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KEY WORD: KHMER LOANWORDS / SOUTHERN THAI DIALECT

PREMIN KARAVI : KHMER LOANWORDS IN THE SOUTHERN THAI DIALECT.

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The purpose of this dissertation is to collect Khmer loanwords in the Southern Thai dialect (STD) and analyze their transforming processes into the STD, to compare the sounds and meanings between the Khmer loanwords and the related Modern and Ancient Khmer words, to compare the transforming processes of the Khmer loanwords in the STD to those of the Khmer loanwords in Standard Thai (ST), and finally to analyze key probabilities of when and how the Khmer loanwords entered into the STD.

The results of this research show that there are 1,320 Khmer loanwords in the STD, 573 of which have their related loanwords in ST, while 394 occur only in the STD. When comparing the related sounds in the Khmer loanwords in the STD with modern Khmer words, 10 types of transforming processes from Khmer words into the STD have been found. Some of the sounds constituting words, especially the initial consonants, were weakened in most of the Khmer loanwords in the STD, while in ST, the sounds constituting words were completely borrowed. When comparing the Khmer loanwords in the STD with the Modern and the Ancient Khmer words, it has been found that certain initial consonants, vowels, or final consonants in the Khmer loanwords are related to various sounds in related Khmer words. These sounds are more similar to those in Ancient Khmer words than in the Modern ones. Such sounds can therefore be used as the criteria in presuming the borrowing epochs of the Khmer loanwords in the STD; 306 of the Khmer loanwords were borrowed from the Ancient Khmer, 81 of these were borrowed from the Modern Khmer, while the borrowing dates of the remaining cannot be accurately fixed. And with regard to word meanings, most Khmer loanwords and their related Ancient and Modern Khmer words are semantically similar, while a minority of Khmer loanwords show five types of semantic differences.

The dissertation also indicates some ways in which the Khmer loanwords entered into the STD; it has been found that there is a tendency that the majority of them were borrowed by adopting the sounds as perceived by Southern Thai speakers, while the remaining 57 words were adopted through the Khmer graphic forms.

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