



Language and Good School Ideologies in Thai School Songs¹

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to study the linguistic strategies in constructing good school ideologies. Data was collected from the song of each provincial school, with a total of 76 songs. The results revealed that the school songs contributed to the construction of good school ideologies. That is to say, provincial schools are good schools with a long reputation and history. Some provincial schools are co-founded by the governors and/or key figures. The provincial school is the center of good quality educational personnel, building reputation and academic excellence. The provincial school is well landscaped and conducive to quality teaching. Therefore, a good school is famous, popular and desired by students and people of that province. Such good school ideologies are built through 3 linguistic strategies, namely address terms, verbs use and claims.

Keywords: Ideology, marching song, provincial school

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1. Introduction

Schools are social institutions that are responsible for building and developing people to be good human beings who have kindness, love and generosity for others as well as creative ideas in creating good things in society and self-reliance, and to be the ones whom other fellow human beings can rely on. If youths are developed from effective schools, they will be the ones who can learn and live life happily. The school mission is to develop learners to be knowledgeable and competent by encouraging them to develop themselves to their highest potential based on the belief that all learners have the ability to learn and develop themselves, and they are the most important part in teaching and learning.

In addition to teaching and learning, each school also has various activities, which aim at promoting academic abilities, morals, ethics, arts and culture, such as academic competitions, clubs, sports events, Wai Kru ceremony, orientation events and morning assembly in front of the flagpole. While doing such activities, the school song may be used for communication in each activity. Therefore, the school song is one of the means of communication for schools to convey ideologies or set of ideas which influence the thinking of students or relevant people. Undoubtedly, having a school song is normal for all schools. So, the school song is not only an alarm ringing for morning assembly or playing at school ceremonies, it is also a type of media with an influence in conveying ideologies to students and relevant people.

The provincial school is a school with a very competitive entrance examination rate. The school's reputation creates pride and social recognition to students and parents that their children can study at the prestigious institution. It is also believed that attending a provincial school will bring success in the future. The high demand rate for attending these schools has become a thing of value for the people in Thai society. For this reason, the researcher was interested in investigating what good school ideologies are in the discourses of Thai school songs and what linguistic strategies have been used.

2. Objective

To study the linguistic strategies in constructing good school ideologies in Thai school songs.

3. Conceptual framework

Discourse is a method of producing both abstract and concrete meaning, knowledge, truth, power and belief about things around people in society. Language is used as a tool to create and convey a set of meanings that are related to the social and cultural context. The researcher applied the discourse concept to analyze the discourses of songs of provincial schools in order to explore what ideologies are conveyed by these texts. Discourse analysis is an important guide in the study of the relationship of constructing meanings or ideas towards a subject by focusing on the ways in which power, ideology, domination and inequality are reinforced and reproduced in society. Discourse analysis is, therefore, about understanding and revealing the inequality that exists in society) Fairclough, 1995, pp.132-133; Van Dijk, 2001, p.352(.



Ideology is a belief system that people in a particular society believes to be true, or normal/natural without questioning/doubting. This concept reflects the practices and power structures of that society through the construction of meaning that leads to the production and/or reproduction of unequal power relations in society. In addition, ideology determines communication between people in society concerning who is authorized to send messages to receivers under one of the communication conditions)Fairclough, 1995, p. 14; Simpson, 1993; Thomson, 1984; van Dijk, 1997, p.26; Wennerstrom, 2006, p.6(For the analysis of the linguistic strategies in the discourse of Thai schools' songs, semantics and pragmatics were employed to analyze the texts in order to find out the meanings of the ideologies constructed through the texts.

4. Literature review

From the literature review, many types of songs, such as Thai folk songs (Luk Thung), traditional northeastern-style songs (Mor Lam), modern Thai songs, soundtracks, folk songs and lullabies, have been used in research studies. The research studies the songs through various concepts and perspectives. Due to the large number of research studies on songs, the researcher reviewed only the research on the institutional songs, namely, official songs, navy songs, military marching songs, patriotic songs, patriotic songs of the four-armed forces, the Thai national anthem, national anthems of ASEAN members, provincial songs and university songs. The study of these songs aims at studying the construction of images, roles, communication of meanings, cultures, beliefs and ideologies.

According to the review of the research mentioned above, it was found that the study of official songs, navy songs, military marching songs, patriotic songs, patriotic songs of the four-armed forces, the Thai national anthem, national anthems of ASEAN members, provincial songs and university songs focused on studying the construction of images, roles, communication of meanings, cultures, beliefs and ideologies appearing and communicating through the songs. Songs do not only have a function to accompany the activities of that organization, they also play a role in transferring ideas, beliefs, values and ideologies to people in the organization and society. The researcher used the results of the aforementioned research as a guide in this study. The researcher also believes that the songs of the provincial schools have an influence on the opinions and beliefs of students, relevant people and people in society.

5. Results

The study results revealed that good school ideologies have been built through 3linguistic strategies, namely address terms, verbs use and claims.

5.1 Address terms

The address terms of the school names consist of the name of the province, or the name of the famous place of that province to represent the province as follows.

Kalasin Pittayasan Institute, Khon Kaen Wittayayon, Phakdee Chumphon Wittaya, Chumphonwit, Ratchasima, Bueng Kan Institute, Bueng Kan, Buriram Pittayakom, Sarakham Pittayakom, Yasothon Pittayakom, Roi Et Wittayalai School, Loei Pittayakom, Sisaket Wittayalai, Sakon Ratchawittayakan, Sakon Ratchawittaya Kingdom, Sakon



Ratchawittaya Territory, Sura Wittayakarn, Pathumthep Wittayakarn, Nong Bua Pittayakan, Udonphit Educational Institution

Because each province has a large number of secondary schools, the provincial schools are usually established in the city, that is, in the Muang District. Also, in the Muang District, there are a number of secondary schools. However, using the province name in the school song and/or in the provincial school song conveys unity, and represents the center of the province's education, so the name of the province or the famous place is part of the lyrics. The provincial school, therefore, is the representative of that province. For this reason, it can be assumed that the provincial school is the best school.

The address terms defining the provincial schools as the schools with academic readiness and excellence, which are famous and beloved, have also been used, such as *knowledge learning source, center of all students' minds, great knowledge development center, learning center, center of discipline teaching, educational place and academic institution.*

The use of the word "source", followed by words such as "teaching" "knowledge", "discipline teaching" and "training" indicates that the provincial school is the center or the source of knowledge and the center trains students to be good and disciplined. However, the word "place" which means location, followed by words such as "believed", "relying on", "being good for a long time" and "great," is used to refer to the provincial school as a place or center of love, goodness, and the place that students can rely on. The use of the address terms, namely the words "source" and "institute", constitutes the provincial school as a good school that students can rely on and the center of knowledge that has been around for a long time.

5.2 Verbs

The research results indicates that there are 2 types of verb usage³, namely other people + verb and school + verb as follows.

5.2.1 Other people + verb

The use of verbs performed by other people here refers to parents or people in general. The verbs that have been used include *admire, love, popular, want, praise*, such as *everyone wants to study in Phatthalung Pittayakom, everyone loves, well known, popular for a long time, everyone knows, praised by people.* The use of such verbs points out that the provincial school is good, popular and preferred by students and parents. It is well known, loved, honored and admired by the general public, especially those who live in that province.

³ The concept of lexicase theory was employed in this research to classify parts of speech of words. The word "not" was used in the verb test.



Many other verbs have also been used to express admiration and the popularity of the provincial schools, including *adore, admire, reputed across the city, everyone knows its value, blessed by people, praised with rejoices, the people of Yala are delighted, being talked about, nothing can compare, everyone knows, love Pathumwilai, admire, speak of.*

5.2.2 School + verbs

The verbs performed by the school means that the provincial school performs the verbs. Four idea sets have been presented, namely 1(having a good landscape/location, 2(a school with a long history of establishment, 3(a school with honor and prestige, and 4(a famous school.

1) Having a good landscape

The verbs performed by the school are used to present that the provincial school is outstandingly beautiful with a clean, cool and beautiful environment. The verbs found are: *dignified, elegant, shady and cool, outstanding, outstanding for a long time, elegant as the name of Pittayakom, prosperous, beautiful, magnificently beautiful, graceful as a place for education that maintains happiness, outstanding in Maha Sarakham, institute with great knowledge, great, our school is very beautiful, the institute is as outstanding as the moon.* According to the example of Anghthong Patamarot Wittayakom School, which is a provincial school, the words “shady and cool” and “beautiful” are used to present the School, which is a provincial school which has a cool and beautiful atmosphere. It can be inferred that the school is shaded by trees and has a beautiful and clean environment that is conducive to the students’ life and teaching and learning.

2) A school with a long history of establishment

The use of verbs performed by the school are used to present that the provincial school is important with a long history of establishment. Therefore, a school with a long history, which may be the first school in that province, may be a good school. The verbs that have been used include *being with the city, staying with times, standing eternally, persisting with the city, a sustainable educational institution, being prosperous for a long time, remaining with the world, eternally being together with Thailand, standing with Phang Nga, being prosperous with the city, long-established, existing for one hundred years, Trastrakarnkhun has been together with the province and Thailand for one hundred years, eternally being with Prachuap Wittaya, eternally forever, to be forever, long-lasting.* According to Trastrakarnkhun School, which is a provincial school in Trat Province, the verb that has been used is “existing for one hundred years”. The subject, which is the school, is omitted. It implies that Trastrakarnkhun School is the provincial school of Trat Province. The school was founded during the reign of King Rama V, and it was named Trastrakarnkhun School and started having a principal in 1911. The long history of a provincial school of Trat Province reflects that Trastrakarnkhun School is an important school for people in the province.



3) A school with honor and prestige

The use of verbs performed by the school are used to present that the provincial school has honor and prestige and is famous and well known. That is, the provincial school is famous, honored and respected. The word “honor” performs verbs, such as *create, widely known, spread, spread widely, reputed*. The owner of the “honor” is a provincial school. The verbs that have been used are, such as, *building a reputation for dignity and persistence, the honor is spread widely, the reputation is widely known, the honor is spread far and wide, wide-spread honor, the prestige with a rich history, the fame is spread far and wide, the honor is with the city, building honor to remain with Udon*.

Notably, the word “honor” has been used a lot in the songs of provincial schools. It has been used more than two times in some songs. In this study, the word “honor” was found 6 0times. It is communicated that the provincial school is a good school because it is a famous school. It is honored and respected by students and parents.

4) A famous school

The use of verbs performed by the school to present that the provincial school is famous is different from the one mentioned earlier. This is because it does not appear with the word “honor”. Common verbs that convey fame and the reputation of provincial schools include; *be famous, to be famous widely, generally reputed, to be famous far and wide, widely known, having a good reputation in education, a well-known institution, the name of the school is recognized widely, to be known everywhere, flourish, spread far and wide, well-known throughout the world*. From the aforementioned examples, Sura Wittayakarn School, which is a provincial school in Surin Province, has used the word “institute” to refer to Sura Wittayakarn School which performs a verb “widely known”, to communicate that this school is known to the general public in the province and also to the people of nearby provinces. Therefore, the school with a reputation, fame and recognition is a good school.

5.3 Claims

To present good school ideologies, claims of important people who were involved in the establishment of the school, such as the royal family, the city governors, and monks have also been used. The claims that have been used include *Phra Piyayingrat, Maha Vajiravudh, Bejama Maharaj, Wachirawut Kuman, Phra Kiew, Phra Piyamaharat, Two Great Ancestors, Chao Phiriya Thepwoong, Brahmanusorn, Sribunyanon, Luang Pu Pian, Buddha Sakyamuni, Luang Phor Wat Pho, Luang Phor Ngern, Phra Wimonmethajarn*.

Example: *The prestige of Phra Piyayingrat (King Chulalongkorn) spreads over. His Majesty is our morale that we adhere to.*

From the above example, Benchamarajutit Pattani School, which is a provincial school in Pattani Province, was founded in 1912 during the reign of King Rama VI. During the early stages of the establishment of the school, the pavilion was used to welcome Phra Piya Maharat. His Majesty King Mongkut graciously bestowed the name “Benjaminachutit School”. Claiming King Chulalongkorn’s name in the song and the name of the school indicates that Benchamaratchutit Pattani School, is an important school with a long history



and is linked to the monarchy which is the main institution of the Thai nation. This contributes to the construction of a good school ideology.

6. Discussion

The provincial schools were established during the years 1868- 1971 as follows: 1 school (1867-1866); 3 schools (1877-1886); 2 schools (1887-1896); 33 schools (1897-1906); 27 schools (1907-1916); 1 school (1917-1926); 2 schools (1927-1936); 3 schools (1947-1956), and 4 schools (2007). The oldest school is Chonradsadornumrung School, Chonburi Province, which was established in 1868, is now aged 153 years. According to the research results, during the years 1897-2007, 60 schools were established. The provincial school is the first school of that province and has a long history of establishment. The average school age is not less than 114 years. From the long history of its establishment, the provincial school is a reliable school because it is the first school. It is the educational center of that province. This leads to the construction of good school ideologies for the provincial school.

Because the provincial school is the first school of that province, and many of the founders were the ones who played a role in governance and administrative government in the province, and in the beginning, the temple was an area for teaching students, the founders of the schools are important persons as follows. 1) King or royal family: King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) founded Yupparaj Wittayalai School, Chiang Mai Province. His Royal Highness Krom Luang Prachaksinlapakhom established Udon Pittayanukul School, Udon Thani Province. 2) City governors: Kitjakaree (Jean Piyarat), the governor supervising the city of Khon Kaen and Phra Nakhon Si Borirak, the mayor of Khon Kaen established Khon Kaen Wittayayon School, Khon Kaen Province. 3) Senior civil servants: Phraya Srisuriyaratwaranuwat (Suk Disayabutr), the governor of Chiang Rai Province established Samakkhi Witthayakhom School. 4) Monks: Phra Khru Det, the abbot of Wat Thai Mueang founded, Sribunyanon School, Nonthaburi Province and Phra Sangkharaparawahamoni (Niam Phumasaro), the abbot of Wat Sao Thong Thong, founded Pibulwitthayalai School, Lopburi Province.

For the aforementioned reasons, the provincial school is a school that is reliable and trusted by the people in the province, resulting in the belief and ideology that provincial schools are good schools.

The provincial school is the central educational institute of each province. Often, it is the first school in the province with a long history. It is the center of educational prosperity, teaching management systems with modern facilities, well-equipped buildings or laboratories and well qualified educational personnel and expertise. With a high number of candidates wanting to study in the provincial school, the provincial school seems to be more important than other schools in the same province. For this reason, the provincial school in each province is famous and desired by students and parents.

Most provincial schools are large schools. Controlling and managing students is, therefore, not an easy task. So, songs are used to control students to act in the same way, such as gathering students for morning assembly in front of the flagpole or various school activities. For this reason, songs have the power to control the students' bodies according



to the school's wishes. Provincial schools are not only places that provide the best knowledge but also create some ideologies for students and parents.

Good school ideologies dominate the thinking of people in Thai society, causing inequality in society. It is believed that provincial schools are the best equipped schools in every way. Those who attend and graduate from such schools tend to receive certain recognition and privileges which are not granted to those graduating from other schools. Consequently, provincial schools are the centers for elite students. On the other hand, medium and small schools are not popular. Those graduating from small and medium schools are not accepted and do not have certain privileges, such as access to modern school supplies, rights or quotas for admission to university or the opportunity to work in the future.

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