



An Analysis of English Code-mixing in the Television Series U-Prince

การใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษในละครโทรทัศน์เรื่องยูปรีnce

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ABSTRACT

Currently, English code-mixing is a common phenomenon, which occurs in various types of Thai media. It is used both for communication purposes and as a symbol of modernization. Furthermore, English is increasingly used in Thai T.V. series where it reflects real life language use. This suggests that Thais are using more English in everyday conversation. This study aims to explore linguistic forms and motivations for English mixing; it also examines how meaning and features of words are modified through the nativization process. Conversational dialogue from the Thai teenage T.V. series “U-Prince” was transcribed for this analysis. The results reveal that the most found English items were at the lexical level. Truncation or shortening English words was found to be the most nativized feature while specification was the main motivation for code-mixing in the script. English mixing in the TV series U-Prince demonstrates how characters, which represent Thai teenagers from similar social and educational backgrounds, embrace and adopt English code-mixing into their conversation.

บทคัดย่อ

ในปัจจุบันนี้ปรากฏการณ์การใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษได้ปรากฏให้เห็นในสื่อไทยหลายประเภท วัตถุประสงค์ของการใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษไม่ได้เป็นแค่เพียงเครื่องมือที่ใช้เพื่อการสื่อสารเท่านั้นแต่ยังเป็นเสมือนสัญลักษณ์ในการแสดงออกถึงความทันสมัยด้วย บทบาทของการใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษสามารถพบได้มากขึ้นในละครโทรทัศน์ไทย ซึ่งเป็นภาพสะท้อนการใช้ภาษาในชีวิตจริงที่แสดงให้เห็นว่าคนไทยได้ใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้นในการสนทนา งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ในการจัดทำขึ้นเพื่อสำรวจลักษณะรูปแบบทางภาษาและแรงจูงใจในการใช้คำปนภาษา ตลอดจนการตรวจสอบความหมายและลักษณะของคำผ่านกระบวนการวิเคราะห์การปรับตามภาษาแม่ โดยเก็บชุดข้อมูลในการวิเคราะห์จากบทสนทนาในละครโทรทัศน์วัยรุ่นเรื่องยูปรีnce ผลการวิจัยพบว่าคำปนภาษาอังกฤษที่ถูกใช้มากที่สุดนั้นเป็นระดับหน่วยคำ ส่วนในกระบวนการปรับความหมายตามภาษาแม่พบว่าการตัดคำถูกใช้มากที่สุด และการใช้คำที่มีความหมายเจาะจงเป็นแรงจูงใจอันดับแรกของการใช้คำปนภาษาจากบทสนทนาในละครโทรทัศน์เรื่องนี้ การใช้คำปนภาษาในละครเรื่องยูปรีnce นั้น แสดงให้เห็นถึงการเปิดรับการใช้คำปนภาษาอังกฤษและการนำมาปรับใช้เพื่อการสนทนาในกลุ่มเด็กวัยรุ่นไทย ตลอดจนการนำมาใช้ร่วมกับกลุ่มผู้มีภูมิหลังทางสังคมและมีการศึกษาในระดับใกล้เคียงกัน

Keywords: Code-mixing, Nativization, Motivation for code-mixing

คำสำคัญ: คำปนภาษา การปรับตามภาษาแม่ แรงจูงใจในการปนภาษา

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Introduction

Over the past decade in Thailand, the use of English has become highly regarded and it has been increasingly used in broadcast and print media, which aims to reach a large audience. [1] Snodin stated that English is the symbol of modernization and Thais tend to perceive cultures of more developed and more affluent nations as superior and more attractive.

Teenage television series are influential shows that aim to reach a young adult audience. Plots are created to be relevant to teenagers' lifestyles, experiences, and activities. The stories tend to reflect relationships between friends, puppy love and university life. Therefore, to be appealing, the script needs to reflect the use of English by Thai teenagers in real life. [2] As in other parts of the world, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Brazil, and Germany, Thai teenagers have been increasingly exposed to English through listening and watching international media. In addition, they are motivated to learn English for purposes like using English in everyday life and to pursue a higher education overseas.

Nowadays, English is significant to Thai teenagers because it has become embedded in their everyday activities. As the result, this genre of T.V. series increasingly employs Thai-English code-mixing in a variety of forms such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the script.

Generally, linguists have used the terms code-switching and code-mixing to describe the phenomenon of language mixing. These two terms are used interchangeably. [3] Ho stated that code-mixing referred to the changing of one source language in another language within the same spoken or written text as its normal phenomenon. [4] Mysken explained that code-mixing was the occurrence of lexical units and grammatical features from two different languages appearing in one sentence.

[5] Bathia and Ritchi noted that code-mixing was intra-sentential mixing with linguistic units such as morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses, and sentences of two or more languages that occurred in the same sentence while switching at the level of the sentence or inter-sentential mixing was defined as code-switching. Since language mixing at a level higher than the clause has been rarely found, this study only focuses on the use of code-mixing in Thai utterances.

The purpose of this study is to explore the characteristics, nativized features and motivations for English code-mixing in the Thai teenage T.V. series "U-Prince".

Methodology

Data Collection

Samples of English code mixing from the Thai T.V. series U-Prince were collected for the analysis. However, some English words, which could be found in The Royal Institute Thai dictionary were not included as they were considered as loanwords. [6] Thadpoothon defined loanwords as English words that have been borrowed and used as common words in Thai. 12 main series of U-Prince were produced from 12 young adult best seller pocket books from Jam-Sai publishing, the largest well-known teenage romantic comedy publisher in Thailand. During



broadcasting, U-Prince earned the highest rating score than other teenage T.V. series at that time. Furthermore, Handsome Cowboy, which is the first sub-main story was presented as an opening episode starring popular actor and actress for leading roles and having the most number of episodes and earning highest rating and views of all 12 stories. This data includes 227 examples of English code-mixing collected from the dialogue transcribed from Handsome Cowboy, 1 of 12 main stories. There are eight episodes, which can be divided into 40 chapters. The program was broadcast from 2016 to 2017 on Sunday at 8 pm on GMM's channel 25 and at 10 pm on Line T.V. It is also available on YouTube.

Handsome Cowboy is a romantic comedy. The plot centers around a love story between the male protagonist named Sibtis, a handsome U-Prince who studies in the Faculty of Agriculture and is the only heir to the Wimarn-din Farm and Resort. The lead female character is Prik-kang, also known as DJ PK, a very popular girl from the same university. The story develops in two different settings: on the campus with a group of upper-middle-class friends and at the resort with other supporting roles such as the staff. Sibtis and PK grew up together. When they were children, they were close friends until Sibtis was sent to study at a high school in America. Several years later, they met each other again one night in a pub where PK worked as DJ. Despite not remembering her at all, Sibtis was interested in PK. So, he made a bet with his friends that she would be his girlfriend. The plot follows these characters' lives in this romantic comedy.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, a table was created to classify the English code-mixed elements. The data were tabulated, in columns, according to three theoretical frameworks, [3] the first had seven categories: 1. letters of alphabet, 2. lexical words, 3. proper nouns, 4. short forms, 5. phrases, 6. incomplete sentences, 7. single full sentences. [2] The second, nativized features, had six categories: 1. hybridization, 2. truncation, 3. reduplication, 4. conversion, 5. semantic shift, 6. word order shift, [7] and the third framework, motivation, had seven categories: 1. euphemism, 2. specificity, 3. principle of economy, 4. quotation, 5. doubling, 6. interjection, and 7. English specific name. Code-mixed items were added to the data table and counted manually. Then, the frequency for each classification was calculated as a percentage.

Results

English items were categorized into seven types, according to the classification by Ho [3]:

1. Letters of the alphabet: the use of English acronyms to refer to the name of objects, ideas, people, or places such as “*IUCA มหาวิทยาลัยอินเตอร์ที่เท่ที่สุดในเมืองไทย*” (Translation: IUCA, the coolest International University in Thailand). Other examples include abbreviations of noun phrases such as *V.I.P. (very important person)*, or abbreviations of an exclamation such as *O.K. (okay)*.

2. Lexical words: Lexical words are single English words that consist of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, which are mixed into the target language, for example, “*เปิดตัว ambassador หนุ่มหล่อจาก 12 คณะ*”

(Translation: Introducing 12 heartthrob male ambassadors from each faculty). Compound nouns formed using two nouns were checked with The Oxford English Dictionary to differentiate lexical items from phrases.

3. Proper nouns: Proper nouns are nouns, which refer to specific names, for example, “**ขอต้อนรับเข้าสู่ International University Central of Asia**” (Translation: Welcome to the International University Central of Asia).

4. Short forms: This type is a truncated form where the meaning of the original full word is retained. For example, *U* (university), *drama* (dramatize), *up* (upload).

5. Phrases: A phrase is a group of words made up of two or more words appearing together. For example, the noun and the noun modifier, “**หนุ่ม degree U-Prince**” (Translation: U-Prince ambassador).

6. Incomplete sentences: An incomplete sentence is a subordinate clause, which lacks a main clause to make the whole idea complete. This category was not found in this study.

7. Single full sentence: A single full sentence is a complete sentence, which contains the essential parts of a sentence such as a subject and a predicate, for example, “**Team Cholly be strong**”. Imperative sentences where normally the subject is omitted are also included in this category.

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of seven English code-mixed items. However, only six types were found in the data. The majority of items were **lexical words**, which were found 117 times (51.54%), followed by **letters of the alphabet** 55 times (24.22%), **phrases** 22 times (9.7%), **proper nouns** 17 times (7.5%), and **short forms** 11 times (4.84%), respectively. The least found items were **single full sentences**, which were found 5 times (2.2%). **Incomplete sentences** were not found in the data.

The second framework applied was a classification of six nativized features based on Kannaovakun and Gunther's [2] study of English code-mixing in Thai media.

1. Hybridization: This is a combination of Thai and English words. For example, **ถ่าย nude** (to shoot nude photography). “**ถ่าย**” is a Thai word that has been mixed with the English word “**nude**”.

2. Truncation: Truncated forms of English words are found in two types, first, truncation by dropping the first syllables. For example, “**morning**” is the short form of “**good morning**”. The second type is truncation by dropping the last syllables. For example, “**inter**” is a truncated form of the word “**international**”.

3. Reduplication: This is the repeating of English words. For example, “**ผมก็มีมุม soft soft**” (Translation: I also have a soft side in me).

4. Conversion: This occurs when English words are changed in the dominant language. Conversion occurs when English nouns are converted to Thai adjectives and English nouns are converted to Thai verbs. For example, “**จิ้มราเมน selfie กันดีกว่า**” (selfie is a noun converted to a Thai verb = Let's take a selfie)

5. Semantic shift: This is when the original meaning of an English word is modified in the nativized language. For example, “**มั่วซั่ว**” (mouth), the meaning in English is an organ but in the context of Thai, it refers to gossip.



6. Word order shift: This is a change in English grammatical patterns when a word is mixed into the nativized language. For example, “*birthday party*”, which was found in the data and replaced with the phrase “*party birthday*”.

Table 2 shows nativized features categorized into 6 types: The majority of items were **Truncations**, which were found 17 times (7.5%), followed by **hybridizations** 15 times (6%), **semantic shifts** 13 times (5.7%), **reduplications** 12 times (5.3%), and **conversions** 6 times (3%), respectively. The least found items were **word order shifts**, which were found 3 times (1.5%).

The third framework, adapted from A Corpus-based Analysis of Mixed Code in Hong Kong Speech Lee [7], has seven motivational categories that were applied to English code-mixing on a Cantonese T.V. program.

1. Euphemism: This is used to avoid the embarrassment of the speaker when talking about sexuality. For example, “*น่าจะจับ Scratch*” in this Thai dialog means “he’s got to make love with her tonight”.

2. Specificity: This is the use of an English word when it has a more specific meaning than the word or words used in the target language, English is preferred because it can fit with the context better than Thai. For example, “*hot เหมือนเดิมเลยนะพี่*” (Translation: You are a star here as usual).

3. Principle of economy: This occurs when English elements express an idea in a better way than the equivalent Thai words can, in a more concise or shorter form. For example, “*ก็เลยกลัวว่าจะ entertain ไม่ได้เต็มที่*” (Translation: I’m afraid that I cannot entertain you well enough). The word “*entertain*” replaces “*ส ำ ร ำ ง ค ว า ม ส ุ ก ส ะ ม า น*” (Translation: to entertain someone) as it has a more concise or shorter form.

4. Quotation: This is citing text or someone else’s speech when the speaker prefers to communicate in the source language. In this case, none of the meaning is lost through translation.

5. Doubling: This is English and Thai words, which have a similar meaning, appearing together to emphasize an idea or avoid repeating the same word. For example, “*ฉันไม่อยากมีคนแบบนั้นอยู่ในรายชื่อ list โทรศัพท์*” (Translation: I don’t want that kind of guy on my contact list). The Thai word “*รายชื่อ*” and the English word “*list*” have the same meaning.

6. Interjection: English interjections appearing in Thais sentences are used to intensify emotions during conversation. For example, “*Crazy! Crazy! Oh my god! ไปดูเพื่อนสิแก*” (Translation: Crazy! Crazy! Oh my god! Go after her).

7. Specific English names: This category was adapted from the original framework to cover English place names, objects, and concepts. This is because these specific nouns have similar functions and they were a large portion of the data. For example, “*เพื่อนชวนน้องไปฉลองเปิดเทอมที่ J-Club นะ*” (Translation: My friends asked me to celebrate the new semester at J-Club).

Table 3 shows seven motivational categories. The majority of items were in the category of **specificity**, which was found 117 times (51.54%), followed by **principle of economy** 67 times (29.95%), **English specific names** 17 times (7.5%), **interjections** 14 times (6.17%), and **doubling** 7 times (2.64%), respectively. The least found items were **euphemisms**, which were found 5 times (2.2%), **quotations** were not found in this data.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to Ho's classification, lexical words were the most found English items in the TV series U-Prince. [3] This is in agreement with Ho's study of code-mixing, linguistic form, and socio-cultural meaning. He found that when considering word classes of lexical items, English nouns were the most frequently identified followed by verbs, adjectives, exclamations and phrasal verbs, respectively.

The plot centers around the male protagonist, a handsome U-Prince who prefers one night stands to long-term relationships. He studies agriculture and is an heir to the family farm. Therefore, "*bad boy*", "*playboy*" and "*cowboy*" appeared in the script several times, probably, to highlight the character's personality and give more depth to his backstory. The examples below demonstrate how English nouns inserted into Thai sentences were used to create a credible backstory for the U-Prince character.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. และ U-Prince คนแรกที่เราจะแนะนำ เขาเป็น <i>playboy</i> , <i>bad boy</i> , <i>cowboy</i> สุดหล่อจากคณะเกษตรศาสตร์ | 1. And here is the first U-Prince that we would like to introduce. He is <i>a playboy</i> , <i>a bad boy</i> and also a charming <i>cowboy</i> from the Faculty of Agriculture. |
| 2. แต่ก็ต้องอย่าลืมว่าเขาเป็น <i>bad boy</i> ก็ระวังตัวนิดนึงแก | 2. But keep in mind that he's a <i>bad boy</i> . Be cautious about this too. |
| 3. อย่างที่ทุกคนรู้แน่ครับ ก็เป็นขวัญใจสาวๆ แบบ <i>playboy</i> อะไรว่ะ | 3. Well, as everybody knows, P' Sibtis is quite popular among the girls. He is a <i>playboy</i> |
| 4. เรานะครอบครัว <i>cowboy</i> ก็จริง แต่เรื่องผู้หญิงต้องให้เกียรติ | 4. We may be a <i>cowboy</i> family but we must respect women. |

[8] It can be assumed that lexical words, particularly, groups of nouns, were the most found items because content words have a significant role in expressing the meaning of a sentence. In the T.V. series U-Prince, truncations were the most frequently found items. [2] This concurs with other studies of Thai media such as The Mixing of English and Thai in Thai Television programs, [9] Thai-English Code-mixing in Hormones the series.

The truncations found in this study shared two common characteristics, they were created by eliminating either the first or the last syllables of a word. Most of the examples of truncation identified in the T.V. series U-Prince were created by removing the last syllable. For example, *inter (international)*, *U (University)*, and *share lo (to share location)*.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. มหาวิทยาลัย <i>Inter</i> ที่เพ่ที่สุดในเมืองไทย | 1. The coolest International University in Thailand. |
| 2. ถือว่าเป็นความโชคดีของสาวน้อยคนนี้ด้วยที่ได้มา date กับหนุ่ม degree <i>U-Prince</i> จากคณะเกษตรศาสตร์ | 2. And how lucky is this girl? She gets to date this man who is a U-Prince ambassador. |
| 3. ยังไงเดี๋ยวน้อง <i>share lo</i> มาให้พี่แล้วกันนะ | 3. Can you send your location to my phone? |



U-Prince is a T.V. series, which represents the lifestyle of the young generation in Thailand. The show is aimed at teenagers and the dialogue reflects real life linguistic behavior. Currently, teenagers in Thailand tend to use truncation to communicate because it requires less linguistic effort.

[7] Regarding the motivation for code-mixing in the T.V. series U-prince, based on Lee's framework, the majority of code-mixed items fell into the category of specificity. Of all word classes, nouns were the most found. This was because English words were used to avoid ambiguity when there were no equivalent words in Thai.

Interestingly, this study also uncovered some new terms that are used by Thai teenagers. These terms mainly reflect major events, current social phenomenon, and advances in technology. For example, the term *"selfie"*, which means a photograph that one has taken of oneself with a smartphone and shared via social media, does not have a Thai language equivalent. The best way to say it in Thai would be "to take a photo of oneself", which sounds awkward and does not imply the use of the camera or a smartphone. [10] Li explained that particular English words or expressions are preferred as they are more specific. In the case of selfie, the English word is used to contextualize a new concept because the term is widely understood in Thailand. Other interesting terms in this group are *"check-in"*, *"share lo (location)"*, *"up IG"*, *"up clip"*, and *"drama"*.

The dialogue in the T.V. series U-Prince suggests that social roles, personal backgrounds, and relationships influenced the scriptwriters choice of dialogue. It is noteworthy that English code-mixing, in the episodes, mostly occurs during conversations between characters who share similar backgrounds such as social class, age, education and common interests. In particular, most of the dialogue, which features English-Thai mixing, is uttered by friends of the main characters who are from the same educational background. [3] Code-mixing facilitates easier communication among group members as it allows them to express ideas and feelings without fear of misunderstanding and without the trouble of explanation when the concept is not easily replicated using Thai words. On the other hand, during conversations with interlocutors from different social classes, the characters employed code-mixing less frequently. Most of the English words identified appeared to be English loan words that have been used widely in Thailand for a long time because the working class and the older generation could understand the terms as well. This aspect of the data shows the relationship between language and identity. [11] According to Jaspal,

Language seems to have two principal functions; it is, of course, an instrument of communication, but it can also constitute a means of asserting one's identity or one's distinctiveness from others. A common language may be the ideal vehicle to express the unique character of a social group and to encourage common social ties on the basis of a common identity.

[12] Therefore, it can be said that interlocutors are motivated to mix English elements instead of using words from their language to communicate effectively when they are aware of the listener's linguistic ability, [13] or to express group identity and differentiate themselves from another group. The language used in the T.V. series reflects Thai teenager's real linguistic behavior. The characterizations represent the personality and behavior of real-life people to enable the younger generation, the main target group of the production, to relate to the characters and the plot.

The dialogue uttered in the T.V. series U-Prince reflects the young generation's real-life use of language in Thailand. The phenomenon of code-mixing in the series shows how English has become integrated into Thai discourse. In addition, the dialogue demonstrates how English and Thai language can be combined to express meanings, ideas, and feelings. Furthermore, mixing English in this type of media can make the use of English more acceptable to the younger generation in Thailand.

To find similarities and differences between the English items found in this research, future studies of code-mixing in Thai T.V. series could investigate other T.V. show genres, where the plot features characters with different ages, occupations, and incomes. Moreover, the sociolinguistic aspects and cultural meaning of code-mixing identified in the series U-Prince is worth further investigation. Further analysis of English code-mixing, based on theoretical frameworks, in other types of media, should be investigated to gain a better understanding of English use in Thai media.

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**Table 1** English items

English Items	Frequency	Percentage
Lexical words	117	51.54
Letter of the alphabet	55	24.22
Phrases	22	9.7
Proper nouns	17	7.5
Short forms	11	4.84
Single full sentences	5	2.2
Incomplete sentences	0	0

Table 2 Nativized features

Nativized features	Frequency	Percentage
Truncation	17	7.5
Hybridization	15	6
Semantic shift	13	5.7
Reduplication	12	5.3
Conversion	6	3
Word order shift	3	1.5
None of the nativized features	161	71

Table 3 Motivations of code-mixing

Types of motivation	Frequency	Percentage
Specificity	117	51.54
Principle of economy	67	29.95
English specific name	17	7.5
Interjection	14	6.17
Doubling	7	2.64
Euphemism	5	2.2
Quotation	0	0