

**An Analysis of Khmer Usage in the Literary Works of Prince Dhammadhibet:
A Case Study of Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang and Nirat Thansok**
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Abstract

This research aimed to analytically study the use of Khmer words in three literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet: Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang and Nirat Thansok. The research method was carried out through textual analysis by a close reading method. Moreover, word forms and meanings of Khmer words were also analyzed. The findings were as follows:

In Kap He Rue, use of 60 Khmer words was found. Having analyzed the word forms, it was found that there were 26 words that retained the original forms, 11 words that changed consonant forms, 10 words that changed vowel forms, and 13 words that changed consonant and vowel forms. Having analyzed the meanings, it was found that there were 35 words with the original meaning, 15 words with the narrow meaning, and 10 words with the transformed meaning.

In Nirat Thanthongdeang, use of 157 Khmer words was found. Having analyzed the word forms, it was found that there were 48 words that retained the original form, 39 words that changed consonant forms, 24 words that changed vowel forms, and 36 words that changed consonant and vowel forms. Having analyzed the meanings, it was found that there were 122 words with the original meaning, 25 words with the narrow meaning, and 10 words with the transformed meaning.

In Nirat Thansok, use of 178 Khmer words was found. Having analyzed the word forms, it was found that there were 65 words that retained the original form, 37 words that changed consonant forms, 40 words that vowel forms and 35 words that changed consonant and vowel forms. Having analyzed the meanings, it was found that there were 146 words with the original meaning, 27 words with the narrow meaning, and 5 words with the transformed meaning.

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The results also revealed that Khmer words appearing in these three Thai literary works concerned word forms and meanings. Some of them maintained the original forms and some were changed. This research can be used as a case study of features of Khmer loanwords adopted in the Thai language and literatures.

Keywords: Khmer words, form, meaning

1. Rationale and Background

Khmer language is a language of a neighboring country of Thailand that has influenced the Thai language for a long time, since the Sukhothai period, which was the era of the formation of “Thai Kingdom” of Thai people. The influence of Khmer language on Thai language had a significant impact on Thai literary circles during that time, since “language” was a tool in creating literary works. This is evident from the usage of Khmer words also found in one of the well-known Thai literary works during Sukhothai period entitled, “*Trai bhumikatha or Traibhumipraruang*”. For example, กระแจจะ กระเชอ เกลือ ขตาน จังหัน จำเริญ ตระการ ทำเนียม สำคัญ สำรับ สำเร็จ อังคาส Such evidence indicates the important role of Khmer words in Sukhothai literature no less than those of Pali and Sanskrit, which influence the religious beliefs of Buddhism and Brahmanism.

Until the Ayutthaya period, the kingdom of Khmer or Kampuchea (Cambodia) was deteriorating; however, the popularity of the usage of Khmer words in the world of literature still remained the same.

According to the acknowledgement page of the *Khmer Dord dictionary in Thai: The 55th Anniversary of the Establishment of Thai-Cambodian Diplomatic Relations* (Santhi Phakdikham 2006), Mr. Thech Boonnaak, Chairman of Thai-Cambodian Association, mentioned loanwords from Khmer. He pointed out the importance of ‘Khmer language’ in Jindamane book that Khmer language has its own features that are different from loanwords borrowed from other languages in Thai. Thai language borrows many Khmer words to use in both royal language and daily life.

Khmer words had a significant impact on Thai literary works during late Ayutthaya period, especially in using Khmer words for prosody in Nirat Thanthongdeang. Most Khmer words were

used for creating prosody, which creates and connects the rhymes within the same line of the poem. For example, there were 43 words used for prosody between the consonants in the same line. There were 149 words used for creating descriptions of scenes, or expressing the emotions of the poet, describing the beauty of women in the story, and explaining or telling the story, respectively.

As for using Khmer words for prosody in Nirat Thansok, most of Khmer words were also used for creating prosody, which creates and connects the rhymes within the same line of the poem. For example, there were 51 words used for prosody between the consonants in the same line. There were 178 words used for describing the beauty of women in the story, creating descriptions of scenes, expressing the emotions of the poet, and explaining or telling the story, respectively (Chawnuam, 2016, 111-112).

The objectives of this research were to analyze Khmer words that appeared in Thai literary works, namely Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok, in terms of word forms and meanings in order to identify any changes to Khmer words over time in Thai literature.

Besides having the analytical skill in literary appreciation, the “close reading” method used in this study also provides the benefit of a better understanding of the influential languages, especially Khmer that play an important role in Thai literary works.

2. Research Objectives

To identify and analyze the usage of Khmer words presented in the literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet: Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok, specifically focused on word forms and meaning.

3. Research Hypotheses

The presence of the Khmer words found in the literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet: Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok, contains word forms and meanings with particular features that appear in the stories. The primary data indicates the significant usage of

Khmer words in the three literary works, since the Khmer words were the most influential in Thai literature during the late Ayutthaya period.

In this case, the researcher hypothesized that there were many Khmer words present that might retain the original word forms, while others might transfer or change the consonants and vowels. When considering meaning, most of Khmer words might retain the original meaning, while some of them might change by narrowing or transforming the meaning.

In order to identify which words were Khmer, the researcher selected Khmer words identified in the following two academic texts, which are recognized sources on Khmer vocabulary:

1) Orawan Boonyarit and Department of Oriental Languages. *Khmer Rouge in Thai*. 1st ed. Translated from ‘*Les éléments khmers dans la formation de la langue siamoise*’ by **Worasarin Uraisri** (Professor Emeritus). Bangkok: Faculty of Archeology, Silpakorn University, 2010.

2) **Phakdeekham Santi**. *Khmer Word Dictionary in Thai: The 55th Anniversary of the Establishment of Thai-Cambodian Diplomatic Relations*. 1st ed. Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing Public Co. Ltd., 1996.

The researcher selected these two academic books as research tools for identifying Khmer words for the analysis of word forms and meanings of Khmer words that appeared in the three literary works in this study.

4. Scope of the Study

This study focused on three literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet: *Kab He Rue*, *Nirat Thongdeang*, and *Nirat Thansok*, Volume 3, published by the Department of Fine Arts, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 2002.

5. Definitions of Terms

Key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

5.1 *Cambodia* refers to the context of country name.

5.2 *Khmer* refers to the context of language, culture, traditions such as Khmer language and Khmer culture.

5.3 *Khmer words* refers to root words that are derived from Khmer languages, according to the research hypothesis no.3 from the Academic books.

5.4 *The analysis of word forms* refers to root words that are derived from Khmer and Cambodian languages.

5.5 *Words that retain original form* refers to Khmer words appearing in the literary works in this study in which the form remains the same. However, both tone markers and vowels in Khmer and Thai languages are not being used to distinguish the feature differences of word forms in this study.

5.6 *Words that change the consonant forms* refers to Khmer words appearing in the literary works in this study in which any changes occur through the process of words changing consonants, such as changing forms, adding, reducing, and eliminating consonants.

5.7 *Words that change the vowel forms* refers to Khmer words that appeared in the literary works in this study in which any changes occur through process of words changing vowels, such as changing forms, adding, shortening, and eliminating vowels.

5.8 *Words that change both consonant and vowel forms* refers to Khmer words appearing in the literary works in this study in which any changes occur through the process of words and vowel changing, such as changing forms, adding, reducing or shortening, and eliminating both consonants and vowels.

5.9 *The analysis of meaning* refers to the identification of Khmer words that appeared in the text depending on whether or not they retained original meaning or transformed it.

5.10 *Words that retain original meaning* refers to the identification of Khmer words that follow the criteria in academic textbooks, Item 3. According to the hypothesis, it is found that the meaning of those Khmer words that appeared in the texts retain the original meaning.

5.11 *Words that narrowed in meaning* refers to the identification of Khmer words that follow the criteria in academic textbooks, Item 3. According to the hypothesis, it is found that the meaning of those Khmer words that appeared in the texts have narrowed in meaning from the original meaning in Khmer language.

5.12 *Words that transformed in meaning* refers to Khmer words that follow the criteria in academic textbooks, Item 3. According to the hypothesis, it is found that the meaning of those Khmer words that appeared in the texts have transformed in meaning from the original meaning in Khmer language.

6. Significance of the Study

This study was intended to show how the Khmer words presented in the Thai literary works of Kab He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang and Nirat Thansok can result in potential benefits that come from an exploration of this academic study. Also, this study lays the groundwork for further research on the loanwords from Khmer language in Thai literary works.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Results of the Study

Regarding the analysis of Khmer words that appeared in the literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet, namely Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok, the results confirm the hypothesis that Khmer words had significant influence in Thai literary works during the late of Ayutthaya period. Due to the fact that Prince Dhammadhibet was one of the most famous poets during that period, the three Nirat literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet were widely accepted because of its content and literary values. The summary of the results of this study through textual analysis by close reading method were analyzed as follows:

7.2 Conclusion of the Study

This research was conducted to study the analysis of Khmer words that appeared in the literary works of Prince Dhammadhibet: Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok, specifically focused on Khmer word forms and meanings. The findings indicate two specific important features as follows:

7.2.1 Word forms

According to the analysis and results, the usage of Khmer words were observed in the literary works of Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok as presented in the table below:

Table shows the features of Khmer words appear in Thai literary work of Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok

Title	Words that retain original forms		Words that change consonant forms		Words that change vowel forms		Words that change both consonant and vowel forms		Total Word Count	Percentage
	Word count	Percentage	Word count	Percentage	Word count	Percentage	Word count	Percentage		
Kap He Rua	26	43.33	11	18.33	10	16.67	13	21.67	60	100
Nirat Thanthongdeang	48	30.57	39	24.84	24	15.29	46	29.30	157	100
Nirat Thansok	66	37.08	37	20.79	40	22.47	35	19.66	178	100

According to the data presented in the table above, the usage of Khmer words which retained original forms in all three Thai literary works were as follows: Kap He Rua at 43.33 percent, Nirat Thanthongdeang at 30.57 percent, and Nirat Thansok at 37.08 percent of the the total Khmer words that appeared in those stories.

The appearance of Khmer words in Kap He Rua and Nirat Thansok, which have similar features of word forms in both stories, include words that change both consonant and vowel, consonant forms, and vowel forms. As for Kap He Rua, the changes to word forms mentioned above were 21.67 percent, 18.33 percent, and 16.67 percent respectively. As for Nirat Thanthongdeang, the changes to word forms mentioned above were 29.30 percent, 24.84 percent, and 15.29 percent respectively.

Nirat Thansok has different features of Khmer words that appear in the story: words that change vowel forms, consonant forms, and both vowel and consonant forms at 22.47 percent, 20.79 percent, and 19.66 percent respectively.

7.2.2 Meaning

According to the analysis and results, the meaning of Khmer words in Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok can be categorized as presented in the table below:

Table shows the contextual meaning of the usage of Khmer words that appeared in Thai literary work of Kap He Rue, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok

Title	Words that retain the original meaning		Words that narrow meaning		Words that transform meaning		Total Words	Percentage
	Word count	Percentage	Word count	Percentage	Word count	Percentage		
Kap He Rua	35	58.33	15	25	10	16.67	60	100
Nirat Thanthongdeang	122	77.71	25	15.92	10	6.37	157	100
Nirat Thansok	146	82.02	27	15.17	5	2.81	178	100

Regarding the data presented in the table, the contextual meaning of Khmer words in all three Thai literary works shared a similar order. Most of the usage of Khmer words in these stories retains the original meaning, some words were narrowed in meaning, and other words transformed their meaning.

As for Kap He Rua, the contextual meaning of Khmer words mentioned above were 58.33 percent, 25 percent, and 16.67 percent respectively. Concerning Nirat Thanthongdeang, the contextual meaning of Khmer words mentioned above were 77.71 percent, 15.92 percent, and 6.37 percent respectively. Regarding Nirat Thansok, the contextual meaning of Khmer words mentioned above were 82.02 percent, 15.17 percent, and 2.81 percent respectively.

Regarding the findings, it is found that the usage of most Khmer words in Kap He Rua, Nirat Thanthongdeang, and Nirat Thansok retained the original word forms, and changes in consonant and vowel forms accordingly. As for the analysis of meaning, the findings were similar as the results of word forms. Most Khmer words in each of the three literary works retained their original meaning while some were narrowed, and a few transformed meanings.

However, the findings strongly supported the argument that the usage of Khmer words was influential in Thai literary works during late Ayutthaya period. According to these three Thai literary works, this study could be used as a guideline for studying Khmer words in Thai literature, specifically word forms and meaning. These guidelines can help us understand the features of Khmer words, interpret their meaning, and fully understand words in Thai literary works.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Study

7.3.1 This research can be applied for further use as a case study of the usage of loanwords from Khmer language to expand the understanding of the features of Khmer words that appear in Thai literary works.

7.3.2 According to the discussion of the findings, the findings can be expanded and applied in different research areas, such as the Khmer words that appear in other Thai literary works in terms of word forms and meanings, the works of contemporary Thai-Khmer literature works which have a similar storyline, or the literatures which come from a similar background. All of these recommendations for further research will be greatly beneficial for the study of language and literary works in the future.

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