

English Code-Mixing in Thai Reality Television Show:

The Face Thailand Season Four (All-stars)

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ABSTRACT

English is often code-mixed in everyday Thai communication and the phenomenon seems far more common these days than in the past. The study illustrates the frequencies of English code-mixing in a reality television show and suggests possible motivating factors of such practice. For authenticity, we observed conversations in the reality TV programme “The Face Thailand Season 4 All-Stars”, broadcast in 13 episodes in 2018. The dialogues were collected and analyzed for frequency and parts of speech and the types of word formation were identified.

The study found the most mixing codes in word and phrase levels. Of all 13 episodes, 5,011 code-mixing occurrences were recorded, of which 3,901 (77.85%) were words, and 1,110 (22.15%) were phrases, and the majority was nouns (68.06%). Code-mixing types mainly included hybridization (76.38%) whereas other types were much less common, such as truncation, reduplication, conversion, and word order. The study concluded that the Thais code-mixed English to serve effective communication, but the usage of the foreign code was adapted to suit the Thai syntax, particularly observed in hybridization, truncation, semantic shift, and conversion. It is, however, noted that the practice of code-mixing may be more prevalent to those with access to media and exposures to other cultures. The study further explored the speaker’s motivation in code-mixing and suggested the need for an updated compilation of English borrowings in the Thai dictionary of loanwords.

Keywords: Code-Mixing, Thai Reality TV Show, The Face Thailand, hybridization, truncation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a major part of culture as it is a medium for human communication. Each nation or a clan has developed its unique language to convey their thought, but through social contacts, one's language would be easily contaminated by others. English is undeniably the most influential language when discussing language contacts. Based on Kachru's (1985) description of "World Englishes" or "Three Concentric Circles Theory", English is not restricted to only native speakers or those countries that use English as mother tongue, which is the smallest group of users, or the Inner circle. The language is extended to the Outer circle, whose historical background empowered English among its citizen, while the Expanding circle is the largest group. This latter circle represents countries like Thailand that employ English language in the context of business operations, education, and technology. According to Pennycook (2010), the expanding circle refers to countries that learn English as a foreign language to be the most useful tool in international communication, also quite commonly known as *lingua franca* (Baker, 2009).

For the Thais, the English language has been included in formal education for over a century and English competency is seen as a special qualification that promotes employability. The more people use and understand English, the higher chances it is for the Thais to borrow English lexicons or code-mix while speaking Thai. As Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003) maintain, the prevalence of English in everyday Thai conversation reflects a broader public acceptance of code-mixing. The scope of English is gradually expanding to the daily interactions of Thai people.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Code-mixing refers to a language phenomenon -- as Sumarsih et al. (2014) identified --, that integrates two languages that the speakers understand. The integration is based on language rules or grammar, and usually involves a non-native language. Wardhaugh (1986) clarified that code-mixing takes place in a bilingual and multilingual society when a word feels special and needs to be emphasized (also Kannaovakun & Gunther, 2003). Nababan (1993) states that code blends are found primarily through informal interactions. In a nutshell, code-mixing is a part of social linguistics where people use more than one language and mix them up for interaction functions.

Baker (2008) posits that television is one of the best media for expanding political, cultural, cognitive and educational information. Producers need to increase ratings and sponsorship revenue. Therefore, they need to produce a TV show that is interesting and engaging to the audience. Currently, broadcasting has benefited from social networks that allow viewers to critique the dialogue used in the show. The show dialogues play an important role on a broadcast programme. Studies have been interested in the language used in shows. For instance, Ruanglertsilp (2018) reported that Thai celebrities use English to speak during TV interviews, which seems to convey the power and elite social class often associated with code-mixing.

Code-mixing in Thai societies has been studied in a wide array of interests and analytical styles. For example, Yuthyothin and Thip Hayosupharat (2018) studied code-mixing in a study of Thai-English code-mixing in "Pentor", Thai Sitcom television show. The results showed that most of the code-mixing used in the show included nouns, verbs, adjectives, and interjections. It emphasizes and clarifies meaning despite existing Thai equivalents.

An influential study on code-mixing in media program is that of Kannaovakun and Gunther's (2003) whose conceptual framework of analysis has been used in other later studies. The techniques of code-mixing refer to the six types – truncation, hybridization, conversion, semantic shift, reduplication, and word order.

Employing Kannaovakun and Gunther's (2003), Kuptanaroaj and Srinoparut (2020) explored code-mixing in the Thai Television Series "The Diary Tootsies the Series Season 2" and reported that the most common code-mixing was at the word level, and the most commonly used technique of code-mixing was truncation out of the six types.

The research of code-mixing conveys that the English language is not only a communication tool, but it is also a symbol of modernity as well as the trend of social linguistic phenomena. Ruanglertsilp (2018) studied code-mixing in *The Face Thailand Season Two* and *The Face Men Thailand Season One* and explored the motivations for speaking in comparisons between men and women. The result revealed that the woman who are mentors employed more code-mixing than men.

Quite similarly, Songthada and Tipayasuparat (2021) compared English code-mixing (at morphological level) and code-switching (at syntax level) in the Thai Reality Television Show "The Face Thailand Season 3". It was found that the use of English was needed to clarify the meaning or to clearly convey the message.

Another study conducted by Tanabut and Tipayasuparat (2019) on English code-mixing in the television series *U-Prince* explored the motivation of code-mixing. The show was popular and contain a large number of English words. According to the study, people created new vocabulary by mixing English and Thai words, and the motivations to mix English words was to let the listener know that the speaker has language skills. Other reasons of use were for professionalism and for respect.

As mentioned, the most common code-mixing in *U-Prince* was truncation which contradicts in English the findings in a reality show "The Face Thailand Season 3" conducted by Songthada and Tipayasuparat (2021), which found hybridization more often.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the current code-mixing study, the major questions deal with the use of interchangeable-speech coding in a television show, *The Face Thailand Season 4 All Stars* (*The Face All Stars*). The programme was a reality show broadcast in Thailand. It was created by Kantana, being offered by Ukkharatchat and Kanjaruk as executive producers. Its theme is the seek for beautiful women and handsome men to model for prizes with a mentor to guide them. The programme was chosen as a case study because it was likely to contain language code-mixing within a community of mixed-nationality contestants and mentors.

Launched in 2018, the show requires the contestants to be 13- 30 years old. *The Face Thailand Season 4 All-Stars* brought back contestants from previous seasons. Therefore, it is a combined competition of both men and women, 18 all together, and 6 mentors. The analysis was conducted on 13 episodes of 90 minutes each. The first broadcast was scheduled for February 10, 2018 on television, Channel Three and YouTube Channel "The Face - Thailand".

The study was set off under the following research questions.

1. How many code-mixing occurrences are found in the programme?
2. What types of code-mixing are employed in the chosen reality television show?

The data analysis consisted of the basic counting for the code-mixing occurrences. For identification of code-mixing type, the study referred to the framework by Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003).

Framework of analysis

For classification of code-mixing patterns, the study employed the framework suggested by Kannaovakun and Gunther (2003). Patterns of code-mixing are classified into six types: truncation, hybridization, conversion, semantic shift, reduplication, and word order.

1. Truncation refers to a shortened form of the original word, either the front or the back syllable, while maintaining the original meaning.
2. Hybridization means a combination of an English borrowing with a Thai word. The mixing part may be a result of particular terminology, leading to a new variety of hybrid word or phrase that shares the properties of both languages.
3. Conversion refers to the change in part of speech of the English word when used in a Thai sentence. For instance, a noun in English might function in a Thai sentence as a verb, without the change in form.
4. Semantic shift includes the change in the meaning of English word when used in a Thai sentence. This linguistic variation reflects an evolution of word usage as the derived meaning can be completely different from the conventional one.
5. Reduplication is a repetition of English words. In the process, part or the entire word is repeated where such occurrence does not exist in the English context.
6. Word order refers to the occurrence that English phrase is placed in a different syntactic order. In Thai, a modifier usually follows the noun while in English the modifier precedes the noun.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 General information of code-mixing

Among the total of 5,011 occurrences of code-mixing, 3,901 (77.85%) were words, and 1,110 (22.15%) were phrases. The code-mixed phrases were item's name, campaign's name, and product's brand for advertisement.

The three types words mostly code-mixed were nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The results indicated that the most code-mixed items are nouns to address the team and mentors, with the words "mentor", "team", "campaign", "masterclass" are those on top.

Other common nouns refer to cosmetic items, gestures, which correspond to the campaigns that occur in each episode such as Episode 4 "The Couture Musketeers". In Episode 6 "Under Water World", words include photographic terms such as take, shot, and position. The part of speech counts in code-mixing are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Code-mixing categorized by original part of speech

Part of speech	The number of occurrences at word level (%)
Noun	2,460 (63.06)
Verb	776 (19.89)
Adjective	361 (9.25)

Pronoun	219 (5.61)
Interjection	62 (1.59)
Adverb	14 (0.36)
Preposition	9 (0.24)
Total	3,901 (100)

4.2 The patterns of code-mixing items

Based on Kannaovakun and Gunther's (2003) classification framework, code-mixing items are classified into six common types: hybridization, truncation, conversion, semantic shift, reduplication, and word order. Hybridization was found the most among six types. The researcher obtained the following information: hybridization (76.38%), truncation (9.33%), conversion (4.88%), reduplication (4.23%), word order (2.77%), semantic shift (2.41%) The average of study is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Number of Words in Type of Code-Mixing

Type of Code-Mixing	Number of words	Percentage
Hybridization	1,048	76.38
Truncation	128	9.33
Reduplication	58	4.23
Semantic Shift	33	2.41
Conversion	67	4.88
Word Order	38	2.77
Total	1,372	100

To illustrate the findings, this part describes and discuss each type of code-mixing with some selected examples, given in the full utterance.

1. Hybridization

Hybridization is the most common type of all, found in as high as 73.38% of all code-mixing occurrences. English words are borrowed and mixed with Thai words to convey a meaning in utterances. There are two types: preserving the first syllable of English words and preserving the second syllable of English words.

Type 1 Retaining English word at the first syllable

Example 1: cream อานน้ำ [cream aap nam] meaning shower cream

Utterance: หลังจากนั้นเราจะไป station ที่ 3 ให้น้องๆ present **cream** อานน้ำ

(Lang chak nan Rao Cha Pai Station Thi Sam Hai Nong Nong Phri Sen Khrim_aap nam)

After that we will go station number three let sisters present cream shower

Translation: After that, we are going to station 3 for you to present shower **cream**.

Example 2: Freeze [freeze a-rom] meaning freeze the mood

Utterance: จริงๆแล้วภาพนิ่งมันทำได้แต่เราต้อง **freeze** อารมณ์ไว้

(*Ching Ching Lao Phapning Man Tham Dai Tae Rao Tong Fiz a-rom Wai*)

actually picture still it can do but we must freeze mood keep

Translation: Actually, still pictures can do the job but we must **freeze** our mood.

Type 2 Retaining English word at the ending syllable

Example 3 ความ weak [kwaam weak] meaning weakness

Utterance: การที่มีน้ำตามันแสดงถึงความ **weak** ก็คือแสดงถึงความพ่ายแพ้แล้วอะ

(*Kan Thi Mi Namta Man Sadaeng Thueng Kwaam Weak ko Khue Sadaeng Thueng Khwaam Phaiphae Lao Ah*)

Having tears it show [noun-prefix] weak represent defeat already

Translation: The tears reflect weakness, that is showing the defeat.

Example 4 หลุด frame [lud frame] meaning out of frame

Utterance: ทุกครั้งที่เขากระโดดข้ามมัน **หลุด frame**

(*Thuk Khrang Thi Khao Kradot Pha Man lud frem*)

Every time when he/she jump cloth it out frame

Translation: Every time (s)he jumps, the clothes fall out of frame.

Example 5 ไม่ fair [mai fair] meaning unfair

Utterance **ไม่ fair** ก็ **ไม่ fair** ครับ แต่ว่าความคิดผมก็คืออย่างนี้ครับ

(*Mai Fair Ko Mai Fair Khrap Taewa Khwamkhit Phom Ko Khue Yang Ngi Khrap*)

No fair is no fair [politeness particle] but idea me is this [politeness particle]

Translation: Being unfair, yes probably, but this is my opinion.

2. Truncation

The code-mixing occurrences quite often employed truncation techniques. Perhaps this comes with the Thai as a language of isolated words. Even though the occurrences were counted as second to hybridization, truncation is far less common, with only 9.33 per cent of occurrences. Truncations may occur in three forms of omission: the first syllable, the ending syllable, and the one in between. The current study did not observe an omission between words.

Example 6: คอมโพส [kom-pos] meaning compose

Utterance: เจ๊ว่า **compose** นี้ดี

(*Cha Wa Compose Ni Di*)

I (sister- first personal pronoun) say compose this good

Translation: I think that is a good composition.

The word compose derives from the word composition being cut short.

Example 7: นอยด์ / [noi] meaning paranoid

Utterance: ไม่รู้ว่าน้องเขานอยด์ (noid) อะไร

(*Mai Ru Wa Nong Khao Noi A Rai*)

Not know that he/she noid what

Translation: (I) don't know what she was paranoid about.

The word 'paranoid' has been shortened in Thai as นอยด์ [noi] and the usage was comprehensible to the listeners in the set.

Example 8: เมนต์ 'ment' meaning comment

Utterance: ไม่เมนต์ (ment) ดีกว่าค่ะ

(*Mai Ment Di Kwa Kha*)

not ment better

Translation: I'd better not comment.

Since the Thai word stress usually falls on the last syllable, the word 'comment' when spoken in Thai, receives the stress on the second syllable 'ment'. Therefore, when shortening the word, Thai users keep the stressed syllable, 'ment', and omit the lighter 'com'.

Example 9: ก๊อบ [kop] – Copy

Utterance: เดี่ยวเป็นทีมแรกเดี๋ยวก็ก๊อบเราเห็นนี่ไป โอ้ยไม่ก๊อบ (kop) หรอกค่ะ

(*Diao Pen Thim Raek Diao Kop Rao Oi Mai Kop Rok Cha*)

Soon be team first would copy we see right away oh no copy

Translation: The first team could be copied, but once we saw it, oh no way we would copy that.

The omission in the word 'copy' is on the second syllable while the first syllable remains. The stress when a Thai says 'copy' is likely to be placed in both syllable 'kop-pee'. A common code-mix for 'copy' is 'kop' whose first consonant sound is pronounced with a stronger Thai /g/ sound.

Example 10: ฟิน [fin] – Finale

Utterance: มันก็ไม่ฟิน (fin) อะค่ะ

(*Man Ko Mai Fin A Kha*)

It not fin [politeness particle]

Translation: It not fin/ We would not be satisfied.

The word 'fin' originally derives from the French 'finale', which has been used as a fashion terminology. It implies the state of completion or the highlight. The Thai borrows the word to refer to the satisfactory feeling.

3. Conversion

As conversion refers to syntactic change, the English items are fused in grammar within the Thai sentence.

Example 11: เลส [less] - less

Utterance: นิกก็หน้าเลส (less) กว่านี้หน่อย

(*Nik Ki Na Less Kwa Ni Noi*)

Nikki face less than this a bit

Translation: Nikki, face is a bit less than this.

Apparently, the word ‘less’ in English is an adjective but when used in a Thai sentence it has become a verb. This mismatch structure may be caused by the fact that adjective in Thai are often used without a copular verb; hence the Thai adjectives are likely to function as a verb and convey the action, as evidence in Example 12.

Example 12: แฮปปี้ [hap-pee] – happy

Utterance: ดีใจครับพี่ริต้าเขาแฮปปี้ (hap-pee)

(*Di Chai Khrap Phi Ri-Ta Khao Hap-pee*)

Glad [politeness particle] sister Rita she happy

Translation: Glad sister Rita she happy. / I am glad that Miss Rita is happy.

Example 13: แอคติ้ง [ak-ting] – acting

Sentence: ดิฉันแอคติ้ง (ak-ting) ว่าดิฉันเต้นได้

(*Dichan Ak-tink Wa Dichan Ten Dai*)

I acting that I dance can.

Translation: was acting that I could dance.

The example shows that the word ‘acting’ stands alone as a verb in Thai although its particle ‘be’ to make a verb phrase is not included, as in ‘I was acting’.

4. Semantic shift

Different from conversion, semantic shift refers to semantic change from the original word (English) to a new meaning in the recipient language (Thai).

Example 14: เบอร์ [ber] – number

Utterance: เล่นใหญ่มากเบอร์ (ber) อะไรนี่

(*Len Yai Mak Ber Arai Nia*)

Play big very number what

Translation: Playing very big, what number is this?

The word ‘number’ is first truncated to ‘ber’ and then a new meaning understood by the Thai as ‘the degree of intensity’ or the level. Semantic shift occurrences tend to create a new meaning in the recipient language that will not be recognized by the donor language.

Example 15: แมน [man] – manly

Utterance: โค้รตแมน (man) เด็ช

(Khot Maen Loei)

Greatly man so

Translation: Greatly masculine / gentleman

The word ‘man’ when borrowed in Thai may carry different tones of meaning. It may imply a masculine appearance, or a gentleman manner. Such implications were not directly transferred from the word ‘man’ in the donor language.

Example 16: เซลที่ [sel] – self-confidence

Utterance: เสียเซลที่ (self) นิดนึ่งนะกะ

(Sia Sel Nit Nueng Na Kha)

Lose self a bit [politeness particle]

Translation: Lose self a bit / Losing a bit of confidence

The semantic of the word ‘self’ that the Thai has borrowed is seemingly far different from the original one, as the word ‘self’ has gone through truncation process, from ‘self-confidence’, of which the key ‘confidence’ has been omitted.

5. Reduplication

In English, words are not commonly repeated, unlike the Thai language. The repetition in Thai may function as stressing, or laxing the intensity. When an English adjective is borrowed, the Thai users tend to make a reduplication as they would say in the Thai structure.

Example 17: คิวท์คิวท์ [cute-cute] – cute-ish

Utterance: เต้นแบบเท่ๆ แต่มีความคิวท์คิวท์ (cute cute) แบบน่ารัก

(Ten Beab The The Tae Mi Khwam Tae Mi Khwam Cute-Cute beab Na Rak)

Dance cool cool but with cute cute like cute

Translation: Dance in a cool style, but kind of cute.

The reiterated word ‘cute cute’ does not sound familiar in English, but all Thais would understand this linguistic usage.

6. Word order

Phrases in English when spoken in Thai sentences are altered in the word order to fit the Thai pattern, but probably violating English structure patterns.

Example 18: campaign Bridesmaid (instead of Bridesmaid Campaign)

Utterance: ในโจทย์ของแคมเปญ ไบรด์ทั้งหมด (campaign Bridesmaid)

(*Nai Chot Khong Khaem Pen Blaid Made*)

In question of campaign Bridemaid

Translation: In question of campaign bridesmaid / In the question of Bridesmaid Campaign

Example 19: ‘event fashion show’ instead of ‘fashion show event’

Utterance: เอาทั้ง event fashion show

(*Ao Thang Faechan Cho*)

Take whole event fashion show

Translation: Take all event fashion show / Take all fashion show event

The examples show a common [Noun + Modifier] pattern in Thai language when English words are spoken. This kind of word order alteration can cause confusion when the phrases are to be used in English. For instance, Thai people would refer to the ‘bank book’ as a ‘book bank’.

5. DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTION

As English is widely learned and used in Thai societies, code-mixing of English in Thai conversations is very common, especially in the circle of those living an urban lifestyle. This could be a result of media influences or effects of language used in entertainment circles. Adoption of English words and phrases in Thai has various patterns. The current study found hybridization heavily employed, which goes in line with Songthada and Tipayasuparat (2021), exploring English code-mixing and code-switching in “The Face Thailand Season 3. On the other hand, Tanabut and Tipayasuparat (2019) found truncation more common in the television series U-Prince.

Like most of other studies’ findings, nouns are the most common code-mixed items. Since the purpose of code-mixing is basically to convey the meaning that may be absent in the recipient language, nouns are likely to be easily borrowed and code-mixed. However, in many cases English words are code-mixed for meaning emphasis, not necessarily that the Thai counterpart does not exist.

Despite the apparent influence of English language, the Thai users tend to adapt the code-mix to fit the Thai syntax such as through hybridization, semantic shift, and conversion. Probably this is a reason why the English code-mix sounds smooth in the conversation and does not appear odd in the utterance. Neither the speaker nor the listener even noticed this linguistic phenomenon since it facilitates the conversation flow.

Such linguistic phenomenon as lexical borrowing, to some extent, implies the language contact’s influence on both core-borrowings where words already exist in the recipient language and cultural borrowings where words represent objects new to the culture (Myers-Scotton, 2002). In our contemporary usage, code-mixing may reflect language evolution. While in the past, the use of foreign languages in a recipient language was viewed as a privilege (Myers-Scotton, 1992), it seems no longer the case nowadays. The current study of a reality show program relied on English code-mixing and borrowings for effective communication. Thai people are familiar with English and naturally incorporate English words in everyday conversation.

Nevertheless, while the study assumes the prevalence of English code-mixing as a common linguistic phenomenon, the researchers are well aware that code-mixing may be far less common in other Thai groups whose access to media and exposures to different cultural circles are limited.

Our study in phase two explored the speaker's motivation in code-mixing, which could provide deeper insight of the need for code-mixing. To take a forwarding step, the study would point out the need for an updated compilation of English borrowings that have not been included in the Thai dictionary of loanwords. For sociolinguistic explanation, a further study could be conducted on surveying public perception of code-mixing to identify the current trends and attitudes.

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