

Pali Sanskrit and Tamil words in South East Asia; A case study of the Thai, Lao, Malaysia Language

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Abstract

According to previous studies, they mainly focused on Pali and Sanskrit language which obviously have a direct influence to many ASEAN countries. Although there are many families of languages in Southeast Asian countries which have different grammatical structures, all of these countries' languages have been affected by the Indian language and cultures since 12th Buddhist era. The alphabets were developed by adapting from the form of south Indian alphabets called 'Pallava' (ปัลลวะ). Therefore, the languages of these countries such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma, in which Pali and Sanskrit are widely used, obtain many word roots from the Indian language and have used them so far.

As a result, this study mainly focuses on Pali Sanskrit and Tamil language because Tamil is also a great Indian language which has influence on the ASEAN countries the same as Pali and Sanskrit language do. These three languages have an impact on Tai-Kadai language by sampling words in Thai- Lao family and languages in Malayu Ponesian family by sampling Malaysian words from dictionaries and glossaries in order to compare to Thai words. The study is achieved by comparing only the form of written language which are the original manuscripts written in Pali Sanskrit and Tamil texts from Thai national library, such as, Kuenbaromhong (ขึ้นบรมหงส์) royal ceremony scripture, the Coronation (King Narai), Ongkar-Chaeng-Nam (โองการแข่งน้ำ), and royal Brahmanic ceremonies. The study will be completed by narrating and describing as the principle of quantitative research because Thai and Lao alphabets, which are developed from south Indian alphabets, have a development on writing which can be converted to Latin alphabets in Malaysian language. The articulation however differs due to the identities of each area in south East Asia countries.

The result suggests that the Malaysian language somehow roots from Pali and Sanskrit language as well. Tamil words are used in Malaysian language, too because both are agglutinative languages which are developed from the languages in Melayu Poynesian family belonging to Austronesian language. For the Thai language, although some inscribed evidences and ancient scriptures written in Tamil were found, there are only few Tamil words used in Thai language as well as in Lao language because both are isolating language which called Tai-Kadai family. Nevertheless, Thai and Lao language are affected by Buddhist and Brahmanic cultures causing these countries to have many words which root from Pali and Sanskrit like the other ASEAN countries. Alphabets and language in scriptures written in original Tamil of Brahman in Thailand were valued highly and used only in religious

ceremonies. As a result, they are not widely used or well-known, except for few old words appeared in Thai literatures that Thai people used to.

1. Introduction

Most of the alphabets used in Southeast Asia are developed from south Indian alphabets long before any countries have created their own alphabets. As Thai alphabets (around 18th Buddhist era) were developed from Cambodian and Mon alphabets which obviously inherited the written form from south Indian alphabets called Pallava (around 11th-12th Buddhist era). Even Grantha, which the south Indian used to write Sanskrit, was developed from Punlawa too (around 18th Buddhist era). The worth noting point is that the Brahman in Thailand also use Grantha to write the scriptures used in crucial royal ceremonies until these days of Ratanakosin era. As a result, Thai Grantha or Grantha used in Pali Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures of the Brahman in Thai royal court is created with a unique identity that is different from those Grantha used in south India. (KaewkayChaem, 2548:19-24)

Pali and Sanskrit are ancient languages and influences Thai language since the ancient time. Although English has become more necessary than any other languages, Thai people still use Pali and Sanskrit words more often. Pali and Sanskrit therefore have an important role to create new words to replace English words in formal Thai language, such as the word ‘โลกาภิวัตน์’ replacing ‘globalization’, and the word ‘อัตลักษณ์’ (Identity) are all created from the roots in Pali-Sanskrit language.

Tamil is also an ancient language, though it is not as important as Pali-Sanskrit in the Thai language. Tamil is not vastly used or well-known in Thailand because it is a secret language of the Tamil Brahman in Thai royal court which is considered forbidden for outsiders. Tamil is believed to be a holy language that the Thai Brahman uses to pray in important Brahman's ceremonies held in the Thai royal court and it cannot be read wrongly. As stated in the first Thai enacted law, the punishment for the Brahman who misreads the mantra is ‘To be hung with a big rosary’ (Royal Institute, 2550: 195-195)



The Thai Brahman's text wrote by Thai Grantha script
on Tamil and Sanskrit in Thailand

2. Comparison study

2.1 The comparison study of Malaysian, Tamil and Thai language

Tamil culture has long notably remained in Malaysia which makes Malaysian words contain a great number of borrowed words from Tamil. According to Tamil words found in the original manuscript of Thai books in Thai national library, as compared to Malaysian dictionaries used these days called Kamus Kembangan by Anwar Ridhwan and Lai Choy, there are a moderate numbers of Pali-Sanskrit words which were adopted in Malaysian words. Most Pali and Sanskrit words, however, were borrowed first by Tamil language and Malaysian borrowed them later. This can be summarized by carefully observing the grammatical system of Tamil language e.g. the form of affixes. Then we can discriminate the Pali Sanskrit words borrowed by Tamil language. The following table presents the relation of borrowed Tamil words in Malaysian language.

The table of Tamil words in Malaysia language (1)

No.	Tamil	English	Malaysia	English
1.	அக்கா (Akkā)	Older Sister	kakak (กากาก)	Older Sister
2.	அப்பம் (Appam)	Pancake	apam (อาปัม)	Pancake
3.	அப்பா (Appā)	Father	bapa(k) (บาปาก)	Father
4.	அம்மா (Ammā)	Mother	amah (อาม่า)	Mother, Maid Chinese nurse
5.	இலாடம் (Lāḍam)	Horseshoe	ladam (ลาดัม)	Horseshoe
6.	இலை (Ilai)	Leaf	helai (เฮไล)	Leaf Paper
7.	ஏலக்காய் (Elakkāy)	Green Cardamom	ilaci (อีลาจี)	Green - Cardamom
8.	ஐயர் (Aiyar)	Abbot or Father	ayah (อายายาร์)	Father
9.	கட்டில் (Kaṭṭil)	Stool Bench Bed	katil (กาติล)	Wood or Iron's structure of old style of bed.
10.	கடை (Kaḍai)	Shop	kedai (เกอไต)	Shop
11.	கஞ்சி (Kañci)	Rice porridge	kanji (กานจี)	Flour
12.	கப்பல் (Kappal)	Ship	kapal (กาปัล)	Ship , Boat

These words can be found only in Malaysian dictionaries. Anyhow, Tamil language is one of the speaking languages in Malaysia. There are Tamil people in Malaysia so it is not necessary that they know only these words. There are also borrowed words that Tamil language borrowed through other languages before becoming Malaysian language. We need a great deal of time to profoundly study Tamil in Malaysian language, including the language used these days and the ancient language of the Tamil.

2.2 The comparison study of Pali Sanskrit Lao and Thai language

Although, Thai and Laos are not the same countries, they have a close relationship and are very close in cultures and languages. Thai alphabets might be different from Lao alphabets, but some of them have the same pronunciation, except for some alphabets, such as,

In Thai, pronounce /r/ In Lao, pronounce /f/

In Thai, pronounce /p/ In Lao, pronounce /p^h/(some words)

In Thai, pronounce /kw/ In Lao, pronounce /ŋ/ or /f/

The comparison of Pali Sanskrit and Lao which found in Thai documents and standard Thai language can be concluded as the following table.

The table of Pali -Sanskrit in Laos and Thai language (2)

No.	Pali -Sanskrit	Laos	pronounce	Thai	pronounce	Meaning
1	Phā-sā	ພາສາ	Bhā-sā	ภาษา	Bhā-sā	Language
2	Tā-rā	ດາລາ	Dā-lā	ดารา	Dā-rā	Star
3	Can-dra	ຈັນ	Chan	จันทร์	Chan	Moon
4	Siñ-ha	ສິງ	Siñ	สิงห์	Siñ	Lion
5	Ā-dit-ya	ອາທິດ	Ā-thid	อาทิตย์	Ā-thid	Sun
6	Va-ja-ra	ເພດ	Bhed	เพชร	Bhed	Diamond
7	Va-ja-ra	ວັດຊະຣະ	Vat-cha-ra	วัชร	Vat-Cha-ra	Diamond thunderbolt

3. Result and discussion

The result indicates that Malaysian language contains some Pali Sanskrit words and there are many Tamil words used in Malaysian language today because both are agglutinative languages which are developed from Melayu Polynesian family belonging to Austronesian language. For the Thai language, although inscribed evidences and ancient scriptures written in Tamil were found, Thai adopts only few Tamil words the same as Lao, which is isolating language, or called Tai-Kadai family.

Thai words with Malaysian roots

Some Thai words that we use these days might be borrowed words which occur in many cultures, Normally we think that we borrow words from Tamil, but some Tamil words, such as, कुली (Hindi : Kulī कुली) a delivery man, जीरा (Hindi : Jīrā जीरा) caraway, साबु (Hindi : Sābun साबुन) soap, अजาด (Hindi : Ajār अचार) fermented cucumbers, according to a Tamil

dictionary (AciriyarKulam. 2008: 354-355), have absolutely different meanings from those in Hindi language, as follows,

The word Kulī குலி in Tamil means The eldest sister of a wife.

The word Kulām குலாம் means a slave

The word Kulālan குலாலன் means a potter

The word Kulāli குலாலி means a female potter

The word Kulīnan குலீனன் means aristocrat

Caraway in Tamil is called Jīrakam or Sīrakam (சீரகம்) originally as Jīrakam (ஜீரகம்) The alphabet ஜ /J/ is barely used in Tamil language.

Nowadays, they usually use the words borrowed from foreign countries or other states in Tamil language. The word Ājād in Hindi called Ajār, but in Tamil called Orukāy (ஊறுகாய்). The word Ajār in Tamil is borrowed from Hindi and Ajār is originally food which is known as a side dish of Chicken Satay for the Islamite. When it spreads into Malaysia, becomes Ājār, and still be a side dish of Chicken Satay (Āyam Satay) as well. In Thai, it is called Ājād, which is a side dish of Pork Satay. (The Islamite cannot eat pork, but Thais, and Chinese can) (AciriyarKulam. 2008: 189,462)

As a result, the words, Kulī (कुली) a delivery man, Cīrā (जीरा) caraway, Sābun (साबुन) soap, Ajār (अचार) fermented cucumbers, are not originally Tamil words, but were borrowed from the Hindi language.

As many Thai scholars state that Thai borrows word from Tamil, this might be caused by the confusion between the borrowed Tamil words and the borrowed Hindi words because Thai ancients have known Tamil first. There are evidences saying that the appearance of Tamil words in Ramayana, and other ancient literatures, such as, กุเรปัน Kurepun (Ramayana), ฤๅษีกาลโกฏี hermit Kalaikot (Kumpa-Ramayana), นางตันไต Miss Tantai (Miss Tantai Tale), ตะไล Talai (dessert, sky rocket), ใจหะ Cozha (inscribed history), ชาวทมิฬ Tamil people (in Mahawongsha text คัมภีร์มหาวงศ์). It means if you did not study in languages or literatures, or history, you would not know that these words have Tamil roots and have an impact on Tamil words in the Lao language. However, Tamil words are found less in the Thai language and the Lao language than the Malaysian language where Tamil language is used as one of national languages. Likewise, Thai and Lao words are affected by Buddhist and Brahmanic cultures, contributing to several Pali Sanskrit words as in other south East Asia languages. The scriptures of Thai Brahman which was written in original Tamil alphabets are restricted and are used only in religious ceremonies.

Pali-Sanskrit words which are written differently between the Thai and Lao Languages

Thai and Lao words in contrary are affected by Buddhist and Brahmanic cultures, contributing to several Pali Sanskrit words as in other south East Asia languages. However the many common words in Lao was the same as Thai pronunciation and meaning as the borrowed words from Pali- Sanskrit, but are spelt differently from the Pali Sanskrit and Thai written language such as

The written เพชร (a diamond), pronounced as Bhed in Thai, this same word is differently written as เพด, but it is pronounced the same in Lao.

The written พระอาทิตย์ (the sun) pronounce as Phra-ā-tid in Thai, this same word is differently written as พระอาทิตย์, but it is pronounced the same in Lao.

The written พลศึกษา (the physical education), pronounced as Bha-la-suek-sā in Thai, this same word is differently written as พลศึกษา, but it is pronounced the same in Lao.

The written ภาษา (a Language), pronounced as Bhā-sā in Thai, this same word is differently written as ภาษา and it is pronounced the same in Lao.

Even though there are many words that are different in the Thai and Lao language, there are many words which are the same in different written forms, but have the same articulation. We can see the examples from words that Thai borrows from Pali Sanskrit language, which will be written in the same form as in Pali Sanskrit, and not be written accordantly to its sound. On the other hand, the Lao language, those words will be written accordantly to its sound, but not in the same form as the borrowed words'. The similarity in the articulation of Pali Sanskrit borrowed words in Thai and Laolanguage indicates that the Thai and Lao language are related to each other and have shared the same language culture ever since the ancient time, when Thailand was called Ayuthaya and Laos was called LanXang as told in both countries' history.

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