

# วิเคราะห์ความต้องการในการเรียนภาษาไทยของนักศึกษาکمพูชาเพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน

## A Needs Analysis of Cambodian Students Learning Thai Language for ASEAN Preparation

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### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาทัศนคติต่อการเรียนภาษาไทยในฐานะที่เป็นภาษา ๑ หนึ่งและศึกษาความต้องการในการเรียนภาษาไทยของนักศึกษาชาว کمพูชาเพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน เครื่องมือที่ใช้สำหรับการวิจัยคือแบบสอบถาม โดยเก็บข้อมูลจากนักศึกษาที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในมหาวิทยาลัยพระตะบองและในโรงเรียนจังหวัดพระตะบอง ซึ่งเดินทางมาจากหลาย ๆ แห่งในประเทศ کمพูชา จำนวน 173 คน วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงสถิติโดยใช้จำนวนร้อยละ (Percentage) ค่าเฉลี่ย (Means) และค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน (Standard Deviation)

ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า :

1. ทัศนคติต่อการเรียนภาษาไทยในฐานะที่เป็นภาษา ๑ หนึ่งของนักศึกษาชาว کمพูชา เพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน โดยรวมอยู่ในระดับเห็นด้วยอย่างปานกลาง ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ) ด้านที่มีค่าคะแนนเฉลี่ยระดับสูงสุด 3 อันดับแรกคือ ภาษาไทยนั้นเป็นภาษาที่มีการออกเสียงยากมากที่สุดที่จะเรียนรู้ได้ ( $\bar{X} = 3.53$ ) รองลงมาได้แก่ ภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาที่อุดมด้วยคำศัพท์จำนวนมาก ( $\bar{X} = 3.43$ ) และภาษาไทยนั้นเป็นภาษาที่ไพเราะและมีความสละสลวย ( $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ) ตามลำดับ

2. ความต้องการในการเรียนภาษาไทยของนักศึกษาชาว کمพูชาเพื่อเตรียมความพร้อมสู่ประชาคมอาเซียนโดยรวมอยู่ในระดับเห็นด้วยอย่างปานกลาง ( $\bar{X} = 3.89$ ) ด้านที่มีคะแนนเฉลี่ย

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ระดับสูงสุด 3 อันดับแรกคือ ความต้องการที่จะทำงานและได้รับเงินเดือนที่สูงในประเทศไทย ( $\bar{X} = 4.24$ ) รองลงมาคือความต้องการที่จะมีเพื่อนเป็นคนไทยโดยติดต่อผ่านอีเมลล์หรือเฟสบุ๊ค ( $\bar{X} = 4.08$ ) และความต้องการที่จะอ่านหนังสือไทยและวารสารไทยได้ง่ายมากยิ่งขึ้น ( $\bar{X} = 4.04$ ) ตามลำดับ

คำสำคัญ : นักศึกษาชาวภูมิพูชา; ภาษาไทย; วิเคราะห์ความต้องการ; การเตรียมความพร้อมสู่ประชาคมอาเซียน

## Abstract

The objectives of this research studied the attitudes toward the Thai language as a language and needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The samples for data collecting were 173 Cambodian students studying in Battambang University and schools in Battambang province came from many provinces of Cambodia. The data were analyzed by statistics consisted of the percentage, means and standard deviation.

The results of the study were showed as these followings :

1. The overall of attitudes toward a Thai language as a language of the Cambodia students learning Thai language for ASEAN preparation was at moderate agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ). Three highest average scores consisted of the Thai pronunciation is very difficult to learn ( $\bar{X} = 3.53$ ). It was followed by the Thai language is a language with rich vocabularies ( $\bar{X} = 3.43$ ) and the Thai language is beautiful and sweet ( $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ) respectively.

2. The samples' needs analysis of Cambodia students learning Thai language for ASEAN preparation was at much agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.89$ ). Three levels were highest consisted of the needs to get a good job with high salaries in Thailand ( $\bar{X} = 4.24$ ). It was followed by the needs to make friendship with Thai people living in Thailand through e-mail or Facebook ( $\bar{X} = 4.08$ ) and the needs to read Thai books and magazines with easiness ( $\bar{X} = 4.04$ ) respectively.

Keywords: Cambodian Student; Thai Language; Needs Analysis; ASEAN Preparation

## Introduction

Some linguists have been trying to define language in their ways. According to Haviland, Prins & McBride (Haviland, et al., 2008) pointed that a language is a system

of communication using sounds and gestures. These are put together according to certain rules, resulting in meanings that are intelligible to all who share that language. These sounds and gestures fall into the group of a symbol defined as a sign, sound gesture, or another thing. This arbitrarily links to something else and represents it in a meaningful way. This definition is related to Lyons' mention (Lyons John, 1970). Lyons pointed that languages are the ruled systems of communication. It is used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society (linguistic community) of which they are members. Regarding the both definitions, we can briefly say that language is a system of transmission that is related with meaningful sound and gesture using. This communication system is pre-owned by the group of human beings staying as a community in the specific or geographical areas.

Every country has their town language such as Thailand has Thai language as an official language. Cambodian people use the Khmer language as their official language, India has Hindi and English as their official languages, the United States has English as an official language etc. Although the people in those countries have their individual languages for speaking or communication, their spoken words are not limited to be learn or communicated by others staying in other societies, communities or countries. All languages can be learnt or used for talking, chatting, communicating or some purposes if the learners are skillful to use. It can say that the human beings in this world can learn any language. If they have capability and interest in learning such as at the present many Cambodian students are attending to learn Thai language for ASEAN preparation.

Now there are many Thai schools have been established in Cambodia and they are very popular for many Cambodian people to study it. Moreover, some Cambodian students come to Thailand and study the Thai language here (Anucha, 2012). According to the data of the students studying in schools of Thai - Cambodia border under the Office of the Basic Education Commission, it reported on 8 January 2008. It showed that there were 2,639 Cambodian students came to study in Thai schools in Chanthaburi, Sa-Kaew, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani, Surin, Buriram and Trat. The reasons why these students came to study in Thai schools were 4 reasons. The first was the needs on learning Thai for their lives in the future. The second was confident about the equality of Thai educational system. The third was the relationship between family blood of their Cambodia and Thailand and the fourth was easiness and safety in traveling (Sunida, 2011). In Phnom Penh, a capital city of Cambodia, there is Royal University of Phnom Penh (Cambodia's oldest and largest university), especially the faculty of literature offers the

Thai language course for Cambodian students. There are many Cambodian students choose to study this course. Most of these students said that learning spoken and written Thai language can lead to high salaries & promising careers for Cambodian university students (Anucha, 2012). Teaching Thai language has started in Royal University of Phnom Penh since 2005 - 2014. There are 937 Cambodian students studied and finished with Thai courses. Regarding numbers of Cambodian students, it was found that the Thai language is interesting in studying for them. In the future, it tends that the numbers of students will continuously increase (Boonsner, 2015). Cambodian students don't study only in the school or university, but also they study in the temple's class. Thai courses established in Wat Po Veal far away from the Battambang University about 6 kilometers at the west of Sangker River offer to the students from Monday - Friday. It starts from 07.00 - 09.00 am in the morning, 12.00 am - 14.00 pm in the afternoon and 17.00 - 19.00 pm in the evening. There are at least 50 - 60 students per class. There are monks used to study Thai language with Thai tourists and Thai language through Thai books and internet teach the students here (Pisutpong, 2014).

According to the data above, it was found that there are many Cambodian students are very interested in learning Thai language. The numbers of those students will continuously be increased. So, to find out these results why many Cambodian students need to learn Thai language, this research focused on the study of attitudes toward the Thai language as a language. Moreover, it investigated the needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia.

## The objectives of this study

The objectives of this research "A Needs analysis of Cambodian Students Learning Thai language for ASEAN Preparation" were in two aspects to find out, namely:

1. To study the attitudes towards learning Thai language of Cambodian students for ASEAN preparation.
2. To analyze the needs of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation.

## Research methodology

To gain a holistic picture of the study on this research "A Needs analysis of Cambodian Students Learning Thai language for ASEAN Preparation", a methodological description was provided as these follows:

## 1. Samples

The samples of this study were 173 Cambodian students studying in Battambang University and schools in Battambang province came from many places of Cambodia. The Purposive Sampling designed by Karnchanawasri Sirichai, Srisukho Direk and Pituyanon Taweewat (Sirichai et al., 1992) was used for choosing the samples. The majority of these samples have different ages. Some are studying in the university and some are studying in highest school in Battambang province. Moreover, these samples also have varying proficiency level in Thai language courses. Some have basic Thai courses background while the others are starting to study it. These students are studying Thai language courses with their very highest motivation.

## 2. Research instrument

To study attitudes toward learning Thai language as a language and needs analysis of Cambodian students to learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia, a questionnaire was designed for data collection. The questionnaire was checked with the validity and reliability from the experts. This questionnaire consisted of 3 parts. The first part was general samples' personal information. The second part was samples' attitudes toward a Thai language as a language and a needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia. Additionally, there was recommendation. The first one was 10 educational variables consisted of gender, age, level of their education, the samples' provincial city, experiences for Thai class, times of Thai class, needs of special Thai class, the way of studying Thai, the frequencies of Thai studying and the samples' Thai proficiency. And the second one was 2 sub-parts consisted of part 1 and part 2. The first one consisted of 7 questions on the samples' attitudes toward a Thai language as a language of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia and the second one consisted of 10 questions on samples' needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia. The final part consisted of the samples' recommendation which was open end questions.

There were 5 average levels of agreement with the samples' answers. They consisted of 5 = strongly agreement, 4= agreement, 3 = moderately agreement, 2= disagree, and 1= strongly disagree.

## 3. Data collection

The data was collected during a researcher went to teach Thai at Battambang University, Battambang province, Cambodia on the project of Academic Services: Thai Class for Cambodian Students in Battambang University during 1-15 August 2014. This project was co-operated between Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Surin campus,

Thailand and Battambang University, Cambodia. A researcher spent time to teach Thai for Cambodian students and also collect the data for this research.

#### 4. Research data analysis

The collected data from the questionnaires provided for 173 Cambodian Students studying Thai were analyzed in the form of statistics consisted of the percentage, means and standard deviations according to Srisa-art's design, (Boonchom, 2002). According to Srisa-art, the value of mean scores was interpreted using the following range. It was 1.00 - 1.49 = Least agreement, 1.50 - 2.49 = Less agreement, 2.50 - 3.49 = Moderate agreement, 3.50 - 4.49 = Much agreement, and 4.50 - 5.00 = Very much agreement.

### Findings

From the data analysis on this research "A Needs Analysis of Cambodian Students in Cambodia Learning Thai for ASEAN Preparation", it could find the results as these follows:

#### 1. The findings of samples' general personal information

According to Table 4.1, it presented the samples' general personal information consisted of both females and males. After the data were collected, the results were revealed as these fellows:

There were 88 males (50.9%) and 85 females (49.1%) respectively.

The findings of the samples' age showed their ages were during 21 - 25 years old (61.8%), 16 - 20 years old (27.7%), 26 - 30 years old (7.5%), 10 - 15 years old (1.2%), 31 - 35 years old (1.2%), and more than 35 years old (0.6%) respectively.

The samples' educational level consisted of tertiary education (60.7%), upper secondary education or grades 10, 11 and 12 (26%), vocational education (9.8%), primary education or grades 1 - 6 (6.4%) and lower secondary education or grades 7 - 9 (6.4%) respectively.

The samples' provincial cities were in Battambang province (79.76%), Pursat Province (5.78%), Banteay Meanchey province (2.89%), Siem Reap province (2.89%), Kampong Cham province (2.31%), Palin province (1.16%), Kampot province (0.58%), Kep province (0.58%) and Tbong Khmum province (0.58%) respectively. There weren't students coming from Phnom Penh Province, Kampong Speu Province, Kratie Province, Preah Vihear Province, Mondulkiri Province, Koh Kong Province, Kandal Province, Oddar Meanchey Province, Preah Sihanouk Province, Prey Veng Province, Ratanakiri Province, Treng Province, Stung Svay Rieng Province and Takeo Province.

The samples' experiences with Thai class consisted of no having experiences with Thai studying before (57.2%) and having experiences with Thai class (42.8%) respectively.

Regarding the samples' experiences for Thai class used to study Thai, he samples spent times to learn Thai about 2 months - 6 months (34.10%), a week-1 month (27.75%), 2 years - 5 years (17.92%), More than 5 years (7.51 %), 7 months - a year (6.94%) and lower a week (5.78%) respectively.

Needs of special Thai class of Cambodian students, most of them would like to have the special Thai class (96.50%) and some wouldn't like to have it (3.50%). A few of students who didn't like to have the special Thai class came to study with their friends. Studying Thai language, these students didn't like it.

From the ways of the samples' Thai studying, they studied Thai from Thai teachers (47.40%), tuition school (20.23%), Thai textbooks (10.98%), internet (9.25%), Radio (5.20%), Thai tourists (4.05%) and television (2.89%) respectively.

Regarding the ways of the samples' Thai studying, the frequencies of samples' Thai studying were during 10 - 30 minutes a day (56.07%), 40 minutes - an hour (28.32%), 2 - 3 hours (8.67%) and more than 4 hours (6.94%) respectively. The samples' Thai proficiency was fair level (37.00%), poor level (36.40%), very poor level (19.70%), the best level (4.60%) and very good level (2.30%) respectively.

## 2. Findings of attitudes towards Thai language and needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia.

Table 1 Attitudes towards Thai language of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia

Educational variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Agreement
1) Thai language is a language with a rich vocabulary.	3.43	1.01	Moderate
2) Thai language is a very difficult to learn.	3.10	1.13	Moderate
3) Thai language is a language where pronunciation is most important.	3.53	1.00	Much
4) Thai language is a language with a lot of grammar.	3.16	1.07	Moderate
5) Thai language is a beautiful language.	3.28	1.01	Moderate
6) Thai language is a wonderful to learn.	3.20	1.02	Moderate
7) Thai language is a boring language to learn.	2.64	1.13	Moderate
Total	3.19	0.77	Moderate

According to Table 1, it presented the results of attitudes toward Thai language as a language of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia. There were 7 educational variables collected data from the samples. All of these were 1) Thai language is a language with a rich vocabulary 2) Thai language is a very difficult to learn, 3) Thai language is a language that pronunciation is very important, 4) Thai language is a language with a lot of grammar, 5) Thai language is a beautiful language, 6) Thai language is a wonderful to learn and 7) Thai language is a boring language to learn. The findings were found that the overall of attitudes toward Thai language as a language of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia was at a moderate level of agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ). Three levels were highest consisted of Thai pronunciation is very difficult to learn ( $\bar{X} = 3.53$ ). It was followed by Thai language is a language with rich vocabularies ( $\bar{X} = 3.43$ ) and Thai language is beautiful and sweet ( $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ) respectively.

**Table 2** Needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia

Educational variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Agreement
1) Needs to read Thai books and magazines with easiness.	4.04	0.87	Much
2) Needs to make friendship with Thai people living in Thailand through e-mail or Facebook.	4.08	0.80	Much
3) Needs to understand Thai movies and Thai TV programs.	4.01	0.79	Much
4) Needs to get a good job with high salaries in Thailand.	4.24	0.88	Much
5) Needs to be a guide for Thai tourists	3.94	0.91	Much
6) Needs to learn about Thai lifestyles, custom, culture and tradition.	3.84	0.88	Much
7) Needs to know how Thai language reflects the Thais' thinking way.	3.90	0.88	Much
8) Needs to know the relationship between Thai and Cambodian languages.	3.39	1.11	Moderate
9) Needs to know the updated events in Thailand such as Thai education, Thai politics or Thai innovation etc.	3.46	1.03	Moderate



**Table 2** Needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia (Cont.)

Educational variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Agreement
10) Needs to run business with Thai future after graduation.	3.78	0.86	Much
Total	3.87	0.57	Much

According to Table 2, it presented the results of needs analysis of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation in Cambodia. There were 10 educational variables for the samples' questions. They were 1) Needs to read Thai books and magazines with easiness, 2) Needs to make friendship with Thai people living in Thailand through e-mail or Facebook, 3) Needs to understand Thai movies and Thai TV programs, 4) Needs to get a good job with high salaries in Thailand, 5) Needs to be a guide for Thai tourist, 6) Needs to learn about Thai lifestyles, custom, culture and tradition, 7) Needs to know how Thai language reflects the Thais' thinking way, 8) Needs to know the relationship between Thai and Cambodian languages, 9) Needs to know the updated events in Thailand such as Thai education, Thai politics or Thai innovation etc. and 10) Needs to run business with Thai future after graduation.

The findings showed the overall of samples' needs analysis was at much level of agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.87$ ). Three levels were highest consisted needs to get a good job with high salaries in Thailand ( $\bar{X} = 4.24$ ). It was followed by needs to make friendship with Thai people living in Thailand through e-mail or Facebook ( $\bar{X} = 4.08$ ) and needs to read Thai books and magazines with easiness ( $\bar{X} = 4.04$ ) respectively.

### 3. Recommendations

According to the samples' recommendations in the third part of questionnaire, most of them need both Thai and Cambodian students have some chances to participate with the big class of Thai and Cambodian language learning together. This way can make them share how to learn Thai and Cambodian language with success. Moreover, many activities relating with language practicing should be provided for Thai and Cambodian class. Also they need people in both countries Thailand and Cambodia learn Thai and Cambodian. With this skillful language usage, this will make the most relationship between two countries, Thailand and Cambodia.

## Conclusion

To sum up the results of 173 samples' personal information, it was found that there were 88 males (50.90%) and 85 females (49.10%). Their ages are in 21 - 25 years old, have tertiary education level (60.7%). Most samples have lived in Battambang province (79.76%), used to have experiences for Thai studying (57.20%) about 2 months - 6 months (34.10%). They need the special Thai class (96.50%) to improve their Thai studying. Thai teachers (47.40%) are the way these samples choose to study. They spent 10 - 30 minutes a day for studying Thai (56.07%) and moreover the result was found that their Thai proficiency was fair level (37.00%).

For the objectives we set at the first for this research, there were to study the attitudes towards learning Thai language as a language and to analyze the needs of Cambodian students learning Thai for ASEAN preparation. The results revealed that the overall result of attitudes towards Thai as a language was at a moderate level of agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ) and the overall of samples' needs analysis was at much level of agreement ( $\bar{X} = 3.89$ ).

These results were related to Siwapatomchai's finding (Sunida, 2011). According to her study on the research, "Cross-border education between Thailand and Cambodia: Burden or opportunity", it was revealed that Cambodian students' motivation was to need studying Thai language. Now the cross - border education is a chance for them coming to Thai for studying Thai. However, there is not only the cross-border education provided for them, but also ASEAN community coming at the end year of 2015 is one of many ways they can come to Thailand. It is their chances to choose studying, working or running the business with Thai people etc.

Moreover, this result was related to the articles of Anucha Charoenpo (Anucha, 2012) and Pisutpong Endoo (Pisutpong, 2014). They pointed that Cambodian students are very interested in Thai courses. In the future the numbers of these Cambodian students learning Thai will continuously increase especially after ASEAN 2015. After this year, they can come to Thailand and easily learn Thai because it is time for ASEAN community. With the findings from the research, Thai universities have to prepare the various and interesting Thai courses for the Cambodian students.

However, to be a guideline for promotion of mutual understanding between the people of Thailand and Cambodia, I would like to propose that two countries must support the future development. Moreover, they must do collaboration in various aspects such as in the term of education and language, culture, history, humanity,

the border-trade relationship and people to people diplomacy etc. If the both countries can develop and collaborate, Thai and Cambodian people can gain the benefits and most peacefully live.

### 1. Further research studies

This research received many interesting points such as Cambodian students need to learn Thai language because they want to get a good job with high salaries in Thailand. This point showed us to know that in the future many Cambodians will come to work in Thailand. Also they need to make friendship with Thai people living in Thailand through e-mail or Facebook etc. However, the results revealed from this research were only the fundamental and first source information and were not much complete. If the researchers need to take for further research studies, it can do research in many terms. They can search how Thailand and Cambodia can do the future development and collaboration in various aspects such as education and language, culture, history, humanity, the border-trade relationship and people to people diplomacy etc.

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