

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most valuable single possession of the human race. It is used as the primary means of communication, and it is a complex system which includes various elements; such as : sound, grammar, and vocabulary. Language has been defined in various ways, but the most fundamental way of defining it is primarily as an instrument of communication among persons in a speech community. If language is used for artistic creation, it is called literature which is a higher level but related to basic communication. Descriptive linguists are mainly interested in language as a spoken communication.

Every language has its own rules for ordering and arranging its morphemes into words, and sentences with utterances which begin after silence and end with silence. The utterance can be as short as a single word or as long as a speech. Each utterance contains meaning, and form (arrangement of sounds and order of words)

Languages are rarely static. They can be carried great distances and borrow heavily. The borrowing will be more or less dependent upon communication, and cultural factors. The more and better communication, usually the more contact languages have with each other. Then new terms are invented or borrowed as needed.

Since English is spoken throughout the world, it has become the most important language of international communication.

Thailand has had continuous contact with Europeans especially English people since the period of King Rama IV. But the contact became much closer in the reign of King Rama V. Since the beginning of the century especially at the end of the Second World War, different agencies of politics, commerce, etc., have settled down in Thailand. The English language is more used in the country as an international language than other. Moreover, it is treated as a second language after Thai itself; and it is taught in schools and universities as one of the most important subjects. Because of this close contact with the English language, a great number of English words have passed into the everyday speech of Thais, and can be classified as English loan-words in Thai.

Loanwords are regarded as foreign words spoken in the current speech by the native speakers. There are a lot of loanwords in Thai, which derive from different languages, and are pronounced in the way of Thai words. For example :

- ก๊วย / kator/, กะรัต / caramét /, etc. from Malay;
- ซ่ง / sǒng/, เซมเป้ง / semien /, etc. from Cambodian;
- บิดา / bidaa /, มาฆา / maandaa /, etc. from Pali and Sanskrit;
- กุยเต๋อ / kúeytiěw /, กัก / kák /, etc. from Chinese;
- สุราย / surāy/, ราชาวดี / raachaawadii /, etc. from Persian;
- เลอลัง / leelāng/, กัมปะโด / kampađoo /, etc. from Portuguese;
- บูคเก้ / buukêe/, ปัง / pang /, etc. from French;
- and บ้า / baa /, ครีม / kriim /, etc. from English etc.

Through comparative linguistic analyses of the English language and Thai, it is shown that these two languages are different from each other at all levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary). As it is known that persons will automatically produce any new sound according to their particular phonemic system, there will be bound to be differences in the way, the native speakers of Thai pronounce English loanwords. It is interesting to study the knowledge of English loanwords in Thailand and also their phonological structure in current speech of Thai, something which has not been studied yet. For the most part of our use of language is so automatic and natural that no more attention is paid to it than to breathing. This study is expected to reveal those recognition and production features which can be attributed to the different phonological structure of English and Thai as has been outlined above.

Purposes

In this study an effort has been made to show :

1. The production of English phones in the pronunciation of English loanwords in Thai.
2. The similarity of recognition and production of these English loanwords according to the educational levels of the informants.
3. The differences in recognition and production of English loanwords according to educational levels.

4. The phonological problems involved in using English loan-words in classroom situations where the teacher is concentrating on grammatical production.

Limitation of the Study

A. Limitation of subjects

The total subjects are 45 people of different levels who are divided into three main categories as follows :

1. Above mathayom VI 15 people
 - a. University level 5 people
 - b. High school level 10 people
2. Under mathayom VI 15 people
 - a. Mathayom IV - VI 5 people
 - b. Mathayom I - III 5 people
 - c. Prathom I - IV 5 people
3. Illiterates 15 people.

B. Limitation of data

The number of loanwords mentioned here is only 300 words. They all are English words which are spoken in current speech by native speakers of Thai. Since the study is concerned with the phonology of loanwords; trade names are deliberately included as valid terms for analysis although they may not be considered as loanwords for in many other instances. The corpus used here is chosen from more frequent loanwords. Mostly they are loan items, with some trade names included here because of their relevant pho-

nological make-up.

Related Studies

1. A Teacher's Hand Book of Thai Students' English Pronunciation Difficulties; by Edward Mason Anthony, Ph.D. This book describes and compares the significant sounds of both English and Thai languages to the end that difficulties peculiar to Thai students of English may be brought to the teacher's attention.

2. Thai and English, by Kruatrachue, Foongfuang. A cooperative study of phonology for pedagogical applications.