

Is Direct Speech the Norm in English-Thai Simultaneous Interpreting? The Effect of Gender-Specific Terms on the Use of Direct Speech in Interpreting

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Article information	Abstract
Article history: Received: 6 Feb 2022 Accepted: 16 Aug 2022 Available online: 24 Aug 2022	<i>This study investigates using the concept of norms whether English-Thai interpreters regard direct speech as an appropriate interpreting style in simultaneous interpreting. It also explores whether gender-specific linguistic terms in Thai, which consist of first-person pronouns and formality-marking particles (FMPs), affect the interpreter to deviate from direct speech. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. As a result, 12 interpreters answered the questionnaires, and four interpreters participated in the interviews. The results show that direct speech is the norm among the interpreters in this data set: 90.9% of respondents believed that English-Thai simultaneous interpreting should be done in the direct style, and 58.3% regularly used first-person pronouns and FMPs based on the speaker's gender. However, some respondents did not use first-person pronouns or FMPs along these lines. Some of their reason might be to avoid gender-specific terms. The interviews' results also showed that although the negative feelings toward using different-gender first-person pronouns and FMPs were different among individuals, all four interview participants admitted that they had misused FMPs when interpreting for the different-gender speakers. The results, therefore, suggest that gender-specific terms induce the interpreters to shift from direct to indirect speech.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Direct speech, or the interpreter speaking in the first person as if he or she was the orator, is viewed as a norm among professional interpreters¹ (Harris, 1990). For example, when the

¹ Harris (1990) used the term “professional interpreters” to refer to those working as an interpreter after receiving interpreter training. However, as there is only one interpreter training course at the graduate level in Thai (Uehara, 2008), recruiting subjects with interpreter training experience might be difficult. Therefore, this study applies the definition of “professional translator” in Chesterman (2016) to the definition of “professional interpreter” in this study: a full-time interpreter whose main livelihood is interpreting.

primary speaker², in this case, a male, says “I am hungry,” the interpreter should also interpret it as “I am hungry” instead of “he said he is hungry.” The latter example is called indirect speech, the usage that is a norm among natural interpreters³ (Harris, 1990).

This claim, although made on Harris’s experience as an interpreter, is supported by several data. For example, Duflou (2012) found that two brochures published by the European institutions talk about the use of direct speech in the definition of conference interpreters, thus indicating that direct speech is the default interpreting style of conference interpreting in the EU. Conversations with his colleagues who were conference interpreters also reveal that all of them think of direct speech as an absolute interpreting style (Duflou, 2012). Cheung (2012), on the other hand, found that over 90% of court interpreters in Hong Kong used direct speech when interpreting either from Cantonese to English or from English to Cantonese. The International Association of Conference Interpreter (AIIC, 1999) also presents a practical guide for professional conference interpreters, which states that “[p]rofessional conference interpreters speak in the first person on behalf of the speaker” (Quality Interpreting section). All this evidence suggests that direct speech is the norm among professional interpreters.

However, as norms do not have to be the same everywhere (Harris, 1990), direct speech might not be the norm in some interpreting modes or some language pairs. For instance, direct speech is considered unsuitable for telephone interpreting because the situation is not always clear whether the utterance originates from whom (Rosenberg, 2007).

This might also be the case in Thai interpreting because Thai first-person pronouns usually used in formal settings are gender-specific: They must be selected according to the gender of the speaker. When the speaker is male, *phǒm* is used and when the speaker is female, *dichǎn* is used. Due to this characteristic, when interpreting into Thai, the interpreter who uses direct speech will have to select the first-person pronouns in accordance with the gender of the speaker. However, using the different-gender speakers’ first-person pronouns might be equal to identifying oneself as different-gender speaker because first-person pronouns in Thai are used by transgender individuals to express their gender (Saisuwan, 2016). Hence, following the direct speech norm when the gender of the speaker and the interpreter are different might be difficult when interpreting into Thai.

Apart from first-person pronouns, Thai spoken language has another linguistic tool that denotes the gender of the speaker: formality-marking particles (FMPs). These particles are added at the end of the clause or the sentence to express the formality (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000). Based on the gender of the speaker, FMPs can be divided into three types: male-specific (e.g., *kháp*), female-specific (e.g., *khâ*⁴), and neutral (e.g., *câ*). Although FMPs do not have to be added at

² The term “primary speaker” refers to the speaker whose speech is rendered by the speaker. This term is used because the primary speaker speaks first (primary) then the interpreter renders (Bot, 2005).

³ The term “natural interpreter” refers to bilinguals who function as interpreters without receiving interpreter training.

⁴ The female-specific FMPs have two forms: *khá* and *khâ*. *Khá* is used at the end of questions and *khâ* is used at the end of statements. This study will use the term *khâ* to refer to both of them.

the end of every clause or sentence (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000), they are used several times larger than that of first-person pronouns (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000). Therefore, the selection of FMPs in accordance with the gender of the speaker might be more difficult for Thai interpreters than that of first-person pronouns.

Due to these reasons, this study investigates whether direct speech is the norm in English-Thai interpreting. It also investigates whether gender-specific terms, that is first-person pronouns and FMPs, induce the interpreters to use indirect speech. The results might provide a piece of useful information for English-Thai interpreter training and might identify indirect speech as the norm in English-Thai professional interpreting.

This paper will provide definitions of direct and indirect speech first. Then, it will summarize existing research on direct and indirect speech in interpreting studies. The method of referring to a person in Thai, with the type and usage of FMPs, will be explained too. The main theoretical framework of this study, norms, and the methodology used to collect and analyze the data will also be presented. The results imply that direct speech is the norm in this data set, but gender-specific terms indeed induce the interpreters to shift from direct to indirect speech.

DIRECT SPEECH AND THAI LANGUAGE

Definitions of direct and indirect speech

Direct and indirect speech in interpreting studies have been termed differently by different researchers. For instance, Bot (2005) divided direct and indirect speech into four main strategies: “direct representation” (e.g., “he says I am hungry”), “indirect representation” (e.g., “he says he is hungry”), “direct translation” (e.g., “I am hungry”), and “indirect translation” (e.g., “he is hungry”) (p. 246). Cheung (2014) further divided direct representation into two kinds based on speaker referents: a third person pronoun (e.g., “he said I am hungry”) and a professional title (e.g., “the judge said I am hungry”).

Angermeyer (2009), on the other hand, distinguished between “first person translation” (e.g., “I am hungry”), “third person translation” (e.g., “he is hungry”), and “absence of reference to the source speaker” (e.g., the use of passive) (p. 9). It must be noted, however, that third person translation in Angermeyer also included the use of reporting verbs. For instance, “says the policeman” was also included in the third person translation, not as a different strategy such as in Bot (2005). Similarly, Ng (2013) also distinguished between “first-person reference” (e.g., “I am hungry”) and “third-person reference” (e.g., “he is hungry” or “he said he is hungry”), but her third category was an omission, which is the omission of the first-person reference used in the primary speaker’s utterance (p. 256).

Investigating direct and indirect speech from the viewpoint of social studies, Du Bois (1986) pointed out that the act of reference is not just a binary opposition such as direct or indirect, but is a hierarchy. Du Bois called the act of reference only “propositional content” from the primary speaker as “indirect speech,” and the act of reference to both “propositional content” and “shifter selection” as “direct quotation” (p. 328). Propositional content refers to the sense

of the message, cutting apart from the form. For instance, when the primary speaker said “I received a letter from John,” the sense of the message here is “the speaker received a letter from John.” The interpreter who rendered only propositional content will interpret as “the speaker received a letter from John,” “the speaker got a letter from John,” or “John sent a letter to the speaker.” Shifter selection refers to the adoption of the primary speaker’s pronouns. For example, when the primary speaker said “I received a letter from John,” the interpreter who maintain both the propositional content and the shifter selection will interpret as “I received a letter from John” or “I got a letter from John.” Based on Du Bois’s proposal, indirect speech, therefore, is the act on referring to only the sense of the message, and direct quotation is the act of maintaining both the sense of the original message and the primary speaker’s pronouns.

Based on the definitions in the literature, this study uses the definition of Du Bois’s (1986) direct quotation as the definition of direct speech. In other words, the act of referring to the primary speaker’s propositional content and shifter selection is considered direct speech in this study. Additionally, since the current study also focuses on FMPs, the use of FMPs in accordance with the gender of the speaker or the omission of FMPs are considered direct speech too. Indirect speech, on the other hand, refers to the use of any strategies that deviate from direct speech, thus including the use of reporting verbs either in third-person pronouns (e.g., “he said he is hungry”) or occupational titles (e.g., “the speaker said he is hungry”) and the change in perspective of the speaker (e.g., “he is hungry”) or the use of FMPs that is not based on the gender of the primary speaker.

Research on direct and indirect speech in interpreting studies

Literature related to professional interpreters’ use of direct and indirect speech tends to focus on why indirect speech is used. That is because the use of direct speech is considered a default interpreting style or a norm in professional interpreting (Harris, 1990) thus researchers wonder why even professional interpreters deviate from the direct speech norm. The use of indirect speech among professional interpreters can be divided into two types depending on the frequency of indirect speech used by the interpreters: occasionally or habitually. Occasional use of indirect speech refers to the use of direct speech as the default interpreting style, but with some deviation to indirect speech. The habitual use of indirect speech, on the other hand, refers to the use of indirect speech as the default interpreting style. There is no exact definition of occasional and habitual use of indirect speech. However, as Cheung (2014) called the use of indirect speech 12 of 35 turns as occasional switches to indirect speech, and Angermeyer (2009) called the interpreters who used around 70%–87% of indirect speech as habitual use, it might be assumed that the over 70% use of indirect speech should be called habitual.

Factors causing shifts from direct to indirect speech occasionally include sensitive topics, rushed delivery style of the primary speaker (Angermeyer, 2009), the interpreter’s delivery after consulting with the speaker, the situation of conflict (Merlini & Favaron, 2009), the need to identify the speaker (Angermeyer, 2009; Cheung, 2012; Duflou, 2012), and the need to add illocutionary force (Cheung, 2012). Factors causing professional interpreters to use indirect speech habitually included the interpreter’s perception about the target recipient’s needs

(Angermeyer, 2009; Bot, 2005), the interpreting norm in the courtroom (Ng, 2011), and uneasiness in assuming the voice of the powerful participant (Ng, 2013).

Gender-specific terms were also suggested as a reason why some interpreters use indirect speech occasionally or habitually. Angermeyer (2009) hypothesized that when the gender of the interpreter and that of the primary speaker are different, the need to grammatically mark the gender of the primary speaker might influence interpreters to use indirect speech occasionally. However, not enough evidence was provided to prove this hypothesis.

Sukgasi (2018), on the other hand, investigated the issue of direct and indirect speech in Japanese-Thai interpreting, with particular attention to how personal reference terms (PRTs) and FMPs were used in court settings. PRTs and FMPs in Thai are commonly used in formal settings to denote the speaker's gender thus the interpreter using direct speech must use these linguistic tools in accordance with the speaker's gender. The results from Sukgasi's (2018) text analysis showed that the interpreters used PRTs and FMPs variously when there was a difference in the gender of the speaker and the interpreter. Some interpreters, for example, omitted PRTs but used FMPs, not according to the primary speaker's gender, but their gender. There was also an interpreter who used FMPs according to the speaker's gender but used reporting verbs instead of first-person pronouns. Sukgasi (2018) also found that those using FMPs that did not belong to the interpreter's gender sometimes misused FMPs. Besides, the interview data showed that the default interpreting style perceived by these interpreters could be divided into two types: those who used direct speech habitually and those who used indirect speech habitually. The lack of training in Japanese-Thai interpreting, differences in expectations of Japanese and Thai participants, and the cognitive effort were suggested as the reason why indirect speech was used by these interpreters.

The variation in both the strategies and perceptions may indicate, to some extent, the effect of gender-specific terms on the direct speech norm, although the lack of training in Japanese-Thai interpreting (Sukgasi, 2018) may also be the reason for these varied strategies and perceptions. Direct speech was claimed to be the norm among professional interpreters (Harris, 1990), understood as those who have received interpreter training. The variations found in Sukgasi (2018), therefore, might not be due to the gender-specific terms alone but due to the interpreters' lack of knowledge that direct speech was an appropriate interpreting style.

To date, the only study on direct and indirect speech in English-Thai simultaneous interpreting is Sukgasi (2020), who found, the variation in the use of PRTs and FMPs by three professional conference interpreters. One male interpreter used *khâaphacâw*, the gender-neutral first-person pronouns, which are rarely used in a formal public speech today (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005), and intentionally avoided gender-specific FMPs. Another female interpreter also used *khâaphacâw* habitually too, but her FMPs are the gender-neutral FMPs *hâ*, which are less formal than the male-specific FMP *kh râp*. The last female interpreter used first-person pronouns and FMPs according to the gender of the speaker, but used FMPs less frequently when interpreting for a different-gender speaker. Although the interpreters in this data used PRTs and FMPs differently, unlike Sukgasi (2018), the default interpreting style of all these interpreters is direct speech, thus suggesting that even those who used direct speech habitually might be affected by gender-specific terms.

However, it remains unknown whether these results can be applied to English-Thai interpreting in general because Sukgasi's (2020) data were based on only three interpreters. Therefore, this study investigates whether English-Thai simultaneous interpreters regard direct speech as appropriate, using the concept of norms proposed by Toury (2012). It also explores the effect of gender-specific terms in Thai on direct speech, using more extensive data.

Personal reference terms and formality-marking particles in Thai

Interpreting studies focused on western languages tend to investigate direct speech from the use of personal pronouns. However, personal pronouns in Thai are not the only linguistic tools used to refer to a person. Personal reference terms (PRTs) in Thai consist of personal pronouns, personal names, kin terms, and occupational titles (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005). However, this study excluded kin terms from the analysis because the study focuses on formal situation but kin terms promote informal and friendlier atmosphere (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005)

Personal pronouns in Thai contain a large inventory (Cooke, 1965). First-person pronouns commonly used in high- and mid-formality levels are categorized into three types based on the speaker's gender they denote: female (i.e., *dichăn*), male (i.e., *krăphôm* and *phôm*), or neutral (i.e., *khâaphacâw*, *chăn*, and *raw*) (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000). The gender-neutral forms, however, might not be employed because, in actual practice, *khâaphacâw* is used in writing (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005), *chăn* is seen as a female speaker's pronoun, and *raw* is used in informal conversation (Attaviriyanupap, 2015). Hence, when the gender of the speaker and that of the interpreter are different, the interpreter must choose first-person pronouns according to the speaker's gender if they are to follow the direct speech rule. In contrast to first-person pronouns, third-person pronouns used commonly in Thai are not as gender-specific. Except for *thăa* (corresponding to "she" in English), the remaining third-person pronouns (i.e., *thân*, *kĕe*, *khăw*, and *man*) can refer to either gender (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005).

Personal names are used in the first-, second-, and third-person forms, but because those in the first- and second-person forms create intimacy, they tend to be used in less formal settings (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005). Occupational titles are used in the first-, second-, and third-person forms like personal names, but are not used to replace pronouns as frequently as personal names or kin terms.

Some studies have added the omission of pronouns or zero references as a method to reference a person in Thai (Chodchoey, 1986; Hatton, 1978, as cited in Hoonchamlong, 1992). Zero references are the most frequently used PRTs in the narrative (Chodchoey, 1986). Since PRTs in Thai denote the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, when the relationship is unclear, Thai-native speakers sometimes omit PRTs (Hoonchamlong, 1992).

Formality-marking particles (FMPs) denote the formality level, the speaker's gender, and the relationship between the interlocutors (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005). High-formality FMPs include *khâ*, which represents female speakers, and *khraph*, which represents male speakers. Mid-formality FMPs include *hâ*, which denotes female speakers, and *hă*, which denotes male speakers. Like PRTs, Thai speakers can also employ zero FMPs to avoid specifying the formality

level (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000). However, without any FMPs, the formality of an utterance is treated as casual but not informal (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005). FMPs are also considered to actively code the speech formality more than personal pronouns because personal pronouns tend to be used less than FMPs in an actual conversation (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000).

Since PRTs and FMPs are closely connected to gender issues and express whose perspective the utterance is spoken, this study investigates strategies used to express interpreting style by focusing on PRTs and FMPs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses translation norms as a theoretical framework. Toury (2012) defined norms in general as “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate – into performance ‘instructions’ appropriate for and applicable to concrete situations” (p. 63). In other words, norms are the guideline of what a given community considers as appropriate or not. Translation norms, therefore, are not translation strategies themselves but are instructions that help justify strategies used in translation (Toury, 2012).

To investigate norms, Chesterman (2017) suggested that researchers extract both regularities (i.e., repeated patterns or tendencies found in the community) and normative forces because some regularities might occur due to cognitive constraints or time and task constraints; thus, not all observed regularities are a result of a norm. Normative forces can be investigated from belief statements, explicit criticisms, and norm statements. Belief statements are accounts of what people think should or should not be done under specific conditions. Explicit criticisms are comments showing disapproval toward action not conforming to the given norm, such as teacher comments, translation reviews, or client and consumer reactions. Norm statements are official statements issued by a norm authority, such as a trainer, a publisher, a patron, or the government, to issue and maintain norms.

Although norms discussed in Toury (2012) and Chesterman (2017) focused mainly on written translation, the concept can be applied to interpreting because interpreting is considered a type of translational activity (Pöchhacker, 2016). Still, there is one crucial difference: Interpreters may not conform to norms when faced with cognitive overload (Gile, 1998/1999). Adopting the concept of interpreting norms, this study examines whether direct speech is a norm in English Thai simultaneous interpreting by investigating the regularities and belief statements of English-Thai interpreters.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate whether direct speech is a norm in English-Thai professional interpreters and whether gender-specific terms affect the use of direct speech, three research questions were set up:

1. What are belief statements of English Thai professional interpreters regarding the interpreting style?
2. Which PRTs and FMPs do English-Thai professional interpreters regularly use?
3. Do gender-specific terms (i.e., Thai first-person pronouns and FMPs) induce the interpreters to use indirect speech instead of direct speech?

This study used questionnaires and follow-up interviews to collect data for three reasons. First, the investigation of norms needs extensive data because the patterns found in the practices of a few interpreters might not represent the regularities or belief statements of the overall community of English Thai interpreters. Second, it might be difficult to observe the type of PRTs and FMPs used regularly in practice because Thai speakers usually omit PRTs (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000) and interpreters in Sukgasi (2020) tend to omit FMPs when interpreting from English into Thai. Third, as Toury (2012) argued, people could account for and explain their actions, although they may not recognize the norm influencing them. Thus, this study determined questionnaires and interviews as adequate for seeking English-Thai interpreters' belief statements and regularities in how they deal with PRTs and FMPs.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires written in Thai (see Appendix for the English version) consisted of three parts: respondents' backgrounds, their interpreting strategies, and belief statements about appropriate interpreting style. The first part was designed to identify the backgrounds of the respondents and factors that might influence the strategies or the belief statements, including gender, age, native language, language pairs for interpreting, amount of interpreting experience, employment types, interpreting settings, the frequency of working in Thailand, interpreter training/education experience, teaching experience in interpreter training, simultaneous interpreting experience, and experience of interpreting for male and female speakers. The questions related to training/education issues were adopted from Angelelli (2004) with some revisions to accommodate the situation in Thai.

The second part collected data on the types of PRTs and FMPs regularly used by English-Thai interpreters. I asked the respondents about cases of interpreting monologues given by female speakers in a simultaneous mode from English into Thai: the type of PRT and FMP they used most frequently in the past two years (i.e., 2019–2020). Then I asked them about cases of interpreting for male speakers with the same questions. The types of PRTs displayed in the choices were *khâaphacâw*, *phôm*, *dichăn*, *chăn*, omission of PRTs, *thân*, *khăw*, personal names, occupational titles, and others. Although Bot (2005) suggested the classification between the use of reporting verbs (e.g., "he says") and the perspective (e.g., "he" in "he is hungry"), this study did not separate them as different choices because respondents might not be able to remember which strategy they used. The options used in FMP-related questions included *kh ráp*, *khâ*, *hâ*, *há*, omission of FMPs, and others.

The third part, consisting of two multiple-choice questions, was designed to collect the respondents' beliefs in the interpreting style and their reasons. I asked the respondents to imagine listening to a novice interpreter rendering a monologue in simultaneous mode from

English into Thai. Then I asked them to select the statement that represented their belief: “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was as much a same person from the speaker as possible” or “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was as much a different person from the speaker as possible.” I also requested them to select the reasons for their choice. The choices in this question were created based on the norm theory and the answers from a pilot study. The choices included “because I think the interpreter should be like a machine translation,” “because I have been told to interpret like this (e.g., interpreter trainers, colleagues, clients, or audiences),” “because I have seen other interpreters interpret like this,” “because it is simultaneous interpreting [as opposed to consecutive interpreting],” “because it is a monologue interpreting, not a dialogue interpreting,” “because it made audiences less confused about who was speaking.” To answer Research Question 3, which is to determine whether gender-specific terms induce interpreters to prefer indirect speech instead of direct speech, those who selected “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was a different person from the speaker as much as possible” will have two additional choices: “because I felt weird when hearing the interpreter use first-person pronouns that do not belong to his or her gender” and “because I felt weird when hearing the interpreter use FMPs that do not belong to his or her gender.”

After pilot-testing the questionnaire with ten Japanese-Thai interpreters for its reliability and validity, the questionnaire was distributed to the TIAT members of the list provided by the TIAT by an email containing a link to the web survey (SurveyMonkey). After completing the questionnaire, clicking the “send the questionnaire” (in Thai) button indicated that the respondent consented to participate in the study. The questionnaire was available for completion from November 19 to December 6, 2020.

Subjects

I selected members of the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand (TIAT) as a sample because TIAT is the only professional association of translators and interpreters in Thailand with 1,250 members. Being a full-time English-Thai interpreter in 2019 and having experience in interpreting a monologue in the simultaneous mode were also a requirement to participate in the study because this study focuses on the interpreting of a monologue from English into Thai in simultaneous mode. After the screening, 12 members were chosen for the study.

The interviews

Given the difficulty of conducting on-site interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic, follow-up interviews by email were conducted from December 8, 2020, to February 11, 2021, to gather more detailed information about respondents’ backgrounds, strategies, and attitudes. The email interview was chosen instead of a video interview because it allows participants to answer in their own time, which helps promote carefully considered answers (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013). An invitation email was sent to those who stated their willingness to participate in the interview at the end of the online questionnaire. Replying to the invitation email indicated their consent to participate in the interview. Subsequently, an email containing a list of questions was sent to those who had responded to the invitation email. For clarification, I also asked further questions after checking their answers.

All questions in the interviews were formulated as open-ended questions. The questions used in the interview were individually customized for each respondent based on the answers they provided in the questionnaire. For example, those who selected first-person pronouns as their most-frequently-used PRTs in the questionnaire would be asked about their feelings when using PRTs that did not belong to their gender. Due to the limited space, only the answers to the following two questions will be displayed:

- Have you ever felt embarrassed, worried, or uneasy when using PRTs or FMPs that do not correspond to your gender?
- Have you ever misused FMPs that did not correspond to your gender?

RESULTS

Eight hundred forty-four emails containing a link to the questionnaire were successfully sent to the TIAT members. Out of the 39 people who completed the questionnaire, 12 fulfilled the requirements, which are working as a full-time English-Thai interpreter in 2019 and having experience interpreting a monologue in the simultaneous mode. Thus, 12 responses were analyzed in the following three areas: backgrounds, belief statements regarding appropriate interpreting style, and strategies when interpreting for female and male speakers.

Background of the respondents

Among the 12 respondents, eight were female (66.7%), and four were male (33.3%). All of them had Thai as their native language (91.7%) except one male respondent who spoke Hakka Chinese, a language used by Thai people of Chinese descent in Thai, as his native language. The average length of their experience as an interpreter was around 12.5 years (ranging from less than one year to 36 years). Regarding their employment type, nine said they were a freelance interpreter (75%), two a permanent employee (16.7%), and one a contract employee (1/12%). Nine also worked most frequently in conference settings in 2019 (75%), two in legal settings (16.7%), and one in business settings (8.3%). Five worked only in Thailand (41.7%) and seven mostly in Thailand (58.3%). Their total days of working in a simultaneous mode in 2019 varied: Six, which was the majority, worked between 53 and 149 days (50%).

Ten respondents had received interpreter training/education⁵ (83.3%). Their training duration was varied, but six respondents received training “over one week but less than six months” (60%). As for interpreting domains, eight had received training/education in conference interpreting (80%) and four had received training/education in court interpreting (40%). Additionally, nine respondents had teaching experience in interpreter training (75%). Although seven respondents had teaching experience in on-the-job training (77.8%), two had also taught in interpreter certification courses (22.2%) and graduate interpreting programs (22.2%).

⁵ It must be noted that interpreter training/education in this study also included on-the-job training.

Belief statements

The respondents were asked to select the statement that represented their thought regarding the interpreting style employed by a novice interpreter interpreting a monologue from English into Thai in simultaneous mode. Ten respondents selected “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was as much a same person from the speaker as possible” (90.9%)⁶.

Regarding the reason for selecting the above statement, nine respondents chose “because it made audiences less confused about who was speaking” (81.8%), seven “because it is simultaneous interpreting (as opposed to consecutive interpreting)” (63.6%), and six “because I think the interpreter should be a machine translation” (54.6%).

However, one respondent selected “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was as much a different person from the speaker as possible” (9.1%). She also selected “because I felt weird when hearing the interpreter use first-person pronouns/FMPs that do not belong to his or her gender” as the reason why she thought like that.

PRTs and FMPs used most frequently by each respondent

The types of PRTs and FMPs used most frequently during 2019–2020 by each respondent are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1
Types of PRTs and FMPs most frequently used by each respondent

Respondent	When interpreting for female speakers		When interpreting for male speakers	
	PRT	FMP	PRT	FMP
F1	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
F2	Title	<i>Khâ</i>	Title	<i>Khâ</i>
F3	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
F4	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	Omission
F5	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
F6	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
F7	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
F8	<i>Chăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	Title	<i>Khâ</i>
M1	— ^a	— ^b	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
M2	<i>Khâaphacâw</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Khâaphacâw</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
M3	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>
M4	<i>Dichăn</i>	<i>Khâ</i>	<i>Phôm</i>	<i>Khráp</i>

Note. PRT = personal reference term; FMP = formality-marking particle

^{a,b} M1’s data were excluded from the analysis because he had never interpreted for female speakers in simultaneous mode.

⁶ Due to an incomplete answer, the total number in this part was 11.

Five patterns of PRT and FMP usage can be found in the current data set. The most popular strategy is to use first-person pronouns and FMPs according to the gender of the speaker, either when interpreting for same-gender or different-gender speakers. Seven respondents were in this pattern (58.3%). They regularly used *phởm* and *kháp* when interpreting male speakers' utterances, and most frequently used *dichăn* and *khâ* when interpreting female speakers' words.

Except for the first pattern, the remaining four patterns had only one respondent each (8.3% each). First, the speaker's occupational titles and the female-specific FMP *khâ* were used habitually when interpreting for same-gender or different-gender speakers (F2). Second, *dichăn* and *khâ* were used regularly when interpreting for the same-gender speaker, but *phởm* and the omission of FMPs were used instead when interpreting for the different-gender speaker. Third, the gender-neutral first-person pronoun *chăn* and the female-specific FMP *khâ* were used regularly when interpreting for the same-gender speaker, but speakers' occupational title and *khâ* were used instead when interpreting for the different-gender speakers. Last but not least, the gender-neutral first-person pronoun *khâaphacâw* was used when interpreting either for the same-gender or for the different-gender speakers. This interpreter, however, used FMPs in accordance with the speakers' gender.

Interviews' results

Four participants attended the interviews (i.e., F1, F4, M3, and M4). When asked whether they had ever felt embarrassed, worried, or uneasy when using PRTs or FMPs that did not belong to their gender, two of them (F4, M4) said yes, but the other two (F1, M3) said no. Among the four participants, M4 seemed to have the strongest negative feeling toward the use of gender-specific terms:

When the original speaker is female, I always feel embarrassed to use "*dichăn*" because I think [my] voice sounds unnatural in the ear of the listeners (that is, male voice using the pronoun *dichăn*). If my boothmate was female, I would be happier to have her interpret the section that the original speaker was female (But such matching does not always occur except we agree in advance).

M4 also expressed his feeling toward the use of FMPs when the primary speaker is female as follows:

I felt embarrassed and worried when interpreting for female speakers. I was afraid that I would unintentionally use *kháp* when focusing too much on the rendition of the message or when having cognitive overload.

F4, on the other hand, said she felt embarrassed sometimes. When interpreting for male speakers, she sometimes unintentionally used *dichăn*, *khâ*, or omission.

In contrast to M4 and F4, F1 and M3 said they did not have any negative feelings toward the use of PRTs and FMPs when interpreting for the different-gender speakers. For example, M3

said he did not have such a feeling because he thought of direct speech as “a kind of voice acting.”

When asked whether they had ever misused FMPs when interpreting for the different-gender speakers, F4, M3, and M4 admitted that they experienced misusing FMPs when interpreting for the different-gender speakers. F4 said “I had used *khâ* unintentionally [when interpreting for male speakers] and was warned by a boothmate or an organizer.” M3 also explained his experience as follows:

I had an experience of misusing *kháp* [when the speaker was female] but only once or twice, as far as I remember. It was scarce, occurring less frequently than when I used the self-reference term *phǒm* by accident (which was very rare too). This happened when I had to interpret spontaneously or could not concentrate due to cognitive overload.

M4 explained the situation that he misused FMPs as follows:

Even today, I must be careful when using FMPs during interpreting. The most recent case occurred during an opening speech by the director of an international project. She was female. I started interpreting using the pronoun *dichấn* and the FMP *khâ*, but during the interpretation, I carelessly used *kháp* once. When I made a mistake once, I felt pressured and had to be more careful.

Additionally, F1 said she could not remember whether she had misused FMPs, but she could have misused FMPs because she had misused *phǒm*.

DISCUSSION

Using questionnaires and interviews, this paper investigated the norms regarding the interpreting style in English-Thai simultaneous interpreting and the effect of gender-specific terms on the use of direct speech. The results from the questionnaires reveal that 90.9% of the respondents think “the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was the same person as the speaker as much as possible,” which indicates that most of them believed that English-Thai simultaneous interpreting should be performed in direct speech. In addition, 58.3% of the respondents used first-person pronouns and FMPs based on the gender of the speakers most frequently, suggesting that most of this sample used direct speech habitually. Since norms can be extracted from regularities and normative forces such as belief statements (Chesterman, 2017), the perceptions regarding the interpreting style and the types of PRTs and FMPs used most frequently by most respondents suggests that direct speech is the norm among professional interpreters in this study.

Some respondents, however, did not usually use PRTs and FMPs in such a way. F8 used the first-person pronoun *chấn* and the female FMP *khâ* most frequently when interpreting for female speakers but used the occupational titles and the female FMP *khâ* most frequently

when interpreting for male speakers. Using occupational titles and *khâ* only when interpreting for the different-gender speakers indicates that she intentionally used indirect speech to avoid the different-gender first-person pronouns and FMPs. Her perception regarding the interpreting style also corresponds to her strategy: She selected “I think the interpreter should interpret as if he or she was as much a different person from the speaker as possible.” It indicates that she prefers indirect speech rather than direct speech. Moreover, she also selected “because I felt weird when hearing the interpreter use first-person pronouns/FMPs that do not belong to his or her gender” as the reason why she perceived like that. Therefore, it might be assumed that F8 preferred indirect speech because she wanted to avoid using different-gender PRTs and FMPs.

F4 also omitted FMPs only when interpreting for the different-gender speakers: She used *dichăn* and *khâ* most frequently when interpreting for female speakers and used *phõm* and the omission of FMPs most frequently when interpreting for male speakers. F4’s omission of FMPs was not unusual because FMPs can be omitted. However, her omission might not be due to her intention to avoid specifying the formality level, as suggested in Iwasaki and Horie (2000) but might be because she wanted to avoid assuming the male speakers’ gender. Ng’s (2013) claim that the omission strategy can be regarded as an effort to compromise the need to comply with the norm and avoid assuming the voice of the powerful primary speakers might explain the F4 case. Although Ng used the omission strategy to refer to the omission of first-person pronouns, not FMPs, and the interpreters in her study used the omission strategy to avoid assuming the voice of the powerful primary speakers, not the different-gender speakers, it might be assumed that F4 avoided the male FMP *kháp* because she wanted to comply with the direct speech norm while avoiding assuming the voice of the male speakers.

Among the 12 respondents, F2 was the only interpreter who used indirect speech when interpreting for the same-gender or the different-gender speakers: She always used occupational titles with the female FMP *khâ*. Interestingly, the data regarding her belief statement show that she preferred direct speech; thus, her belief statements and her strategies in actual practice seem to contradict each other. However, more data are needed to conclude the causal relationship between the use of indirect speech and the effect of gender-specific terms.

M2, on the other hand, was the only respondent who regularly used *khâaphacâw*, the highly formal but gender-neutral first-person pronoun, both when interpreting for male and female speakers. He also used *kháp* when interpreting for male speakers and *khâ* when interpreting for female speakers. Such usage can be found in Sukgasi (2020), where a male interpreter in her study used *khâaphacâw* whether interpreting for male or female speakers. The interpreter in Sukgasi (2020) also admitted that he used *khâaphacâw* to avoid using gender-specific terms such as *phõm* and *dichăn*. Although there is a possibility that M2 used *khâaphacâw* to avoid gender-specific PRTs, the fact that he mainly worked with legal interpreting might be the reason for his strategies: Legal interpreting deals with very formal language, hence using *khâaphacâw*, the highly formal first-person pronoun, might not be unusual, compared to other settings. However, more data are needed to conclude the causal relationship between the use of *khâaphacâw* and the effect of gender-specific terms.

In addition, the interview results reveal that the feeling toward PRTs and FMPs that do not belong to the interpreter's gender varied among individuals. M4 expressed the strongest negative feeling. F4 had a slightly negative feeling. F1 and M3, however, can use the different-gender PRTs and FMPs without any negative emotions. Nevertheless, even F1 and M3 admitted that they had misused gender-specific first-person pronouns and FMPs at least once. These results are consistent with Sukgasi's (2018) findings, who found that Japanese-Thai interpreters sometimes misused PRTs and FMPs that do not belong to their gender. The results also support, to some extent, the hypothesis proposed by Angermeyer (2009) that when the gender of the interpreter and that of the primary speaker are different, the need to grammatically mark the gender of the primary speaker might influence interpreters to use indirect speech occasionally. It also raises the question of whether the use of FMPs based on the speaker's gender should be considered the norm because interpreters may not conform to any norms when faced with cognitive overload (Gile, 1998/1999).

To sum up, the results show that although most respondents perceived direct speech as the appropriate interpreting style and regularly used first-person pronouns and FMPs based on the gender of the speaker, gender-specific terms induced some respondents to shift from direct to indirect speech, either habitually or occasionally.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Although this study aimed to investigate the norms regarding interpreting style in English-Thai simultaneous interpreting, the data could not be generalized because of the limited evidence. Only 12 respondents participated in the study. Besides, since the data in this study were based on the personal accounts of the interpreters, there is a possibility that the strategies used by the interpreters in the actual practice might be different from their accounts. Therefore, further studies should focus on objective data such as discourse analysis. Since this study focused only on the practice and attitude of professional interpreters, the expectancy norms (i.e., user expectations for interpreters' handling of gender-specific terms in Thai) should also be investigated in future studies.

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Appendix

Survey instrument in English

Dear all, who is interested.

Thank you for your interest in this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is divided into 3 parts:

1. Personal information
2. Interpreting strategies
3. Opinion toward interpreting strategies

If you would agree to participate in this questionnaire, please answer the questions as faithfully as possible.

1. Are you a member of the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand
☐ Yes ☐ No (end the questionnaire)

2. Did you serve as an English-Thai interpreter in 2019?

Interpreting is defined as translating the **voice** spoken in one language into another language **using voice**. The translation of written form, such as document translation, do not include in interpreting.

Serving as an interpreter is defined as interpreting **with paid**.

☐ Yes ☐ No (end the questionnaire)

Part 1 Personal information

Please select the answer which best represents your identity.

3. Please select your age range.

☐ Below 20 years old ☐ 20-29 years old ☐ 30-39 years old
☐ 40-49 years old ☐ 50-59 years old ☐ Over 60 years old
☐ Prefer not to specify

4. Are you...?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Do you consider yourself to be **a transgender person**?

Transgender persons are defined as those who felt their present gender is different from their birth-assigned sex.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ Prefer not to specify

6. Please select your **sex at birth**.

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Undetermined ☐ Prefer not to specify

7. Please select your felt gender?

e.g., your sex at birth was male, but you **felt** you are female.

☐ Male or primarily masculine ☐ Female or primarily feminine
☐ Both male and female ☐ Neither male nor female
☐ Don't know ☐ Prefer not to specify

8. Please select the gender you currently **live as** in your day-to-day life?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Sometimes male, sometimes female
☐ Something other than male or female ☐ Prefer not to specify

9. Please select your **native language** or your most fluent language.

☐ Thai ☐ English ☐ Prefer not to specify ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Which **language pairs** do you serve as an interpreter? (Multiple answers possible)

☐ English-Thai ☐ Japanese-Thai ☐ Chinese-Thai ☐ Other (please specify)

11. How long do you serve as an interpreter?

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ Over 1 year (please specify a number in years)

12. Did you serve as an interpreter **full-time or part-time** in 2019?

If you worked full-time, please select your **type of employment**.

(If you changed your employment in 2019, please select the longest status)

☐ Part-time job ☐ Full-time job (a freelance)
☐ Full-time job (a permanent staff) ☐ Full-time job (a contract staff)

13. Which **settings** did you serve as an interpreter in **2019**? (Multiple answers possible)

☐ Conference (e.g., a large scale conference, a seminar, a course)
☐ Business (e.g., in a company, in a factory)
☐ Legal
☐ Medical
☐ Prefer not to specify
☐ Other (please specify)

14. Which **setting** did you serve **most frequently** as an interpreter in **2019**?

☐ Conference (e.g., a large scale conference, a seminar, a course)
☐ Business (e.g., in a company, in a factory)
☐ Legal
☐ Medical
☐ Prefer not to specify
☐ Other (please specify)



15. Please select how **frequently** you served as an interpreter **in Thailand** in **2019**.

- ☐ Only in Thailand
- ☐ In Thailand than out of Thailand
- ☐ In and out of Thailand for about the same time
- ☐ Out of Thailand than in Thailand
- ☐ Only out of Thailand

16. Have you ever received **interpreter training/education**?

Interpreter training/education here includes on-the-job training instructed by other interpreters

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. Please select the **total duration** of your interpreter education/training?

- ☐ Less than 1 week
- ☐ Over 1 week but less than 6 months
- ☐ More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- ☐ More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- ☐ Over 2 years
- ☐ Don't know

18. Please select the **types** of interpreter education/training you received? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Lecture
- ☐ Practice in class
- ☐ Practice in an actual situation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

19. Please select the **field** of interpreter education/training you received? (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Conference interpreting
- ☐ Court interpreting
- ☐ Medical interpreting
- ☐ General (no qualifiers)
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify)

20. Have you ever **taught** interpreting?

Teaching here includes instructing a junior interpreter in the workplace.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to specify

21. Please select the **types** of interpreting education/training you taught. (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Certification courses/program
- ☐ Undergraduate courses/program
- ☐ Graduate courses/program
- ☐ On-the-job training
- ☐ Prefer not to specify
- ☐ Other (please specify)

22. Have you ever performed **simultaneous interpreting**?

Simultaneous interpreting is defined as an act in which the speaker makes a speech and the interpreter renders the speech at the same time. The speaker does not pause the speech for the interpreter.

☐ Yes

☐ No

23. Please select the **number of days** you performed simultaneous interpreting in 2019.

☐ Over 150 days

☐ 53-149 days

☐ 13-52 days

☐ 1-12 days

☐ 0 day

☐ Don't know

24. Have you ever interpreted a **monologue**?

If you have, please select whether it is consecutive, simultaneous, or both.

A monologue is defined as a long speech by one person, such as a speech, a lecture, a presentation, a news report?

Consecutive interpreting is defined as an act of interpreting after the speaker pauses a speech.

☐ Never interpreted a monologue

☐ Interpreted a monologue only in consecutive

☐ Interpreted a monologue only in simultaneous

☐ Interpreted a monologue both in consecutive and simultaneous

Part 2-1: Interpreting strategies when speakers were female

25. Have you ever interpreted for female speakers?

☐ Never interpreted for female speakers

☐ Interpreted for female speakers only in consecutive

☐ Interpreted for female speakers only in simultaneous

☐ Interpreted for female speakers both in consecutive and simultaneous

Please answer the following questions using your experience as an interpreter in the past **two years**.

Situation

Please imagine that you were interpreting **monologues** (e.g., speeches, presentations) of female speakers (**simultaneous** interpreting from English into Thai).

The speakers here are **female**, not male.

26. Please select **strategies** you have used to **interpret "I"** in the given situation. (Multiple answers possible)

For example, "I am glad to be here" ➡ "(strategies) *yindii thii dâaymaa thîinîi*"

Please select all the strategies you have used both **intentionally** and **unintentionally**.

☐ *khâaphacâw*

☐ *dichăn*

☐ *phôm*

☐ *chăn*

☐ Not translate (e.g., omitting pronouns)

- ☐ thân / thân bòk wâa
☐ khăw / khăw bòk wâa
☐ Speakers' names / khun (speakers' names) bòk wâa
☐ Speakers' titles / (speakers' titles) bòk wâa
☐ Others (please specify)

27. Please select the **strategy** you have used to **interpret "I" most frequently** in the given situation.

For example, "I am glad to be here" ➡ "____(strategies)____yindii thîi dâaymaa thîinîi"

- ☐ khâaphacâw ☐ dîchăn ☐ phôm ☐ chăn
☐ Not translate (e.g., omitting pronouns)
☐ thân / thân bòk wâa
☐ khăw / khăw bòk wâa
☐ Speakers' names / khun (speakers' names) bòk wâa
☐ Speakers' titles / (speakers' titles) bòk wâa
☐ Others (please specify)

28. Please select **formality-marking particles** you have used in the given situation.

For example, "Hello" ➡ "sawàtdii____(FMP)____"

Please select all formality-marking particles you have used both **intentionally** and **unintentionally**; for example, you wanted to say "khráp" but said "há" instead.

- ☐ khráp ☐ khâ / khá ☐ há ☐ hâ
☐ Omitting particles ☐ Other (please specify)

29. Please select the **formality-marking particles** you have used **most frequently** in the given situation.

For example, "Hello" ➡ "sawàtdii____(FMP)____"

- ☐ khráp ☐ khâ / khá ☐ há ☐ hâ
☐ Omitting particles ☐ Other (please specify)

Part 2-2 Interpreting strategies when speakers were male

[Question 30-34 used the same questions as Question 26-29. The only difference was that the speakers in the provided situation were male, not female]

Part 3 Attitude towards interpreting strategies

35. Please imagine that you are **listening** to a novice interpreter interpreting **a monologue** (in a **simultaneous** mode from **English into Thai**).

Please select the statement which best represents your attitude.

(Your **opinion** do not have to match your actual practice)

- ☐ I think the interpreter should interpret as if s/he was as much **the same person** from the speaker as possible
☐ I think the interpreter should interpret as if s/he was as much **a different person** from the speaker as possible

36. Please select **all** reasons why you think that the interpreter should interpret as if s/he was as much **the same person** as the speaker as possible when it was a monologue interpreting from English into Thai. (Multiple answers possible)

- ☐ Because I think the interpreter should be a machine translation
- ☐ Because I have been told to interpret like this (e.g., interpreter trainers, colleagues, clients, or audiences).
- ☐ Because I have seen other interpreters interpret like this.
- ☐ Because it is a simultaneous interpreting
- ☐ Because it is a monologue interpreting, not a dialogue
- ☐ Because it made audiences less confused about who was speaking
- ☐ Other (please specify)

[For those who answered “I think the interpreter should interpret as if s/he was as much a different person from the speaker as possible,” two additional choices were added]

- ☐ Because I felt wired when hearing the interpreter use first-person pronouns that do not belong to his or her gender (e.g., a female interpreter used “phǒm” when interpreting for a male speaker)
- ☐ Because I felt wired when hearing the interpreter use formality-marking particles which do not belong to his or her gender (e.g., a female interpreter used “khráp” when interpreting for a male speaker)

Thank you for your cooperation in answering the questionnaire.

38. If you would agree to answer some further questions (via an email) or would like to receive the results of this study, please select your demand and write your email to receive a contact back.

- ☐ I am willing to discuss these issues further.
- ☐ Please send me information about the results of the study.
- ☐ E-mail _____