การใช้ภาษาในอีเมล์ของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัย
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Language use in Thai university e-mail writing in EFL academic discourse towards the English-Speaking Teacher

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บทคัดย่อ

อีเมล์เป็นการสื่อสารรูปแบบหนึ่งโดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์ ซึ่งเปิดโอกาสให้ผู้ใช้โต้ตอบกันผ่านสื่อกลาง ในภาวะเวลาที่ต่างกัน ปัจจุบันการสื่อสารผ่านสื่ออิเล็กทรอนิกส์นั้นมีจำนวนผู้ใช้งานเพิ่มมากขึ้น การติดต่อ สื่อสารโดยใช้อีเมล์แสดงให้เห็นถึงลักษณะการเขียนและการพูดที่ผิดรูปแบบไปจากรูปแบบเดิม ผู้ใช้อีเมล์ สามารถสร้างโลกเสมือนของตนเองเพื่อใช้ติดต่อสื่อสารกับสมาชิกคนอื่น ๆ โดยใช้คอมพิวเตอร์เป็นสื่อกลาง อีกทั้งการใช้ภาษาในอีเมล์ส่งผลให้มีการปรับรูปแบบการใช้ภาษาพูดปะปนกับภาษาเขียนโดยการปรับ และเปลี่ยนการสะกดคำให้สั้นลงจากภาษาเขียนเดิม การคิดค้นคำศัพท์เพื่อให้เกิดความหมายใหม่ และ การใช้สัญลักษณ์ต่าง ๆ แทนที่การเขียน จากพฤติกรรมการใช้ภาษาดังกล่าวของผู้ใช้อีเมล์ถือเป็น ปรากฏการณ์สำคัญที่นำไปสู่การศึกษาลักษณะการใช้ภาษาที่เกิดขึ้นในอีเมล์ โดยศึกษาว่าผู้ใช้อีเมล์สร้าง ลักษณะการเขียนที่มีการผสมผสานกับภาษาพูดโดยทำให้เกิดความหมายใหม่เพื่อนำไปใช้สื่อสารเฉพาะกลุ่ม ของตนอย่างไร ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้วิจัยได้เลือกใช้ทฤษฎีกลวิธีการแสดงออกถึงความ สุภาพของกอร์ดอน และลาคอฟ (1971) และ ชีล (1975) ซึ่งประกอบด้วยกลวิธีการแสดงออกถึง ความสุภาพสี่ลักษณะ เพื่อใช้บ่งชี้รูปแบบการใช้ภาษาที่ได้รับอิทธิพลจากวัฒนธรรมของผู้ใช้ผ่านการสื่อสาร ทางคอมพิวเตอร์ ทั้งนี้ความรู้และความเข้าใจลักษณะการปฏิสัมพันธ์ของกลุ่มผู้ใช้อีเมล์ จะช่วยให้ผู้อ่าน เข้าใจค่านิยมทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมของผู้สื่อสารที่ถ่ายทอดผ่านภาษาที่ใช้ในอีเมล์ได้เป็นอย่างดี

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Abstract

E-mail communication is a type of Computer-Based Communication which allows users interact via asynchronous medium. In electronic communication discourse, it cannot be denied that the use of electronic communication is on the increase, with modes of electronic communication and the number and types of individuals and groups which have access to those modes, increasing over time. E-mail interaction reveals the impersonal features of writing and speaking through technological tool. E-mail users are able to create their virtual space, which is unreal, behind the computer screen to play with members in computer environment, subsequently develop brief speaking manner through writing; spelling shortening, vocabulary redefinition, and emoticon or smiley use. This meaning-making that occurs within e-mail communication in this phenomenon is becoming a crucial literacy event. Concerning specifically with how users text their talks through CMC contributes to the process of meaning-making, Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Searle (1975)'s politeness strategies, four general methods of felicity conditions were used to identify the language patterns influenced by social practices of a particular community occurring via CMC. With the perception of what is produced within the e-mail interacting will give a better insight of how social and cultural norms shape the ways students use language in e-mail writing.

Introduction

The e-mail interaction taken place in Computer-Based Communication (CMC) can be seen as a new form of multimedia literacy. Johnson and White (1989) pointed out that the electronic mail provides a convenient, productive way for students to communicate with professors. The students learn to master the computer operations to complete the assignments and to know how to use technological resources to decrease the labor intensity of the statistical calculations. Since the electronic text is rapidly established for the academic work, signified by the growing number of computer-based subjects in schools and universities, users have created their own space according to the purpose of using E-mails. There is no rule to follow as long as the receiver gets the message, the negotiation is completed. Related to e-mail language characteristics, Aston (1990) proposed after looking at samples of e-mail messages, in terms of the quality of e-mail writing, some users adopt a telex style, because they want to save time typing and the cost of the length of the message. Letter-type text is less concerned with grammar, spelling, completeness and structure.

Gee (2000b: 191) posits, "through our words and deeds, to get to recognize people, things, artefacts, symbols, tools, technologies, actions, interactions, times, places, and ways of speaking, listening, writing, reading, feeling, believing, thinking, and valuing as meaningful and valuable in certain ways". Literacy practices can be divided into two key components; the social practices where written language is given its purposes in which the production and use of written text are embedded, the other is the technological, interpersonal, cognitive and textual practices which are associated with the production and use of written text (Tusting et al. 2000: 213).

When considering a situation where people interact with others from different cultures, it is noted that they follow different rules. These rules may cause the same language interaction, but carry different meaning. During the intercultural communication, interlocutors do not share the same cultural ground rules. It becomes more difficult to focus on the content of the messages that are being exchanged because people may encode and decode the messages using different cultural codes. To understand the constructions of literacy and discourses of literacy of particular cultural members, it is important to consider how people talk about and make sense of literacy. With this regard, Barton and Hamilton (2000: 8) drew many concepts of social literacy practices. They related literacy with a set of social practices which can be inferred from events and mediation of the written texts. Since they associated the literacy with society, different domains of life, social institutions, power and relationships and historical concerns can be factors that influence the process of sense-making acquisition.

E-mail and Students' Interaction

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), a text-based communication is chosen as the first choice in the medium of communication among advanced teachers and learners who are fairly proficient in computer-based communication because it provides them an avenue for never-ending classroom learning. Ruberg and Taylor (1995) found that students do more activities in CMC than they participate in traditional classroom, where face-to-face interaction exists. And CMC offers a medium for student interacting in the medium that seems somewhat like writing and talking, which represents the social construction of CMC users.

The electronic mail is a tool for communication in schools. It provides a convenient, productive way for students to communicate with teachers since the electronic text is rapidly

established for the academic work, signified by the growing number of computer-based subjects in schools and universities, users have created their own space according to the purpose of using E-mails. There is no rule to follow as long as the receiver gets the message, the negotiation is completed, ignoring the correction of e-mail writing such as telex style or letter type using, grammatical realization, spelling check, and structure awareness.

E-mailing Defined

Electronic mail is the most widely contributed form of electronic communication. It is the use of a computer network that allows users to send, store, and receive messages using terminals and storage devices. The document can take on the form of a letter (simple text), files containing graphical images; such as drawing and photographs, some of the newest message forms contained digitized sound and animation. Messages can be sent person-to-person (called interpersonal messages) or person-to-computer. In order to use electronic mail, the users need only have to access the Internet, an e-mail program, and the e-mail address of the person or persons the users wish to reach.

Background of the Study

Teacher and students often form a channel to communicate with one another in a classroom setting. E-mail is a tool to be used for teaching and learning process. The existence of computer-mediated communication (CMC) through e-mail messages allows impersonal interaction and a play of the language. Bell (2001) states that "if we type ourselves into being in cyberspace, the argument goes, of our RL 'real life' bodies and all the identity markers they carry" (cited in Lee & Tan 2006: 46). They usually construct playful identity in texts to offer the audience a picture of their personalities. This allows the students to employ informal use of communication in academic discourse.

The paper focuses on language use in Thai students e-mail messages interacting with the English-speaking teacher in CMC setting. It aims to show the communication between the teacher and the students via e-mail in an academic environment. Through e-mail interaction, the students are able to create writing to the English-speaking teacher, who is superior in classroom setting. Through e-mail writing, social and cultural norms are represented via CMC communication.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the written discourse patterns interacting within the speech community of Thai students' e-mail writing. The study looks at three aspects as following:

1) request making

2) politeness strategies

3) Thai cultural and social norms

Since a social distance between the teacher and the students presents in Thai academic discourse, it is significant to identify the way of making requests created by Thai students considered inferior and held lower social position interact with the teacher considered superior and held higher social position taken place in CMC setting. How the students show politeness in request making, and the way these students produce language use influenced by Thai cultural and social norms. Through this electronic writing offers a broaden view of language use for academic purpose in CMC made by the students.

Studying Speech Community

Speech community has been defined by Kramsch (1998: 6-7) as people who use the same linguistic code in which members of a social group use language to meet their social needs. The ways they share grammatical, lexical, phonological features, the topic they choose to talk about, the way they present information, the style of interaction can differentiate them from non-members of the society.

The Subjects/ Participants

All 10 participants study Listening Speaking IV as an elective subject majoring in English. The participants include males and females between 20 and 22 years of age. The study lasts one semester in which participants email assignments to the English-speaking teacher who is on leave to his hometown for a specific time. The students have to report their assignment progression through e-mail in order to get feedback from the teacher. Since English is a must as a medium of communication in e-mail writing, these students are not allowed to communicate in Thai. Even though Thai students are familiar with Thai as a medium of communication for English class, interacting between the students and Thai teacher,

there is a need to communicate in English between them and the English-speaking teachers. All students and the teacher have participated in a classroom and discussed a topic before the teacher's leave. The students were asked to prepare a presentation about the English-Speaking countries as a group work.

The e-mail writers' (the students') messages are created to report the progress of the assignment to the teacher. These messages express variable literary written texts, including greeting as opening message, informative and interrogative sentences, and closing message. The e-mail writing features of these messages would give aspects of language use in e-mail produced by Thai e-mail writers.

Background of the Subjects (The E–mail Writer)

The subjects of this research are English major. Their ages are about 20-22 years old. They are different in terms of hometowns, religions, hobbies, personalities, and experiences. The students expose to similar linguistic backgrounds, using Thai language as the first language in educational system in primary, secondary level, and higher tertiary institution, and another dialect for casual communication. In order to communicate with the teacher as a volunteer of a group, the students create the e-mail name tag as identity instead of displaying their real names. It was found that this showed the intimacy between the teacher and the students as it can be seen in greeting part of the e-mail concerning with nickname and another anonymous names because the students made up their speech community to contact with the teacher whom they knew him well after taking the course for one semester.

Background of the History of the Subjects' E–mail Practices

The meaning of the message is more concerned in Computer-Based Communication (CMC), compared with the grammatical structure or writing form. The interactional style allows users to apply symbols, emoticons, smiley, and abbreviation in the text. The e-mail writers are currently third year English major students, who are exposed to the English medium of instruction for 3 years. Although the purpose of communication the students made is academic, the students still allow casual symbols to soften the conversation to the teacher.

Research Site

In this context, the e-mail message of English major students via hotmail site is concerned as the research site, where the speech community of e-mail writers show their textual writing based on their cultural and social norms. Since linguistic, geographical, and religious factors significantly affect speech pattern of people in a speech community in the way they use the language, it is crucial to consider Pattani as the target research site because of its multilingual and multicultural society. The study selects Pattani where social structure, surrounding, and religious and are a bit different from another part of Thailand. It is located in the southern part of Thailand where the border is close to Malaysia. Pattani is multicultural and conservative society. 80 percent of the people are Thai Muslim. Most of them are bilingual, Thai and Klantanese dialect (for Muslims). For Thai language, it is used as the national language and the first language (L1) while Klantanese dialect is as the second language (L2) for Muslims. Standard Thai is the most important language in education. It is also the official language. It is used in the school as the medium of instruction in all levels of education and communicated in the daily lives especially in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Thai dialects are spoken in various areas such as northern dialect, southern dialect and Malay dialect for Thai Muslims in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat where people share the border with Malaysia. For English language, it is as a foreign language. Those 20 percent are Thai Buddhists, Thai Chinese Buddhists, and Christians.

The e-mail system "hotmail" used for this study is hotmail. It is a web-based e-mail that provides an account for members with free subscription. For hotmail web-based account, there are many features to attract users to join as members. It allows documents to be stored digitally. The documents are kept on the World Wide Web, a very easy format, making copies, or alterations with a few keystrokes. It does not consume a lot of time and resources by photocopying or retyping information. This web-based e-mail also allows the sending of a message with or without attachments. There is a name list created in the user's account in order to facilitate the process of sending mails. Users do not have to retype the receiver's name, but can just click on the name lists to retrieve the stored names. The web-based E-mail also offers symbols, emoticons, graphics usage with and without sounds as a tool to emphasize or soften the message. Moreover, this web-based e-mail provides many options for users to save time creating a new message; such as reply option, reply all options, and forward option to multiple receiver s in one click. Concerning spelling, the users can use the spellchecker to review the message before sending across the information
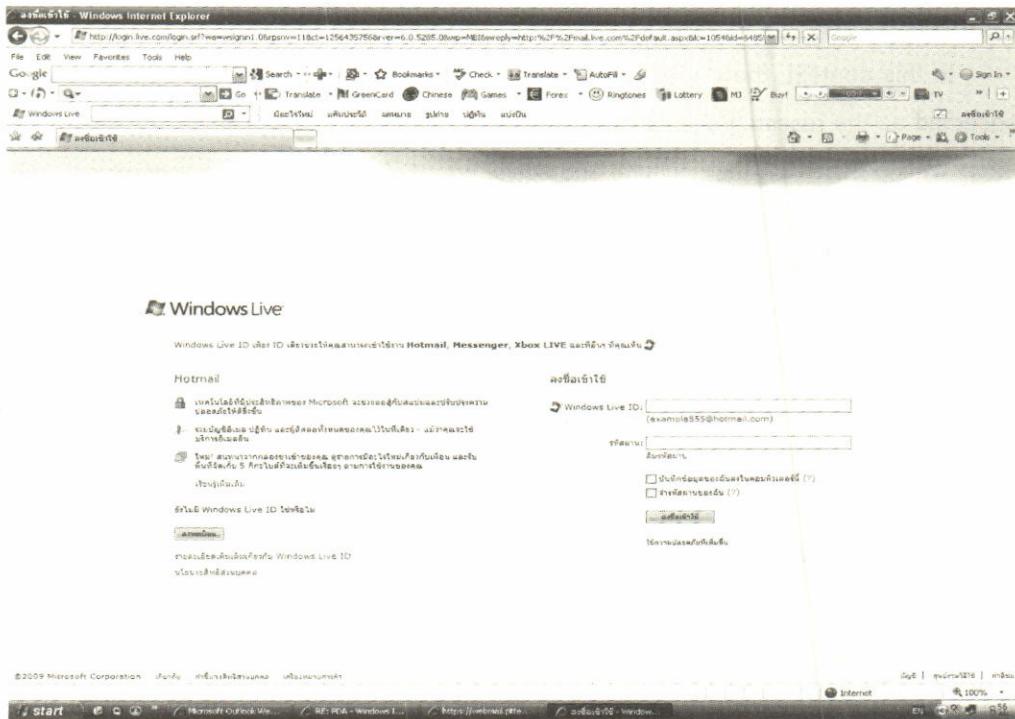
Figure 1: Hotmail Webpage

E-mail Pattern and Style

In the context of e-mail writing offers the e-mail users to the virtual space created behind the computer screen where physical presence is replaced by the unreal relationships taking place in computer environment, where informality speech patterns are allowed among users. Due to digitalized technology, the output from the CMC creates a new variety, revealing the highly impersonal features of CMC interaction. As Crystal (2001) defines that the new variety "Netspeak" taken from the brief manner of speaking and writing; the acronymic manner of shortening spelling, vocabulary redefinition, and emoticons or smiley to draw to the unique characteristic of web-based users as the concept of "virtual reality". Members of this community can create any identity or characteristic he wants to display via computer-based community. Such a reality implies a new articulation of an individual to the community or a false identity that users construct to persuade their audience to believe. Thus, the false construction in CMC allows for anonymity and less individuality. The text-based communication technologies allow the users to say anything through their keypads. They are able to decide how or what

they would like to be or perform role-plays by ways of texts. Bell (2001) mentions the people who play with the language as 'Trickster', the real-life people, who 'text' their talk in a 'new' language mediated through advanced communication technologies, using the flexibility of the communication setting to draw their self-presentation. The way the users interact with one another McLuhan (1964) describes as the "global village" which is a small town mediated electronically, where the users their environment of communication setting. This "global village" has a particular form of features which causes the users to perceive it in certain ways. These perceptions help the users to choose the form of creating messages depending on their audiences.

In CMC, it is certainly true that there is "something missing" during the communication process. Nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, body posture, which enhances meaning of words spoken, disappeared from the conversation. Strauhaar and LaRose (1997) refer to the "something missing" as lack of social presence that conveyed the hidden meaning of the words. This makes the electronic mediated base communication, an inferior means to establish interpersonal relationship.

Methodology

Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Searle (1975)'s politeness strategies, four general methods of felicity conditions were used to identify the language patterns occurring via CMC. These methods especially focus on the way the e-mail users make indirect request making based on their cultural and social norms surrounded their community to the teacher.

Table 1 : Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Searle (1975)'s politeness strategies, four general methods of felicity conditions

Strategies	Features
1. Ability.	Assert to **B** that he is able to do that action, or ask B whether or not be is able to do that action, as in **You can leave me the car keys** and **Can you reach the salt ?**

Strategies	Features
2. Desire.	Assert to **B** that you want him to perform the action as in **I want you to hand me the car keys** and **I would appreciate it if you passed me the salt.**
3. Future action.	Assert to **B** that he will do that action, or ask B whether or not he will do that action, as in **You will leave me the keys to the car** and **Would you pass the salt ?**
4. Reasons.	Assert to **B** that there are good reasons for doing the act, or ask B whether or not there are good reasons for doing act, as in **You should hand me the keys to the car** and **Why don't you pass me the salt ?**

Source: Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Searle (1975)

Research Procedure

A case study is the best way to approach a certain area of e-mail message investigation by giving importance to the context of the study and the ability to track the development of the study within its natural context of CMC situation, its characteristics, cultural and social dynamics, and purposes of interaction, which is for academic reasons. It can be defined as contextual forms of study. The process of investigation will be placed within a condition of such the e-mail user, also a cultural and social manner in which the users present in their e-mail writing are conducted. Then, the study looks at in-depth study of a thing, an institution, a person, or any defined cultural group, which probably affect the language patterns used by the e-mail writers for academic purposes. This study pays attention to a group of people who share similar cultural and social constructions. It is a qualitative study seeking to identify linguistic aspects of language use in e-mail. The e-mail messages are studied , specifically how politeness strategies, felicity conditions (Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Searle (1975) are employed by Thai e-mail writers to interact with the English-speaking teacher.

Speech Pattern in E-mail

Communication occurs in a specific context. People produce words in a particular framework with facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other behaviors when they interact with others. To have interaction, the amount of information is transmitted from one person to another person by words spoken. Indeed, we attend to the words and language people use. It is the spoken form of communication. On the one hand, written form of communication plays a crucial part in the educational system. Relating to formal educational system, people usually concentrate on words, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. They spend much of the time to thinking about the right words in order to express their ideas, thought, and opinion to the right person in the right situation.

Pink (2001) stresses, the electronic representations can differ radically from printed text in terms of it being made to imitate and reproduce the conventions and objectives of printed words and image. In other words, the electronic text does not necessarily challenge existing styles of representation, but it can be embodied to establish forms. Badrul Redzuan Abu Hassan (2006) points out, the language can be (re)structured or (re)defined to set up the meaning for something else through the collaboration between human being and the machine. People are influenced by a new popular media language and this encompasses e-mailing. Writing asynchronous e-mail is an electronic discourse which allows the 'hybrid' mode of communication to occur. The users are less concerned of the traditional written discourse. The increasing popularity of e-mail messaging among today's teens leads to the change of language that students use in their writing.

When e-mail writing spreads to the academic discourse for academic purpose, the writing model is also changed from the traditional form to a 'hybrid' mode of writing. It becomes a new way of transmitting meaning through language. Good (1996: 82) claims, "Spontaneity is lost; the communication is impoverished in terms of its social and emotional content; and the precision of written page can exert its own form of pedantic tyranny as the prospects for negotiating meaning are reduced" (cited in Mann & Stewart 2000: 182). In contrast, face-to-face interaction is a communication that is immediate and requires the participants to be in close contact with each other. The speaker and the hearer have to share time and space together. That means they are part of the communication by being present

at a given time. On the other hand, a distant communication allows the speaker and the hearer's space between each other. Distance-learning students benefit more than face-to-face students in learning experiences. The distant learners can create their own learning style that they feel comfortable with. The social construction of learning flows naturally among members of the same group while the students in the class have to be more formal because of the classroom setting and the presence of the instructor in front of the classroom. Sometimes, the ways they respond to the instructor are restricted by real time setting.

Method and Data Collection

The research employs the combination of qualitative research with interactional method. The data collected was divided into two main methods:

(1) Students' and teacher's interviews

(2) Analysis printed copies of e-mail messages

Students' and teacher's interviews

The interviews are posted to the sampling of the subjects relating; the profile of the respondents, involving their age, hometown, religion, linguistic backgrounds, major subject, minor subject, favorite hobby, personality, and experiences. This part also concerns language in educational system in primary, secondary level, and higher tertiary institutions, Thai and English. It also provides the profile of the English-speaking teacher, comprises age, educational backgrounds, and qualifications. Additionally, it clarifies the students' tasks and classroom interaction in the "Listening-Speaking IV" course. The interviews conduct as participant interview. The participants do not have to provide so much background information about the wider cultural context (Mann & Stewart 2000). This allows the interviewer shares the cultural understanding with the students providing deeper and more varied meaning relating to the positive and negative politeness strategies using in the students' e-mail writing.

The interview with the English-speaking teacher was conducted in the form of an individual interview between the researcher and the teacher for the reason of gaining access to the teacher's demographic characteristics and the specific attitudes towards interaction in Thai cultural context.

Analysis printed copies of e-mail messages

The data collected from the printed copies of e-mail messages of 10 participants will be analyzed in term of interactional analysis, using the Felicity Conditions (Gordon and Lakoff, 1971 and Searle, 1975) as framework theories. The data discussed and presented in the messages and see how cultural and social norms influence on language use presented in the e-mail messages, focusing on requests. The analysis discuss from the request opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, and request closing and look at the way the students open up channels of communication, how they acknowledge the presence of others and also how they manipulate particular outcomes with addressees. The research emphasizes on how Thai cultural and social norms are situated in the strategies of Thai requests in e-mail messages. This unit also attempts to explore the rules surrounding speech acts and the effect of one's own culture on the choice of expression and situated meaning connected to one's cultural norms of speech acts. This data helps us to expand our understanding of the politeness strategy, which Thai university students use in the interaction between them and the English-speaking teacher.

Results

Nature of politeness in Thai electronic written discourse (CMC)

1. Messages must be appropriate with the receiver's social status.
2. Do not send messages which are intended to cause a person to be insulted.
3. Remaining a social distance between superior and inferior.
4. Informal writing can be seen only when the target teacher is the English speaking teacher, this will not happen between Thai teacher-student communication.
5. Complicate Thai titles influence on the one's address. They should pay more attention before addressing one's social position; otherwise, it may cause the feeling of insult to the addressee.
6. Using a smile expression to show the hospitality and friendliness to the English-speaking teacher, whereas using a smile expression to show the respect and the modesty to the Thai teacher.

Language use in CMC affected by Thai culture showed by linguistic politeness through intercultural e-mail messages sent to the English-speaking teacher

Thai culture is dominant in the way the students write e-mail messages to the English-speaking teacher. Although they know that the target reader is the English-speaking teacher, they still much aware with Thai social norms. What they are supposed to do when communicating with the superior? It seems that they plan message composition in order to control over composing, editing, reviewing and delivery. They are very worried about the mistake of both grammatical writing, cultural and social manner. The politeness were displayed in Thai written form like greeting form 'sawasdee ka' and the title 'professor'.

Ways of the external (social distance) and internal (degree of friendliness) factors play an importance role to the expression of politeness in the students' e-mail messages

Both external (social distance) and internal (degree of friendliness or intimacy) factors play an importance role to the expression of politeness in the students' e-mail messages. The internal factor allows the students to get closer to the English-speaking teacher; however, the external factor is more dominant. This Thai value emphasizes on the politeness expressions framed by what are generally considered in the discourse community.

Ways of the use of solidarity strategy in the university students' e-mail messages dominated by the Thai politeness norms in CMC setting (strategies likely to be)

There are various times of using solidarity strategies (positive and negative face). The students write e-mail consciously. They are always concerned about the English-speaking teacher's face. Some of them treat him as a member of the same society sharing things with each other based more on Thai norms than western norms. Degree of friendliness is high. Whereas, some of them keep a distance to the English-speaking teacher in order to show the respect.

Discussion

The result draws a link between written literacy and Thai's socially and culturally situated meaning which is important to consider Figure 1 on interpreting Thai speech act interaction.

Request Strategies	Opening	Pre-Requests / Pre-Announcement	Request Closing
1. Accommodation	1.1 "Merry Christmas" (P = R.1, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7)	1.2.1 Informative details (P= R.1) 1.2.2 Hesitating statement (P= R.5) 1.2.3 - (P= R.6)	1.3.1 "Merry Christmas" (P = R.1, R.5, R.7) 1.3.2 "Best Wishes" (P= R.6) 1.3.3 "Name" (P= R.4, R.7)
2. Intimacy	2.1 "Hi", "Hello" (P= R.2, R.10)	2.2.1 Apologizing (P= R.2) 2.2.2 Reason (P= R.10)	2.3.1 "Have a Wonderful Holiday" + "See You Around" (P= R.2) 2.3.2 "Have a Nice Christmas Day" (P= R.10)
3. Thai Greeting	3.1 "Sawasdee ka" (P= R.3)	3.2.1 Apologizing (P= R.3)	3.3.1 "Thank You" (P= R.3)
4. Formality	4.1 - (P= R.8)	4.2 - (P= R.8)	4.3 - (P= R.8)
5. Slang	5.1 "Aloha Ahalo" (P= R.9)	5.2 - (P= R.9)	5.3 "See You Next Week" + "Happy Wednesday" (P= R.9)

Figure 2 : The Styles of Request Strategies in Terms of Opening, Pre-Requests or Pre-Announcement, and Request Closing.

Abbreviations and Symbols

P : Participant

R : Request

(-) : Not Available

(+) : And

Figure 2 shows the result of request strategies in terms of opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, and request closing. The data presented above are extracted categorized from the students' e-mail messages sent to the teacher. The strategies of making request can be categorized into five styles as shown in Figure 2 composed of (1) Accommodating, (2) Intimacy, (3) Thai Greeting, (4) Formality, and (5) Slang. The results show that there are

five e-mail messages used the accommodating style for the opening message, including Christmas greeting. The participants according to this type are R. 1, R. 4, R. 5, R. 6, and R. 7. Two of participants R. 1 and R. 5 started the e-mail with pre-announcement before requesting. However, the participants prefer four kinds of closing in the messages. The first closing is again with "Merry Christmas" participated by R.1, R. 5, and R. 7. The second kind of closing ending by the name of the participants is used by R. 4 and R. 7. Thirdly, R. 6 closed the message with "Best Wishes". It should be noted that there are no pre-request or pre-announcement for R. 6.

The second style mentioned in Figure 2 is intimacy. There are two participants who utilize this manner, R. 2 and R. 10. The participants use pre-announcements such as apologizing used by R. 2 and a reason used by R. 10. The ways they closed the requests are different. R.2 prefers to end with "Have a Wonderful Holidays" and "See You Around" while R.10 expresses "Have a Nice Christmas Day".

The third style is concerned with the Thai greeting. Only one participant, R. 3 started interacting with the teacher by using the Thai phrase "Sawasdee ka". She formed pre-announcement as apologizing before proceeding to make a request. She closed the e-mail writing to the teacher by saying "Thank You".

Additionally, the fourth style is formality. One participant out of the ten prefers this style. The student wrote the message without even an opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, request, or closing, but the language is used for the academic purpose. R. 8 only attached the body of the message they needed to report for the assignment.

The result identifies the final style of request strategies which is slang. A participant modified the message using slang in order to set the speech act in a more casual tone. There are no pre-request or pre-announcement and request in the message he sent. R.9 finished off the message with "See You Again Next Week" and "Happy Wednesday".

Analysis of Felicity, Politeness Strategies of Request Making in E-mail Messages

Figure 2 also explores the informative data to find out the ways the students create messages and strategies they prefer. The research will subsequently show the analysis of each request strategy in descriptive arguments based on Thai and western norms influencing the genre of the students' writing.

a. Request I

MeRry ChriStmaS and A HaPpY NewYeaR.   (= opening)

I hope you are happy on your vacation. We are Canada Group (Tik, Mai,
Pom, May).

**Now, we are prepare the powerpoint and typist the information about
our country. We are doing a flag of Canada and we find some
pictures for our presentation.**

                                        (=pre-announcement)

We want to know we must send a final draft to you later ?
I will send another e-mail to you later.   (= request)

Thank You So Much
Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year.   (= request closing)
Tik, SutiDa Sangsri No. 4615779 Canada Group

---

b. Request IV

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.   (= opening)

The members of Australia group are Ann Oil Pee Jik. This is Ann in
Australia group. **I am not sure that I must hand in the final draft.**
Finally I think I will hand in the final draft. On weekend, we have finished
summarize. We are finding some pictures or doing the power point and
work hard for our presentation.

                                        (= pre-announcement)

When we have problems we can ask you past this email ?

                                        (= request)

"Ann" Sudawan Ramphoey no. 4615775 G. Australia

                                        (= request closing)

---

c. Request V

(= opening)   Hello, Professer Steffen

Merry X' Mas and Happy New Year

We are New Zealand group. How are you? **We gonna tell you about our works ?** In our group we've finished our power point. We've also finished our conclusion. We had the last meeting on Friday and we gonna have the meeting again after the New Year celebration.

(= pre-announcement + request)

Have a nice Christmas Day.   (= request closing)

New Zealand Group

---

d. Request VI

Aloha !! **Merry Christmas and Happy new year !!!**   (= opening)

How are you doing there? Good to hear news from you .it's very very nice to know how happy you are when you're with family and we , German 6 class............ miss you too.

Best wishes,   **(= request closing)**

Baekdnat

P.S. Macadamia nuts cost 700-1500 Baht/1 kg. here. I thought in Eu might cheaper but it's not. What is your favorite book ?

There are no pre-request or pre-announcement and request.

---

e. Request VII

Merry X'mas & Happy New Year.   (=opening)

Pitima Piphattahanaserl (Dao) 4530341 G.1   (= request closing)

There are no pre-request or pre-announcement and request.
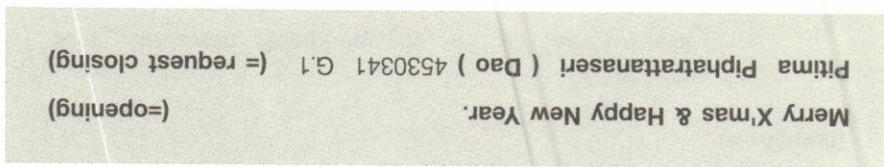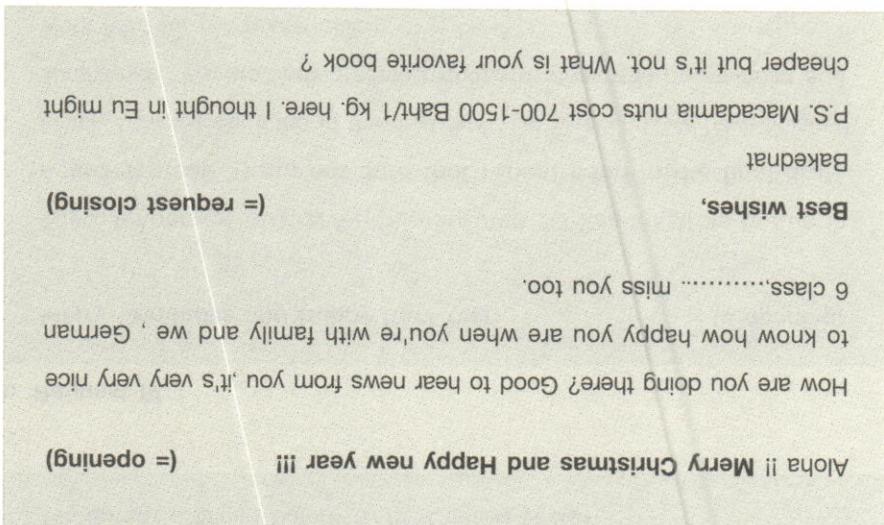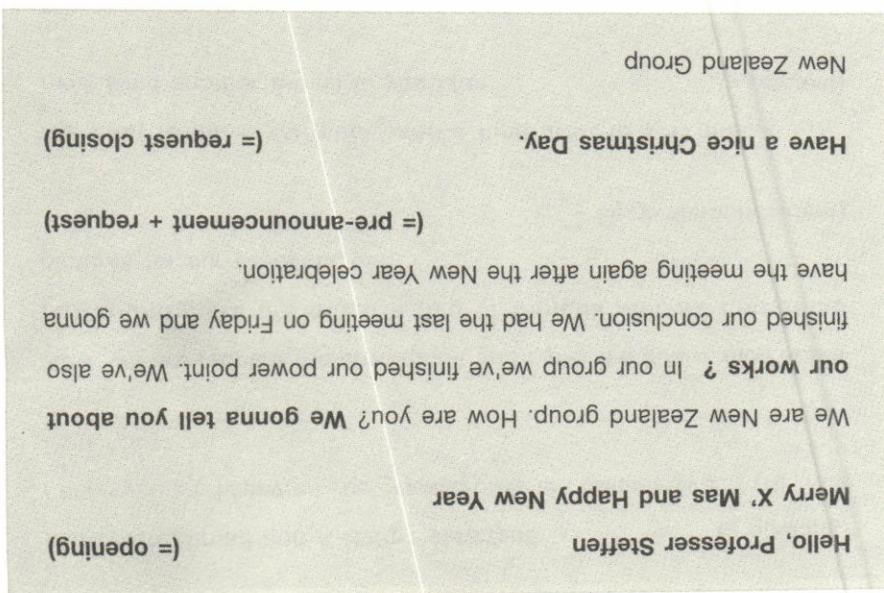
The senders initiate the interaction using "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" to accommodate the receiver in order to accept something from the environment. It is the process of changing cognitive structure. The sender modifies their style of speaking to become more like that of her addressee. This represents the desire to identify more closely with the listener in order to win social approval or simply to increase the communicative efficiency of the interaction. In addition, to begin with "Merry Christmas" also implies that the sender's cultural norms relate to the way a message is opened in a specific community.

For Thais, Christmas celebrity is a western culture. Basically, Thai people who are traditional conservative hardly wish anyone "Merry Christmas". Most of them are only conscious of Thai culture. In this case, the sender shows her knowledge of the addressee's culture in order to build a closer relationship with the English-speaking teacher and complete the interaction via e-mail discussion. They switch from the Thai style opening to the English style when communicating with the addressee. This reflects that she is aware of the addressee's culture. The western culture has its influence on local students so they prefer to greet the teacher by using western form rather than the Thai greeting. The opening style connects to what they have learned in the English culture. They tend to leave the Thai culture behind when they are being exposed to a new culture.

f. Request II

Hi there !!! Mr.Steffen	**(= opening)**
How are you doing there? I'm fine here.	
I'm sorry I send you mail late. Actually, I've finished my "one mail" since last week and I try to send you "Auf Deutsch" mail but the point is I took a very longgggggg time to draft it ,	
	(= pre-announcement)
But again I promise I'll send you later,	
Okay ???	**(= request)**
Have a wonderful holiday (and healthy) !!!	**(= request closing)**
See you around !! ^__^	
Nat Bakedmonkey	

There is no pre-request or pre-announcement.

g. **Request X**

> **Hello, Professer Steffen**   **(= opening)**
>
> **Merry X' Mas and Happy New Year**
>
> We are New Zealand group. How are you ? **We gonna tell you about**
> **our works ?**
>
>   **(= pre-announcement + request)**
>
> In our group we've finished our power point. We've also finished our
> conclusion. We had the last meeting on Friday and we gonna have the
> meeting again after the New Year celebration.
>
> **Have a nice Christmas Day.**   **(= request closing)**
> New Zealand Group
> See you soon !!!

There is no pre-request or pre-announcement.

From the two e-mail messages, the result shows that the senders began interacting with the English-speaking teacher using informal openings. This indicates the closeness of the relationship between the sender and the receiver. The students feel comfortable using English greeting style because they do not have to be concerned about the social distance between them and the teacher.

In written discourse analysis, titles can guide us to look out for a sender's cultural norms. For English-speaking countries, they also express status and attitudes through titles, first names and last names. Examples of titles are Professor, Dr., Sir, Dame, Mr., Mrs., and Ms. In general, the usage of these in one's own community without cultural knowledge suggests lack of deference. In some context, there are norms showing one's difference in status and social superior of reference.

From the result, the participants use the title to address the social status of the English-speaking teacher. Thai students address him as "Mr." because it is a universal and formal title. They usually call him by his English name instead of nickname because it is a more appropriate term to refer to the teacher who is superior. The degree of friendliness can be measured through the use of name and titles as well.

h. Request III

> **sawasdee ka**   **(= opening)**
>
> this is my draft about The relationship between the United State and Southeast Asia countries. i am really sorry about this very very late draft. I read many taxts about it but i still can't write it in my language and there are many parts which i still don't understand. **so if you don't mind i will need you advise after you reached to PSU.**
>
>   **(= pre-announcement + request)**
>
> **thanks you** tasneem   **(= request closing)**

There is no pre-request or pre-announcement.

A participant using the Thai traditional opening, *"sawasdee ka"* in the e-mail message to the English-speaking teacher indicates her treatment of him as a member of Thai society. This kind of opening shows the cultural behaviors and also implies the social distance between the sender and the receiver.

Referring to Thai norms, the word "Sawasdee ka" is a Thai way of saying hello and a show of respect. Originally, when a Thai is introduced to a Westerner, Thai men usually shake hands with him in concession to his customs. They also bow and smile during their greeting. But the handshaking treatment should not be given to a Thai lady. Thai traditional greeting called "Wai" is used by Thai when greeting each other. They keep a distance, bow slightly and say "Sawasdee", "good-fortune" (Mole 1973: 138). Thai customs believe that this shows reverence for each other. Thus, we can see the social distance from the way Thai people greet each other. The junior initiates the first gesture and then the senior must respond. When replying a child, the individual will nod and say "Sawasdee". The "Wai" turn-taking is structured. The junior or inferior must initiate the action before the senior or superior does.

Social rank can be displayed through the Thai greeting, which makes people aware of one's relative hierarchy. The inferior must be polite and reserved indicating his lower position. Thus, in casual encounters, people can discover one's social position and his social distance. What work does he do? To what group does he belong? What position does he hold? Is he rich or poor ? Has he studied and where ? Observing the way Thai people greet each other can answer these questions.

Using "sawasdee ka" to open the channel of conversation of an intercultural e-mail message, the participant shows strong Thai norms influence related to her Thai identity. She was born in a Thai culture and prefers to greet the English-speaking lecturer in Thai instead of the English opening style. Although she has studied English language and culture for 12 years, Thai norms evidently still play a crucial role in her choice.

i. Request VIII

> Our group will present about "Festivals in Pattani" that will be involved about somethings like... Places in pattani...............................Pattani ; and they want to show their friends about the festivals in their local area (Pattani), the ways of life, and the changes that was happened there. **We will present via drama**

There are no opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, request, and request closing

Referring to the above e-mail message, there is an absence of opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, request, and request closing. The sender only wrote the body of the message to the teacher in order to report what they want to say in descriptive form. The way they initiate the topic of the message is direct and formal according to the written format and the level of academic language they used such as terms and symbols.

j. Request IX

> **Ahola Ahalo**   (= opening)
>
> You're right. I didn't go home coz the tickets was sold out and I didn't book in advance too that's why I do count forward here in Pattanee. Oh, this time I attached your pix & the first letter. We (german class) are fine. Everybody back home and somes are getting back to Pattanee next week.
>
> **See you next week ^__^**   (= request closing)
>
> **Happy Wednesday**
>
> Nat

There are no pre- request or pre-announcement and request.

A participant prefers opening the interaction with the teacher using the phrase *"Ahola Ahalo"*. He used the slang instead of the formal opening a message and established a social identity through the usage. Slang is a kind of intimate or in group speech. This shows the close intimacy between the student and the teacher. Therefore, slang serves social functions to assert membership of identity or solidarity groups.

The student draws himself out of Thai social structure and puts himself in the western culture. When he is exposed to two contrasting cultures, he adapts himself to the English culture when in the right occasion interacting with the English-speaking teacher. This informal opening style represents the least influence of Thai social norms. They are consciously moving themselves away from one hierarchal society (Thai) to another casual social position (English-speaking countries).

Summary and Conclusion

The people's actions take to preserve both kinds of face, for themselves and people they interact with, add up to politeness. It is obvious that in human communication, either spoken or written, people tend to maintain one another's face continuously. In this study, the senders take widely advantages of using the politeness face strategies (negative and positive face) based on the Thai politeness norms in CMC represented through request opening, pre-request or pre-announcement, and request closing. It is obvious that the politeness in Thai speech acts of making requests made by Thai university students takes into consideration the power and solidarity between the speaker and the hearer influenced by Thai social constructions. In Thai speech act discourse, the structure and hierarchy are critical at all levels in Thai society, including in the university. The formality has been developed around what one does and with whom; it is essential to show respect for individuals, depending on their rank and position, in order to succeed in negotiation. In the discourse, it is proven that Thai e-mail messages present the politeness norm through the formality in making requests where hierarchical concept is concerned. Thai students are aware of opening up channels of communication, the way they acknowledge the presence of others and also manipulating particular outcomes with addressees in e-mail messages. The language use in Thai e-mail messages encode the Thai politeness norms influenced by the social class,

status and role of the receiver to shape the way they differentiate the ways and degrees of the politeness. It can be said that all theories applied in the written discourse are related to culturally embedded notions in politeness norms glossing over the differences among cultures.

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