

คำยืมภาษาอังกฤษในภาษาลาว: หมวดหมู่ความหมายและผลกระทบต่อภาษาลาว

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บทคัดย่อ

การยืมภาษาเป็นปรากฏการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นกับภาษาต่าง ๆ ทั่วโลก โดยเฉพาะการยืมคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ ในฐานะที่เป็นภาษาสากล ภาษาลาวก็เช่นเดียวกันมีการยืมคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษเพิ่มขึ้นภายหลังจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมของลาวใน ค.ศ. 1975 ภายหลังกโยบายการเปิดประตูบ้าน (Open door policy) ของรัฐบาลลาว

บทความนี้จึงมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อรวบรวมและจัดกลุ่มความหมาย อธิบายประเภทของการยืม คำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษ ตลอดจนเสนอวิธีการเขียนคำยืมภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับภาษาลาว ข้อมูลคัดเลือกจากคำยืมภาษาอังกฤษที่ปรากฏในภาษาเขียนและภาษาพูดจากสื่อสารมวลชนลาว ได้แก่ นิตยสาร หนังสือพิมพ์ รายการโทรทัศน์ ที่เผยแพร่ในปี ค.ศ. 2010 พบคำยืมจำนวน 438 คำ จัดอยู่ใน 12 ประเภทตามกลุ่มความหมาย คำยืมภาษาอังกฤษส่วนมากอยู่ในกลุ่มความหมายเกี่ยวข้องกับธุรกิจ เป็นประเภทคำนามมากที่สุด ส่วนคำกริยามีการยืมเข้ามาใช้แต่จำนวนน้อยมาก ด้านการเขียนนั้น พบว่าคำยืมเขียนแบบทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษและเขียนด้วยภาษาลาว ซึ่งการเขียนคำยืมด้วยอักษรลาวนี้ส่งผลถึงการเปลี่ยนแปลงระบบการเขียนในภาษาลาว โดยเฉพาะพยัญชนะสะกด พยัญชนะควบกล้ำ และการใช้เครื่องหมายการันต์

คำสำคัญ: คำยืม, คำยืมภาษาอังกฤษ, การยืมภาษา, ภาษาลาว

English Loanwords in Lao Language: Semantic Fields and an Impact to Lao Language

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Abstract

Borrowing language is a phenomenon that occurs around the world with languages, especially with words borrowed from English as an international language. Similarly, in the Laotian language, English loanwords have been used more and more since Lao society has been changed in 1975, particularly by the ‘Open door policy’ of the Lao government.

This article aims to collect and categorize the English loanwords into the semantic fields, types of borrowing, and offer ways to write those loanwords. The data were collected of the English loanwords as they appear in the written and spoken language of several Lao media sources; magazines, newspapers and TV programs published in 2010. The study found that there are 438 English loanwords being in 12 categories, particularly in business categories and being more noun words than verbs. In terms of spelling, it was found that there are both English and Laotian languages. Lastly, it results in Lao’s writing system change especially final consonants, cluster consonant, and using Karan marker.

Keywords; Loanword, Borrowing, English loanword, Laotian language

Introduction to (English) borrowing in Laos

English language, as an international language, lingua franca and/or educational language, is an important medium to access information as globalization era. Likewise, there are studies of English loanwords in the Thai language (Nirasrop, 1956; Nacaskul, 1979). It has only one study concerning English loanword in Lao language is Khonphutphro's work published in 2002. The previous studies show an immense number of English loanwords in written and spoken languages. In Khonphutphro's work is only study about Lao people's pronunciation but it is not included to group the English loanword appearing in the Laotian language, nowadays.

Borrowing not only reveals a degree of language contact, but it also presents the social contact between source languages and target languages. This study will reveal the English loanword being in the Lao in the present time when Lao has big society change in 1975. After this time the government announced the 'Open Door Policy' to welcome foreign investment and tourist into Laos. Not only the society and culture were changed, but also the Lao writing system was changed through the government's policy of a writing system based on word pronunciation. Since the beginning, the government has focused mostly on developing the country. Until the late 1980s, the country's relationship with Thailand was nearly closed until the government instituted an Open Door Policy for outside countries. Through this policy, Laos opened itself to globalization and free trade of both the Southeast Asian and the world.

Evans (2002: 226) states that globalization is the approach of transforming Lao's relations with the world. The most immediate and visible effects of this are regional and geopolitical economic and cultural contacts with Thailand.

The post-1975 period is very interesting because of the rapid changes in both societies and languages. Lao had contact with other countries. The English loanword influence into Laos can be seen in the spoken and written language. However, Lao scholars state (Saiyavong, 2005) that there is increasing use of the English as

international language, official language and educational language, Lao has a large number of loanwords from other languages, including English, France, Pali-Sanskrit and Thai. The ‘semantic field concept’ was adapted to categorize the English loanword into the ‘semantic field’ to understand that which field has huge loanwords.

Earlier studies about language borrowing often referred to migration and colony areas, where various languages, people, cultures and nationalities existed in a community. Then, the studies were interested in new main characters of language in contact and/or language change because of globalization. Thus, loanwords can travel from one language to another easily and swiftly. It is interesting how borrowing language takes place in different languages around the world, including studies of source languages, how many loanwords exist in a semantic field, the impact on native lexicons and society, how they are implied in speech-community and how loanwords are adopted. This study can display understanding those questions more clearly.

The English loanword in the Lao language has never been studied in the ‘semantic field’ perspective. The question of this research is what the most semantic field of English loanwords is. This research finding, moreover, is not only to understand as a phenomenon of lexical borrowing from English and lexical changes in Lao, but also to augment an historical knowledge of Lao lexicon in pre-1975 to the present day more clearly. This might help predict a future of the Lao language, including the role of the English language in Lao society.

Types of Borrowing

Scholars (Bloomfield, 1935; Haugen, 1953; Weinreich, 1953; Arlotto, 1972; Bynon, 1983; Anttila, 1989; Hock, 1991,1996) have categorized types of borrowing into three levels: lexical borrowing, syntactic borrowing and semantic borrowing. The category by Bloomfield (1935) – cultural, intimate and dialect borrowing – is generally referred. study I only focus on lexical borrowing when it is divided into the three types proposed by Haugen (1950s).

Haugen (1953) explained that lexical borrowing requires some kind of imitation of the source language and is further broken down into loan words and loan shifts. Loan words are then broken into “pure” loan words and loan blends. “Pure” loanwords occur when the whole word is borrowed into the language, while loan blends is a mixture of native and non-native elements. Loan shift tends to fall into two categories as well: extension and calques (loan translations). Extension is a shift in the semantics of a native word under the influence of a foreign one. Loan translations or calques is a combination of native morphemes in imitation of a foreign pattern.

The research found that there are 438 loanwords. All of them are divided into three types. That is 335 loanwords in the loan word, 67 loanwords in loan blends, and 36 loanwords in loan translation types.

Loan Word

Most English loanword is ‘Loan word’ types. There are many Lao people who understand English language and use the loanwords extensively particularly who living in the capital city, Vientiane.

Example: Loan word

Computer	Internet	Office	Six-paces	Wifi
Magazine	printer	Smoothie	Coffee	Tea
Bank	Sport	Football	Tennis	Adventure
Package	Tour	Pancake	Airline	Engineering

The most appearing the ‘loan word’ type, it is easy and convenient to borrow the complete word from English in use because rapidly social change in Lao lets the user learning about English language for study, business and tourism of which come to Lao as English is best medium one to communication to other countries.

Loan Blends

The ‘loan blend’ type looks slightly different from loan word types above, because it mixes between source language and target language. It is clearly that the loanwords in this type change some lexemes to match the Lao context. In this case, we found that there are mix between English word and Lao native to make new concept or objects. This makes to Lao people had better understand the loanword. Some loanwords cannot borrow all elements to use so it is adapted English element to Lao language.

Example: Loan blend

ລົດແທັກຊີ	‘taxi’	ລົດຈຳໂປ່	‘big car’
ເຄື່ອງປັ້ນ	‘printer’	ລົດບັສ	‘bus’
ເຄື່ອງກັອບປີ້	‘copy’	ລູກທົວ	‘tourist’
ຂ່າວອອນໄລ	‘online news’	ໄຟຕິສໂກ້	‘decorative light’
ທ້າງຊັອບປີ້ງ	‘shopping mall’	ງານແຟຟະ	‘festival’

Loan Translation

It is quite difficult to identify whether the loanwords above are borrowed from English and are categorized as loan translation types. However, it shows traces of the borrowing that is used enough to detect it probably is related to the original English word by comparing the meaning and use in context of Lao. This loanword groups are borrowed into Lao because most people cannot well understand the loanword so the loanword will be translated by using native Lao words.

Example: Loan translation

ເຮືອນຕ້ອນຮັບ	‘guest house’	ຜູ້ນຳທ່ຽວ	‘guide tour’
ບ່ຽນເຄື່ອງ	‘transit’	ປະຊຸມໂຕະມົນ	‘round table’
ຕົວແທນ	‘agency’	ສຸມໃສ່	‘focus on’
ສຳມະນາກອນ	‘attendees’	ຕະຫລາດແລງ	‘night market’

English Loanword in ‘Semantic Field’

The research found that there are 438 English loanwords in 12 semantic fields. I will show some examples in semantic fields that link to Lao social contexts. This point will be presented again in the conclusion. The semantic fields are arranged from the largest to the smallest, in the following fields as the Table 1 bellows;

Table 1 English loanwords separated into semantic fields

Semantic field	number	percent
1. Economic	77	17.8
2. Communication	61	13.9
3. Media	57	13.0
4. Education	49	11.3
5. Food	48	10.9
6. Healthy	35	7.9
7. Career	33	7.6
8. Activity	19	4.4
9. Place	17	3.8
10. Verbs	16	3.6
11. Sport and Entertainment	16	3.6
12. Tourism	10	2.2
Totally	438	100

The finding above showed that there are 292 loanwords or 66.6% of loanwords are in fields of economic, communication, media, education, and food. The another group there are 149 loanwords or 33.4 % being in fields of food, healthy, career, activity, place, verb, sport and entertainment, and tourist.

In 2008, Lao government has permitted the ‘Lao Star’ channel publishing the TV program of which is the private company. After that it has an increasing people who lean English loanword from TV programs then the loanwords also come into the writing and speaking language. In addition, coming to global trade system let Lao society has to absorb English language than the past. This makes the people has to learn English loanword for understanding new concepts or objects.

The ‘Semantic field’ above show more clearly that Lao get the English loanwords widely by there are more fields used in Lao including verbs of which are the basic terms that they are difficult to borrow from other language. Similarly, the cultural terms are borrowed much more because the speakers from other cultures always borrowed words from each other cultures that come with the borrow new objects.

An Impact to Native Lao Word

Borrowing English loanword effects to the native Lao word in 3 ways: 1) there are an increasing word in Lao languages and 2) there is overlapping with native Lao words, and 3) impact to Lao’s writing system

The first way, it displays an influence of English language, as an international language and lingua franca, in Lao society after Lao changed in post-1975. Therefore, coming of the English loanwords displays to know that Lao being coming into modern society like big cities around the world. It makes people to understand new technology.

In addition, it lets other countries to know Lao much more and easy to communicate with. New technology or concept are going into Lao can show from using the English loanwords mixed with their language in both formal and informal communication. This phenomenon is not only taking place in Vientiane, but the remote areas are also learning these loanwords by TV programs.

The second one, it may concern to the overlapping of native Lao word because it was found that there is more loanword being used replace the native Lao word and in the same meaning. So, the native words may be used decreasingly. However, the loanword cannot replace the native words in all domain of use that it is processing to keep the native word. Most the English loanwords are used in an informal communication while native Lao words are used in the other one. However, there are loanword relate to the new concepts these loanwords can use in the formal communication because Lao has never had the word to describe them.

The last is an impact to writing system that is final consonants, cluster consonants, and using the Karan marker (ຼ). As English language has more final phonemes than Laos, Lao try to adjust the English final phonemes into Lao language such as the word ‘star’ ສຕາຣ. In the same case of cluster consonants that Laos has only 2 phonemes; / -l-, -w-/, therefore, the English loanwords having different cluster consonants particularly /-r-/ and the Karan marker are used in writing Loanwords such as ‘Free’ ຟຣີ and style ‘ສໂຕລ’. As Kunyarat and Rattana (2017) state that the adaptation of English phoneme into English loanwords in Laos are more clearly in writing system in the present.

It can say that using the English loanword by Lao people has two ways being in both positive perspectives, that is, it makes Lao to have new words to call new objects or concepts. For negative perspective, it also makes the native Lao words being not use and being replaced by foreign language, especially loan word type.

Summary and Discussion

English loanwords as the language contact phenomena between Lao and English are the new words in communication in Lao society. The types of loanwords are divided into 3 categories; loanword, loan blend, and loan translation, respectively. In terms of ‘loanword’ it is easier to borrow because it does not need to adapt much

from source language to target language so the most of loanwords is in this type. In the other hand, the ‘translation’, Laos has to create the new native Lao for replace meaning of the loanword, in addition, it was not popular in user, so the loanwords are in this type having not much words.

As the research question was found that the most of Loanwords is in economic field and followed by communication, media, education, and food. This shown the social development because after ‘Open Door Policy’ Lao increasing growth of economics including wider communication by digital mass media as well as expanding education of this country. Vientiane capital city as the modern city and lot of tourist has increasing restaurant and foreign foods or various international foods around city center or tourist places.

It is difficult to say that the language is ‘pure’, being not mixed or borrowed from other language particularly by the English loanwords of which come together with country development process including Lao. As generally know that after 1975, an important change in Lao society let Lao to go into the international trade. New technologies, concepts, objects come to Lao rapidly. These let together Lao to borrow the ‘loanwords’ more than to produce new words label them. It is clearly showed by huge loanwords being in the ‘Loan word’ type that it is easy and fast to use. In the other way, the ‘Loan blends’ and ‘Loan translation’ types show that Lao could not produce new word to use promptly.

For the ‘Semantic field’, the research finding was found that the most loanwords are in the ‘Media and Entertainment’ field, and next fields are technology and economy. These fields there are total loanwords more than the other fields. This relate to the country development process as the new television channel by private including economic system. These also link to use the new technology in the second field. In addition, the loanwords are in communication, education, and food and process also display new culture particularly food and process.

However, the other fields reflect to modern Lao society. In illness and disease field show that Lao people have much more understand in prevent themselves from illness or disease. In terms of the effect to native Lao, the finding let to know that there is an increasing of the words in fields to use with new objects or concepts. In the same time, it also effects to the decreasing and overlapping between the loanwords and native words. Perhaps, this point should be studied deeply how the native words will be replaced by the loanwords.

Note

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