

Effects of Different First-person Pronouns and Politeness Sentence-ending Particles in
English-to-Thai Consecutive Interpretation: a Case Study

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Abstract

With various first-person pronouns to choose from, interpreters who render English into Thai language sometimes find themselves struggling to determine the most suitable pronoun, especially when they and their speakers are of the opposite sex. This is because the limitations of each pronoun concerning genders of word and the level of formality. Conducted in Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School (LCBD), this pilot case study explored whether different first-person pronouns as well as presence and absence of politeness sentence-ending particles, a characteristic of Thai language, affected Thai users' preference in consecutive interpreting from English into Thai. Three experiments in cooking demonstration classes were conducted. Each was interpreted by a female interpreter using different pairings of first-person pronouns and politeness sentence-ending particles, followed by questionnaires and interviews of selected participants. The result was that the audience was indeed affected by different choices of pronouns. The gender-neutral casual-to-formal-register occupational pronoun /fɛf/ was highly preferred, while the gender-specific /phǒm/ and the hyper-formal /khâaphacâw/ were deemed less suitable, respectively. One of the most prominent reasons was that the usages of the less-preferred pronouns deviate from the norms of communication in Thai, whether the clash of genders between that of the interpreter and the words spoken or the hyper-formality. The participants generally did not regard the absence of politeness sentence-ending particles as significant since it was not interpreted as impoliteness and the particles did not seem to serve any semantic purposes.

Keywords: consecutive interpretation, first-person pronouns, sentence-ending particles, language register, formality, politeness, gender

1. Introduction

When it comes to interpreting, the most faithful rendition has always been the ideal of which an interpreter is expected. Such fidelity concerns not only linguistic aspects but also paralinguistic and extralinguistic ones. In other words, the meaning of speaker's message must be interpreted accurately as well as their feelings, attitude or intention that comes with it. To illustrate, quality interpreting, as stated in "Practical guide for professional conference interpreters" by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), must be done in the first person because interpreters' loyalty lies with the speaker. Moreover, interpreters

have to maintain the register of the speaker. The two are among the many other conditions that interpreters have to fulfill.

For these extensive terms come inevitably myriad complications, one of which is the disparity of gender specificity between words in two languages. Such problem was brought up in a research on court interpreting by Berk-Seligson (1988). The conflict between preserving the meaning and preserving the politeness of the original message arose when a Spanish-speaking witness who did not reciprocate the use of first-person interpretation by addressing the female interpreter instead of the male prosecutor attorney, albeit the interpreter's recommendation. Therefore, the witness used the feminine "señora", the Spanish equivalence to "ma'am" in English, as the sentence-ending address term in answering the prosecutor attorney's question. To avoid embarrassment of addressing the male prosecutor attorney with a feminine sentence-ending term, the interpreter decided to alternate between leaving out the word and substituting it with the male-specific "sir" instead. The first solution of dropping the politeness marker, however, may distort the the witness' intention and affect the prosecutor attorney's perception towards her.

Similarly, interpreters who render messages from English into Thai also open a can of worms when they interpret in first-person and the speaker is of the opposite sex. Two decisions have to be made. One is on first-person pronouns available and the other is of the choices concerning speech-level particles. Each choice affects the degree of formality and politeness of the original speech.

The topic of this study, therefore, would focus on whether or not different first-person pronouns as well as whether the presence and absence of speech-level particles affect listeners. Moreover, should significant differences occur, they are expected to determine the more preferred practice as a potential guideline for English-Thai interpreters in similar context of the study.

First-person pronouns and politeness sentence-ending particles in Thai

While the only singular first-person pronouns in English "I" is of neutral gender and register, Thai first-person pronouns are of the opposite. Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom (2005) categorized nine most common first-person pronouns, spread across the spectrum as seen in Figure 1.

SPEAKER =	Male	Male/Female	Female
Higher Formality		/khâaphacâw/ (ข้าพเจ้า)	
↑ ↓	/kraphôm/ (กราบ)		/dichân/ (ดิฉัน)
	/phôm/ (ผม)	/chân/ (ฉัน)	
		/raw/ (เรา)	
			/kháw/ (เขา) /tua eeg/ (เธอ)
Lower Formality		/kuu/ (กู)	

Figure 1. First-person pronouns (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005, p. 50)

In addition to closed class first-person pronouns in Figure 1, there are also open class first-person pronouns, which can be specified as ‘nominal pronouns’ in Thai as this type of pronouns include 1) official names or nicknames, 2) kinship terms and 3) certain occupational terms. Some of the occupational first-person pronouns, such as “/khruu/” (teacher), “/m /” (doctor) and “/jef/” (chef), also covers casual, consultative (alternatively called ‘professional’) and formal register. (See *Appendix 3: Non-exhaustive List of Occupational Terms functioning as Nominal First-person Pronouns in Thai Language*)

Apart from the variety of first-person pronouns, another prominent feature of spoken Thai is the omnipresent sentence-ending particles (occasionally referred to as speech-level particles). Among the many types of these particles are politeness sentence-ending particles (PSPs), which are often used intermittently to show courtesy towards family members, acquaintances and strangers alike. All of them, save for the highly informal particles in the bottom line in Figure 2, are gender-specific.

SPEAKER =	Male	Male/Female	Female
Formal		/khráp/ ~ /kháp/	/khâ/ ~ /khà/ ~ /khá/
↑ ↓		/há?/~ /há/	/hâ/ ~ /há/
			/câ/ ~ /cá/
Casual		/wá/ ~ /wáy/ ~ /wóoy/	/yâ/ ~ /yá/

Figure 2. Politeness speech-level particles (Iwasaki & Ingkaphirom, 2005, p. 179)

With all the aforementioned first-person pronouns and politeness particles, there are five possible pairings that can be used when interpreting a speaker of the opposite sex in first-person, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Pairing (P _n)	Register	Gender (neutral or specific)	First-person pronoun	Politeness particle
P ₁	Hyper-formal	Gender neutral	/khâaphacâw/ (ข้าพเจ้า)	None
P ₂	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender specific (assuming the speaker's gender)	/phôm/ (ผม) for male or /dichân/ (ดิฉัน) for female	/khráp/~ /kháp/ (ครับ) & /na khráp/~ /na kháp/ (นะครับ) for male or /khâ/ and /na khá/ (ค่ะ) & (นะคะ) for female
P ₃	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender neutral	Open class first-person pronouns (nicknames, kinship terms and occupational terms)	None
P ₄	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender specific (assuming the interpreter's gender)	/phôm/ (ผม) for male or /dichân/ (ดิฉัน) for female	/khráp/~ /kháp/ (ครับ) & /na khráp/~ /na kháp/ (นะครับ) for male or /khâ/ and /na khá/ (ค่ะ) & (นะคะ) for female
P ₅	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender specific (assuming the speaker's gender)	Open class first-person pronouns (nicknames, kinship terms and occupational terms)	/khráp/~ /kháp/ (ครับ) & /na khráp/~ /na kháp/ (นะครับ) for male or /khâ/ and /na khá/ (ค่ะ) & (นะคะ) for female
P ₆	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender specific (assuming the interpreter's gender)	Open class first-person pronouns (nicknames, kinship terms and occupational terms)	/khráp/~ /kháp/ (ครับ) & /na khráp/~ /na kháp/ (นะครับ) for male or /khâ/ and /na khá/ (ค่ะ) & (นะคะ) for female
P ₇	Casual	Gender neutral	/raw/ (เรา) ¹ , /chân/ (ฉัน)	None

Table 1. All possible pairings

¹ /raw/ เรา in Thai can be both singular and plural first-person pronouns. In other words, it can be translated into both "I" and "we" in English. In this case, it is intended to mean "I".

From observations, there are two common practices among Thai professional interpreters and interpreter trainees when they have to interpret simultaneously in first-person for speakers of their opposite sex. The first is using the hyper-formal gender-neutral first-person pronoun /khâaphacâw/ (ข้าพเจ้า) while omitting speech-level particles (P₁) to avoid the awkwardness that any sex-exclusive word may present. However, this method deviates from commonly spoken Thai, whether the speech is of casual, consultative or formal register. It is labeled as “hyper-formal” earlier in this paragraph because of two reasons. Firstly, Thai people mostly use this word in formal writings such as in legal documents. Secondly, this style of speech resembles public utterances by members of the Thai royal family. In contrast, the second practice, which is generally perceived as more natural everyday language and formal speech, pairs up gender-specific pronouns /phõm/ and /dichán/ and speech-level particles /khráp/~khaps/ or /na khráp/~na khaps/ and /khâ/ or /na khâ/ (P₂).

From the aforementioned linguistic limitations, it is possible that the sense of dilemma interpreters have to face can be mitigated by finding out whether different first-person pronouns as well as presence and absence of speech-level particles affect Thai user’s preference of rendition. By choosing Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School (LCBD) – the researcher’s workplace at the time of this study – as the case location, the researcher did not aspire to provide a generalized solution on choosing first-person pronouns and PSPs. Instead, the research is aimed to examine contextual conditions for they have been deemed relevant to the phenomenon under study (Yin 2003, cited in Baxter & Jack 2008).

2. Research Methodology

Scope of research

The study was conducted in a school setting (Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School). The participants were Thai students listening to English-Thai consecutive interpretation in cooking demonstrations. The speakers were English-speaking male French chefs and the interpreter (the researcher) was a Thai-speaking female.

There are seven possible pairings of first-person pronouns and politeness particles as shown in the Table 1. However, this study exclusively examined P₁, P₂, and P₃ in Table 2. There were two reasons for this. First of all, the researcher has observed that the most prevalent uses of pairings among professional interpreters and interpreters in training are P₁

and P₂ when it comes to simultaneous conference interpreting, so examining audience's perception towards the pairings in the context of consecutive interpreting can be useful. Secondly, the researcher would like to see whether P₃ could help replace the deep-rooted use of third-person interpreting in the research location. All of the interpreters at LCBD, who were all untrained except the researcher herself, employ third-person interpretation. It has been this way since the school started using interpreting in class demonstrations. If proven satisfactory to the research participants, P₃ can be proposed as a non-disruptive way to channel first-person rendition for audience who have been familiar with third-person interpretation for at least three months. Moreover, the pairing can also be employed when interpreting in some other disciplines, e.g. medicine and education, as well.

Pairing (P _n)	Register	Gender (neutral or specific)	First-person pronoun	Politeness particle
P ₁	Hyper-formal	Gender neutral	/khâaphacâw/ (ข้าพเจ้า)	None
P _{2E} ²	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender specific (assuming the speaker's gender)	/phôm/ (ผม)	/khráp/~kháp/ (ครับ) & /na khráp/~na kháp/ (นะคะ)
P _{3E} ³	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Gender neutral	/jef/ (เชฟ) "Chef" (Occupational pronominal word as open class first-person pronoun borrowed from the English language)	None

Table 2. Experimented pairings

There are also three additional reasons for excluding P₄, P₅ P₆ and P₇. First of all, some consecutive interpreters frequently use P₄, albeit without the use of subject pronoun. This is because doing so can mislead the audience to understand that the interpreter is speaking as themselves. Thai language, almost always, allows for absence of first-person pronouns as well as omission of the subject in a sentence. However, there are also cases that a

² This is a subset of the second pairing in Table 1, with added specificity on the pairing being male-specific (/phôm/ & /khráp/~kháp/ or /na khráp/~na kháp/) and excluding female-specific pairing (/dichán/ & /khâ/ or /na khâ/) because the researcher/interpreter is female and the Chefs in the experiments conducted are male. The subscript 'E' stands for 'experimented'.

³ This is a subset of the third pairing in Table 1, with added specificity on the pronoun exclusively representing the profession of chefs and excluding other possibilities of P₃ e.g. using other occupational first-person pronouns. Like the pairing P_{2E}, the subscript 'E' also stands for 'experimented'.

pronoun cannot be omitted, namely possessive, reflexive and object pronouns. Thus the interpreter must find a way around them by, for example, using the Thai equivalence of “this” (/nî/ นี้) or “myself” (/tua eej/ ตัวเอง), which are gender neutral but quite informal. Apart from informality, the constant struggle to judge whether at which point first-person pronouns can or cannot be omitted may cause certain delay as well as distraction. The reason for omitting P₆ falls into the same situation. Secondly, P₅ closely resembles to both P_{2E} and P_{3E}. Therefore, it was excluded for the sake of clarity. Thirdly, the casual register of P₇ makes it an unlikely choice for interpreters, so its limited use was the reason for the omission.

It should also be remarked that at the time this study took place, all interpreters employed at the research location were female. Therefore, the cross-gender pairings could only be experimented in the case of female interpreters interpreting male speakers, not vice versa.

Research methods

This research was a qualitative study aiming to discover whether different first-person pronouns as well as presence and absence of speech-level particles in Thai consecutive interpretation affect user’s preference, as well as the reasons. Being aimed at exploring the phenomena in a specific setting and “[illuminating] a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken” (Schamm 1971 cited in Yin), this research was thus designed to be a case study.

The degree of effects of user’s perception towards formality and politeness in Thai was first tested in the experiment, followed immediately by questionnaire. Then, the researcher, bearing the preliminary result in mind, interviewed selected participants from the previous experiment to gather in-depth information.

The experiment was conducted within three different cooking demonstration classes by three pastry chef instructors at LCB. All of the sessions were recorded. In each three-hour-long class, the Thai students, the target population, were exposed to three types of pairings: P₁, P_{2E}, and P_{3E}. Each rendition, consisting of one pairing, was of one-hour in length. At the beginning of the class, each group was given a brief explanation on the experiment, namely the segmentation and what each pairing consists of. The briefing was to make the objective and process of the experiment as clear as possible, thus preventing it from being time-consuming and disruptive for the students. The data on user’s perception towards the three pairings, as well as towards the roles of language register and politeness in interpreting, was then collected from the three groups by means of questionnaire in Thai at the end of the

class. Students in each class were encouraged to voluntarily fill out the questionnaire evaluating the three pairings by informing that those who participated were eligible for a lucky draw, with two 500-baht Starbucks gift cards as prizes. The number of respondents was 41 in total: 17 from Basic Pastry (BP) class, 11 from Intermediate Pastry (IP) class and 13 from Superior Pastry (SP) class.

Next, nine interviews, two face-to-face and seven on the phone, with selected nine individuals (three from each experiment groups) were conducted further for insight into their answers given in the questionnaire. The interviewees were selected on the basis of varieties of answers. Unfortunately, the only questionnaire respondent who was the only one to choose the pairing preference sequence of $P_{3E} > P_1 > P_{2E}$ did not wish to be interviewed, so this research lacks data on this particular answer.

Before the interview, participants were informed that the interview would be recorded as well as noted down for data analysis, provided that their consent was given. Two of the nine interviewees stated that they were more comfortable speaking without recording, thus the researcher relied solely on jotting down their answers. The interviews were semi-structured, with the first four (or three, depending on the interviewee's first answer in their questionnaire) questions aimed for the interviewees to clarify and/or exemplify the answers they gave in the questionnaire. The interviewer occasionally repeated or read the interviewees' answers to them to save their time, albeit informing them beforehand that they could always offer new input or retract their answers.

Finally, data from the questionnaires and recorded interviews were compiled and analyzed.

3. Findings and Analysis

Upon examining the questionnaires and interviews, the results on effects and favorability of the three different pairings and the perception on the importance of language register were quite clear-cut. On the contrary, the opinions on the necessity of politeness sentence-ending particles were not as definite.

As illustrated in Table 3, the majority of the respondents (35 out of 41 individuals) stated that they were affected differently by the three pairings, with all but one respondents

choosing P_{3E} (the pairing of first-person pronoun “/fɛf/” & no politeness particles) as the most suitable. With the mean of 2.97 (maximum value = 3) and the sample standard deviation of 0.17, the preference for P_{3E} was almost uncontested. Two of the most prominent reasons given were the suitable level of formality and the implied advantage of being gender-neutral. Each of these two qualities are absent in P₁ (the pairing of first-person pronoun “/khâaphacâw/” & no politeness particles) and P_{2E} (the pairing of first-person pronoun “/phǒm/” & politeness particles “/khráp/~khráp/” and “/na khráp/~na khráp/”), respectively.

	Most appropriate (value = 3)	Moderately appropriate (value = 2)	Least appropriate (value = 1)	Mean	Sample standard deviation (S)
P₁ (n=35)	-	8	27	1.23	0.43
P_{2E} (n=35)	1	26	8	1.8	0.47
P_{3E} (n=35)	34	1	-	2.97	0.17

Table 3. Preference of pairings

Meanwhile, the data from the questionnaires showed that there was higher regard for language register than for PSPs (politeness sentence-ending particles). When being rated on the basis of their importance, the mean of language register was 3.12, while that of PSPs was 2.51 (maximum value = 4). The disparity correlated with the comments derived from the questionnaires and the interviews in the sense that no participants expressed any negativity towards the absence of PSPs. This signified that omitting PSPs did not affect the listeners in a significant way.

Neutrality of audience

Only six of the 41 respondents expressed their neutrality, answering that the three pairings did not make them feel different. Four individuals of the neutral camp held language register and politeness particles in lower regard on the spectrum (rating them “Not very important” or “Not important at all”), with only one student who answered that language register is “Important” because it facilitated understanding and made the rendition more concise, and another students rated PSPs as “Important” for its embodiment of courtesy.

The respondents who further explained their reasons in the questionnaires cited their focus on the gist of the speaker’s message (thus not relying on the interpretation or

intermittently listening to the interpreter for clarification or confirmation) or the interpreter's rendition rather than the pronouns and PSPs.

Furthermore, an interview with a respondent from the neutral camp revealed that the neutrality could be caused by the impersonal nature of the source message.

"[The interpreter] did not use the pronouns and particles much. Therefore, I think the meaning and the tone of the chef's message were not affected. If [she] had used more of them, maybe I would have felt differently. But mostly it was because [she] interpreted the chef, who didn't refer to himself much to begin with." – Student G

In each experiment, the researcher attempted to mimic the speakers' frequency in referring to themselves. Excluding 1-3 time(s) that slip-ups were made during each hour of a pairing, each pronoun and particle were used 6-15 times. However, it is possible that, for more insight into the topic, the setting and context of experiment should be those in which the source materials or the speakers tend to be more personal e.g. court interpreting, speeches, ceremonial events, etc. Student G also likened the language the chef used in the session to that of textbooks because it often contained "technical explanations" (and, from the researcher's observation, instructions). Therefore, the presence of the speaker in this context may not be as noticeable as many other contexts.

Perceived advantages and disadvantages of each pairing

From the questionnaires and the subsequent interviews, the data on the pros and cons of both components of the pairings can be summarized as follows:

1. P₁ (the pairing of first-person pronoun "/khâaphacâw/" & no politeness particles)

1.1 First-person pronoun: /khâaphacâw/

Even this was the least preferable pairing, two Interviewees still mentioned the merits of the pronoun, all of them involving extralinguistic aspects of communication i.e. settings and identities of speakers and audience. However, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. It was perceived as disruptive towards communication in terms of understandability, speed and relationship between all actors.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the setting, the speaker and the interpreter more respectable, believable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too formal and not many people use it in everyday language; Sounds

<p>and professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for senior chefs (e.g. the BP Chef, who was in his fifties) as well as speakers with certain positions or authority • Appropriate for senior audience (e.g. a French chef giving lectures or demonstration to Thai chefs) • Appropriate for public venue, with vast audience 	<p>unnatural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes the speaker and the interpreter from the audience and make a respondent feels like the two are of a higher status • Alienates the listeners and may make them hesitant to ask questions or request the chef to repeat what he said • More time-consuming since the pronoun itself contains more syllabuses and the interpreter is likely to spend more time thinking what to say • Interrupts the flow of communication • Less fluency of interpreter
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1.2 Politeness sentence-ending particles: none

It was worth noting that the absence of PSPs did not cause any dissatisfaction in the participants. When specifically asked about the absence, the interviewees mentioned two advantages, both of which paralleled with the criticisms towards the presence of PSPs.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes interpretation less time-consuming • Suitable with the source message since English speakers rarely use sentence-ending particles 	

2. P_{2E} (the pairing of first-person pronoun “/phǒm/” & politeness particles “/khráp/~ /khráp/” and “/na khráp/~ /na khráp/”)

2.1 First-person pronoun: /phǒm/

Even with a higher mean of rating than P₁, this pairing was also criticized for being disruptive as well, but this time in terms of perception on and identity of the speakers. This is

largely caused by the clash of gender between that of the pronoun (male) and that of the interpreter (female).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows courtesy and politeness • Proper choice considering the polite nature of Thai people • Appropriate for younger chefs (e.g. a LCBD chef who is in his late twenties) • Appropriate for intimate venues such as small classrooms • Used in everyday register, not too formal and informal, therefore appropriate for classroom environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes confusion, awkwardness and unfamiliarity since cross-gender pronoun usage deviates from social norm • Makes the rendition sound unintentionally funny because sometimes people of third gender use cross-gender pronouns • Sounds too casual

2.2 Politeness sentence-ending particles: /khráp/~khráp/ and /na khráp/~na khráp/

The presence of the particles raised the question on their necessity. Two among of the disadvantages mentioned paralleled with the presence of PSPs: its time-consuming nature and unnecessary due to the lack of such counterpart in the source language. In addition, the advantages mentioned were largely unrelated to the participants' cognitive process, but rather emotional process.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes signaling the end of a sentence • Can make the rendition more elegant • A part of social etiquette • Pleasing to listeners • Showing humbleness • Making the rendition more natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracting if used too often • Unnecessary as they do not contribute to the meaning of the rendition • Does not affect politeness much since the source language (English) does not contain them • Can cause delay in communication • The more PSPs, the more the message seems to belong to the interpreter's own words, not the chef's • Seems unnecessary since there were

	<p>not sentence-ending particles in the original English statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make rendition boring if used too often
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3. P_{3E} (the pairing of first-person pronoun “/ʃef/” & no politeness particles)

3.1 First-person pronoun: Chef

Similar to the absence of PSPs, the use of pronoun “Chef” received no criticism. The participants mostly attributed their preference to its clarity, understandability and appropriateness regarding the context i.e. speakers, audience, location and content interpreted.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationally and easily understood • Facilitates the quickest rendition among the three pairings. • Does not cause any confusion, because it is clear that the statement is coming from the chef, not the interpreter • Suitable for the location as a cooking school. • Most resembling the third-person interpretation, which LCBD students were used to • Suitable for chefs of all ages • Suitable for what was being interpreted • The right degree of formality for the class • Honors the speaker’s profession and title 	

3.2 Politeness sentence-ending particles: none

Refer to *1.2 Politeness sentence-ending particles: none*

On pronoun preference and language register

When asked about general formality in interpretation, many participants expressed concerns that it could lead to more complexity and confusion. Most of them agreed that interpreters should adapt language register according to the main components of interpreting: setting, source message, target message, audience, speakers and interpreters. And in this specific context, simplicity and consultative register were valued. That is to say, formality is not a one-size-fits-all choice when it comes to selecting first-person pronouns for English-to-Thai consecutive interpretation in the context of this study.

Almost all of the participants noticed the hyper-formal nature of /khâaphacâw/ and the major criticisms towards it was unnaturalness and obstruction of communication. As stated in the Introduction, the pronoun /khâaphacâw/ has no place in everyday spoken language. It is of limited usage and can be found mostly in the royal family's speeches, highly formal public speeches, legal writings and historical records written using first-person narratives. Therefore, the participants expressed that it could disrupt communication flow, directly and indirectly. The pronoun can reduce interpreters' fluency (simply because they themselves do not use it in real life and the word is longer and harder to pronounce) and delay the rendition. The researcher herself automatically felt the urge to match the experimented rendition with the register of the pronoun. For example, there are many words of different language registers for the verb "to eat" in Thai and the formal "/rápprathaan/" (รับประทาน)⁴, again uncommon in common spoken language and a longer version, was considered instead of "/kin/" (กิน) when a chef recounted his past experience during the experimented demonstration. The formality can also inadvertently obstruct communication by creating the sense of impersonality and alienating speakers (and possibly interpreter) and listeners, thus discourage interaction and participation, both of which are necessary for good classroom environment.

"Maybe [P₁] is suitable for the school by making this place more formal and respectable, but the pronoun made me feel like the chef was very aloof. I wouldn't have had any courage to ask a question or request him to repeat what he had said." – Student H

Albeit the pairing's advantage of being genderless, P₁ was ranked behind P_{2E}, with with the mean of 1.23 to 1.8. The most common problem of P_{2E} mentioned was the clash

⁴ Although "/thaan/" (ทาน) can also be used as a short but also formal Thai word for "to eat", the researcher did not come up with it during the experiment.

between the gender of the pairing and the gender of the interpreter. Most interviewees described it as “strange” and “awkward” because normally women do not speak of themselves using /phǒm/ nor ending their sentences with /khráp/~/kháp/ and /na khráp/~/na kháp/. When asked further to compare the hypothesized a male interpreter interpreting female chef using the female first-person pronoun /dichán/ and PSPs /khâ/ or /na khá/, the nine interviewees’ answers varied, ranging from “even more strange”, “equally strange” to “less, but still, strange”.

“I think the degree of strangeness depends on personal experience... I have a lot of friends who are third gender. Maybe that’s why [a male interpreter using female-exclusive pronouns] is funnier [than the other way around].” – Student B

The pairing perceived to be most suitable, with the mean of 2.97 out of the maximum value of 3, is P_{3E}. It was viewed as adequately formal, as well as suitable for the location (a cooking school), the speaker (a chef) and the message (cooking instructions). The overall positive feedbacks were related to the clarity and speed of the rendition with this pairing. When the interpreter used “Chef” as the first-person pronoun, no confusion or vagueness was caused as to whom the message belonged; nominal pronouns, occupational terms included, have a great advantage since the words themselves contain an additional layer of identity.

On the presence and absence of politeness sentence-ending particles (PSPs)

Even though six questionnaire responses stated that PSPs are “Very important” and 13 others thought they are “Important”, none of the respondents or interviewees expressed that PSPs were indispensable. Likewise, even if P₁ and P_{3E} do not contain any PSP, no one explicitly commented on its absence or disadvantages of its absence. However, after more detailed discussions on this topic during the interview, it was revealed that the absence did not make the rendition sounded impolite or curt on a few simple conditions:

“If the rendition is delivered in a correct manner, with appropriate first-person pronouns and polite language and the tone of voice is courteous, not shouting or being too curt, then the rendition can be polite without the sentence-ending particles at all.” –Student H

Student D, another interviewee, also added that, apart from the interpreter’s tone of voice, facial expression and body language can help convey politeness in lieu of PSPs.

There was also another indication that the absence of PSPs did not significantly, if at all, affect user's satisfaction. Although P_{3E} lack PSPs, it was rated most appropriate, without criticisms or perceived drawbacks.

The presence of PSPs, as demonstrated in P_{2E}, however, gained some disapproval. There were three most common areas of criticism. First, PSPs were viewed as having a high tendency of being superfluous. Student G explained that the content-centered nature of the demonstration, full of step-by-step instructions, was similar to that of a textbook. The participant also mentioned it was why PSPs were unessential to her. In other words, the majority of source message had an aspect relating to written language; therefore speech-level particles could be considered less important. However, the interviewee also pointed out that when the chef gave advice or warned students about something, the interpreter could use PSPs as it seemed more conversational, thus more appropriate. Second, using a certain amount of PSPs may lead to listeners thinking it was the interpreter's own additions, since the English language does not have a lot of use for PSPs (and most participants assumed there was none, understandably because the French Chefs did not use them either). Third, they could make the audience feel that the rendition was longer than it should be. When discussing PSPs as well as politeness in general, several participants mentioned that LCBD interpreters should prioritize speed over politeness when interpreting the demonstration.

4. Conclusion

This case study has shown that, when available, occupational nominal pronouns were the most preferable choice of first-person pronouns for interpreters who are consecutively interpreting English messages from speakers of their opposite sex into Thai. The most significant advantages were that most of them are gender-neutral and cover formal to casual register (see details in *Appendix 6: Non-exhaustive List of Occupational Nominal Pronouns in Thai Language*). In addition, all of them made the identity of the speaker and owner of the message clearer, since the name of the occupation contains additional information for identification. The latter advantage leads to another additional benefit: occupational nominal pronouns could provide interpreters with a non-disruptive and straightforward way to use first-person rendition. This was especially true for the audience who have been familiar with third-person interpretation for a certain period of time, like those in the case location, or who may not understand standard procedures of interpreting. The reason is that this type of

pronouns can function as first-, second- and third-person pronouns. However, when the interpreter could not opt for occupational nominal pronouns in settings and contexts similar to those of the case study, the consultative-register gender-specific pronouns /phôm/ and /dichán/ were to be considered, followed by the hyper-formal gender-neutral /khâaphacâw/ as there are certain flaws as discussed in *Section 4: Findings and Analysis*.

Unlike first-person pronouns, absence of PSPs was not proven to have consequential effects on the audience or the interpretation, so the interpreter could omit them without being concerned that they or their speaker would be perceived as impolite. This disparity may have resulted from language register playing a role in effective and clear communication, as demonstrated by the participants' comments on the "confusion" or "clarity" resulting from the choice of pronouns. However, there was nothing in the questionnaires and interviews that hinted the indispensability of PSPs in communication. Therefore, the interpreter did not have to use these gender-specific units of word in their rendition to prevent any awkwardness that may result from the clash between the gender of the word and the speaker. The omission of PSPs also kept the clumsiness at minimum when the interpreter had recourse to the use of opposite-gender first-person pronouns.

For this research was conducted as a case study, the findings were specific and would not be generalized. To fully explore this topic, they need to be cross-checked with related data from other angles to determine their validity, namely in these two aspects based on the specificities of this case: modes of interpreting and settings.

When compared to simultaneous interpreting, one of the specificity of consecutive interpreting is its exposure the interpreter has to face, being in close proximity to participants and usually without being shielded by a booth (Setton & Dawrant 2016). Such visibility may also affect audience's perception towards the gender issue of pronoun and PSP pairings as well as towards absence of PSPs. Body language and facial expression were considered by one of the interviewees (and many others) as additional factors for determining the interpreter's politeness, apart from PSPs. Therefore, it would be very interesting to see whether a similar study conducted with simultaneous interpreting – the mode where the interpreter is often unseen – will yield a different result. Another reason to compare consecutive and simultaneous interpreting on this topic is that the higher degree of exposure may also cause an issue of identity confusion, as mentioned by several participants. It is possible that, when a rendition is received in real-time and directly given as a "voice-over",

the speaker's and the interpreter's identities are more clear-cut, resulting in different perspectives on the pronouns in P₁ and P₂.

The settings can also be another deciding factor for choosing pronouns and PSPs, as several participants touched on.

“The demonstrations consist of steps and instructions; it's fast-paced and requires quick interpretation so I don't think PSPs are necessary. Unlike, probably business interpreting. For a business negotiation to be successful, listeners should feel satisfied.” –Student F

Apart from business discussions, other possible settings and contexts, which can be broadly different from the case setting in terms of formality and so on, are diplomatic events, seminars, court and media interpreting. These different settings can also set a condition in which the researcher will explore exclusively P₁ and P₂ as the speakers cannot be referred to using occupational nominal first-person pronouns.

List of Abbreviations

BP	Basic Pastry
IP	Intermediate Pastry
LCBD	Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Culinary School
P _n	Pairing of first-person pronoun(s) and politeness sentence-ending particle(s)
P _{nE}	Experimented pairing, chosen from the variations of the pairing (if any) to match the gender and profession of the speaker. Example: P _{2E} is the male version of P ₂ because the researcher was a female who studied cross-gender pairings used when interpreting speakers of the opposite sex
PSP	Politeness sentence-ending particle
SP	Superior Pastry

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Responses

The questionnaire was written in Thai. The questions and answers were translated into English by the researcher.

Total respondents: 41 (17 from BP, 11 from IP and 13 from SP class)

1. Do you feel differently about the three styles of interpretation?

From 41 respondents in total

Answers	Number of responses by group (n=41)	Total number of responses (n=41)
Yes	BP = 16, IP = 10, SP = 9	35
No	BP = 1, IP = 1, SP = 4	6

2. Please arrange the three styles into the order of appropriateness, from the most appropriate to the least by marking 1, 2 and 3 (1 = most appropriate, 3 = least appropriate)

From 35 respondents who answer "Yes" in Question 1

	Most appropriate (value = 3)	Moderately appropriate (value = 2)	Least appropriate (value = 1)	Mean	Sample standard deviation (S)
P₁ (n=35)	-	8	27	1.23	0.43
P_{2E} (n=35)	1	26	8	1.8	0.47
P_{3E} (n=35)	34	1	-	2.97	0.17

Sequence of pairings, from most to least appropriate	Total number of responses
P _{3E} > P _{2E} > P ₁	26
P _{2E} > P _{3E} > P ₁	8
P _{3E} > P ₁ > P _{2E}	1
P ₁ > P _{2E} > P _{3E}	-

3. Do you think register of language (formal, semi-formal, informal, etc.) is important in interpreting? If yes, to what degree?

From 41 respondents in total

Answers	Total number of responses (n=41)	Mean	Sample standard deviation (S)
Very important (value = 4)	6	2.51	0.87
Important (value = 3)	13		
Not very important (value = 2)	18		
Not important at all (value = 1)	4		

4. Do you think politeness particles (/khráp/~kháp/, /na khráp/~na kháp/, /khâ/, /na khâ/, etc.) are important in interpreting? If yes, to what degree?

From 41 respondents in total

Answers	Total number of responses (n=41)	Mean	Sample standard deviation (S)
Very important (value = 4)	14	3.12	0.78
Important (value = 3)	19		
Not very important (value = 2)	7		
Not important at all (value = 1)	1		

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

1. Do the three styles of interpretation make you feel different?
 - a. If yes, how are they different? Please compare the differences and provide reasons and/or examples.
 - b. If yes, how are they similar? Please compare the similarities and provide reasons and/or examples.
2. Please arrange the three styles into the order of appropriateness, from the most appropriate to the least by marking 1, 2 and 3
 - a. Why P_x is the most appropriate?
 - b. Why P_y is less appropriate than P_x ?
 - c. Why P_z is less appropriate than P_y ?
 - d. Why P_z is the least appropriate?
3. Do you think politeness particles (/khráp/~kháp/, /na khráp/~na kháp/, /khâ/, /na khâ/, etc.) are important in interpreting? If yes, to what degree? Please provide reasons and/or examples.
4. Do you think register of language (formal, semi-formal, informal, etc.) is important in interpreting? If yes, to what degree? Please provide reasons and/or examples.

Appendix 3: Non-exhaustive List of Occupational Terms functioning as Nominal First-person Pronouns in Thai Language

Since nominal pronouns are a part of open-class words by nature, the list is not exhaustive.

Thai pronoun	IPA	English translation	Register	Remark
กัปตัน	/kàptan/	captain	Consultative / Casual	Borrowed from the English word
ครู	/khruu/	teacher	Formal / Consultative / Casual	
โค้ช	/koutʃ/	coach	Consultative / Casual	Borrowed from the English word
ช่าง	/chân/	mechanic	Consultative / Casual	
เชฟ	/ʃef/	chef	Formal / Consultative / Casual	Borrowed from the English word
ซินแส	/sins /	doctor, teacher, astrologer	Consultative / Casual	Borrowed from the Chinese word
เทรนเนอร์	/treinər/	trainer	Consultative / Casual	Borrowed from the English word
พ่อค้า*	/ph kháa/	male seller	Consultative / Casual	
แม่ค้า*	/m kháa/	female seller	Consultative / Casual	
ล่าม	/lâam/	interpreter	Formal / Consultative / Casual	
ศาล	/s an/	judge	Formal / Consultative / Casual	
หมอ	/m /	doctor	Formal / Consultative / Casual	
อาจารย์	/ʔaacaan/	professor	Formal / Consultative / Casual	

**The only gender-specific first-person pronouns in the table*

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