



A Study on Royal Affixes in The Thai Language

การศึกษาหน่วยคำพسانราชศัพท์ในภาษาไทย

Tassnee Khamsaengtong^{1*}

ทัศนี คำแสงทอง^{1*}

(Received: October 27, 2023; Revised: December 8, 2023; Accepted: December 18, 2023)

Abstract

With the progress of civilization, various factors, including regional interactions, trade, religious beliefs, and cultural influence, have contributed to the assimilation of a considerable number of loanwords into the Thai language. The utilization of affixes for word formation has emerged as a key mechanism in Thai Lexical Formation, giving rise to a standardized structure known as "royal language". Linguistic phenomena arising from development processes evolve into lexical entities within the Thai language system. In this study, the author, therefore, focuses on explaining and analyzing characteristics that encompass both grammatical and semantic properties. This study reveals the complex nature of complex word formation, with the author delving into the standards, characteristics, scope, classification, and functions of royal vocabulary in detail.

Keywords: Thai royal terms, Source, Structural rules, Royal nouns, Functions of Affixes

บทคัดย่อ

ด้วยความก้าวหน้าทางอารยธรรม รวมไปถึงปัจจัยด้านการปฏิสัมพันธ์ในระดับภูมิภาค การค้าขาย ความเชื่อทางศาสนา และอิทธิพลทางวัฒนธรรม มีส่วนทำให้มีเกิดการหลอมรวมคำศัพท์จากภาษาต่างประเทศ เข้ามาในภาษาไทยเป็นจำนวนมาก การใช้คำพسانกล้ายเป็นกลไกสำคัญในการสร้างคำศัพท์ในภาษาไทย ก่อให้เกิดโครงสร้างมาตรฐานที่เรียกว่า "คำราชศัพท์" ปรากฏการณ์ทางภาษาที่ผ่านกระบวนการพัฒนา หลอมรวมกล้ายเป็นคำศัพท์ที่ใช้ในระบบภาษาไทย การศึกษาครั้งนี้ผู้เขียนได้วิเคราะห์ที่มา และการสร้าง คำราชศัพท์ในภาษาไทย ผู้เขียนจึงเน้นไปที่การอธิบายและวิเคราะห์ลักษณะที่เป็นคุณสมบัติเชิงไวยากรณ์

¹Faculty of Liberal Arts, Hunan Normal University

คณบดีคุณศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยครุฑานาน

*Corresponding author. E-mail: Faeng19@gmail.com



และคุณสมบัติทางด้านความหมายของคำพسان การศึกษานี้เผยแพร่ให้เห็นธรรมชาติที่ซับซ้อนของการสร้างคำพسان นอกจากนี้ผู้เขียนยังอภิปรายรายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับมาตรฐาน ลักษณะ ขอบเขต การจำแนก และหน้าที่ของคำราชศัพท์อีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ: คำราชศัพท์ แหล่งที่มา กฎหมายสร้าง คำนามราชศัพท์ หน้าที่ของคำพسان

Introduction

Research on the affix phenomenon in the academic world has delved deep into all aspects, yet there are still limited research results on the characteristics of royal terms. Since royal affixes have not been thoroughly subdivided in previous studies, the Thai royal language emerges as a unique phenomenon. This distinctiveness is exceptionally rare, even when viewed from the perspective of world linguistics. Tiewcharoenkij et al. (2022) suggested that Studying the Thai language enables us to comprehend the origins of our people and to explore the culture that has evolved and transformed over time. Pei (2001) suggested that Thai belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, specifically the Kam-Sui subgroup, and is the language used by the Thai ethnic group, serving as the official language of Thailand. Regarding the phenomenon of the Royal Language, it is a unique feature of Thai language that is rarely seen even from a broader perspective in the field of linguistics. The structure of the Royal Language shows traces of foreign word influences, as a significant number of loanwords have been incorporated into the Thai lexical system. Regarding the structure of the Royal Language used in Thai.

Furthermore, another characteristic of the Thai language is its emphasis on respect for elders in Thai culture. Language stratification is also employed, where Thai linguists classify Thai into different layers of language usage. The lecture series on regional typology in Southeast Asia Wu (2021) suggested that Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese in mainland Southeast Asia still exhibit the use of "avoidance of pronouns" as a polite form of expression. Prasithrathsing (2002) pointed out that language in Thai society can be divided according to hierarchical distinctions, specifically in terms of social hierarchies and levels of authority. She argues that Thailand is a hierarchical society that uses language in a sequential order based on importance or social roles. She also references Joos (1962) concept of "The Five Clocks"



which categorizes language styles into five variants: formal style, consultative style, casual style, intimate style, and frozen style. Thai Royal Language falls under the frozen style, which is the most formal and highest degree of formality among various Thai language styles. In general, this formality is reflected in the specialized content of the language. Formal language is used in contexts including royal and religious ceremonies and in legal proceedings where the use of formal language is deemed necessary. In Thai culture, appropriate language usage varies depending on the occasion and social status, necessitating the use of different words.

It is seen that observe a unique phenomenon where the Thai lexical system places importance on social hierarchy, most notably evident in royal language. This highlights the significance of royal status and members within Thai society, resulting in the high importance of the royal language. Royal Language represents a distinctive feature in the formation of the Thai lexical system, characterized by a fixed structural form that conveys specific meanings. Due to the use of hierarchical structures, semantic relationships associated with hierarchical actions are considered the most fundamental semantic structures in human cognition.

From the perspective of the structure of the Thai royal language, it exhibits a non-independent nature in terms of its construction. Based on the structure and components, a selection and classification can be made to analyze the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of Thai vocabulary within the complete structure of the Thai royal language. Diachronic investigations indicate that the combination of "royal language" emerged during the Sukhothai Kingdom, and its usage continued to evolve. In contemporary Thai, the "royal language" has developed into a more diverse and mature pragmatic marker.

The Source of Royal Expressions

There is a profound historical relationship between the Khmer and Thailand. As early as several centuries ago, during the Sukhothai Kingdom, the Khmer influenced Thailand. At that time, the Thai people and the Khmer coexisted, leading to cultural exchange and mutual contact, resulting in the incorporation of loanwords into the native Thai language system. Later, Thailand gradually grew stronger, and the Thai Kingdom declared



independence from the Khmer, establishing the Sukhothai Kingdom in 1238, which was the first independent kingdom in Thai history. During the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng in 1283, the earliest stone inscription in Thai history was created, depicting the paternal rule where the relationship between the king and the people was akin to that of a father managing his children. The inscription included Sanskrit, Pali, and Khmer, but did not mention any royal words. Later, during the reign of King Trailokanat of the Ayutthaya Kingdom (1347-1368), the concept of a Dharmaraja (Righteous King) was introduced, replacing the previous paternal system. Drawing on Theravada Buddhist concepts, the Dharmaraja concept dictated that the king should rule the people based on the principles of law and the teachings of the Buddha. Subsequently, the Ayutthaya Kingdom, also known as the Kingdom of Ayutthaya, was greatly influenced by Khmer customs and culture during the Ayutthaya period, transforming into an absolutist monarchy, and Thai gradually established its position in Thailand. After the Ayutthaya Kingdom, Thailand experienced the Thonburi Kingdom (1767-1782) and the present-day Rattanakosin Kingdom (also known as the Bangkok Kingdom, since 1782). Most Thai linguists conduct diachronic research on the Thai language based on these historical periods. Following previous research approaches, I also conduct diachronic research on the Thai royal language according to the different periods of dynasties. Drawing upon the available information, the derivation of the Royal Language is expounded in four scholarly works authored by experts in Thai linguistics: Srihaamphai (2007), Ngamwises (2012), the Office of National Identity Development (2012), and Sikkharit (2009).

The origin of the Thai Royal Language remains inconclusive. Generally, there are three different hypotheses. Some believe that royal language was first used during the reign of King Ramathibodi I (พระมหาธรรมราชาที่ ๑ [พญาลิไทย]), the 5th monarch of the Sukhothai Kingdom (1347-1368). According to Sikkharit (2009), the discovery of royal language was found in the Nakhon Chum Inscription (เจริญนครชุม) in 1357. Additionally, King Ramathibodi I authored the "Tepphumikatha or Triphum Phra Ruang," which also contains ancient Khmer



text Srihaamphai (2007). Ngamwises (2012) suggests that some works argue that many royal language terms were already present in the "Tepphumikatha or Triphum Phra Ruang. Such as: ราชอาสน์ /râ: t t̄chā ɻa:t/ (seat), ราชกุมาร /râ: t t̄chā ku ma:n/ (prince), เสวียราชย์ /sa w̄r :j râ:t/ (enthronement) etc.

Khanittanan (2001) believed that royal language was created in the Ayuthaya period to be used with kings. During this period, Khmer influence was strong, and the Ayutthaya Kingdom absorbed a substantial amount of cultural, administrative, and linguistic influences from Khmer, including the introduction of Khmer royal word formation patterns. For instance, in the Khmer language, the prefix "សម្រេច" /sōm det/ was added before the king's name. It was during the reign of the founding monarch of the Great City, King Ramathibodi I (สมเด็จพระรามาธิบดีที่ 1 [พระเจ้าอู่ทอง]), who ruled from 1350 to 1369, that the prefix "สมเด็จ" /sōm det/ began to be used. However, Somdet Phrachao Borommawongthoe Kromphraya Damrongrachanuphap (สมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ) is a renowned Thai historian. He believed that the first compilation of Thai royal vocabulary occurred during the reign of King Borommatrailokanat (สมเด็จพระบรมไตรโลกนาถ) from 1448 to 1488.

Regarding the origins of the usage of the Royal Language and the ongoing debates, the author believes that the usage of Royal words began during the Sukhothai era. To express the Thai people's reverence for the king, Royal words started to be used. The creation of Royal words could not rely on indigenous words because the everyday language of commoners was not suitable for addressing the revered position of the king. Therefore, the Thai language adopted the method of borrowing foreign words to design Royal words. Many of the words in the royal language are borrowed from other languages. The reason for using Khmer is that early on, Khmer Royal words were borrowed and used as Thai Royal words. Due to the long coexistence of the Khmer and Thai people, a linguistic exchange transpired, encompassing the assimilation of lexical items and grammatical elements between the two languages. Within contemporary Thai, a notable residue of Khmer influence persists, manifesting not solely in the Royal Language but also in the vernacular of everyday discourse. This enduring influence imparts a layer of intricacy to the interlinguistic dynamics between the two languages. In addition to borrowing from Khmer, the Thai royal



language also incorporates Sanskrit and Pali. The main reason for using these languages is that they are considered sacred language within the Thai language, reflecting the ancient Thai concept of Sanskrit and Pali.

The Definition and Scope of Royal Terms

Drawing upon the available information, the elucidation of the definition of the Royal Language within the realm of Thai linguistics reveals a measure of variation among scholars. Nonetheless, discernible within this scholarly discourse are two distinctive scopes of application for the royal language.

Firstly, it refers to the language used by the king and the members of the royal family, as well as the words related to the king. Pisit (1959) defined royal language as the words used by the king or spoken by ordinary people when addressing the king or referring to things related to the king.

Secondly, it is regarded as the polite language used when addressing the king or members of the royal family. Panmieta (2001) defined royal language as "ศัพท์สำหรับราชा" (words for the king), which does not necessarily imply that they are used by the king or members of the royal family. Instead, they are words used by ordinary people when reporting to the king or the high nobility.

The usage scope of "royal language" also includes different social classes. The book "Royal Vocabulary" Office of the National Identity Development (2012) by the Office of the Royal Society also references Phaya Srisunthornwohan's definition, which states that Royal Language is the language used by government officials when submitting reports to the king. Government officials must remember and be careful with the accuracy of their choice of words to avoid errors. It is also mentioned that royal language is not limited to the use by the king but also includes vocabulary used in writing books and poetry.

Considering the various viewpoints from the Thai linguistic community regarding the definition of the Royal Language. Smalley (1994) suggested that "royal words, high language" in Standard Thai. It consists of a special set of vocabulary plus prefixes which elevate ordinary words when special ones are not available. Royal words reflect the social hierarchy



in Thai society. In Thai culture, a relatively clear class system has been established. The author believes that the initial purpose of creating Royal words was to address the king and members of the royal family as a means of expressing reverence for the Thai monarchy. Later, the definition of Royal words expanded to include their usage for monks, government officials, and commoners. Royal words have become a distinct category of vocabulary in the Thai language, but their usage is more complex than ordinary words due to the specific scope, targets, and contexts involved. Modern Thai linguists consider Royal words as part of honorific language, which can be further classified into royal language and polite language. This study focuses only on the usage of the Royal Language in two social classes, namely the king and members of the royal family. The study leaves room for further research on the social hierarchy and usage of the Royal Language.

Khmer Loanwords in Thai Royal Language

In the Royal Language of Thai, there is a significant presence of loanwords from the Khmer language. As early as several centuries ago, during the Sukhothai Kingdom, Khmer influenced Thai. Sikkharit (2016) suggested that Khmer vocabulary entered the Thai Royal Language not only through direct borrowing but also by imitating the structural patterns of Khmer. Due to the historical interactions between the two countries, there has been a mutual borrowing of vocabulary. Khmer later borrowed new Thai word forms as well. Khanittanan (2001) also highlights the long coexistence of the Thai and Khmer people, leading to cultural exchange and mutual contact, which inevitably resulted in language interactions, including code-switching, hybrid vocabulary, and structural patterns between Thai and Khmer languages. Prasithrathsint (2002) argues that the most notable languages in mainland Southeast Asia are Thai and Khmer. The languages have influenced each other's lexical systems, not only through loanwords but also in terms of grammatical similarities, such as the use of Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order and affixation.

Due to factors such as geographical, political, religious, and cultural influences, there were similarities in the use of Thai and Khmer languages. Khmer served as a cross-border language for Thai, leading to the evolution of the indigenous Thai language. That can be



considered as a special hybrid of Mon-Khmer and indigenous languages. Although they still retain their languages and customs, due to the need for communication with the outside world, these Mon Khmer-speaking ethnic groups have become proficient in Thai and have adopted some aspects of the Thai lifestyle. Some groups have even completely assimilated into Thai society. With increased cultural contact and extensive communication, the languages of both Thai and Khmer influence and mix. As a result, there is often no clear boundary between the Thai and Khmer languages during that period.

We can observe that when Khmer words were incorporated into the Thai language system, they changed to fit the usage of Thai. One of the main methods used was the addition of phonemes, including consonants and vowels, especially complex consonant clusters. This method was employed not only in everyday language but also in the Thai royal language. When Khmer words were assimilated into the Thai system, they followed the convention of using the pre-reformed spelling rule, such as, where the pre-reformed letters are combined with the short vowel "-ং"/a/ and pronounced shortly and lightly. For example, "ພ ຮ ং" is pronounced as /pʰráʔ/. We can observe that the Thai consonant letter "ຮ" corresponding to the consonant/r/ is still reflected in the Thai writing system. This consonant letter "ຮ" has a pronounced sound in Thai words. The consonant /r/ in the source word is reduced, but the Thai consonant letter "ຮ" corresponding to the consonant /r/ is still present in Thai script.

Based on the above, we believe that the assertion that the Thai language adopted loanwords from Khmer through a process of borrowing both form and sound is valid. The main way in which Thai borrowed from Khmer is by imitating the structural forms of Khmer. Affixation played a significant role in this process. Early Thai language was predominantly devoid of or had minimal affixation, while Khmer was a language that employed prefixes and infixes. Thai linguists of that time emulated the structural patterns of Khmer by adding affixes to Thai words. Later, they also incorporated elements of Sanskrit and Pali languages using suffixation. Although affixation became a method for creating new words in Thai, the new words did not significantly differ in meaning from their original forms, and in some



cases, there was hardly any change at all. In the Thai language, affixes can be categorized into three types: prefixes, infixes, and suffixes.

Regarding the adoption of affixation in the Thai language, Wongcha-oum (1986) suggested that according to E. Gehr (2494), many affixes in Thai may have evolved from compound words into prefixes, particularly in the case of animal and plant names. Additionally, in the Thai language, a root word can become both a prefix and an infix. From the rules of affixation in the Thai language, it is evident that Thai not only borrowed vocabulary from Khmer but also imitated Khmer's affixation rules. In the region of the Menam River (The Menam Chao Phraya River) in Thailand, Khmer's rules of adding prefixes and infixes spread into the Thai vocabulary system. For example, ดູກ /dù:k/ (bone) becomes กระดູກ /kra? dù:k/ (bones). It can be observed that the newly formed meanings have hardly any changes compared to the original words and do not indicate grammatical features such as number, tense, position, gender, body, or form.

STRUCTURE RULES OF ROYAL TERMINOLOGY

In terms of the construction of royal vocabulary, it can be classified into three ways: direct borrowing of foreign words, the addition of affixes, and the participation of certain words in the royal vocabulary.

1. Direct borrowing of foreign words. The method of borrowing foreign words is mainly to borrow Khmer, Sanskrit and Pali as Thai royal words, such as, "ເສວຍ"/sa wr:;/ (eat), "ບຣຣມ"/ban tʰom/ (sleep), "ຄວາຍ "/tʰa wă:j/ (dedication) are from Khmer. "ສວຣຄຕ" /sa wān kʰöt/ (death), "ພິໂຣຮ" /pʰi rō:t/ (angry), "ນິພນຮ" /ni pʰon/ (creation) comes from Sanskrit and Pali.

2. The addition of affixes, divided into two categories is the "prefix + root" structure and "the root + suffix" structure, such as:

"prefix + root" structure

"ພຣະເນຕຣ" /pʰrá? ne:t/ (eyes): ພຣະ/pʰrá?/ (prefix) (from Khmer) + ເນຕຣ/ne:t/ (eye) (From Sanskrit and Pali)

"root + suffix" structure



“เรือหลวง” /rɯ̄a luang/ (King's Ship): เรือ/rɯ̄a/ (boat) (from the Thai) + หลวง/ luang/ (suffix) (from Thai)

3. The participation of certain words in the royal vocabulary, the Thai compound form is formed by its word plus royal word, such as:

"General noun + royal noun" structure

“หนังพระเนตร” /naŋ pʰráʔ ne:t/ (eyelid): หนัง/naŋ/ (skin) (noun) + พระเนตร/pʰráʔ ne:t/ (noun used by the royal family)

SikkhaRit (2009) proposed that the structure of the Thai royal language primarily consists of three elements: the core element, the affixing element, and the modifying element.

Example 1: “พระ เช่น ย ข าง ”/pʰráʔ kʰa nɯ̄:j kʰa :ŋ/ (bolster), a structure of the affixing element + the core element + modifying element. The affixing element "พระ" (derived from Khmer) is attached as a prefix to the noun, indicating royal vocabulary. the core element "เช่นย" (pillow) represents the main concept. The modifying element "ขาง" (side) denotes the nature of the object. "พระเช่นยขาง" (bolster) is a noun-based royal vocabulary.

Example 2: “พระศีර”/pʰráʔ sian/ (head), a structure of the affixing element + the core element. The affixing element "พระ" (derived from Khmer) is attached as a prefix, signifying royal vocabulary. the core element "ศีร" (derived from Pali) represents the meaning of "head." "พระศีร" (head) is a noun-based royal vocabulary.

Example 3: “รถหลวง”/rót luang/ (vehicle), a structure of the core element + the affixing element. the core element "รถ" (derived from Thai) represents the meaning of "vehicle" and serves as the main concept. the affixing element "หลวง" (derived from Thai) is attached as a suffix, denoting royal vocabulary. "รถ หลวง" (the king's carriage) is a noun-based royal vocabulary.

Example 4: “เสวย”/sa wɯ̄:j/ (eat), a structure consisting of only the core element. The core element "เสวย" (derived from Khmer) represents royal vocabulary and signifies "eat". "เสวย" (eat) is a verb-based royal vocabulary.

Based on the above examples, it can be observed that Thai royal vocabulary primarily consists of three major components: the core element, the affixing element, and



the modifying element. The simplest structure includes only the core element, while the most basic structure involves the combination of the affixing element and the core element.

In conclusion, as early as several centuries ago during the Sukhothai Kingdom, the Thai language absorbed a significant number of loanwords. That is a mixed language primarily influenced by Khmer, Pali, Sanskrit, and other languages. Ancient Thai incorporated numerous vocabularies from Khmer, resulting in new word formation patterns and elements. Due to the long duration of borrowing, many of these words have become part of the Thai language's basic vocabulary, making it challenging to determine whether they are indigenous Thai words or loanwords. Regarding the borrowing from Sanskrit and Pali, influenced by religious propagation. Thai has assimilated many loanwords from these languages. In the process of usage, loanwords may undergo varying degrees of modification. However, some words still exhibit clear connections in terms of pronunciation, meaning, morphology, and word formation with their source words. Therefore, we can provide evidence for loanwords in Thai from both phonetic and morphological aspects borrowed vocabulary and borrowed structures. From the perspective of this article, it is evident that Thai contains numerous loanwords and ancient Thai language experts intentionally preserved traces of root word orthography.

Composition of Royal Terminology

It is well known that the Thai language has limited inflectional morphology, and it is necessary to analyze and understand the Thai language without relying solely on the Indo-European language framework. The concept of "morpheme" itself is an imported concept that has not been well assimilated into the unique characteristics of the Thai language upon its introduction. Most existing studies on morphemes in Thai have adopted a bottom-up approach, analyzing morphemes based on Western morphological theories. While in everyday Thai language, monosyllabic morphemes are the basic form. In modern Thai, monosyllabic morphemes account for the vast majority. However, monosyllabic morphemes are rare in royal terminology. For example, "ก^{ริ}ว" /kriv/(angry) and "ต^{รั}ส" /trat/(speak). Royal terminologies generally consist of two syllables or more.



I agree with the concept that "morphemes" are the smallest grammatical units and the smallest meaningful units. There have been debates regarding the concept of morphemes in Thai. To clarify the units of grammar and their respective roles, in terms of the definition and classification of "morphemes," the former attempts to categorize morphemes, which is innovative, but the classification criteria may be relatively simplistic and vague, making practical implementation challenging. The latter approach analyzes the structure of Thai morphemes from a traditional classification perspective, which makes it difficult to highlight the category of morphemes.

Kupfer (2017) proposed that morphemes can be divided into two major categories based on their semantic functions: content morphemes and function morphemes. Based on their formal types, morphemes can be classified into four categories: basic morphemes, auxiliary morphemes, configurational morphemes, and derivational morphemes.

The author, following Kupfer's concept, classifies morphemes into four types based on their forms. basic morpheme(B); particle morpheme(P); inflectional morpheme(F); derivational morpheme(D).

Structure of Royal Nouns

Royal nouns have certain prefixes and suffixes that play a role in their grammatical structure, based on their position in the structure or within the word. In this article, they are categorized into prefixes and suffixes. They can be classified as follows:

Prefix and Root Combination

1. The combination of affixes and noun roots, and prefixes, added in front of kings, members of kings, and revered objects, to express respect. For example, พระ/pʰráʔ/ + root, พระราชน/pʰráʔ râ:tn/ + root, พระบรม/pʰráʔ bɔ:rom/ + root, ราช/râ:t/ + root.

2. Affixes are combined with noun roots, and prefixes are added in front of royal expressions to indicate places. For example, พระที่นั่ง /pʰráʔ tʰi: nâŋ/ + root

3. Affixes are combined with noun roots, and prefixes are added in front of kings, gods and Buddhas, revered objects, to express respect. For example, พระเจ้า/pʰráʔ tɕáw/ + root, เสด็จ/sa det/ + root, สมเด็จ/sɔdm det/ + root, พระราชน/pʰráʔ râ:tn/ + root, พระ/pʰráʔ/ + root



4. Affixes are combined with noun roots, and prefixes are added in front of members of the king to express respect. For example, สมเด็จพระเจ้า/sõm det p̄hrá? t̄cāw /+ root, สมเด็จ พระ /sõm det p̄hrá? /+ root, พระเจ้า/p̄hrá? t̄cāw /+ root

Root and suffix combination

The combination of noun root and suffix, added to the king, member of the king revered thing, expresses, respect. For example, root+หลวง/luāŋ/, root+ต้น/tōn/, root+พระที่ นั่ง/p̄hrá? t̄hí: nāŋ/, root+ทรง/sõŋ/, root+ที่นั่ง /t̄hí: nāŋ/, root+พระประเทียบ/p̄hrá? pra t̄hí:ap/.

When examining the structure of royal nouns, we can analyze the prefixes and suffixes, and observe the following characteristics:

1. In terms of syllabic structure, royal noun affixes can be classified into monosyllabic, disyllabic, and trisyllabic or polysyllabic affixes. Monosyllabic affixes can function as both prefixes and suffixes. Examples of monosyllabic prefixes are "พระ" and "ราช", while examples of monosyllabic suffixes are "ต้น", "หลวง", and "ทรง". Disyllabic affixes can also function as both prefixes and suffixes. Examples of disyllabic prefixes are "พระราช", "พระเจ้า", and "สมเด็จ", while an example of a disyllabic suffix is "ที่นั่ง". Trisyllabic or polysyllabic affixes only occur as prefixes before the root, such as "พระบรม", "พระบรมราช", "สมเด็จพระเจ้า", "สมเด็จพระ", and "พระที่นั่ง". However, they can also occur as suffixes, for example, "พระที่นั่ง" and "พระประเทียบ".

2. The prefix "พระ" is the most frequently used in royal terminology, especially in strong forms such as "พระราช" and "พระบรมราช". Many affixes are attached to general Sanskrit and Pali vocabulary to form Thai royal vocabulary, such as "พระเนตร"(eye). It can also combine with Thai and Khmer to form words, although this occurs less frequently, such as "พระฉาย" /p̄hrá? t̄cāhā:j/ (picture), "พระแสง"/p̄hrá? sa:.ŋ/ (weapon), "พระขนง" /p̄hrá? k̄hā noŋ/ (eyebrows), "พระอุ้ม" /p̄hrá? ?u:/(cradle), and so on.

3. Regarding the combination of prefixes and roots to form royal nouns, it is not simply an additive relationship between the affixes and the root. Multiple affixes can combine to form new prefixes, which are then combined with roots to form royal nouns. Using the example of the royal noun "พระมหาราชวัง"/p̄hrá? ma ha: rā:t t̄cāhā waŋ/ (Royal Palace) and analyzing its internal components. For example: the royal noun "พระมหาราชวัง" (Royal



Palace) D+D+D+B , let's examine the application of the structural rules for royal nouns. Examining the example "พระมหาราชวัง" we can observe that it has a single meaning, representing the lexical meaning attached to the fixed combination of "พระ" + "มหา" + "ราช" + "วัง." Traditionally, the constituent morphemes "พระ," "มหา," and "ราช" are borrowed elements that form the royal prefix, while only "วัง" serves as the Thai root. In essence, the newly formed word represents the meaning of "วัง" (palace), and together with the prefix "พระ" it creates a word denoting a place related to the king. This connection between the original meaning of the constituent morphemes and the current meaning of these words is not significantly different but rather emphasizes their association with the king.

4. In the combination of prefixes and roots to form royal nouns, Thai distinguishes the hierarchical status, such as using "พระบรม" and "พระบรมราช" as prefixes before nouns, which can only be used by the king and are exclusive to their rank. "พระราช" is used as a prefix before nouns, limited to the language used by the king and members of the royal family, and not accessible to others. The prefix "พระ" before common nouns indicates royal terminology. As the king holds the highest position in Thai society, the language used by the king is considered more noble compared to the language used by other ranks. These words represent royal language and, therefore, their structure is distinctive, expressing the greatness associated with the king.

Table 1 Thai royal word for "command"

royal word	meaning	object
พระบรมราชโองการ /pʰráʔ bɔːm râːt tɕʰaʔ ʔɔːŋ kāːn/	command King (already undergone)	King (already undergone)
พระราชโองการ /pʰráʔ râːt tɕʰaʔ ʔɔːŋ kāːn/	command King (yet to undergo)	King (yet to undergo)
พระราชเสวานีย় /pʰráʔ râːt tɕʰa saw wa niː/	command	Queen
พระราชบัพมหุร /pʰráʔ râːt tɕʰa ban tʰuːn/	command	Prince

**Table 1** Thai royal word for "command" (Continued)

royal word	meaning	object
พระราชนบัญชา	command	Princess
/pʰráʔ rā:t tɕʰa ban tɕʰa:/		
พระดำรัสสั่ง	command	from Somdet Chaofa
/pʰráʔ dam rat sàŋ/		to Phra Ong Chao
รับสั่ง	command	from Phra Ong Chao
/ráp sàŋ/		to Mom Chao

When it comes to expressing the word "command" in royal terminology, different structural forms are required, as the complexity of the word formation depends on the identity and hierarchical status of the subject.

5. From the combination of root and suffix to form royal nouns, Thai distinguishes the hierarchical status. For example, the suffixes "หลวง", "ต้น", and "พระที่นั่ง" can only be used by the king. The suffixes "ทรง", "ที่นั่ง", and "พระประเที่ยบ" can be used by the king and members of the royal family.

6. From the perspective of combining noun roots and suffixes, the noun roots used are general Thai nouns. Regarding the components of the suffixes, "หลวง", "ต้น", and "พระที่นั่ง" exclusively denote things related to the king and can only be used by the king. Among them, "หลวง" and "ต้น" are derived from the Thai language. The suffix "หลวง" is placed after general nouns to indicate "belonging to the king," such as people, animals, and objects, for example, "หลานหลวง" (king's grandchild), "ม้าหลวง" (king's horse), "เรือหลวง" (king's boat). The suffix "ต้น" is placed after general nouns to indicate "belonging to the king," specifically related to animals, places, and objects other than humans, for example, "ช้างต้น" (king's elephant), "เครื่องต้น" (king's object). The suffix "พระที่นั่ง" is placed after general nouns to indicate "belonging to the king" specifically related to royal transportation, for example, "รถพระที่นั่ง" (royal carriage), "เรือพระที่นั่ง" (royal boat). Additionally, the suffixes "ทรง", "ที่นั่ง", and "พระประเที่ยบ" are used by members of the royal family and indicate belonging to the royal



family, including people, animals, and objects. It's worth noting that the suffix "พระประเที่ยบ" is specifically used with vehicles, such as cars and boats.

Functions of Affixes to Royal Nouns

Grammatical aspect

1. Marking grammatical category: The function of prefixes in terms of grammar is primarily manifested in marking grammatical category, which is a form of categorization. For instance, the prefix "พระ" when attached to a root is almost always a marker for nouns.

2. Changing word class: The ability to change word class varies among royal affixes. For instance, in the case of the royal verb "ทรงงาน" the prefix "ทรง" transforms the original noun root "งาน" into a verb. However, in the case of the royal noun "พระศีรษะ" (head), the addition of the prefix "พระ" does not alter the word class. This suggests that not all affixes have the capability to modify word class.

3. Non-independence as a word: Royal prefixes can not function independently; they can only be attached to root words to form compounds. For example, "พระบรมราช" attaches to the root word and exhibits a clear affixation property, lacking the ability to function as a standalone word.

4. Positional nature: Royal affixes have a fixed position in word combinations. For instance, "หลวง" functions as a suffix and tends to appear at the end of a combination, thus referred to as a suffix.

5. Collocating with nouns: The prefixes "พระบรมราช," "พระบรม," "พระราชนครินทร์," and "พระ" primarily collocate with loanwords, particularly from Sanskrit, Pali, and ancient Khmer. They are rarely used in conjunction with native Thai words. These prefixes can be combined with nouns, noun phrases, and other nominal elements. They signify a hierarchical and social level of language. In addition to preceding nouns, they also serve as markers that transform common words into royal terms. We observe a tendency of semantic bleaching and pragmatic functions in terms like "พระบรมราช." For instance, when "พระบรมราช" is added to the beginning of a word, it acquires a royal register, implying a language marker associated with the king's status. Only individuals of the king's rank can use "พระบรมราช"



Semantic aspects

1. Evolution of the prefix "พระ": The original meaning of "พระ" was associated with Buddha or Buddhist monks. As a royal affix, its meaning has broadened to encompass individuals and things related to the king and the royal family. When used as a prefix, "พระ" no longer carries its original meaning and functions purely as an affix.
2. Signifying respect and greatness: Certain affixes attached to the root express respect, reverence, and the greatness of the king. For example, "พระบรมราช" signifies an exceptional aspect related to the king. Regardless of the specific root it combines with, this affix indicates a connection to the king, as its usage is reserved for the king's domain.

Pragmatic aspect

It is argued that almost all the affix morphemes in the royal context are borrowed from foreign languages. Except for the suffixes "ต้น" and "หลวง," the listed affixes are derived from non-native sources. While "ต้น" and "หลวง" are free morphemes in the general Thai language, they function as suffixes in the royal context. They have undergone phonetic, semantic, and grammatical assimilation, and are considered affixes due to their transition from free to bound morphemes. Although they have experienced varying degrees of semantic bleaching, they primarily serve as grammatical markers without conveying specific lexical meanings. Other affixes like "พระ" "ราช" and "เส็จ" also belong to the category of Thai royal affixes. The presence of loanword morphemes in these affixes significantly impacts the word formation process in Thai affixes, allowing for potential breakthroughs.

The extraction of loanword morphemes plays an indispensable role in the development of Thai royal affixes, given the substantial proportion they comprise. The affixation of loanword morphemes caters to the need of expressing concepts related to the king and members of the royal family in the Thai language. Considering the established rules derived from the criteria of royal affixes and structural patterns, it is crucial to adhere to these guidelines to ensure clarity and avoid using impolite or inappropriate words. The criteria emphasize effective communication, and disregarding the specific requirements of the context, interlocutors, and topics may lead to violation of the conversational norms.



Conclusion

From examining the affixes in royal vocabulary, the analysis of Thai affixes in the context of the Thai royal language is an attempt to explain this linguistic phenomenon within the Thai language itself. It aims to explore the grammaticalization of Thai affixes and classify them, analyze their functions, and present the pragmatic aspects of the Thai royal language. In today's cultural integration, exploring the word-formation of the royal language is beneficial for absorbing positive cultural elements from other languages without losing its language independence. Regarding the connotation of royal affixes, it can be observed that these affixes primarily indicate positive or neutral meanings and do not have affixes specifically indicating negative connotations. This is why there are no derogatory words formed by these affixes. The main reason for this is that when constructing royal words, it is not appropriate to use words with negative, impolite, or informal connotations. We can conclude that the production of royal vocabulary is influenced by its social background and purpose.

Suggestion

1. It is recommended to expand the content within the structure. In addition to studying nouns, it is advisable to explore the usage of royal vocabulary in different categories. The content should be categorized and a clear structure defined, providing illustrative examples to enhance clarity.
2. Apart from studying historical royal terminology, it is essential to investigate how it is used in contemporary contexts, identifying both similarities and differences.
3. Beyond studying royal terminology in the Thai language, the scope of the study should be broadened by comparing it with royal vocabulary in other languages.

References

Joos, M. (1962). *The Five Clocks*. Research center in anthropology, folklore, linguistics. Indiana University.



Khanittanan, W. (2001). Khmero-Thai: The great change in the history of Thai language in the Chao Praya basin. *Language and Linguistics*, 19(2), 35-50. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/joling/article/view/181026/128435>

Kupfer, P (2017). Chinese lexical teaching based on "morphemes". *International Chinese Language Teaching Research*, 13(1), 23-30.

Ngamwises, W. (2012). *Royal Vocabulary: Principles of Thai Language Usage Worth Knowing*. Pumipanya Publishing.

Office of the National Identity Development. (2012). *Royal Vocabulary: Celebrating the auspicious occasion of the Royal Coronation Ceremony, Rama IX, on December 5, 2011* (4th ed.). Dansuttha Printing.

Panmieta, B. (2001). *STRUCTURE OF THAI*. RamkhamHaeng University Press.

Prasithrathsint, A. (2002). *Language in Thai society: Diversity, change, and development*. Chulalongkorn University Press.

Pisit, W. (1959). *Principles of Thai Language*. Chulalongkorn University Press.

Pei, X. (2001). *A new compilation of Thai grammar*. Beijing: Peking University Press.

Smalley, W. A. (1994). *Linguistic diversity and national unity: Language ecology in Thailand*. University of Chicago Press.

Srihaamphai, P. (2007). *Language and Culture*. Chulalongkorn University Press.

Sikkharit, Y. (2009). *The development of the royal terms during the Sukhothai period to the pre-revolution of 1932* [Master's thesis, Silpakorn University]. <https://sure.su.ac.th/xmlui/handle/123456789/4441>

SikkhaRit, Y. (2016). *A comparative study of Thai and Khmer royal vocabulary from diachronic Perspective* [Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University]. <http://cuir.car.chula.ac.th/handle/123456789/59148>

Tiewcharoenkij, A., Kanokkamalade, V., & Pankhuenkhat, R. (2022). The Evolution of Thai Language. *The Journal of Sirindhornparithat*, 23(1), 364-375. <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jsrc/article/view/248987/172778>

Wongcha-oum, M. (1986). *Poetic license in the Ayudhya period* [Master's thesis, Silpakorn University]. <http://www.thapra.lib.su.ac.th/thesis/showthesisth.asp?id=0000000140>



Wu, F. (2021). A typological study of Southeast Asian languages. *Lecture Series on Regional Typology*. Renmin University of China.