กลยุทธ์ความสุภาพเมื่อไม่เห็นด้วยในระบบความสุภาพ
Thai Politeness Strategaies for Disagreement in Politeness Systems

สโรชา รัตนเพียร

SrowchaRattanapian
มหาวิทยาลัยรัตนบัณฑิต
Rattana Bundit University

บทคัดย่อ
  วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยครั้งนี้เพื่อมุ่งเน้นศึกษากลยุทธ์ทางความสุภาพของคน ไทย ซึ่งเป็นงานทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ตามกรอบทฤษฎีของบราวน์และเลวินสัน(1978) งานวิจัยนี้เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ โดยมีกลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นเพศหญิง และชาย อายุ 15-52 ปี จำนวน 400 คนเพื่อวิเคราะห์การใช้ภาษาเมื่อแสดงความ ไม่เห็นด้วยในระบบความสุภาพแบบอาวุโส ในสามรูปแบบ คือ แบบเพื่อนร่วมงาน แบบเพื่อน และแบบครอบครัว คำถามในงานวิจัย คือ กลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้กลยุทธ์ทาง ความสุภาพใดเพื่อแสดง ความไม่เห็นด้วย เครื่องมือวิจัย คือ แบบสอบถามแบบเติม เต็มบทสนทนาชนิดให้เขียนตอบ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า กลุ่มตัวอย่างเลือกใช้กลยุทธ์การพูด ตรงเพื่อแสดงการไม่เห็นด้วยในระบบครอบครัวและเพื่อน นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่ามีการ ใช้กลยุทธ์ ทางความสุภาพเชิงบวก เชิงลบ และ การพูดอ้อมเพื่อแสดงความเคารพนับถือ ต่อผู้ฟังในระบบอาวุโส และระบบเพื่อนร่วมงาน

คำสำคัญ: ความสุภาพ, ความสุภาพในภาษาไทย, การแสดงความไม่เห็นด้วย,
    วัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์

Abstract

The paper examined politeness strategies in disagreements of 400 participants, who were native Thaisof mixed gendersbetween 15-52 years of age, in different politeness systems, including hierarchical, deference, solidarity, and family face systemsfollowing the politeness strategy framework of Brown and Levinson (1978). Data Completion Tasks (DCT) was the major research tool used to collect linguistic data when participants disagreed. The resultwas found thatThai participants prevalently employed bald onrecord strategies (directness) when they disagreed in solidarity and family systems, while a higher number of negative politeness and off-record strategies (indirectness) were observed in hierarchy and deferenceface systems.

Keywords: Politeness, Thai Politeness, Disagreement, Pragmatics

Introduction

Politeness is a pragmatic field in linguistics which has been vastly researched across cultures.Linguists pay attention to how politeness functions through linguistic realization by the interlocutors so that it can be understood how people across cultures express politeness to either involve or show respect to hearers in the communication(Brown & Levinson, 1978; Scollon, Scollon, & H.Jones, 2012).

Politeness study is directly linked with the cultural dimension and social organization of each culture because the expression of any politeness strategy is extensively rooted in the values of communities. As a native Thai, there are several reasons why the researcher finds the need to study the politeness strategies when Thai interlocutors disagree; 1) Disagreement is naturally threatening to thehearer's ability to save face when the speaker is displaying dissatisfaction; 2) It has been observed that people in Thailand tend to avoid disagreeing with their interlocutors in order to avoid possible conflict; 3) According toScollon et al. (2012), communicators express different politeness strategies across three politeness systems. If this is the case, it is suspected that Thai interlocutors express various strategies to disagree with their interlocutor.

Research question

The research question in this study is as such:What politeness strategies do Thai Participants use to disagree in three politeness systems? The study is conducted to understand different types of politeness strategies that are used when Thaiparticipants disagree in different situations.

Literature review: Brown and Levinson (1978)'s Politeness theory

In politeness study, Brown and Levinson (1978) created politeness strategies in Politeness: Some universals in language usage to demonstrate different politeness strategies, expressed through linguistic realizations which claim universality and cross-cultural applicability.

The term 'face' is firstly introduced in Interaction Ritual by Goffman (1967), later reoccurring in Brown and Levinson's notions of face. They pay focal attention to the notion of 'face' in studying politeness. There are two faces in conveying speakers' desires or 'face-wants', including 'negative and positive face'. While negative face is the want to be undisturbed in one's actions, the positive face is the desireto be approved of that a speaker has. In other words, face, which is the public self-image, is viewed as being the basic wants that all members in the community wish to be satisfied. In an interaction, we might either endorse others' faces as they expect us to do so or defend our own face when we are threatened by others and, by this means, threaten others' faces.

Previous works of Yang (1945) and Basso (1979) support the concept of negative and positive face and its universality in looking into ethnic politeness. Brown and Levinson (1978) assert that the notion of face can be applied to analyze cross-cultural similarities and differences of how people from different ethnic backgroundsincorporate faces. Thus, the study of face is significant to the study of politeness in the intercultural communication arena, as it could be understood how different ethnic people recognize notions of face and self-esteem in their cultures and how the facial metaphor affects their lives. The study of face across cultures could be a starting point to perceiving cultural differences in interaction.

Face-threatening acts (FTAs)

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are acts that could threaten the face-wants of the speaker (S) or the hearer or addressee (H). It is valuable to explain here the acts that could be threats to speakers' and hearers' faces.

There are acts which could pose threats to negative face and positive face. Firstly, negative face threatening acts occur when the S impedes the H's freedom of action. These acts can be those which pressurize H to do an action (orders, requests, suggestions, advice), those which push the H to accept or reject in order to satisfy the face-want of S (offers and promises) and acts which show S's desire toward H or H's goods (compliments, expressions of emotions of envy, admiration). Secondly, positive face threatening acts are indicated when S is not concerned about the H's feelings and wants. They include acts which reveal a negative assessment of H's positive face (disagreement, criticism, challenges) and those which show that S ignores H's positive face (non-cooperation, bringing up bad news or sensitive topics for discussion) (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

Politeness strategies

The choice of politeness strategies chosen from S's wants could be 1) to communicate the message of the FTA, 2) to be efficient or urgent and 3) to save the H's face. The following are strategies for redressing FTAs: Firstly, bald on record is the most direct, clear way to communicate. Secondly, on-record with redress includes positive and negative politeness. Redressive action is another strategy being used to 'give face' to H and to avoid damaging H's face. Positive politeness is used toward H's positive face or his other face. When positive face is one's wants which can be satisfied by others, the strategy could be portrayed as 'the speaker wants the hearer's wants' by being

concerned about H and treating him or her as he or she is a member of S's group who is liked and desired. Negative politeness is practiced when S recognizes the H's wants of not being impeded and respects his or her negative face-wants. It shows that S would not interfere with the freedom of action on avoidancebased strategy.

Politeness strategies in disagreement by Asian and Thai speakers have also been researched in different aspects as some examples follow; The study of polite strategies in multicultural corporation showed that distance and power between speakers and interlocutors affect the use of politeness strategies. For communication with unequal power, employees with lower power expressed indirectness to disagree with employers who have higher power. On the contrary, participants used bald-on-record strategies with listeners who have equal power such as colleagues(Samransamruajkit & Getkham, 2015). Another study ofSrisuruk (2011)who studied politeness competence of Thai speakers of English found that negative politeness strategy was used the most commonly with listeners with higher power followed by bald-on-record and positive politeness.

Three politeness systems

According to Scollon et al. (2012), three politeness systems including Deference, Solidarity and Hierarchical are noticed across different contexts which are determined by the factors of Power (P) and Distance (D).

In Deference politeness system, two interlocutors have equal power but their relationship is distant (-P, +D). As their social levelsare similar, the system tends to see interlocutors apply negative politeness strategies when speaking to each other.Solidarity politeness system is exemplified by solidified, close ties between speakers who can be close friends or those who wish to express

closeness to each other. They both carry equal power and a close relationship (-P, -D), and they tend to play positive politeness strategies.In Hierarchical politeness system, two interlocutors see their relationship asymmetrically as they have different status in the context. They bare different power statuses (+P), thus they play different politeness strategies. Speakers who have higher power tend to use involvement strategies while those with lower power would use independence strategies.

Taxonomy of disagreements

Sornig (1977)defines disagreement as being "a reactive, requiring a prior utterance from an interlocutor" (p.364). Locher (2004)explains that disagreement is a speech act in which a speaker shows his or her dissatisfaction toward the hearer. Stalpers (1995:276) defines the term as "when participants do not share common ground with respect to a particular matter, because of a difference in opinion". Disagreements could pose conflict in the communicators' relationship because it is apositive face-threatening act. To reduce the conflict, disagreements can be mitigated by disagreement and politeness strategies such as being conventionally indirect or the use of hedges and giving deference (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

Muntigl and Turnbull (1998) propose the 'taxonomy of disagreements', with which they classify 4 types disagreement which are Irrelevancy Claims (IC), Challenges (CH), Contradictions (CT) and Counterclaims (CC). Irrelevancy claims are acts to dispute the previous claim as being not relevant to the topic being discussed; For example, when the speaker says 'You are straying off the topic', he/she does not think that what his/her interlocutor mentioned is relevant to what they are talking. Next, Challenges are disagreeing acts to demonstrate that an interlocutor has not provided sufficient information. They are normally

performed through interrogative sentences such as 'Who', 'What', 'Why', 'When' and 'Where'. When Challenges are posed by an H, the acts threaten the positive face of S and could create a communication rift as S's face is damaged. Then, Contradictions are claims that the speaker made to show that what the interlocutor offeredwas wrong. The linguistic features of contradictions involve the use of negated sentences and negative particles such as 'no' and'not'. Later, Counterclaims are acts which counter the previous claim through indirectnessand further negotiation. Linguistic usage for counterclaiming includes positive markers, partial agreement, pauses and mitigating devices.

Rees-Miller (2000) presents the taxonomy of disagreement to explain the different types of disagreement strategies which happen when the speaker's intended content contrasts the addressees. They are divided on the degree ofthe intensity of disagreement expression, comprising of soft, medium and strong expression. Hedges showing partial agreement, positive comments and humors fall into the soft type. Then, negative statements and contradictions through negated lexis such as 'yes' or 'no' are medium disagreement expression. Finally, accusation, intensifiers, rhetorical questions or lexis showing judgmental attitudes are considered strong disagreement expression.

Methodology: Participants

Participantsare 400 Thai native speakers whose first language is Thai. 48 percent of the respondents are male (192 persons) while 52 percent are female (208 persons). Their age ranges between 15 and 52 years old. All participants participated in the research on a voluntary basis through both offline and online means, while consent forms were signed prior to the distribution of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT).

Research Instrument, Data collection and analysis

Discourse Completion Task (DCT), one of the research tools used in pragmatics studies of linguistic politeness, is selected to examine participants' politeness strategies in disagreement. Three sets of situation promptsare as follows:

Situation 1: ผัดไทยร้านนี้อร่อยจัง (Pad Thai here is very good.)

You: ....

Situation 2:สมาร์ทโฟนที่ดีที่สุด คือ หัวเว่ย (Huawei is the best smartphone.)

You: ....

Situation 3: หนังเรื่องนี้สนุกมากลองไปดูสิ (This movie is great. You should watch it.)

You: ....

The researcher collected the data by requesting for participants to fill in 3 sets of situation prompts comprised of 12 utterances to disagree with different speakers, including 1) parents, 2) professors/ bosses, 3) colleagues and 4) friends. In each set of DCT, participants were requested to fill in answers in the fastest manner to show disagreement in solidarity, deference, hierarchy and family face systems. To elaborate the point, these simulated speakers were employers/ professors with higher status (hierarchical politeness system), colleagues with equal power and a distant relationship (deference relationship) and friends with a close relationship (solidarity politeness system). It is also interesting to observe how participants disagree with their parents as their power and distant relationship vary in families. In DCT, participants do not need to fill in their names for they can accomplish the tasks freely without any obstruction or hesitation.

After participants filled in DCT prompts, all answers were collected and analyzed quantitatively to see the patterns of participants' politeness strategies. Then, linguistic realizations following the framework of Brown and Levinson (1978) were applied to understand their politeness strategies when disagreeing with speakers with different power and distance.

Findings

This section reports the findings on participants' politeness strategies that were used to disagree with different speakers in solidarity, family, hierarchical and deference politeness systems in three situations. Linguistic examples are also given to elaborate on the analysis.
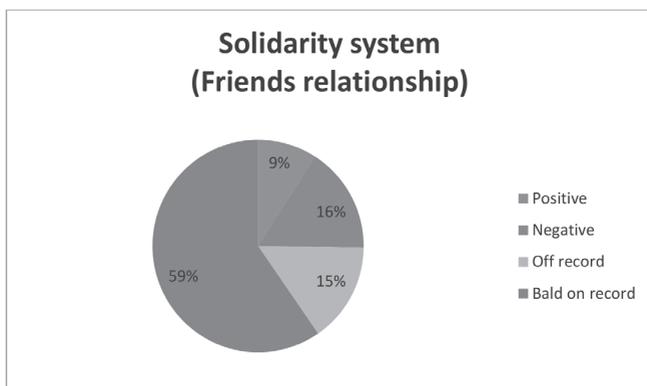

Figure 1: Politeness strategies in solidarity system

In solidarity systems between close friends, it was shown that the speakers employed bald on record strategies the most frequently (59%, 237 times) when compared to positive (9%, 38 times), negative (16%, 65 times) and off- record (15%, 60 times) strategies. This can be interpreted to show that

speakers with close relationships prefer to be directwith each other when they wish to disagree rather than employing politeness strategies to save each other's faces. Also, speakers do not need to adopt off-record strategies as they wish to better communicate direct messages to their listeners.

Certain linguistic features that were found in the solidarity system are vernacular, slang and impolite language use. Examples of vernacular in this system are:

โคตรกากเลย	'It is very bad.',
ห่วยแตกจะตาย	'It is very bad.,
ปัญญาอ่อน	'You are crazy'.

From the examples, Thai wordsโคตร/Kho:t^3/, ห่วย /huaj^2/, and ปัญญาอ่อน /phan^{1}ya^{1}ʔɔ:n^2/are the word choices that are only used by friends with proximity, as they can be considered very rude if used with addresees who have a distant relationship and/or higher power. Also,the second pronoun normally interpreted as impolite, including แก /kɛ:^{1}/and มึง /mɯŋ^1/were observed.For example,

จริงหรอมึง	'Really?',
หรอวะแก	'Really?'

Lastly, speakers disagreed sarcastically to create levity.For instance,

แกเคยใช้แล้วหรอถึงบอกว่าดี	'Have you ever used it?',
อร่อยทุกอย่างละมึงอ่ะ	'Everything is good for you?'

From the researcher's perspective, these language uses are perceived as appropriate in this context as these linguistic samples symbolized close ties among speakers when they conversed.
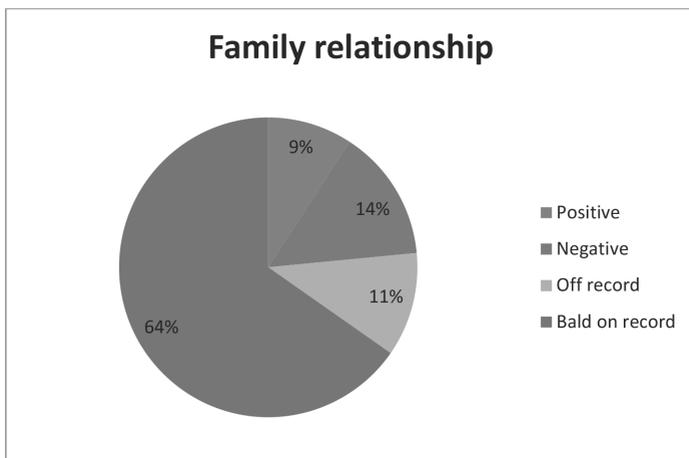
Figure 2: Politeness strategies in family relationship

Regarding politeness strategies in Thai family relationships, it was reported that bald on record strategies were mostly used (64%, 257 times), while other strategies of positive (9%, 38 times), negative (14%, 58 times) and off-record strategies (11%, 47 times) were minimally practiced. In families, speakers who were children chose to directly disagree with their parents and to be frank when speaking their opinions to their adult interlocutors. Interestingly, it was shown that a close relationship between parents and their children outweighed the power factor deriving from parents' more senior age. Thus, speakers' decisions to be direct rather than being indirect to save faces was acceptable in this politeness system. Through bald on record strategies, informal, friendly language was frequently observed in the data by the participants to address their parents to show disagreement. For instance,

ไม่เห็นอร่อยเลยแม่ เส้นก็แข็ง	'Mom, Pad Thai here is not good and the noodles are hard.'
หนูว่าผัดไทร้านนี้จืดเกินไป	'Pad thai here is too bland.

Also, the first pronoun หนู /nu:[5]/and ผม/phom[5]/were optedforin this politeness system to show a respectful yet friendly tone by the speakers who are younger and less experienced. The chosen direct strategies represented closer relationships between interlocutors who are blood relatedas they did not need to exercise various politeness strategies to attend to the hearers' faces to be liked or saved.
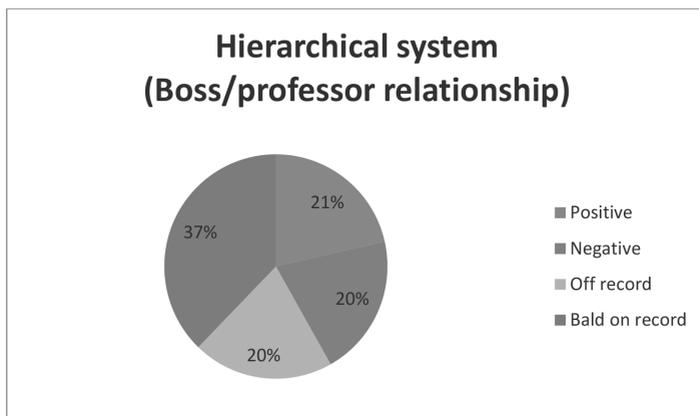

Figure 3: Politeness strategies in hierarchical system

In the hierarchical system, in which interlocutors have unequal power and distant relationships(namely the relationship of employer and employee and that of professor and student), it is observed that bald-on record strategies were mostly used by speakers to show disagreement with their listeners whilepositive, negative politeness and off-record strategies were used to

alleviate face-threatening acts of disagreements in equal proportion. From the data, it can be seen that bald on record was the most employed at37% or 148 times, followed by positive at 21% or 87 times, negative at20% or 82 times and off-record strategies at 20% or 83 times. For baldon record strategies, itis interesting to observe that speakers did not disagree bluntly with the speakers, but rather they frequently usedfinal discourse particlesค่ะ/kha?[2]/and ครับ /khrap[4]/ to show their respect and politeness to the listeners who hadmore power. Through the use of these particles, their disagreement was less face threaten-ing to the listeners. Also, speakers normally used the first pronounหนู/nu:[5]/ and ผม/phom[5]/ in Thai followed by their own opinions to express their responsibili-ty to their own utterances. For instance,

ผมคิดว่าไม่ค่อยดีเท่าไหร่นะครับ   'I don't think it is good.'
หนูไม่ค่อยชอบรสชาติมันนะคะ   'I don't really like its taste.'

For Thai native speakers, being direct might not be considered impolite as speakers purely intend to share their own ideas, without the intention of imposing threat upon the listeners.

In terms of the use of positive politeness strategies in the hierarchical system, speakers exercised the previously mentioned strategiesfrequently by pretending to agree with their interlocutors. For instance,

อ๋อ ค่ะ ดีจริงๆ ด้วย   'Yes, it is very good.'
ใช่ครับ   'Yes, I agree'.

For negative politeness strategies, questions and hedges were employed the most commonly as speakers did not want to coerce hearers and pose face-threatening acts to them. For examples,

อาจารย์ลองใช้ไอโฟนรึยังคะ อาจารย์อาจจะชอบก็ได้ค่ะ

'Professor, Have you ever tried Iphone? You might like it.'

อาจจะแล้วแต่ความพอดีของแต่ละคน

'I think It depends on each person's preference.'

In some cases, off-record strategies were practiced to avoid disagreeing with listeners, as their utterances do not have only one communicative message. For example,

หนูไม่เคยใช้เลยค่ะ เลยไม่รู้   'I've never used it so I don't know',

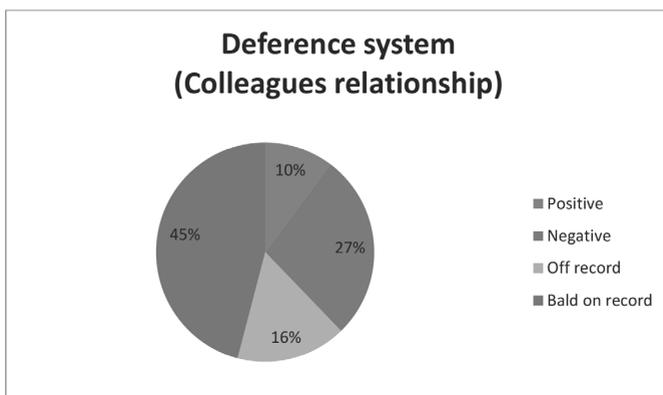ดิฉันไม่เก่งเรื่องการดูสมาร์ทโฟน   'I have no idea about smartphones.'

Figure 4: Politeness strategies in deference system

In the deference politeness system, Thai speakers mostly used bald on record strategies (45%, 182 times), followed by negative (27%, 108 times), off-record (16%, 67 times) and positive politeness strategies (10%, 42 times). It is assumed from politeness system theory that speakers would play negative politeness strategies to save hearers' faces, However, bald on record strategies

were seen to be dominant in this system. Thus, it can be interpreted that participants in the context of Thai workplacespresented close rather than distant relationships, which enabled them to be more direct to their counterparts. For example,

มันไม่อร่อยเลยอ่ะ   'It is not good at all.'

ไม่ค่อยชอบอ่ะ   'I don't like it'

These are examples of bald on record strategies through vernacular that presentedrelationship proximity between interlocutors. In terms of pronoun use, the first pronoun เรา/raw[1]/ 'I'and ชั้น /chan[4]/ 'I' and the second pronoun เธอ /thə:[1]/ 'you' were normally practiced toconvey friendly address to the hearers. For instance,

เราว่ามันก็อร่อยนะ แต่เค็มไปนิดนึง   'I think it is good, yet a bit too salty.',

ฉันไม่ค่อยชอบสักเท่าไหร่   'I don't like it.'

To summarize the findings on participants' uses of politeness strategies, questions and hedges were mostly used for negative politeness strategies to show respect to the listener and not to impede his/her wants. For instance,

จริงดิ เดี๋ยววันหลังไปอุดหนุนบ้างละ   'Really? I will go there sometimes.',

เหรอคะ แต่พี่ว่ามันไม่ค่อยถูกปากเลย   'Really? but I don't like it.'

Speakers used questions to soften their disagreement rather being direct with their opinions. Additionally, the speakers mitigated disagreements through hedges to show politeness before stating their opinion. For instance,

| ก็ดีแต่ไม่มาก | 'It isok but not that good.' |
| พอได้อยู่นะแต่มันไม่ค่อยถูกปากฉัน | 'It isok but it is not delicious for me.' |

Through hedges, utterances sound more polite and less face-threatening.

For positive politeness strategies, a small proportion of participants opted to use strategies of pretending to agree and telling white lies to avoid disagreeing with the listeners and not to cause hearers' face losses. For instance,

| ร้านนี้ก็ดี | 'This restaurant is good.' |
| ก็อร่อยดีนา | 'This dish is good.' |

Instead of being direct to disagree, speakers chose to communicate what the hearer wished to hearin order to save face and to show that his/her face is respected.

Limitations and future research

As Data Completion Tasks were chosen as the major research tool in the study, the researcher was not able to collect naturally occurring interactions of research participants from real-life settings. Also, it must be noted that this study does not presume the generalization of Thai politeness throughout Thai cultures, as the researcher was aware that politeness is culturally specific.

In terms of recommendations for future study, different research possibilities can be accomplished involving politeness issues. First, the study can be replicated in other countries which possess different cultural values in orderto observe similarities and differences in politeness strategies across cultures. Second, researchers can investigate the politeness strategies of different speech acts, namely requests, promises, greetings, apologies etc.

Third, researchers can study politeness in other contexts of their interest, such as business meetings or daily transactions,to observe how interlocutors express politeness strategies in said settings.

Conclusion and Discussion

Here isconcluded the research on the Thai politeness strategies in disagreements of 400 Thai participants insolidarity, deference,hierarchy and family politeness systems. It was found that politeness strategies were practiced differently according to context. The choice of strategies used generally depended on the factors of power and distance between speakers and their interlocutors. In the solidarity and family relationship systems, bald on record strategies were exercised the most frequently when participants disagreed with hearers. It was found that speakers chose to be direct to disagree with their family members and friends, as their relationshipsare solidified. However, the final particles /kha$\boldsymbol{?}^{2}$/and /khrap^{4}/and consanguine kinship terms were used in family relationships to express respect but not between friends, because the former system involved power difference whereas the power factor was equal in the latter.

In terms of strategies used to disagree in workplace relationships, participants tended to be less direct and to use more negative politeness strategies to give and save the faces of hearers who were equal in power. However, the relationship of two participants can be interpreted as either close or distant depending on the linguistic choice. When fictive kinship terms such as พี่ /phi:^{3}/ and /nɔ:ŋ^{4}/ were used, close relationship could be assumed. Hedges and questions were the two most frequently used strategies by Thai participants to demonstrate the partial commitment of the speakers to their own utterances so that they showed their desire not to presume or to coerce hearers.

Finally, negative, positive politeness and off- record strategies were frequently practiced in the hierarchy politeness system when speakers with inferior power felt an important need to show deference to their superordinates. In this scenario, speakers were less direct, more self-humbling and used proper terms of address, suggesting distant and formal relationships.

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