This summer I worked with the Isan Culture Revitalization and Maintenance Project in Northeast, Thailand. This project has been working to introduce the local mother tongue, Tai Noi into public schools as an elective course and put up multilingual signage in public places in order to lend prestige to the language and promote its continued use by younger generations.

To do this the project has had to conduct linguistic research to uncover what the written form of Tai Noi looks like since no one has used the written form in over a century! Using artifacts and local linguistic experts, they have pieced together the written form – that is, everything from its script to grammar rules.

The introduction of a newly revived and standardized language version of Tai Noi presents teachers with many challenges regarding content and pedagogy. My role was to act as an independent researcher to examine what further professional development and learning materials teachers needed in order to improve their capacity to teach Tai Noi.

I conducted observations, interviews and am still in the process of finishing surveys of teachers. It was a great experience to develop the research methods I had been studying last year and also how to be adaptive has field threw me surprise after surprise which forced me to revise my research plan.

It was quite interesting to see how a small school district was able to take on the enormous task of implementing a new academic subject without any financial, logistical or even symbolic support from the central government. The project has serious implications for regional cultural maintenance efforts, identity and the monolinguist, revisionist, and hyper-nationalist narratives of history learned in school.