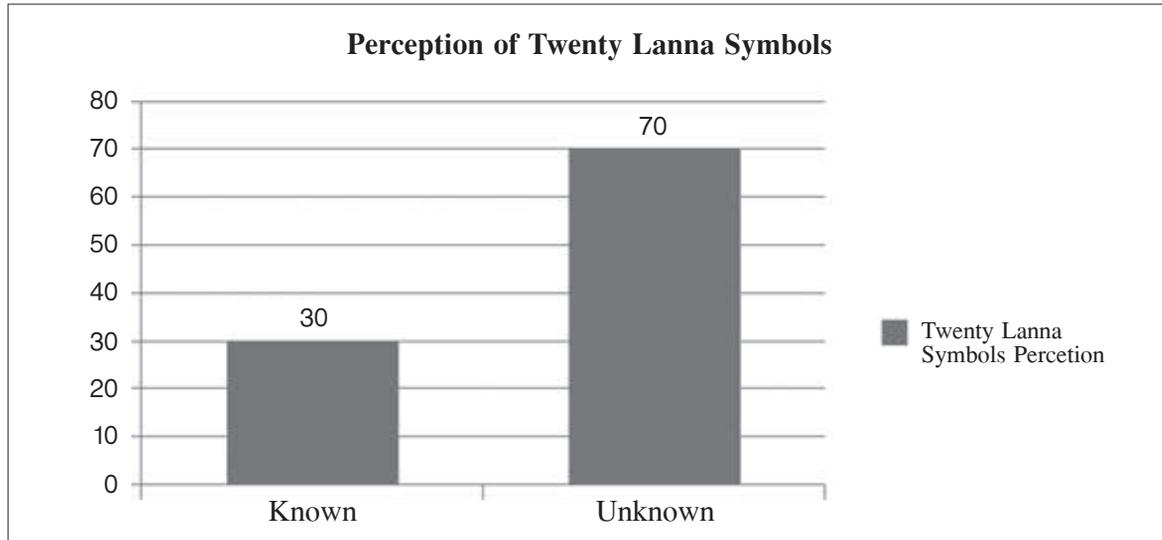


Figure 2: Perception of Twenty Lanna Symbols

Figure 2 indicates that among twenty Lanna symbols, there are 6 symbols or 30% were recognized: house gecko, flip-flops/slippers/shoes, evil owl, Kwan, Sompoi and spirit hid kids. While 14 Lanna symbols or 70% were not recognized: cat, Kwaengkhaao, stair steps, mortar, Karlae, lemongrass, winter melon, twin bananas, hanging clothes, Kinbokjoklong, sweeping, gecko, twitching, and fresh water shell.

The results showed that young generations do not know many Lanna symbols. Out of twenty symbols there are just six symbols which are widely known. Most of the female young people know more Lanna symbols than males. Moreover, additional meaning they know is open for them to write it down. It was found that most meanings were found as the first meaning or the immediate object. This emphasizes that they do not know this object or action as a symbol. The additional opinion on Lanna symbol perception from questionnaires is that father, mother and relatives have taught them the local beliefs and symbols, and they heard about these local symbols from their community.



Discussions

From the results, it tells us that young women knew more Lanna symbols than young men. This fits with the research undertaken by Audrey U.S.A. Swift, Judith G. Chipperfield, and Nancy E. Newall (2008: 110), which tells us that women hold on to folk beliefs more than men. So gender can be named as an important factor in the perception of Lanna symbols. Living with parents is another factor that was found in this study so it can be considered as an essential factor that influences young people to know the meaning of Lanna symbols. Less number of

Lanna symbols perception can confirm that there is some change in current society. The social activities are in a modern way, they seem not to be the local social activities at all. The modern society can change what young people behave and believe. This study showed that most young people in this area are living with the parents. It leads to the understanding that parents can provide both decrease and increase the change in society because they still have their children in control. The results of this study confirm that Peirce's sign theory can be used with Lanna symbols.



Recommendations

1. Recommendation for policy purposes: give the results of this study for Chiang Rai Provincial Cultural Council in order to raise the awareness on Lanna symbols learning among young people in schools.
2. Recommendation for implementation: to be clear on theory before taking full account on using it because the material or theory may go against on some step of studying.
3. Recommendation for future research: study Lanna symbols which documents are based from Chiang Rai Province as Lanna region is large so people may hold different beliefs.



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