CAMBODIA EXPERIENCED ITS FIRST WAVE OF “LINGUISTIC CRISIS” when the country gained independence from France in the mid-1950s. Nationalist exaltation was then born. It was decided that all French words used in the Cambodian administration and justice and educational systems had thus to be replaced. A Commission Culturelle had been created in 1946 to meet this urgent need. The members of this Commission were almost entirely Buddhist monks and scholars, who were mostly, if not all, competent in Pāli and Sanskrit. Overall, their duty was to translate French words that were used in different fields into Khmer.

François Martini, an outstanding French linguist, had the opportunity to take part in the commission between 1946 and 1950 and observed how the Khmer created new words. In his 1962 paper entitled “De la création actuelle des mots en cambodgien,” the author pointed out how the Commission Culturelle was working to create new words in Khmer. The principal processes of creating new words were then as follows (Martini 1962: 162):

I. Extension of meaning of a Khmer word or its metaphorical use, e.g. kaŋ’ [kəŋ] ‘wheel’ was extended to ‘bicycle’; grāp’ [krəap] ‘stone, pit, pip’ was extended to ‘bullet.’ From it later were derived grāp’ paek [krəap-빠ек] ‘bomb, grenade’ and grāp’ paek ǯai [krəap-빠ект-chai] ‘hand grenade’ …

II. Maintenance of phonetically adapted French words and especially those which had become “too popular” in usage, e.g. puyx’ [pʊjɾɔ] ‘office’ (Fr. bureau), Æus(ti) [pʰə] ‘post office’ (Fr. poste), taem [tæm] ‘stamp’ (Fr. timbre), Æulis [pəlih] ‘police’ …

III. Loan translation of French words, e.g. desacar [ts’aɾ-kaɾ] ‘tourist’ [Skt. deśa, Pā. desa ‘region, country’ + Skt., Pā. cara ‘who moves, walks’], dūrasābd [tʊɾə-sap] ‘telephone’ [Skt. dūra ‘far’ + śabda ‘sound, speech’] … These two words are built from Indic elements. As we will see, these kinds of words could be built from Khmer words as well.

IV. Direct Indic (Pāli and Sanskrit) loanwords or new compound words built with Pāli or Sanskrit elements, e.g. seribhūb [serəipʰɪɾɪp] ‘freedom’ (Pā. seri ‘free, freedom’ + bhūva (> bhūb) ‘state, condition, nature, shape, aspect, way, manner, fashion’).

In his paper, Martini omitted to deal with the primary morphological process of Khmer, which is affixation. I shall call this process V and examine it in the last part of this paper.

With the economic reopening of the country towards a free market, and political movement towards democracy during these last few decades, Cambodia must presently face another wave of linguistic crisis: the need to translate or create new words related to different fields such as advanced technology, computer science, electronics, the environment, law, administration, democratization, tourism and so on.

The purpose of this paper is to study how the Khmer language behaves with respect to new word formation after almost half a century. Does the language use the same processes to create new words or adopt different processes? What are the trends in creating new words? I will try to answer these questions and also present the general awareness of native speakers (both ordinary and educated) of these processes. To facilitate the presentation, I will keep the order of Martini’s criteria, as quoted earlier in the introduction.
I. Extension of meaning of a Khmer word or its metaphorical usage

The process of meaning extension or “grinding” phenomena normally creates abstract or metaphorical nouns from concrete nouns in a language. This is true, though it is not always the case in Khmer, as we will see. The first extended meaning of a Khmer word that comes to mind is jajuí [ čučuč ] ‘to fluff up’ as in kho āv jajuí [ khašʔaŋ-čučuč ] (‘clothes’ + ‘to fluff up’) for ‘secondhand clothes.’ Clothes sellers imported these kinds of clothes to Cambodia in the mid-1980s and piled them up on mats to sell in market areas. Clients came and fluffed up clothes to select their favorite ones before bargaining the price, hence the name of these imported clothes. During that time or a little bit later on, traders also imported secondhand motorcycles and other vehicles, especially from or via Thailand. Of course, clients did not fluff up the motorcycles or the cars, but the metaphorical usage of jajuí as ‘secondhand items’ had been established, hence the expressions ó£t£ jajuí [ močučuč ] ( ‘motorcycle’ + ‘to fluff up’) for ‘secondhand motorcycle’ and ℓän jajuí [ lañ-čučuč ] ( ‘car’ + ‘to fluff up’) for ‘secondhand car.’

Other extended meanings of Khmer words, not necessarily abstract, are: srom anüm@y [ sračašnañmaï ] ( ‘case, cover, envelope’ + ‘hygiene’) for ‘condom.’ The word srom [ sračač ] had already been extended to srom khuor [ sračač-khwa ] ‘meninx (anat.)’ (‘case’ + ‘marrow, brains’). Àv bhl¢e¨ [ ñau-phlič ] ( ‘shirt’ + ‘rain’) ‘rain coat’ is a Khmer compound-word that was recently extended to ‘condom.’ Some other formations are tāk’ kañ, sčevabhau phnat’, druń jriük, kär’ tāv, which I will explain below:

Kañ [ kañ ] normally means ‘ring, circle, bracelet, necklace …’ It has been extended to female contraception. This word was heard in the 1980s and 1990s and was then commonly used. So tāk’ kañ [ dāñ-kañ ] basically means ‘to use female contraception,’ specifically, intrauterine devices.

Phnat’ [ phnat ] means ‘fold’ (n.) (derived by infixation from pat’ [ ñat ] ‘to fold, bend’). Sčevabhau phnat’ [ sčau-phay-phnat ] designates ‘brochures, pamphlets’ recently distributed by NGOs in order to educate and inform people.

Druń jriük [ truŋ-crucrj ] is a pig’s cage. Its new meaning is ‘pound sign’ (in the North American sense, this refers to the sign #). Modern Cambodia, like other Southeast Asian countries, is swamped with cell phones. The sign is so called because it resembles a pig’s cage.

The expression kāp’ āv [ kap-daay ] (lit. to cut, hack with a sword) was heard a lot in the sixties and seventies when Hong Kong sword-fighting movies poured into Cambodia. They are called kun kāp’ āv [ kàn-kap-daay ]. It has been extended to mean ‘to cheat badly everybody without exception (friends, relatives).’

There is also mcäs’ phdaí [ mcah-phtah ] ‘owner of a house’ ( [ mcah ] ‘owner, master’ + [ phtah ] ‘house’), which has been extended to a host country receiving international sporting events or meetings.

An extended word in the realm of new technology is rāv rak [ riaŋ-raʔ ] ( [ riaŋ ] ‘to grope, search’ + [ raʔ ] ‘to look for’) ‘to search with the hands, to search by observing closely, to analyze or examine in order to find the truth’ which gives ‘to search (on the internet).’

Finally, one of the most interesting extended words is äŋikajan [ ñaŋkaʔcun ] ( < Päli ñañ + ik > ñañik + jana ) ‘citizen.’ The Vacañanukram Khmaer defines this word as follows “people who are under the authority of others or people who live, work in a foreign country.” This word was probably created to designate Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants living in Cambodia. The word was extended to ‘immigrants,’ including Khmers who had lived abroad, when they came back to
Cambodia in the early 1980s. The latter had difficulty in accepting this name, when they were in their own country, particularly given the fact that the country was then supported by Vietnam.

II. Maintenance of phonetically adapted French or English words
Phonetically adapted French words, especially those which became too popular to simply erase, still exist both in standard and popular usage as the Khmer had borrowed from the French since the beginning of French colonial rule in 1863 (cf. Sok 1999). At present, Khmer continues to borrow a few words from French, though more words are now borrowed from English. Cambodia’s joining ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in 1999 ensured that Khmer would increase its English loanwords as the member States of ASEAN use English as a common language. Other factors such as the return of Khmer emigrants, especially from English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada and the United States essentially), has intensified the borrowing of English words. Moreover, most NGOs operating in Cambodia are English-speaking organizations. They are partly responsible for English loanwords by introducing new concepts into the country.

As we observe the present linguistic situation of Cambodia, young people learn more and more English as it is easier for them to find a job with their English skills (Clayton 2002). They form part of those who introduce English loanwords into Khmer. Some English loans appear, disappear and reappear in usage. Others have been adopted into the language. Here is a short list of English loans taken at random to illustrate the above concern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Khmer Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJ (Disc Jockey)</td>
<td>ដែលក្នុងដំបូងដោយស្នាដៃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heroin [he-ro:i:n, ?e-ro:?in]</td>
<td>ហ៊ុយរូ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail [?i:mei:l]</td>
<td>ជីអេ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids [?est]</td>
<td>អុី</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV [hiu]</td>
<td>អេវី</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show [so:] (any kind of public exhibition or display, especially dance)</td>
<td>សុវត្ថិភាព</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD [si:di:]</td>
<td>េសញុប</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concert [kha:n-sa:]</td>
<td>ការអោយ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digital [di:ci:thai]</td>
<td>ដីជី</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dinosaur [da:i-no:s-a:]</td>
<td>ស្តុយសាន</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masters [mah-sta:] in Masters of Arts. There are also alternative words created from Indic roots: pariññāpatra rañ[s] [pa?ri?na?at-ra?n] and anupaññit [?anu?a?nt].</td>
<td>ស្រាប់ស្រាប់</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO (non-governmental organization) [?an-cii:to:]</td>
<td>ឥស្សាកាម</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth noting that the phonetic variations of the last three words show that they are new candidates and that the language has not fixed a proper pronunciation yet. This is particularly true for polysyllabic words.

III. Loan translation of Western words
A loan translation or calque consists of translating a borrowed word component by component into a host language. Khmer has practiced and still practices loan translation to create new
words from Western languages, especially from English and French. Below are a few examples:

Saññā bhloē khīc (< saññā ‘sign’ + [phlō] ‘fire’ + [khīc] ‘green’) for ‘green light or go-ahead.’

Paññī khmau (< phanā ‘list’ + [khmau] ‘black’) for ‘black list.’

Phsür añt (< phsura ‘market’ + [añt] ‘dark’) for ‘black market.’

Tu ml (< tū ‘table’ + [ml] ‘round’) for ‘roundtable.’

Since Khmer borrows more and more from English as we said in section II, some loan translations of English words occur increasingly as follows:

Gehadaêr (< khaṭ ‘home’ + [tāmp] ‘page’) ‘home page’


Manuss khlū (< munuh ‘human, man, people’ + [khlu] ‘strong’) ‘strongman, a leader who obtains power by force and suppression, dictator.’ Its meaning in Khmer has changed from the original one, as defined in the Cambridge Dictionary: “a person who is very powerful and able to cause change, especially of a political type.”

Añg-kür krau raááhüpül (< ‘organization’ + ‘out, out of’ + ‘government’) for ‘nongovernmental organization ( NGO)’ or añg-kür min maen raááhüpül (< ‘organization’ + ‘not’ + ‘government’). The truncation [añg] is also heard.

With the inflow of foreign tourists in recent years, Cambodia has had to provide accommodation for all kinds of tourists. A loan translation here is phdaí bh –¢ev (< [phth] ‘house’ + [phī] ‘guest’) for ‘guesthouse’ which has rapidly fallen into disuse and is now replaced by phdaí saêåük’ (< [phth] ‘house’ + [smna] ‘stay’).

Finally, there is also pañ dhaê (< [ph] ‘brother’ + [th] ‘big’) for ‘big brother.’ The word normally means “a government, ruler or person in authority that has complete power and tries to control people’s behavior and thoughts, and limit their freedom” as defined in the Cambridge Dictionary. But it has another particular meaning, which is “rascal.” This word is not necessarily a direct loan translation from English, as the expression is found in other languages in the region.

IV. Direct Indic (Pāli and Sanskrit) loanwords or loanwords compounded with the help of Pāli or Sanskrit elements

The Indic suffixal elements that Martini (op. cit.) mentioned in his paper are still productive. To cite some of the most common, we have -kär ‘act, action, affair,’ -bhāb [pī] ‘state, condition, nature, shape, aspect, way, manner, fashion,’ -dharm ‘order, law, usage’ [thān], -kamm [kam] ‘action, act, deed, activity,’ -kicc [kēc] ‘duty, affair, act,’ -niyam [ni?[jum] ‘ism,’ -sāstr [sah] ‘teaching, treaty’ or -vidyā [bi?ṭṭṭhī] ‘knowledge, science...’ -sāstr and -vidyā are sometimes used interchangeably: bhūmi-sāstr [phummi?sa] and bhūmitvīdyā [phu[m?b?ṭṭthī] both mean ‘geography’ but rūpasāstr [rupsa] means ‘morphology’ and rūpavīdyā [rup?b?ṭṭthī] ‘physics.’ However, Khin Sok (1999: 310 fn 56) pointed out that some of these suffixes such as -kamm and -niyam have been used for a long time to create new words in Khmer and that the Commission Culturelle simply adopted them.

-kär ‘act, action, affair’ (Skt. kāya, Pāli kāra)


-bhāb or bhāb- ‘state, condition, nature, shape, aspect, way, manner, fashion’ (Skt., Pā. bhāva)
Nidanābhāb [nīdaṇā-bhāp] (< Pā. ni ‘free from, depriving of’ + dāṇḍa ‘to punish, punishment’ + bhāb) ‘impunity’ (cf. Sam Thang 1961: 443; Tep Yok & Thao Kun 1967: 649). Especially, when high-ranking ministers, or members of their family do bad things and are never punished.
Tamlābhāb [dāmla-bhāp] (dāmla) ‘transparency’ + bhāb ‘transparency’ (Hing Thoraxy & Hean Sahib 2003: 656) (a recent neologism used in politics, whereas the word tamlā, which is ancient, refers to kind-heartedness).

Bhāb ralūn [bhāp-ralūn] (bhāb + ralūn) ‘to be long and unbroken, long and tapering’ ‘smooth running of a negotiation, a business.’

-kicc ‘duty, affair, act, that which should be done’ (Pā. kicca)
Abhipūla[kicc [aϕla-kicc] (< Skt., Pā. abhipūla ‘protector’ + kicca) ‘governance’ (Hing Thoraxy & Hean Sahib 2003: 336). Particularly, in order to continue receiving international aid from some donors, the Cambodian government has to ensure abhipūla[kicc la [aϕla-la] ‘good governance.’

-kamm ‘action’ (Pā. kamma)
Sakalabhātupaniyakamm [sakkalabhātupaniyakamm] (< Sk., Pā. sakala ‘consisting of parts, divisible, material; possessing all its component parts, complete, entire, whole, all’ + Sk., Pā. bhāva ‘state, condition, nature, shape, aspect, way, manner, fashion’ + Sk., Pā. upaniyā ‘having brought near’ + kamm) ‘globalization’ (cf. Hing Thoraxy & Hean Sahib 2003: 333).


Balaratthavidyā [balaratthavidyā] (< Sk. bala ‘power, strength, might, vigour, force, validity; military force, troops, army’ + Pā. rāṭha ‘country’ > balarattha ‘people, citizens, population of state’) + vidyā) ‘civic education’ (cf. Lidee Khmer 1998: 142) (which replaces sīladharm nayopāy [sallōhna-njūrabai], ‘political morality,’ one of the modules taught at school in the 1980s).
-sāstr ‘teaching, treaty’ (Sk. śāstra)

Epidemīsāstr [epidēmīsah] (< Fr. épidémie + sāstr) for ‘epidemiology’ (this word is not yet recorded in dictionaries and lexicons, but is found in recent articles on HIV/AIDS).

It is to be noted that -sāstr(a) is much less used than -vidyā in this sense.

Sūtrasātr [sosah] (< Skt. svāra + sāstr) for ‘phonetics.’

Jan- or -jan- ‘folk, people, person, being, human being’ (Sk., Pā.)

Pakkhajan [pākka-cun] (< Pā. pakkha ‘part, side’ + jan) ‘party member, title used during the regime of the People’s Republic of Cambodia in the 1980s.’

Jan bhīes khluon [cun-phīah-khluan] (< jan + bhīes khluon ‘to flee, to escape’) ‘refugee’ (cf. Lidee Khmer 1998: 53). In dictionaries prior to 1975, the compound is qṇak bhīes khluon [nāḍ- phīah-khluan].

Sakammajan [sa-kamma-cun] (< Pā. sakamma ‘one’s own occupation, active’ + jan) for ‘activist of a political party’ (recent word).

-kar ‘hand, maker’

Bidhīkar [pithi-kac] (< Skt., Pā. vidhi (> bidhī) ‘form, way, rule’ + kar) for ‘master of ceremonies, emcee’ (on the model of bidhīkār [pithi-kac] ‘protocol’).

Balakar [pulla-kac] (< Skt., Pā. bala ‘force’ + kar) for ‘soldier, labourer, worker, proletarian’ as in balakar ka prāṃ [pulla-kac-ka-pram] ‘people who were designated by the then-Cambodian government to go and clear the forest at the Khmer-Thai border in the mid-eighties.’

The relationship between people who do the action and those who receive it necessitates the use of different Indic suffixes. The following examples are attested in the Khmer dictionary of the Institut Bouddhique (1967-1968).

Nāyak [niyau]?’director’ (< Skt., Pā. nī- ‘to lead, guide’ -aka ‘agentive suffix’) (the feminine is nāyikā).

Yācak [iycu] ‘beggar’ (< Skt., Pā. YĀC- ‘to ask, beg’ + -aka).

Dāyak [iycu] ‘benefactor, donor, grantor’ (< Skt., Pā. DĀ(Y)- ‘to give, offer, present, deliver’ -aka) (the feminine is dāyikā).

Niyojak [niyoju] ‘employer’ (< Skt., Pā. ni-YUJ- ‘to appoint’ + -aka).

Niyojit [niyoju] ‘employee’ (< Skt., Pā. ni-YUJ- ‘to appoint’ -ita ‘past participle’).

Samājik [samaci] ‘member’ (the feminine is samājikā), puggalik [pugali] ‘staff, personal,’ buddhāsāsanik [pudsah] ‘Buddhist’ ...

a- ‘Negative prefix in Skt. and Pā.’

Anitiratthi [a niyrat] (< a + nī ‘law, rule, statute, regulation, right, conduct’ + rattha ‘state, nation, population’) ‘state, nation without law (French: État de non-droit).’

V. Morphological and compounding process

As we said, the Khmer morphological process of affixation is still used.

Pampdhuh [bumpthuh] (< pthuh ‘to explode’ ‘to make explode’ (refers to suicide bombing) (recent neologism).


Rapak ganhoen [roa?-kumhag] ([roa?] < [ra?] ‘to look for’ + [kumhag] < [khag] ‘to find’) ‘discovery’
(created by the Khmerization Committee). There is also an alternative: kār rak-khoeū [kār-rāk-khōeû] (< kār + [rāk] ‘to look for’ + [khōeû] ‘to find’) ‘discovery,’ which is less formal.

It seems that this system was fully revived by the Permanent Khmerization National Committee in the mid-1960s when secondary education was in the process of being taught in the national and official language, i.e. Khmer, replacing French. This Committee actually tried to avoid compounds with prefix words such as kūr ‘act, action, affair,’ sek-kōt ‘affair, matter, case,’ qnak ‘person,’ pratha‘ tool, instrument’ and so on:

Caēåüt’ thnük’ [cēamuēn-thnük] rather than kūr cūt’ thnük’ [kaē-cēamuēn-thnük] ‘classification.’

Taēr£v kūr [mrēm-kaē] rather than kūr trēv kūr [kaē-trēm-kaē] ‘need (n.).’


Lm£n [lēm] rather than satv lēn [sēt-lēn] ‘reptile.’


Although, some of the infixational words did not survive, this decision had a tremendous impact surviving the disappearance of the Institute of Khmerization in 1975, as it is common now for Cambodian scholars and journalists to create new words based on this morphological process.

If affixation seems most likely to be passive, compounding is not. Popular word formations such as radeï bhlot‘ê [rēth-phlōt] ‘train’ ([rēth] ‘cart’ + [phlōt] ‘fire’), dū di̱k kak [tu-tēk] ‘fridge’ ([tu] ‘closet’ + [tē] ‘water’ + [kak] ‘to freeze’), successfully created to replace some French words in the past, are still in use, e.g. gūth bīnbō [kūt-pīnpiē] ([kūt] ‘excrement, buttocks’ + [pīnpiē] ‘spider’) ‘diapers’ ([dāj-pē] is also heard however). So besides the Khmer infix [-m-] and the Indic suffix -jan denoting both the human agent of the action of the verb (comparable to English –er as in doer, smoker …), recourse to compounding is, with the help of qnak, very common whether it is a loan translation or not, e.g. qnak nām bāky [nēa-ŋam-pē] ([nēa] ‘people’ + [ŋam] ‘to guide’ + [pē] ‘speech, words’) for ‘spokesperson,’ qnak vibhūg nayopūy [nēa-ϕībhōg-ŋayompē] ([nēa] ‘people’ + [ϕībhōg] ‘to analyze’ + [ŋayompē] ‘politics’) ‘political analyst.’

Here are some other compound nouns:

Siddhi jraē kon nayopūy [sēt-krē-ŋam-ŋayompē] ([sēt] ‘right’ + [krē-ŋam] ‘to be under the aegis of someone, live with someone, a protégé of someone’ + [ŋayompē] ‘politics’) for ‘political asylum.’


As shown, Khmer uses the “same” processes to create new words as those noted by Martini four decades ago. In a big change to these word-creation processes in Khmer, Khmer switches from French loanwords to English ones (process II), and the latter become more and more common. This shows that Khmer-English bilingualism has increased notably. English loanwords are sometimes in conflict with words created from Indic sources. The two processes “loan” and “Indic” are the principal sources and they occur parallel to each other. Most of the Indic bound suffixes cited by Martini, which I have mentioned again in process IV, are nativized.
Now, how do institutions react to all these changes? Not only do institutions or government personnel not have any policy to stop the flow of excessive use of English loanwords, but they themselves also deliberately use English loanwords in law and official letters (Chhieng Vibol 2004). There is no committee in charge of controlling the use of vocabulary. Journalists and translators have freedom to create new words. Some purists (fn 4) criticize all use of English words in the language. They try their best to find a solution. However, what they propose is to go back to Indic sources: words that already existed with a meaning more or less similar to the English ones or words that are newly created. Indic words were not all welcomed by the Khmer because of their length and their unusual reading rules in Khmer.

The study of Khmer neologisms could provide information about and help us understand current social development, in particular how Cambodians view their own language. This is also valid regarding the recent reform of Khmer spelling.

Finally, all words cited in this paper are absent or at least lacking an entry for their meaning in word process I, in the Vacanünukram Khmaer. This does not absolutely mean that they had not been created by then, but rather that their usage was not common. As seen, some words were created by the Commission Culturelle, though they were not commonly used at that period. Now, as the need arises, we start using some old words and delving into ancient sources. In any case, the most recent edition of the authoritative Khmer dictionary goes back to 1968. The language has greatly changed, not necessarily in terms of processes, but in the number of lexical items during these last decades. There is a lot of work to do in this field.

NOTES

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1. Some earlier scholars (including Martini himself, and Nacaskul 1962) claimed that Khmer affixation stopped being active or purely and simply died off. Lewitz (1968: 121) rejected this hypothesis and argued that Khmer affixation is not dead as can be seen in some recent Khmer neologisms, e.g. by infixation traï [traə] > tamraï [damraə] ‘to filter’ > ‘filter.’ It then gives rise to the compounds kraïs tamraï [krudh-damraə] ‘filter paper,’ tamraï nom [damraə-num] ‘kidney,’ by prefixation suïd [sot] ‘pure’ (Pâ. suïda, Skt. suïda) > pansuïd [šuπnsot] ‘to purify’. I will return to this point in my discussion of “process V.”

2. This prefix [ca-] in jajuí serves to denote ‘repetition’ as in other numerous Khmer words: papos [sùsí] ‘to sweep, brush, shake (off) repeatedly,’ dadah [tseah] ‘to beat, flap the wings repeatedly,’ kakoy [kakaj] ‘to scratch repeatedly (like a chicken).’

3. The alternate employment of some French and English words is indicative of this transitional period, e.g. [sì-dà] ~ [šëtə] (sida ~ aids), [tæč-dì-nac tí] ~ [khom-phju-θski] (ordinateur ~ computer) and the like.

4. Many words are used by bilinguals and could potentially become borrowings such as [bakî-fäh] ‘breakfast,’ [dìm-nà] ‘dinner,’ etc. Some Khmer purists are aware of the excessive use of English words and severely criticize it. However, they alternatively propose words of Indic origin such as pïtarûs [šat-tal-rah] (Pâ. pïtarûsa ‘morning meal, breakfast’), and sïyamûs [šaïa-mah] (Pâ. sïyamûsa ‘evening meal, dinner’) (Chhieng Vibol 2003). These words are unknown by the Khmer themselves because they are too elegant or literary, even well-educated people ignore them. We seem likely to turn back to the old problem of the 1950s when Khmer scholars then used/created long words from Indic source, and ordinary people had difficulty pronouncing and remembering them. There is also another practice of English-usage practice, the phonetic transcription of companies, store names and shop signs. This practice is scandalous in the eyes of the same purists (Chhieng Vibol 2004).
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