

The Origin and Development of kra- and ka- Words in Siamese Thai

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Introduction

In Siamese Thai there are over six hundred disyllabic words beginning with kra- and ka, for example /kraduuk/ 'bone', /kradaan/ 'board', /kathi'/ 'coconut milk'. Where did all these words come from? Are they cognate words? Are they loan-words from other languages, or are they new words formed in Siamese? Related literature and many linguists who have studied kra- and ka- words have shown that they come from many directions; as loan words (Banchob Bandhumedha 2526 : 9, 16: Gedney 1947), or as words changing from within the Thai language (Banchob Bandhumedha 2530:121-29), or as new formation words (Uppakitsillapasan 2531:29-33; Sunan Anchaleenukul 2520). This research specially aims at investigating the origin and development of all the kra- and ka- words, documentary found in Siamese.

1. The origin of kra- and ka- words

765 kra- and ka- words were collected from dictionaries¹ since the Early Rattanakosin period. These data were analyzed in the following processes. First, they were compared with words in other Tai languages² to find whether they were cognate. It was found that those cognate of kra- and ka- words were monosyllabic. There were no cognate words beginning with kra- and ka-, except for those found in dialects in Thailand. Second, the remaining words were compared with words in other language families³. This stage led to the discovery of loan words. Finally, the words which did not belong to the 2 categories were investigated, using the dictionaries of the Rattanakosin periods, to find whether kra- and ka- words were lately formed.

It was found that of the 765 kra- and ka- words, 210 (27%) are loan words, 329 (43%) are new formation words, and 226 (30%) are anonymous.

1.1 Loan words

210 of the kra- and ka- words in Siamese are loan words, of which 102 were borrowed from Khmer, 72 from Pali-Sanskrit, and the remaining were from other languages; for instance:

Pali-Sanskrit		Siamese	
/kanaka/	>	/kanòk/	<กนก>
/kamala/	>	/kamon/	<กมล>
Khmer		Siamese	
/krahaay/	>	/krahaaj/	<กระหาย>
/kəpəcəw/	>	/krachəw/	<กระเชอ>
Malay		Siamese	
/kərobok/	>	/kraphəwək/	<กระพอก>
Tamil		Thai	
/kari/	>	/karii/	<กะหรี่>

Table 1 Loan words

Source language	No.	%
Pali-Sanskrit	72	35
Malay	13	6
Khmer	102	48
Malay or Khmer	9	4
Khmer borrowed from Thai		
or Thai borrowed from Khmer	2	1
Other languages	12	6
Total	210	100

1.2 New formation words

As for the development of kra- and ka- words from the Early Rattanakosin dictionaries throughout the Present time, it is found that there are 329 words which could be traced its origin as new formation words. They were categorized into three groups :

- 1.2.1 Disyllabic forming words
- 1.2.2 Initial changing words
- 1.2.3 Partial reduplicating words

Table 2 New Formation words

	No.	%
Disyllabic forming words		
Cognate words	22	7
Siamese words		
Complex words	21	6
Pseudo-complex words	136	41
Initial changing words	78	24
Partial reduplicating words	72	22
Total	329	100

1.2.1 Disyllabic forming words

Kra- or ka- are added before monosyllabic words which are cognate or Siamese words, thus this group can be divided into 2 subgroups.

1.2.1.1 Kra- or ka- + cognate words

There are 22 cognate words; for instance, /krac[^]ɲn/ <กระจ๊อน>, /kraduuk/ <กระดูก>, /krab[~]ɔk/ <กระบอก>, /krar[^]ɔk/ <กระรอก> etc. An example of one word is: /kraduuk/ 'bone' <กระดูก>

Southwestern	Central	Northern
Ahom /k [~] ɲn/ /k [~] ɲn/	Nung /duk ⁶ /	Tay /dok ² /
Shan /lup ² / /luk ² /	Lungchow /duk/ D ₁ S	Po-ai /nook/
Lue /ka [~] -duuk ² /	LeiPing /dok ⁵ /	Saek /rɔɔk/
Black Tai /duk/	LungMing /nok ³ /	Wu-ming /ʔdök/
White Tai /dup ² /		Chuang /duk ³³ /
Lao /ka [~] du:k/		
Phu Thai /ka ² -du ⁵ /		
Northern Thai dialect		
/kadu:k ¹ /		
Southern Thai dialect		
/do:k ⁴ /		

This example, shows that Lao, Lue, Phu Thai, and Thai dialects also use ka- words. However, these languages are spoken in Thailand, thus they may be influenced by Siamese Thai.

1.2.1.2 Kra- or ka- + Siamese words

There are 157 Siamese words, divided into 2 subgroups.

A) Complex words

Complex words are disyllabic words beginning with kra- or ka- having different meanings, or different word classes from a monosyllabic base. There are 21 words; for instance:

บี /bì?/	verb, to break off (a small piece) with one's fingers, pinch off.
กระบี /krabì?/	noun, a small piece of
ทุ่ม /thum/	transitive verb, to throw down, hurl down
กระทุ่ม /krathum/	intransitive verb, to paddle, splash.

B) Pseudo-complex words

Pseudo-complex words are disyllabic words having the same meaning as their monosyllabic base. There are 136 words; for instance:

จู้-กระจู้ /cûu-kracûu/	'a trap to catch eels with'
ผม-กระผม /phôm-kraphôm/	'I, me (masculine singular)'

1.2.2. Initial changing words

Some words whose first syllables are /kha-, pra-, ta-, tra-, sa-/ etc. are changed to /kra-/ or /ka-/ without changing the meaning. There are 78 words; for instance:

ขี้ม /khayim/	>	กระหี้ม /krayim/
สะเพือน /sathuan/	>	กะเพือน /kathuan/