

The Thai language as lingua franca for trading: The intercultural context of Cambodian and Myanmar neighbor laborers in Thailand

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Abstract

This article focuses on the issue of using language as a tool in the context of communication among laborers from neighboring countries and Thais. Its aim is to analyze the phenomena and to investigate these neighbor laborers' ability to do trade using the Thai language in terms of word use, sentence, and meaning. The study also sought the mental factors reflected in the use of language with variation and experience of mother-tongue and environment. The theoretical approach to carrying out this research is based on 'sociolinguistics', which addresses the language use in real situations with regard to social practices. The findings will deepen our understanding of phenomenon of intercultural interactions. In this work, the informants were laborers from Myanmar and Cambodia, 20 people in total aged 21-30, comprising five males and five females from each country. The researcher as observer took notes on the verbal interactions between the Cambodian and Myanmar fruit sellers and their Thai customers in an arcade of market stalls. The findings are, in concordance with the purposes, as follows: they used single words, and groups of words – strongly accented – more than complete sentences. As for conveying meaning based on linguistic form used, they were able to communicate conveniently with single words, and relatively easily with groups of words, but they had difficulty conveying full meaning when using sentences. The effects of speaking Thai explicated the factors of their native languages affected the second one; that is, the Thai language. However, the environment around them might develop the ability of their Thai-speaking communication for the sake of struggling. Finally, they are likely to make their potentials better, and establish Thai as lingua franca for neighbor laborers.

Keywords: the Thai language, lingua franca, cross-cultural communication, sociolinguistics

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นศึกษาประเด็นของการใช้ภาษาในฐานะเครื่องมือในบริบทแห่งการสื่อสารระหว่างชาวไทยและชาวแรงงานเพื่อนบ้าน โดยมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์ปรากฏการณ์ในบริบทของแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านที่ใช้ภาษาไทยทั้งระดับคำ ประโยค และความหมายในวงการค้าขาย ซึ่งเป็นขอบเขตของการศึกษา และเพื่อประมวลความเข้าใจในสภาวะความคิดที่สะท้อนการใช้ภาษากับตัวแปรด้านภาษาแม่ของแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านและสิ่งแวดล้อมที่อาศัยในประเทศไทย แนวคิดเชิงทฤษฎีที่นำมาประยุกต์ใช้คือ ภาษาศาสตร์สังคม ซึ่งเป็นวิธีคิดและวิธีการศึกษาภาษาที่ใช้ในสถานการณ์จริงกับวิถีปฏิบัติทางสังคม ซึ่งเสริมสร้างความเข้าใจปรากฏการณ์ที่มีปฏิสัมพันธ์เชิงระหว่างวัฒนธรรม ในงานวิจัยนี้ได้รับข้อมูลจากผู้ออกภาษาชาวเมียนมาจำนวน 10 คน แบ่งเป็นเพศชาย 5 คนกับเพศหญิง 5 คน และชาวกัมพูชาจำนวน 10 คน แบ่งเป็นเพศชาย 5 คนกับเพศหญิง 5 คน รวมทั้งสิ้น 20 คน ผู้ออกภาษาทั้งหมดมีอายุระหว่าง 21-30 ปี วิธีการเก็บข้อมูล ผู้วิจัยลงพื้นที่ในชุมชนการค้าขายแห่งหนึ่งที่มีแรงงานคนขายผลไม้ทั้งชาวกัมพูชาและชาวเมียนมา โดยการรับฟังการสนทนา ผลการวิจัยพบว่า แรงงานเพื่อนบ้านใช้ภาษาในระดับลักษณะของคำและกลุ่มคำที่ออกเสียงด้วยสำเนียงภาษาแม่ อีกทั้งความหมายที่ใช้สื่อสารผ่านรูปภาษาระดับคำและกลุ่มคำเป็นที่เข้าใจระหว่างผู้ร่วมสนทนา แต่ระดับประโยคเป็นปัญหาในการสื่อสารระหว่างชาวแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านและชาวไทย ผลกระทบของการสื่อสารภาษาไทยของแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านบ่งชี้ถึงปัจจัยของภาษาแม่ของแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านต่อการสื่อสารระดับประโยคภาษาไทยอย่างชัดเจน รวมถึงระดับคำที่มีสำเนียงภาษาแม่ติดเข้ามาสำหรับแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านบางคน อย่างไรก็ตาม บรรยากาศและสิ่งแวดล้อมที่รายรอบแรงงานเพื่อนบ้านอาจช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาไทยเพื่อการอยู่รอดได้ ในที่สุด แรงงานเพื่อนบ้านปรับทักษะการสื่อสารภาษาไทยในฐานะภาษาสื่อกลางได้อย่างดีกว่าเดิม

คำสำคัญ : ภาษาไทย, ภาษาสื่อกลาง, การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม, ภาษาศาสตร์สังคม

1. Introduction

In Thailand, we can see around the situations of cross-cultural communication among foreigners, and Thai citizens have opportunities to communicate with those. However, we always focus on foreigners from western world such as United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, etc. more than counterparts from neighboring countries like Myanmar and Cambodia. Based on the struggling and living for life, neighbor laborers need to learn the Thai language strongly. In the case of struggle, little do westerners need to learn Thai completely because of their statuses of travelers more than immigrant workers.

The Thai language is a tool for neighbor laborers to administer the things of life while they are laboring. Especially they are vendors; for example, fruit sellers, food serving staff, etc. They cannot escape from using Thai for conversations. Neighbor laborers give their talks to Thai people with the Thai language for the purpose of their cost of living in Thailand.

When we consider the context of ASEAN, we may use the English language for working according to the article 34 mentioned in the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008, p.33):

- (1) ARTICLE 34
WORKING LANGUAGE OF ASEAN
 The working language of ASEAN shall be English.

Nevertheless, the Thai language is the working language in the condition of Thai context. Hence, neighbor laborers who come to work learn Thai automatically. In contrast, the performance of using language is not the same for each person. This performance leads the researcher to study what extent the laborers' levels of Thai-speaking communication are and how they linguistically use the Thai language are. The benefit of this research is to help understand the laborers' messages with awareness of linguistics and cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, they may enhance their skill of language if the Thai-developing communication model will be presented.

2. The purposes

2.1 To analyze the Myanmar and Cambodian neighbor laborers' Thai language skill in linguistics – sound, word, sentence and meaning, and in cross-cultural communication

2.2 To comprehend the environmental factors with regard to mother-tongue affecting the use of language

3. Research questions

3.1 What are dominant linguistic units found among laborers' Thai language use?

3.2 How are laborers' using Thai language encapsulated by environment and native-tongue?

4. Assumptions

4.1 The important fragments or units presented are in forms of each word and groups of words seeing that the fragments shown are easy to communicate more than sentences.

4.2 The native-language factor is the most salient which has the impact on using the Thai language.

5. Methodology

5.1 The researcher specifies the informants are Myanmar and Cambodian laborers who are in ages of 21-30. There are 10 Myanmar laborers separating 5 males and 5 females, and so are Cambodian laborers. The total is 20 informants. The method employed, herein, is the purposive sampling, which is *“a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study, and is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling”*. This way can be a critical case in order to *“reach a targeted sample quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern”* (Crossman, 2020).

5.2 The scene of collecting the data is a community market in the hub of Bangkok, Thailand. There are 10 Myanmar sellers speaking Thai with a number of 10 conversations of buying-selling fruits, and so are 10 the Cambodian sellers. Each person with 10 dialogues is 100 (10x10). The data are 200 in total, (from two nationalities with each 10 people that meant 20x10). The area where the researcher went to collect the data was an arcade of market stalls. There are many neighbor laborers who work in both of short and long terms. The researcher has attained the data by means of the own observation therein.

5.3 The data are analyzed by the approach of linguistics by means of sound, word, sentence and meaning, and the concept of cross-cultural communication. The concept of the social integration of migrant populations by Pascual (2019) is adapted to my analysis of the linguistic dimensions and roles.

5.4 The findings with perspectives of linguistics and cross-cultural communication are re-analyzed in the theory of second language acquisition in order to trace back any factors having effects on using the Thai language.

5.5 The analysis of the data afterwards, the conclusion and discussion are criticized.

6. Literature review

6.1 Sociolinguistic perspectives

There are many principles in the theory of sociolinguistics as a bridge connecting the world of human beings and entities in the light of language use reflecting societies and events impacted on life. One of the sociolinguistic perspectives is ‘The Sociolinguistic Integration of Immigrant Populations’ by Pascual (2019), which is integrated with a cognitive-psychological view on monitoring people’s thinking way and language presentation. It is surprisingly beneficial to study the language used by immigrants and aliens who live and work in another country. This figure 1 presents the levels of sociocultural context and the language use channel.

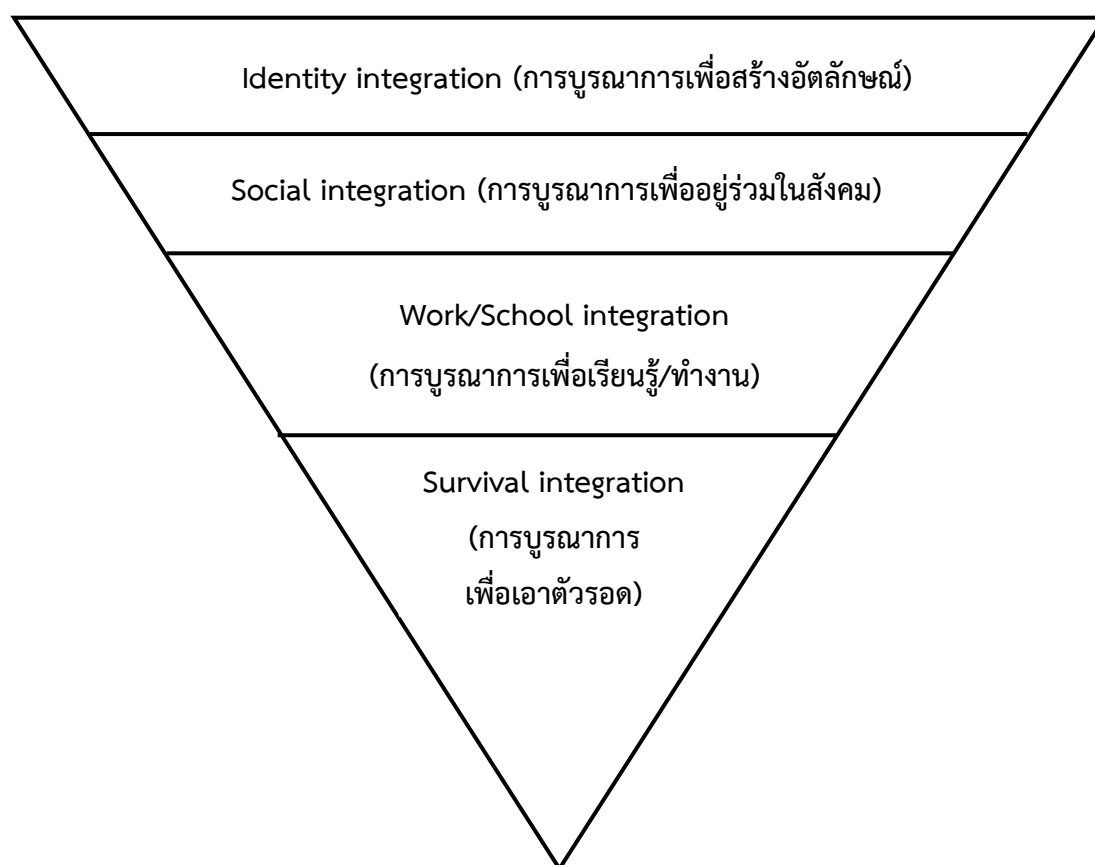


Figure 1 Integration process pyramid.

Source: Moreno Fernández (2009, p.133 as cited in Pascual, 2019: p.4).

Figure 1 focused on the ability of immigrants from the perceptions of those involved in the process in order to analyze and interpret the linguistic spaces and dynamic identities which they themselves construct at each level mirroring the integration. From the bottom to the top, the levels of survival integration, work/school integration, and social integration are development of using non-native language in new places. The last one is the identity integration which is apt for native speakers to consider immigrants united with them.

Not only does the Pascual's concept benefit to my paper but the cross cultural interaction is employed in the research. They are, hereinafter, explicated but the research's scopes range over the issues of sound, word, sentence and meaning including sociolinguistics in terms of age, education and environmental context factors.

An intercultural communication concept is a combination of language use, social factors and different cultures in same situations. The intercultural dimension is under the notion of sociolinguistics. Pascual (2019)'s precepts are satisfactory to analyzing the neighbor laborers' language skill in the new culture like Thailand. Pascual claimed that the inter-sociocultural communication between at least two languages and cultures of people helps learn different thoughts through sophisticated languages.

6.2 Neighbor laborer' languages – Myanmar and Cambodian

The Myanmar language is of the Sino-Tibetan language family. Myanmar or Burmese language is a tonal, pitch-register, and syllable-timed language with a subject-object-verb word order (Bradley, 2012). The Cambodian language is of the Austroasiatic language family. Cambodian or Khmer language is not a tonal language. General word order is subject-verb-object, and modifiers follow the word they modify (Smyth & Jacob, 1993; Huffman, 1970). They are different from the Thai language which is of the Kra-Tai language family (Jenks & Pittayaporn, 2014). The Differences among Thai, Cambodian and Myanmar may affect language use and learning by some people who need to communicate with native speakers in new places. This is, linguistically, the reason why the research has chosen two languages compared to Thai in the situation of Thai culture. Politically, the two ethnic people are Myanmar and Cambodian considered the top two ranks of neighbor laborers who have come and lived in Thailand (Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment of Thailand, 2020). As for the Thai parliament report, it had claimed that there were more than 3 million neighbor workers in Thailand (Foreign Workers Administration Office, Department of Employment of Thailand, 2018 as cited in Academic Office of The Secretariat of The House of Representatives of Thailand, 2018, p.7); in contrast, the statistics of neighbor laborers who

enter into Thailand investigated in May 2020 by the Thailand's Department of Employment showed below.

Table 1 the table of the neighbor laborers from Myanmar and Cambodia retrieved from https://www.doe.go.th/prd/assets/upload/files/alien_th/88ee4994ceb1195ef0a1468ae96796d3.pdf

Table 1 adapted from Table10 a number of foreigners with article63 (ethnic groups) who can be permitted to work as novice in Thailand in May 2020 by Thailand's Department of Employment												
Total sum	132	Nationalities										
Type	Total	Tai Yai	Tai Lue	Myanmar	Mon	Cambodian	Lua	Chinese	Pa-O	Yao	Liso	Others
Physical labors	125	38	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	74
Masons	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Vegetable and fruit gardeners	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food and beverage vendors	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food and beverage makers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Painters	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Animal caretakers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Picture frame makers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle's exhaust pipe makers and mechanics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Building carpenters	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other careers	5	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Table 1, being a Table from the origin shows the data of a number of Myanmar and Cambodian laborers in the career of trading at zero that is nobody works as vendors. Importantly, it is unconvincing with the big picture of an amount of at least 3 million neighbor workers that the Thailand's Department of Employment summarized in 2018. It categorized neighbor laborers into main 4 types including a subtype of trading job. As for this field, it is found that both Myanmar and Cambodian workers are of non-percentile. Still, the reality of purchasing events, Thai citizens can perceive that Myanmar and Cambodian migrants are selling

things in markets. This is the fact that we should survey all rounds. Laborers from neighboring countries might register certain occupations but they have served another one, i.e. they expressed themselves in construction jobs; conversely, they have sold food and drinks, instead. It is the issue of social welfare and national security, next, the issue of language use is interesting of how they produce the Thai language for commutation and communication.

However, there is a research paper on the language policy associated with laborers in Thailand. It is the notion of Sophana Srichampa (2019) that is explaining language and human development for ASEAN laborers in Thailand; especially, Burmese and Thai. The research area was Samut Sakhon province where many industrial firms are located and Myanmar laborers are working. The paper has shown the results in producing interpreters in the one of national language policies, promoting Thai people learn ASEAN languages as same as ASEAN laborers learn Thai, and producing the Thai language and culture guidebook in offline and online forms. The social factors indicating the relations between language and others clarify 4 pairs including 1) language and area: Samut Sakhon province contains a large number of Myanmar migrant workers. 2) language and education: laborers' children need to study the Thai language for communication for cost of living. 3) language and religion: the majority of Myanmar laborers are Buddhist sharing the Pali language for summons with Burmese and Thai., and 4) language and medicine: in case of symptoms, Myanmar laborers go to hospital using Thai step-by-step; nevertheless, the Thai government provides interpreters help them. Although the administration gives interpreters for the medical centers, there are less ones insufficient for the service. This leads Sophana Srichampa to release the policy of producing interpreters.

In my paper, the potentials of laborers' language skills are focused on. Any suggestions will be presented further after any problems and findings are determined.

7. Findings

In this point, the findings are divided in to two points according to the two purposes as follows: 7.1 the characteristic of the Thai language by neighbor laborers and 7.2 the conditions behind the using the Thai language. The importance of the results can be developed in the form of language learning model for neighbor laborers in the future.

7.1 The characteristic of the Thai language by neighbor laborers

The basis of languages is the sound system, word use, sentence, and the meaning of linguistic and contextual forms. These are needed to compare like key answers.

7.1.1 The sound system and pronunciation

There are two kinds of pronunciation features being explained. The first-featured pronunciation of neighbor laborers is equivalent to the Thai sound system with the consonants in particular. The nasals are /m, n, ŋ/ which are more intense than the Thai people's pronunciation. Myanmar laborers pronounced some Thai words with the nasals at the initial positions at the energy of *'the prominent peaks of spectrum about 6 KHz'* (Dantsuji, 1984, p.7) which is adapted to /nɔ̌j.nàa/ 'น้อยหน้า' (custard apple), for example. The linguistic factors like intensity, energy of word-initial, etc. have given birth to the Tai language family tones. (Li, 1966, as cited in Teeranon, 2012, p.54). It affected the pronunciation of different sound systems of laborers having changed the Thai tones of words.

- (2) A: /nɔ̌j.nàa laa.khaa thâw lɔ̌j/
 'น้อยหน้าลาคาเท่าไห¹' (= น้อยหน้าราคาเท่าไห¹)
 How much is each custard apple?
- Myanmar seller: /nɔ̌j.nàa lùk laa sɔ̌p hǎa bàt/
 'หน้อยหน้าหลุกลาซิบห้า²บาท'
 Each custard apple is 15 Baht.
 (ပနီးသီးတစ်လုံးလျှင် ၁၅ ဘတ်ဖြစ်သည်။)²

The Myanmar fruit seller put the weight on the initial /n/ of two syllables in /nɔ̌j.nàa/. A Thai purchaser feel weird but they still understand the meaning of the fruit.

But the word is problematic to Thai hearings is /nám.taan.sòt/ 'น้ำตาลสด' (fresh palm juice). The Cambodia seller spoke out this word as /nǎam.taan.sót/. It could be analyzed the sound /n/ has palatalized at the palate, so the sound of /j/ occurred. Thai clients heard the sound strange, and the other contexts of this word were not exact to the Thai pronunciation which made it stranger.

We turn back to the point of the vowel that is /ɔ̌/ in /nǎam.taan.sót/ which is lower than the sound of /o/ in /nám.taan.sòt/ making Thai buyers confused of the word pronounced as below.

- (3) A: /nǎi ʔa.laj kháʔ/
 'นี่อะไรคะ' (นี่อะไรคะ)
 What is it?
- Cambodian seller: /nǎam.taan.sót/
 'น้ามตานซ้อด'

Fresh palm juice.

(ទឹកត្នោតស្រស់)³

The assumption of believing that the conversations between laborers and Thai people were easy- to- understand with the level of words may be controversy. Due to the pronunciation, Thai ears cannot get it quickly. There were bottles of this product displaying in the fruit glass boxes but the seller did not label the juice' s name on them. The color of juice could seduce the buyers thinking of many possible juice products.

7.1.2 The word use

The word use is the selection of vocabulary for presenting the things that neighbor laborers wanted to express their thoughts and objects. They are learning the names of entities in terms of trading such as the price, the products, the objects involved. Most of words are one or two syllables fruitful for laborers to pronounce and use. However, the words with three syllables or more are troubles in remembering, and laborers prefer to choose the vocab in their languages. In fact, Cambodian and Myanmar people have their repertoire of natural word use from native languages which are construed in any new atmosphere like the Thai context.

(4) A: /sàp.pa.lót sǎw chín/
'สับปะรดสองชิ้น' (<สับปะรด> which is spelled with regard to the real sound; the correct spelling form is <สับประรด>)
Two pieces of pineapple.

Cambodian seller: /əj dæ/ (the Cambodian vowel /æ/ is merely similar to the short vowel /ɛ/ for ឆ and the long vowel /ɛɛ/ for ច in Thai)
'?ឆើយ ដេត'
What's that/Which one?
(អ្វីដែរ)

A: /phūt ʔa.laj/ /phī ʔaw sàp.pa.lót/
'พูดอะไร' 'พี่เอาสับปะรด'
What did you just say? I want pineapple. (The Thai buyer pointed out to the fruit.)

Cambodian Seller: /mnea/
pineapple!
(ម្នាស់)

In this event, we could find out the language switch by the laborer who talked previously by the Thai language but it could not be understood. The laborer switched his language at the level of word ‘**ម្ចាស់**’ and sentence ‘**អ្វីដែល**’. The interesting question is to know how the Cambodian seller did not communicate with Thai word like /ʔa.laj/ or /ʔa.raj/ ‘what’ for asking in turns. The possible answer is frozen. It fossilizes the contemporary language use or it is called ‘language fossilization’ (Han & Selinker, 2005).

7.1.3 The sentence presentation

Neighbor laborers occasionally produced their native sentences in lieu of the ones in Thai. Basically, they have their own incomplete Thai grammar.

- (5) Cambodian seller: /ʔaw əj ... maj dii/
 ‘?เอาเอี้ย...ไมตี้⁴’
 What would you like some?
- A: /...khǎw tɛŋ.moo sǎwŋ chíŋ/
 ‘ขอแตงโมสองชิ้น’
 Two pieces of water melon.

The reaction of Thai purchaser was stunning for a minute. The client still kept having a conversation with the seller. The inviting sentence of Cambodian seller was incomplete but it was carefully comprehensive. Thai people’s processing of language assisted in re-making the sentence in form of /ʔaw ʔa.laj dii (máj)/ ‘เอาอะไรดี (ม้าย)’ or /ʔaw ʔa.laj dii (khá/kháp)/ ‘เอาอะไรดีคะ/ครับ (ครับ)’; the Thai question word for the meaning of ‘what’ is the formal spelling form of ‘อะไร’. As having been noticed that the seller used the Khmer word /əj/ which is equivalent to the vocab ‘what’, the double grammar used in sentence might result from the use of word as well. Pascual (2019) presented the psycho-cognitive background of speakers can affect the thinking process when they produce the new language in sentence.

7.1.4 The meaning of the language use

Largely, the meaning appears accompanied by words and sentences. Although linguists study the meaning along with the linguistic form, any outstanding forms should be paid attentions to an observation for clarification.

- (6) Myanmar seller: /phii phoo.la.maajʔ maa toŋ.nii/ (The syllable /-la-/ is unstressed)
 ‘พี่ โพละมาย มาตงนี่’
 You elder, come here to take your fruits.
 (သင်သည်သင်၏သစ်သီးများကိုယူဒီမှာလာကြ၏)

- A: /..... paj láp khǎwŋ toŋ.nán náʔ/
(นี่หมายถึงให้พี่) ไปลับ(=รับ)ของตรงนี้นะ
(You mean I should) go there to get the things.

This example has shown up the big deal of discussion on sentential or clausal production. The seller is from Myanmar, which the language has the pattern of [subject + object + verb] in contrast to the [subject + verb + object] of Thai. The meaning of the sentence that the seller said will be problematic to different basic structures. At this point, we should learn meanings based on various linguistic forms. So interestingly did the glottal stop sound occur after the last syllable of the word ‘fruit’ by the Myanmar accent /phoo.la.maajʔ/ that it makes sure the pattern of phonological unit of glottal does not need to be at the stressed short syllable like Thai. Nacsakul (2013) said that the sound /ʔ/ in Thai is unaspirated plosive which usually occurs at word-final position containing short vowel; it is the stressed syllable. In contrast, the sound /ʔ/ in Burmese also makes any of syllables shortened. To be honest, the research data indicated the final /ʔ/ in either short or long vowels could be in the final position, in contrast to the Thai feature. The language interference has an effect on this phenomenon. That is to say, foreign language acquisition by non-native speakers have their mother tongue interference with a new language. (Krashen, 2002)

7.2 The conditions behind the using the Thai language

The influences of using the Thai language are varieties of factors; in particular, having two main factors are as follows: 1) the mother-tongue effect and 2) the new learning environment.

7.2.1 The mother-tongue effect

Both Myanmar and Cambodian native-tongues have affected the Thai language in use. Not only do the sounds and words move in reverse directions, but the clausal grammar is also powerful for those to compare with the structures of Thai. Some issues are analyzed by linguists. Scarcely are the laborers and laymen explaining the phenomenon of using language, i.e. the situation of the same word between languages.

- (7) A: /nám.sôm kĕw nŋŋ/
‘น้ำส้มแก้วนี้’ (=น้ำส้มหนึ่งแก้ว)
A glass of orange juice, please.
- Cambodian seller: /muj kĕw.....nŋŋ kĕw nah/
Just one glass.
(มួយ โคะ)

The word ‘glass’ is a container for beverage. Both Cambodian and Thai have the same but different accents with/without tone. Thai people pronounce /kɛ̀w/ with falling tone. The Cambodian accent shows /kæw/, /kɛw/ without tone and with short vowel. Furthermore, the particle ‘nah’ in Khmer should be for acceptance and comprehension. It is comparatively elaborated for speakers’ emotion and intention to receive messages, similar to Thai; but it lacks the command meaning as Thai people always demand in form of politeness with the particle. Allot (2010, pp.141-142) criticized that the indirect language use with a linguistic unit which can reduce the harsh comment in utterance promotes the sentence polite. Hence, the particles ‘nah’ in Khmer and ‘na?’ in Thai softening interrogatives sound safe.

An analysis of the pronunciation with/without tone helps us understand the clear-cut meaning in conversations. This approach may be developed in line with creating a model for learning Thai for foreigners especially neighbor workers. Why does the researcher think like that? Although Myanmar language has the tonal system, it is saliently different from Thai. They are not compared exactly.

7.2.2 The new learning environment

The atmosphere of learning a new language on purpose is difficult for the laborers but is too practical to get rid of their laziness and fear if they are aware of living in Thailand conveniently. The significant tool for fixing the problem of learning and living in Thai culture is to cross the interjections of language barriers. However, the percentage of the laborers’ fluency and comprehension of the researcher’s observation indicates that Myanmar workers were higher than Cambodian men with 72.5% and 63.8%, respectively. As for the easy-listening comprehension, Cambodian laborers were better than Myanmar speakers with 77.5% and 64.4%. The conditions in support of their language skills are to live in the community with huge amounts of Thai people. Seeing that there are laborers who are scared of new environment with the locals so they have made a decision on living only by themselves.

Piper (2005) proposed that the migrant laborers from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Thailand could upgrade their remunerations and welfare if they had developed their professional skills including the language use that is English, and the combination of accents became ‘Singlish’ in Singapore, which is better than one language used. This supposes that English with other tongues such as Indian, Chinese, etc. is a must among intercultural people. Nevertheless, the English language is more important than other languages. Back to the Thai situation, the laborers who communicate with the Thai language have also mixed with their native accents. To conclude, although the linguistic investigation

above has shown the status of Thai as lingua franca, the Thai creole with either Myanmar or Cambodian languages can be touched easily.

8. Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion

To sum up, we can touch the change of numbers of ethnic groups living in Thailand. The purposive sampling groups of this paper are Myanmar and Cambodian workers. They have still the leftovers of their native-tongues once they communicate with Thai citizens. However, if we unite the cross-cultural awareness and practice, we will harmonize in the context of necessary lingua franca by the Thai language for many benefits to all.

That those Myanmar and Cambodian laborers in Thailand have their own Thai communicative skills is in line with the only survival integration level of Pascual (2019)'s idea. Although some of them can communicate fluently, they are not examined the language proficiency by any agents of educational and linguistic tests. Nonetheless, the Thai language is raised up by neighbor laborers with the purpose of survival, and school level for their children who were born in Thailand. Additionally, their offspring or descendants who were born in their countries can learn Thai under the commercial and sociocultural conditions.

Linguistically speaking, we should enact and enforce one of ASEAN languages up to an official language in the specific nation where a lot of foreign workers are having careers. The model of this idea is the Thai language in Thailand. Therefore, Thai deserves to be crowned 'lingua franca'.

Srichampa, Burarungrot and Samoh (2018) put their attitudes that we should raise the Thai language is one of the media of international or migrant workers in Thailand. According to this point, the researcher "couldn't agree more". I have my own opinion fine-grained and friendly to Srichampa et al.'s advice. Many of the ASEAN laborers who are living in Thailand need to learn Thai and adjust themselves into the environment of the cross-culture.

As for my paper's results, it is beneficial for learners or educators to develop the guidebook for ASEAN laborers living in Thailand in order to understand Thai language and culture. It is particularly concentrated on pronunciation and vocabulary. It will be the process of establishing Thai among ASEAN and Asian people, or 'Thai-ization'. Hopefully, I significantly propose that we should inaugurate any institutions for the knowledge management of neighbor laborers' Thai language and culture. To investigate laborers' language levels is universal and critical in accordance with Pascual (2019)'s the concept of sociolinguistic integration.

The factors of economy, tourism and culture make Thailand interesting. This is an opportunity for pushing the Thai language up. Still, Thai is not the biggest language in ASEAN; it is an optional to learn for communication. In addition, laborers who are wanting to live in Thailand, they must comprehend Thai. Conversely, Thai laborers who will be working abroad are about to speak others' native languages in need. We should have done the working language policy of each country by starting at the linguistic elements before advancing in the impact of socio-cultural contexts. Finally, we can integrate the basis of linguistic characteristics with external factors such as community's lifestyles, rules, norms, economy and history.

Notes

¹ To keep the real sounds is transcribed in this paper. In all conversations, the symbol of 'A' is the representative of Thai people who buy some fruits but the sellers are either Myanmar or Cambodian laborers whom is represented with the nationality.

² The Thai language by Myanmar laborers is translated in Burmese, which is based on <http://imtranslator.net/translation/english/to-myanmar-burmese/translation/>

³ The Thai language by Cambodian laborers is translated in Khmer by <https://translate.google.com/> in versions of English-Khmer and Thai-Khmer.

⁴ If putting the question mark '?' before the linguistic form, it is incomplete or ungrammatical.

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