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Some Remarks on Lexical Modernization in Thai*

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Thai is one of the languages of Asia whose place as the national language of the country in which it is domiciled has not had to be struggled for, has never, as a matter of fact, been in question. Thailand, or Siam, has been a continuing political entity for many centuries, and although it has had periods of temporary Burmese domination and lost some of its border territories to France and Britain during the Colonial Period, it entered the era of national modernization and development essentially intact, politically and culturally. This special history undoubtedly contributes to the relaxed attitude about, for instance, the liberal use in the language of contemporary borrowing, mostly from English.

It is not the case, however, that there is no antipathy to foreign terms or that only a minority of new words are produced from existing national resources. There is simply no obsession about the expulsion of things foreign or indecent haste about finding national replacements for them, and even when a national replacement is already to hand the foreign element may continue to be used as well for decorative purposes. This freedom from xenophobic neurosis is undoubtedly a positive feature, but it does have the negative consequence that new-word creation has not been taken seriously enough to receive more than an ad hoc, case-by-case approach where it would probably benefit from a systematic approach (see fn.16, below).

Ways in Which New Concepts are Expressed in Thai

New concepts are expressed in Thai

(1) By adding new meanings to words already in use: e.g., to /cem/1 "robber, bandit" was added the meaning "guerrilla"; to /pom/ "knot, kink, knotty problem" was added "(psychological) complex"; to /mo/ "to send, emit" was added "to transmit (radio, TV)"; to /rit/ "to extract, press out" was added "to iron". Sometimes another word is added which clarifies the meaning: thus /rit/ "to iron" will have an expressed object, as in /rit pha/", lit. "to iron cloth" in contexts where the object is not necessary in English; /jary/ "resin, gum, rubber, tyre" clearly means "tyre" when followed by /rot/ "vehicle". These added words, however, are not essential, and this distinguishes them from expressions of the type 4(a) below. A good example of progressive addition to the meaning of a word is /tamriat/", a word of Khmer origin which originally referred to a female attendant who kept order in the king's harem. Later it was applied also to male attendants doing a similar duty in the rest of the palace. Then in the later nineteenth century, in the reign of Rama V, western-style police were introduced. These
were officially known as /phon trawm/, lit. "patrol forces", but popularly termed /polít/, from Eng. police. The term /tamnat/ was then officially applied to this new force. The result is that today the term /phon trawm/ is obsolete, /polít/ lives on in jocular speech, and /tamnat/ is now the ordinary word for "police" and is not widely known to have any other meaning.

(2) By desynonymization: the distinguishing of words which have hitherto been regular or occasional synonyms. Thus Prince Wan (see below) took the three words /rabiap, rabòp, rabòp/, which had "custom" or "recognized procedure" in common as part of their semantic content, and distinguished them as meaning 'order', 'system' and 'regime' respectively. The technique of desynonymization is particularly important with reference to words taken from Sanskrit and Pali (see 4(b) below).

(3) By borrowing foreign words: "Thai—English". First the concept "foreign" needs refinement, for a very large percentage of Thai vocabulary was borrowed centuries ago from Khmer, or Cambodian, including Khmerized words of Indic—viz. Sanskrit and Pali—origin. Subsequently many more words from these two Indic languages were borrowed directly by Thai. Some of these words are now completely ordinary, and some are felt to be learned or formal, but in no case are they felt to be alien and requiring to be replaced by something national. The word "foreign", then, has a temporal connotation in the present connection, "belonging to another contemporary nation or culture". To describe the position of Indic and Khmer within Thai linguistic culture another term is needed: "classical". The foreign words in Thai come overwhelmingly from English. Now words which are difficult to understand, being either old, or new, or foreign, are known generically as /sap/ (\Skt. sabda\^ ), and the expression for borrowing a word which is foreign in the sense just defined is /thap sap/. Three stages of "naturalization" of borrowings can be distinguished. In the initial stage a word is spelled in roman script if this is technically convenient, and has no fixed spelling in Thai script. In the second stage the Thai—script spelling is quite established, and no need is felt to spell the word in roman, even when this is technically convenient. In these two stages the word is still restricted stylistically to informal or technical usage. In the third stage the word is accepted into the formal language. Examples of words in stage three are: /karàt/ "karat", /ka:tu:n/ "cartoon, comic strip, caricature" and /chik/ "to be shocked", all from English. It should be noted that another meaning of the expression /thap sap/ just mentioned, viz. "to transliterate" also applies only to foreign words that are foreign in the sense just indicated. It is not used to refer to the transliteration of words from Indic or Khmer. The most notable sphere in which foreign borrowing occurs is that of proper names of persons and places. Personal names of contemporary people are given in roman script, or else transliterated (raising the problem that there are often several possible transliterations), but in either case they are— with the partial exception of Romance—language, Indian, Chinese and Japanese names—nearly always read with the Thai national pronunciation of English (see below). With personal names from earlier epochs it is almost always the English form of the name which is chosen: e.g., /vìsòp/ "Aesop", /winiliam ðær'sælen/ "William the Silent", /kóra:n ðær'sælen/ "Joan of Arc", /he:nrí: ðæp nà:wikst/ "Henry the
Again with the partial exception of just specified, foreign place names are taken in their English form and given the Thai national pronunciation of English (again, see below), except for the names of certain places which the Thais have had occasion to refer to for centuries: e.g., /laksəmənər/ "Luxembourg", /swaɪtərsələn/ "Switzerland", /ˈəːsə/ "Asia". Likewise from English are the terms for most scientific and technological concepts which were unknown to pre-westernized Thailand. The terminology of foreign sports is almost all English: e.g., /ˈkʰɪp/ "theenit", wɔːmlətʃo:lmə/ "etc.". It is noteworthy in connection with borrowings that Thai has a mechanism whereby, if necessary, the entire vocabulary of English can be drafted into service: an institutionalized national pronunciation of English. Let us call it (after Brown 1976) "Thai-English". This is a spelling pronunciation, and since it involves certain indeterminacies and irregularities, the pronunciation—or better, the reading—of each word must in practice be learned separately. It drastically reduces or modifies final consonants, takes little or no account of stress and its effects on the pronunciation of the various vowel letters, assigns tones which sound like misplaced stresses, and is in general rather remote from native speaker's pronunciation: e.g., /ˈoːpə:ni/ "Japan", /nɛtʃənən/ (see fn. 4: "National" (brand)), /ˈpʰaːrət/ "parade", /məˈriː kʰriskəmət/ (see fn. 4: "Merry Christmas"). Such readings are enforced in the schools—except perhaps in the most exclusive schools—by teachers and students alike. Those students who by virtue of bilingualism are able to speak English with a good approximation to a native speaker's accent soon learn not to do so when their friends are in earshot, except perhaps when speaking to foreigners, and indeed it can be said that one of the purposes of the national pronunciation is precisely to enable one to use English words without sounding like a foreigner. It serves then, important sociolinguistic functions: it shows that the speaker is not trying to ape foreigners, to air his knowledge, or to put his interlocutor down, and it makes it all right to use almost any amount of English vocabulary in one's discourse (although, of course, if it has a high English content it will be informal or technical in tone). Wearing the Thai-designed uniform for aliens gives the alien word the freedom of the city, as it were, and it prevents the nationals from feeling overwhelmed. More than that, if foreign teachers were to cease trying to teach native-speaker pronunciation, as well as certain grammatical niceties, and generally were to give up behaving as if English were a living language, it is conceivable that English would before too long be elevated to the pantheon of classical languages, so that none of its contributions to the national language would not have to be replaced at all, even in the long run.

(4) By word- and phrase-coining: Apart from foreign borrowings, another major source of expressions for new concepts and things in Thai is the coining of words and phrases, in Thai /banjat sap/, an activity of recognized importance in Thailand, which has been practiced by illustrious personages, including kings and princes, and which forms the subject matter of courses taught at university departments of Thai language and literature. The Thai-Royal Institute has a Word-Coining Committee, of which the chairman was, until his death [about ten years]
ago, Prince Wan Waithayakon, a scholar, diplomat and statesman. But apart from the official coinages that emanate from the Institute, in true Thai laissez-faire spirit, anyone is free to try his hand at coining words and phrases as the need arises, and to try to popularize them. The public is the final arbiter, and not only do outsiders have a chance, but acceptance of the products of the Institute is by no means guaranteed. In fact Prince Wan himself, acting in a private capacity, has had some notable successes, including /bɔːt ktxaːn/ "service, to serve", /pətikam/ "repairs", /məjɔː rə bəj/ "policy", /pətikɔːt/ "revolution" (a word which has been taken up and acted upon far more enthusiastically in neighbouring Laos and Cambodia than in the land of its princely birth) and /pətirnɔːp/ "reform, to reform". The Prince was indeed, until his demise, the doyen of word-"manufacturers", both official and unofficial, in Thailand. In discussing coined expressions in Thai we must distinguish those put together in the native Thai way and those compounded in the Indic manner, as follows:

(a) Thai-style compounds: These are simply new instances of the ordinary Thai compound word, or /kham phason/ — new combinations, in the native Thai manner, of existing words. They follow the Thai word order, with the verb preceding its object and the noun its modifiers. Examples: the expressions /rjɔːt phaj/ "to iron" and /jaːm ròt/ "tyre" referred to in section (1) above; /cʌt jɔːn/ "standpoint" from /cʌt/ "point" and /jɔːn/ "to stand"; /rəttabəm phlɔːt thin/ "government-in-exile" from /rəttabam/ "government"; /plɔːt/ "removed from" and /thin/ "locality", /khrɔːn bin/ "aeroplane" from /khrɔːn/ "contrivance" and /bin/ "to fly"; /khrɔːn bimaj phɔːn/ "jet aeroplane" from /khrɔːn bin/ as before, plus /aj/ "vapour" and /phɔːn/ "to spray", hence lit. "sprayed-vapour aeroplane"; /ria dən nəm/ "a submarine" from /ria/ "boat", /dən/ "to dive under", /nəm/ "water", /jɔːm/ "yawakat" "space vehicle" from /jɔːm/ "vehicle" and /yawakat/ "space"; /khrɛt plɔtʃək/ "liberated area" from /khrɛt/ "area", /plɔt/ "to remove", /kək/ "yoke", lit. "remove-yoke area"; /pɔm dɔ:j/ "inferiority" (formal, versus /sətaj/, informal, from Eng.) from /nət/ "to make an appointment", /jut/ "to stop", /nəm/ "work". Abstract nouns are regularly formed from action-verbs and stative verbs by the pre-placement of the grammaticalized words /kəm/ and /khwarəm/, respectively: thus /weŋ/ "to run" — /kəm weŋ/ "the process of running", /diː/ "good" — /kharəm diː/ "goodness". Nouns too may have /kəm/ placed before them, producing abstract nouns: e.g., /mən/ "town" — /kəm mən/ "politics", /taləːt/ "market" — /kəm taləːt/ "marketing", /ənəm/ "money" — /kəm ənəm/ "finance". Note that even though the constituents may be of Indic origin, e.g., /jɔːm/ "yawakat", the compound is native-Thai because of the method of combination.

(b) Indic style coinages: Indo-Thai and New Indo-Thai classicism and "applied classicism": For the Thais the creation of new words from Indic elements is word-coin ing par excellenc e. Like Latin and Greek for the Europeans,

*complex* from /pɔm/ "knot, complex" (see above) and /dɔːj/ "to be inferior";
ments is word-coining par excellence. Like Latin and Greek for the Europeans, and classical Chinese for the contemporary Chinese, Sanskrit and Pali function for the Thais as repositories of lexical resources which are to be drawn on as required for the expression of new concepts. Almost since their first contact with the Khmers, already Indianized and residing in what is now Thailand, the Thais have been taking words from the Indic languages, and in a more or less limited way, making up their own original combinations of Indic roots. At first they took their Indic words from the Khmers, but then they took them from the Indic languages directly. Borrowings from the Indic languages, as well as from Khmer, form the basis of the vocabulary of royal court etiquette and ceremonial, of religion, philosophy, ethics, law, various branches of science, and journalism. Not only are such words regarded as properly Thai but in fact many Thai people look upon Pali or Sanskrit as the parent-language of Thai, and Thai normative school-grammar is based upon Indic grammar, although in fact good writers do not observe the norms, and various westernized Thai grammarians are trying to describe their language in other terms (some of them hardly less foreign than the Indic grammatical concepts!). The Indic content in Thai will here be referred to collectively as "Indo-Thai" (abbreviated "IT"). Apart from one or two grammatical constructions which may have resulted from Indic influence, IT is a matter of lexicon, phonology and the morphophonemics of word-building. In the process of taking over Indic words it has always been the written form of the word which was basic, and in principle unvarying, while the pronunciation was entirely derivative. It might therefore more appropriate to speak of the "reading" of an IT word, rather than its pronunciation. Borrowing is a matter of transliteration, with certain rules regarding reading, and since the Thai alphabet is an augmented Indic-type script, with a symbol for every one of the symbols of the Devamāgari script, as is the Khmer script, borrowing from Indic should present no difficulty. But the situation is complicated by the fact that IT combines basically two methods of transliterating Indic, corresponding to words that have come into Thai via Khmer and those that have come in direct. We shall therefore have occasion to speak of "Khmerized" IT and "direct" IT. Several Indic letters have different renditions in Khmerized IT and direct IT, with consequent differences in reading, and the reading of Khmerized IT and direct IT also differs in syllabification in some cases; e.g., Khmerized /udom, khordom, vadhik/ versus direct /uttara/, khontama/, vadhika/ "northern", "Gotama", "exceeding" from Indic Uttara, Gotama, aṭṭika. Now in IT word-coining any particular Indic root may, subject to certain limitations, be taken in any of the three Indic vowel-grades (see below—i.e., as the ancient Indian grammarians, and following them the Thais, analyse them, basic, guṇa- and vṛddhi), in its Sanskrit form or its Pali form (see below) (henceforth these two language forms are to be abbreviated when used attributively to "Skt" and "P" respectively), Khmerized or direct, regardless of what form any other constituents are in. Furthermore the roots may be combined according to one process known as /samaṭ/ (<Skt. samāsa), or another process known as /sonthi/ (<Skt. santhi), the latter involving some of the Indic sandhi rules, mostly to do with vowels. Two things should by now be apparent from this discussion. Firstly, IT is a very technical subject, and secondly, any given
Indic root or combination of roots may assume a number of forms in LT. These variations have no morphological value. They are simply free variants of a given lexical item. For the purposes of word-coinage in LT this variation has important results. In the first place, in selecting which of a number of possible forms to settle on for a particular coinage considerations of euphony play a large part: e.g., in creating a Thai word for "culture" Prince Wan first essayed the form /phrāthitham/ (⟨Skt vrddhi 'flourishing state' plus dharma 'practices, disposition'); but felt it was "rather heavy"; then one day as he was writing an article the Pali form /vaththanatham/ (⟨P. vaddhana 'flourishing state' plus Skt. dharma) "came to (him) and (he) knew that it would catch on and it did". It should be noted in this case that between the successful form and the abortive form there is not only a difference of language of origin but also of vowel grade (guna versus base grade). The second important consequence of there being a choice among possible forms when Indic words are being Thaiized is that it often happens that several variants of a given Indic word are accepted and these can through the technique of desynonymization be made to stand for more or less subtle differences of meanings: thus Sanskrit vastu, P. watthu 'thing, object', represented in earlier Thai by the pretty much synonymous /watsadu, phatsadə , watthu/ have been distinguished in contemporary Thai into /watthu/ 'material, object, objective, aim, gist', /phatsadə/ 'material things, assets, equipment or stores of all kinds; parcel in the post' and /watsadu/ 'minor items of stores; component parts or materials'. One further point has to be made on the subject of LT new-creations. That is that there has been a fundamental shift in the attitude towards the source languages, in the purpose of the coinings, and in the walk of life of the people who do the coining and of those who accept and reject the products. Traditionally LT words were coined by royal secretaries and by Buddhist monks, for the purpose of providing auspicious or elevated names for important personages and places. In order to be accepted such coinages had to please only the king or whatever important person had commissioned them. Their usage was restricted, for there would almost always be a parallel simple name used on informal occasions and by the common people. The attitude towards Sanskrit and Pali was reverential; semantic and orthographic liberties were not intentionally taken, except that for euphonious or metrical reasons one might alternate between direct and Khmerized readings of words and lengthen final vowels, such modifications being known in Thai as /phäng khan/, literally "transforming words". Now the attitude towards LT word-coinage has been democratized and utilitarianized. Anyone can have a try. One may, if one wishes, submit one's creation to the Word Coining Committee of the Royal Institute for its approval, but one does not have to wait for it, and in any case neither the authority of the Institute, as was remarked above, nor even that of the king himself under the absolute monarchy that ended only fifty-two years ago can guarantee that a coinage will pass the ultimate test in modern Thai society as in other consumer societies—that of public acceptance. Functionally the Indic languages are now regarded as a tool—a tool for the modernization of the Thai vocabulary, or, more specifically, for the re-creation in Thai of the terminology of English. This difference in the social attitude towards, and in the utilization of, LT suggests a special term for LT new-creations and new meanings assigned to earlier LT words, and we propose to call it "New Indo-Thai" (abbreviated "N. IT"), as opposed to "classical (or pre-modern) Indo-Thai" (abbreviated "(IT)"). If the earlier attitudes towards the
Indic languages which have brought about the emergence and flourishing of CIT may... by referred to as "classicism", then the contemporary instrumental attitude which underlies NIT may perhaps be termed "applied classicism". Prince Wan's paper "Coining Thai words"10, with its preface Wan 1973a, can be regarded as the NIT... manifesto. Some examples to show the CIT/NIT opposition: CIT /सात्तित्व/ 'steadfastness, durability' (<Skt. satīti 'idem') but NIT 'statistics' (echoic of English), /पतिरुप/ CIT 'pattern, image used for comparison; suitable' (<P. patirupa 'idem') but NIT 'reform' (calqued on English or French, with /पति/13 activated as equivalent to English re-, French re-, re-11). See Affixed words below), /द्वात्तानोत्तर/ CIT 'one's own opinions' (<P. attanomati 'idem.') but NIT 'automatic' (modelled on English), NIT उपपराक्ष्य /'opera' (echoic of English, but pseudo-Indic, as if from a non-existent Skt. or P. uparākara), NIT /विथ्थायत/ 'radio' (as if from a Skt. vīdyā, but actually a back-formation from P. vijñā 'lightning flash', corresponding to Skt. vīdyāt 'lightning flash, spark of electricity', which had already given CIT /विथ्थायत/ 'idem.). Further indicative of the new status of NIT is the fact that its spelling has been regulated in certain details, by the Royal Institute Dictionary, and regulated in a way that does not take the original Indic spelling as the criterion (in CIT deviations from the original spelling were frequent but --/except in the case of /फ़्लेज़्न kham/ (see above) -- unintentional and unco-ordinated.

As a contemporary phenomenon NIT word-coining has technical, aesthetic and even sporting aspects. The sport is to produce a word which will win public acceptance, and like horse-racing, it is the sport of kings in which commoners also take part. The technical aspect is the finding of appropriate Indic roots and affixes and their combination in the correct way. Aesthetics, in terms of the mental associations aroused by the component elements and the euphony of the combination, determines which, if any, of several technically correct competitors will catch on.

As a result of the operation of /सात्ति/ -composition and /संधि/ -composition, it often happens that the form that an IT word has in isolation, on the one hand, and in combining-form in a compound, on the other, are different. In /सात्ति/ -compounds, in particular, short open final syllables of Indic, which the normal, Westernized, IT method or reading has silenced, will be revived if another element is attached to the end. But no sooner are they resuscitated than common usage may lay them to rest again; e.g., the word /संधिक/ 'society' (NIT; but CIT 'an associating together' <Skt., P. संधिक /'idem.') when combined with /सत/ NIT '-ology, -istics' (<Skt. सात्रा 'scholarly knowledge') should have a revived final syllable /-ि/, then destressed medially to /-ि/, thus /संधिकसत/ 'social sciences' but by far the commonest pronunciation is /संधिकसत/, i.e., the combining form /संधिकसत/ is restored to the free form /संधिकसत/. Now this resultant combination of two phonologically free forms looks for all the world like a native Thai compound except that the order of constituents -- Modifier + Modified -- is the opposite of the native Thai order, and if the suppression of /सात्ति/ linking-syllables become sufficiently common it may end up creating the view that constituent-order is the only difference between the NIT and native Thai method of compounding.12.

Further examples of IT complex words: For ease of exposition these will be divided into affixed words, semi-affixed words and words containing more than one root of full meaning.

a) Affixed words: The Indic processes of affixation have been known to scholars since the reception of Indic-Khmer culture, but not until the twentieth century did the Thais create new affixed words on a large scale, when the influence of English created a desire for counterparts to English affixes 13. In other word
the activation of the Indic affixes is another feature productive distinguishing NIT from
CIT. At the moment the following affixes are productive to a lesser or greater extent: /ka-/ 'a-', an-, im-, in-, non-' ( <Skt. P. a- '(id.)' ), /pati-/ 'anti-, contra-, counter-, re-' ( <P. pati- '(id.)' ; Skt. prati- ), /attā-/ 'auto-, self-' ( <P. atta- '(id.)' ; Skt. atma- '(id.)' ), /thawī-/ 'bi-, di- ' ( <Skt. P. āvā- '(id.)' ; sāha- ; sām- sān- sāvān- 'go-, com-, con-' ( <Skt. P. sāhā- '(id.)' ; Skt. saṁ etc. P. saṁ etc. '(id.)' ), /thū-/ 'dys-, mal- ' ( <P. du- '(id.)' ; Skt. duḥ- '(id.)' ; saṁsa- 'equi-' ( <Skt. P. sāma- '(id.)' ), /sub-/ 'far-, perhaps by contamination with Skt. dṝ- 'difficult': the expected form is *thūra-/ ', tri- -' tri- ( <Skt. tri- '(id.)' ), but with irregular vowel lengthening.15

b) Semi-affixed words: These contain more than one root morpheme, but one of the roots is semi-devoid of lexical content: e.g., /phāṣp/ '-ness, -ity' ( <Skt. P. bhadā 'state, condition', but as a free form in contemporary Thai meaning 'image, picture' ) thus /īṣaṣa- 'independent' ( <P. īśara 'lord, master'; = Skt. īśara →/īṣarapā- 'independence'; samačhik 'member of organization' ( <Skt. P. saṃjñā 'participant in an assembly' →/samačhikapā- 'membership'; /nīyom- 'ism' ( <Skt. niyama 'restraint, control; fixed practice, vow, religious undertaking definiteness', but as a free from in modern Thai, a verb 'to like, to popularly practice'); thus /vāthu- 'material, object' ( <P. vāthu- '(id.)'; = Skt. vastu ) →/vāthuṇiyom- 'materialism', /chat/ 'nation, nationality, race' ( <Skt. jāti '(id.)' →/chatnīyom- 'nationalism'; /sāt/ 'ology, -istics, -science' ( <Skt. śāstra 'scholarly knowledge'); thus /phaśā 'language; ( <Skt. bhadā 'language' or P. bhadā '(id.)' →/phāśā 'linguistics'; /manat 'human being' ( <Skt. manuṣya or P. māra 'man, person') /māra 'the humanities'; /wīthajā- 'ology' (cf. free form wīthaja- 'knowledge'; < Skt. vidyā 'knowledge'); thus /cit/ 'mind' ( <Skt. P. citta- '(id.)' →/cittawīthaja- 'psychology'; /chīśā 'life, bio-' ( <Skt. P. ṣvā 'life'; thus /wīthaja- /chīśwīthaja- 'biology', /khemā 'chemistry' (probably from German Chemie) /chīśkhemā 'biochemistry'; /tham 'practices, disposition' ( <Skt. dhāra of P. ḍhamma '(id.)'; thus /manutsājatha- 'humaneness', and /wattanā- 'growth, flourishing' ( <P. vaḍṭhana or Skt. vadhana ') /(id.)' →/wattanātham 'culture'.

(a) Words with more than one root of full lexical content: /saṃphāṣ 'relationship' ( <Skt. or P. saṃbāndha- '(id.)' /manutsājasthaṃ 'human relations'; /naya- 'guidance, direction, plan, principle' ( <Skt. P. naya- '(id.)' ) + /yab- 'an expedient, way, means' ( <Skt. or P. upāraya- '(id.)' ) →/nāyōbrā- 'policy'; /aṅkāt 'air' ( <Skt. ākāsa or P. ākāsa- '(id.)' ) /jam 'vehicle' /aṅkāsaian 'aircraft'; /cit/ 'mind' + /vikhrā 'analyse' ( <Skt. vīhrā 'separation, resolution into elements' →/cittawīkhrā 'psychoanalysis'; and finally, what must surely be the longest word in NIT: →/sombuṃ 'complete' ( <Skt. sampurna- '(id.)' ) + /aṅsājīthī- 'absolute power' (an IT compound, in combining-form) and raś't 'king' ( <Skt. P. raśa- '(id.)' ) →/samburraṇa-jā-sīthīrāt 'absolute monarchy'.

Conclusion: Obviously, with the vast lexical resources of their classical languages, Sanskrit and Pali, at their disposal, plus the ability to make fine distinctions by opposing a Pali form to a Sanskrit form, and/or a non-Khmerized form to a Khmerized form, and/or one vowel grade to another, the Thais have in IT a wordy coining apparatus of immense potential. Given vast amounts of time, money and personnel the Thai could conceivably duplicate the entire contemporary English vocabulary with all its registers and specialisms. But even if this were possible, would it be worthwhile? One senses that many Thais do not think so. For people realize that although these
words may have a great sentimental value, as signifying the validity and vitality of the language in the modern world, they still have to be learned. Their instrumental value is cast into doubt when the pursuit of any subject of study to any great depth will almost certainly necessitate the acquisition of the relevant English vocabulary. And quite apart from the activity of study one is confronted more and more in one's daily life with English-language labels and signs on all manner of things. It is probably true to say that the technocrats of Thailand have little patience with the neologistic tours de force of MIT, except maybe to applaud a particularly felicitous creation now and then. In the area of political theory and rhetoric new word coinings however are certain to flourish. One thing is certain: whether by borrowing from English, or utilizing native-Thai or Indic resources, the Thai vocabulary must be modernized, and it still has a long way to go, as anyone who has ever tried to translate into Thai a page of, let us say, a literary journal, or a textbook of political or economic theory can attest; the problems are greater still when it comes to texts of science and technology. But the Thais have always been blessed with the resources and the adroitness to maintain their independence, coping with pressure from the Great Powers in an ever-changing world, seeing themselves not only as survivors but as free men. In the world of language, English is the superpower, and sociocultural changes of unprecedented scope and rapidity make up the setting. It will be interesting indeed to see how the Thai language adjusts itself.
An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Fourth Conference of National Languages (ASANAL), University of Malaya, April 25–30, 1977, under the title, "Creating New Words in Contemporary Thai: Between Laissez-Faire and Language Planning in terms of Ferguson's three components of the degree of development of a language (Ferguson 1968), Thai has for many centuries been graphized, is standardized, and the process of being modernized. Of Ferguson (1968)’s two aspects of modernization, expansion of vocabulary, and expansion of repertoire of styles and forms of discourse -- it is only the former which is being treated here. Acronyms are not dealt with.

The author asks forgiveness for citing Thai forms in a phonemic, roman notation, o This is done for typographic reasons. The notation is that of Haas 1964, with the following modifications: (a) final stops are written "p", "t", "k", not "b", "d", "g", reasons of phonetic realism; (b) long vowels are marked with "ː" instead of by a subscript blinding of the vowel symbol; (c) "ː" is used instead of "ː" for the high non-front unrounded vowel, since "y" suggests the English "y"-sound. The phonemes of Thai, as stipulated here, are as follows: — Consonants: /r̥, r, n, m, p, t, k, ʔ, ph, th, ch, kh, f, s, h, w, j, my, l, r, vr; Vowels: /iː, ia, eː, E, eː, i, aː, eː, aː, uː, oː, ɔː, ɔː/; tones: /−/, ^, ˈ, ˈ/ i.e., mid (unmarked), low, falling, high, rising, respectively. /j/ is a phalatal semivowel; "h" stands not for a phoneme but for the feature of aspiration in /th, ch, kh/, elsewhere it marks the glide /h/. Final stops are unreleased. Sounding the sinhala symbols with IPA values will produce an adequate pronunciation. Stress is voiced.

For this and some of the other information in this paper I am indebted to Aschar Manoh Yuden, who was Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Administrative Head of the Pattani Malay—Thai Dictionary Project of the Pattani Malay — Thai Dictionary Project of the Prince of Songkhla University at Pattani while I was attached to the Project (1975–9). Interpretations and opinions expressed are the sole responsibility of the author.

Desynonymization is my own term. I have not so far come across a term for this process in the literature.

More fully, as a consciously etymologizing citation-form, /sˤapthaː/, with restoration of the original short open final syllable usually suppressed (see below at 4(b)). The phonemic representation of Sanskrit and Pali loanwords in Thai is dealt with in English in Gedney (1947), and partially in Henderson (1951). It is dealt with in Thai in various works, of which Kamchao (1970) is widely used, and Banchob (n.d.) is recent.

For a somewhat comparable division of the borrowing process into stages, see group (2)—(4) in Sleptsov (1975:7).

Meaning respectively, of course, 'golf', 'tennis', and volleyball (note the obvious spelling pronunciation of the last word — an example of the Thai national pronunciation of English, to be discussed immediately. /f, s, l/ are not permitted final consonants in pre-modern formal Thai, or even now in popular Thai, but for some speakers on some occasions these words have alternative pronunciations with the original final consonants.

The writer would be misleading the reader if he were to pass these remarks about the institutionalized Thai pronunciation of English off as common knowledge or uncontroversial:

"...The department store is just one example [of the occurrence in Thai speech of myriads of English words pronounced in the "Thai—English" manner]. Wherever the Thai goes, he is confronted with words written in Roman letters, and an important part of his education must be to learn to read these
words with Thai sounds, so he can use them when speaking with other Thais.

"The subject that teaches this skill in primary and secondary school is called English. In actual fact (as opposed to stated purpose), this means 'How to read English with Thai sounds'. Latin is used in this same sense in the West. I will call it Thai-English to distinguish it from a different subject... (how to speak English). Now if Thai-English were always written with Thai letters (as it easily can be and often is), it wouldn't be necessary to teach it. But [as in the example of shopping in the department store, the Thai often] has to be able to go directly from English letters to Thai sounds... [and so Thai students learn this skill in the "English" (i.e., "Thai-English") class, but they] are led to believe that they are studying real English, or at least a variety of real English... (Brown 1976:76-81, emphasis mine)

So the reader, then, be warned: a Thai may find these remarks about the kind of English taught in Thai schools bewildering or offensive. Brown does not discuss the rules of reading "Thai-English", but the tonal side is discussed briefly in Court 1975b:84 (fn.11). As a step towards the naturalization of English, and other foreign words, and making them available, even if only provisionally, in Thai, "Thai-English" clearly an important sociolinguistic modernizational phenomenon.

These two terms with reference to IT do not have quite the sense of their Sanskrit originals. The most tangible difference between the two forms of compounding in IT that at constituent boundaries vowels that find themselves juxtaposed do not fuse together in /sámát/-compounds, but do fuse in /sóntìŋ/-compounds.

an 1970:37.

Actually there is more to /phìːŋ kham/ than this, but the principle remains that modifications were "innocent" -- not intended to generate new words, but just slightly to vary the shape of existing words for no grammatical or semantic purpose, areas in contemporary IT /phìːŋ/-variants may be deliberately desynonymized.

or instance, the Prince of Songkla University, having a campus in the city of Pattani and another in the city of Had Yai, both in southern Thailand, had much occasion to refer to campuses, but an authorized word for "campus" was lacking and the English word pronounced /kʰæːmpəs/, has perforce to serve, until the University essayed the IT coin e /witthajà:khetː/ (<<Skt. vidyā 'knowledge' and Pali khetta 'field, place where something is produced or found', = Skt. kṣetra). In April 1977 this word had been submitted to the Royal Institute for approval but had not yet approved it, yet the University was nevertheless using the word in official documents (Prof. Manoh Yuden -- personal comnication).


There are a few French loans in Thai. These are distinguishable by their phonological form. But when it comes to calques it may be impossible to decide between French and English as the source language. It is a matter of history that some Thai political thinkers and activists were educated in France, so French influence, especially in political vocabulary, cannot be discounted. Furthermore, with widespread dissemination of ideas among students ten years ago, there may even be some lexical influence from Russian or Chinese. But for the purpose of this paper I will speak as if English were the sole stimulus for lexical innovation in Thai.

This would, then incidentally parallel the Vietnamese case of lexical compounds, with a same difference in constituent order between "classical" (in this case, Chinese).
and native-Vietnamese compounds.

13 See Wan 1970:34-35.

14 In combination, the prefixes lose some stress and this may involve the elision of glottal stops and conversion of tones to mid. In illustrating the prefixes in the aim of the transcription is to represent natural pronunciation.

15 One should mention here a couple of prefixes from English: /mékka/ 'mega-' and /májkhro/ 'micro'.

16 One would like to recommend here that a more systematic approach to lexical expa be adopted. For instance, instead of trying to find equivalents for English words by one the aim should be to recreate in Thai the English word-forming apparatus. A particularly vexatious shortcoming at the moment is the lack of good equivalents for: indispensable affixes -ize and -ize. There is a description of a systematic approa to lexical modernization in Eastman (1983:232-237). In view of the great difference in language typology between Thai and the European languages, it might be worthwhi for Thai-language modernizers to look carefully at how the vocabularies of contempor ary Chinese and Japanese have been modernized and continue to be added to. Likewise in spite of the differences in the political system, a study of lexical modernizati processes in the non-European languages of the USSR might prove highly instructive (see Zakonomernosti; Sleptsov 1975).

5A This statement can be regarded as a convenient fiction rather than a historic tr (see Gedney 1947:75-76).
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Addenda:


Zakonomernosti Razvitija Literaturnykh Jazykov Narodov SSSR v Sovetskuju Epokhu. ['Regularities in the Development of the Literary Languages of the Peoples of the Peoples of the USSR. General editor, Yu. D. Teseriev. "Nauka" Publishing House, Moscow, 1969. (Reference is made here to two books that appeared in this series in 1969, both edited by N.A. Basakov, one subtitled Osnovanye Protessy Vnutristrurnogo Razvitija Transkikh i Iberijsko-Kavkazskikh Jazykov ['Basic Processes of Infrastructural Development of the Iranian and Iberian-Caucasian Languages'] and one Osnovanye...Tjurkskikh, Finno-Ugorskikh i Mongol'skich Jazykov ['Basic...of the Turkic, Finno-Ugrik and Mongolic Languages'] [in Russian.]}