

**THAILAND'S LANGUAGE POLICY:  
CAN IT LEAD TO AN EQUAL SOCIETY?**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the current language policy of Thailand and reviews its historical development, current status, and the challenges Thailand is facing amidst the impacts of globalization and regional integration. Under the dynamism of globalization, Thailand begins to realize that maintaining its somewhat monolingual/mono-cultural paradigm seems ill-adapted and insufficient to address the diversity and complexity of the modern world and the growing cosmopolitanism of Thai society. Recently, the growing of movements for more rights and higher levels of engagement and participation from ethnic minorities and migrant workers has put more pressure on Thailand to open up a wider range of channels for negotiation and participation. Such movements often come under the Critical Theory's umbrella, starting from the traditional Neo-Marxist perspectives to postmodernism. This paper bases its discussions on both the state-building theory and the Critical Theory, in addition to highlighting the tension between the two metaphors: the melting pot and the mosaic. For a sustainable future, the author proposes that Thailand formulate its national language policy based primarily on the middle path, its own indigenous wisdom, which would ensure that such a policy can lead to an equal society where national identity and sustainable development can both be realized.

**KEY WORDS:** Language policy, globalization, equity, sustainability