

FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS IN THAI POLITICAL LANGUAGE¹

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งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความถี่ของการใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 ในภาษาการเมืองไทย และวิเคราะห์ความหมายของการใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 ของนักการเมืองไทย งานวิจัยนี้รวบรวมข้อมูลจากสุนทรพจน์ รายการสัมภาษณ์ทางสื่อ แดงการณ คำแถลงนโยบายและประกาศยุบสภา ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า นักการเมืองไทยใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 ทั้งสิ้น 7 คำ ได้แก่ *ผม(ชาย เอกพจน์ ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง)* *กระผม (ชาย เอกพจน์ ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง เป็นทางการ)* *พวกผม(พหูพจน์ ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง)* *ดิฉัน (หญิง เอกพจน์ ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง)* *เรา1(พหูพจน์ รวมผู้ฟัง)* *เรา2(หญิง ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง ไม่เป็นทางการ)* *พวกเรา(พหูพจน์ รวมผู้ฟัง)* โดยความหมายของการใช้สรรพนามดังกล่าวขึ้นอยู่กับ เพศ พจน์ การรวมผู้ฟัง และระดับความเป็นทางการ นอกจากนี้ผลการวิจัยยังพบว่านักการเมืองไทยมีการใช้สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 *ผม(ชาย เอกพจน์ ไม่รวมผู้ฟัง)* และ *เรา1 (พหูพจน์ รวมผู้ฟัง)* ในความถี่สูงสุด จากข้อมูลด้านความถี่และข้อมูลด้านความหมายของ

สรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 โดยวิธีวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบทางความหมาย งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าสรรพนามบุรุษที่ 1 สามารถสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงลักษณะทางสังคมของภาษาการเมืองได้เป็นอย่างดี และชี้ให้เห็นว่าภาษาการเมืองมีเป็นภาษาแห่งความเป็นพวกพ้อง

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the frequency of the use of first personal pronouns in Thai political language, and to analyze the semantic components of the usage of first personal pronouns by politicians. The data were collected from speeches, media programs, interviews, official statements, policy statements and the declaration of the dissolution of parliament. The results indicated that Thai politicians typically use seven first personal pronouns: *phǒm* 'I (male singular excluding listeners)' *kràphǒm* 'I (male singular excluding listeners showing formality)' *phûak phǒm* 'we (plural excluding listeners)' *dichǎn* 'I (female singular excluding listeners)' *raw₁* 'we (plural including listeners)' *raw₂* 'we (female excluding listeners showing informality)' and *phûak raw* 'we (plural including listeners)'. The meanings of these first personal pronouns depend on factors including *gender*, *number*, *including listeners*, and *the level of formality*. Moreover, the results also found that *phǒm* 'I (male singular excluding listeners)' and *raw₁* 'we (plural including listeners)' are the highest frequency pronouns used by politicians. The data concerning the frequency of use and the meaning of first personal pronouns were subjected to a componential analysis. The research found that personal pronouns reflect significant social roles, and that

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political language is the language of solidarity.

Introduction

Political language can be characterized as the type of language used by politicians in order to interact with people and to take part in political activities. This type of language can be described as 'the language of power'. Lakoff (2006) claimed that all political discourse is composed of deceptive language. This assertion is based on a belief that political language is primarily manipulative or persuasive. In other words, it is used to influence people, and that people are conditioned to accept and to believe the language and language patterns used in political speech. This concept originated with Amara Prasithratsint (2007), who proposed in her work on sociolinguistics that there is no discrepancy between language and its objective. In other words, the language used by people reflects not only their objectives, but also reveals characteristic aspects of the language of power. Therefore, it can be claimed that the language used by politicians contains aspects of the individual objectives of politicians, as well as the more general language of power.

These ideas influenced two of my research papers (Nusartlert 2013, 2014) and supported the concept of the objectives of the use of political language. My two research papers revealed that the dominant characteristics of political language were related to the particular social attributes that the politicians wished to personify or represent. This can be seen in the way in which politicians typically use terms of address that are inclusive rather than exclusive and that show solidarity. Another characteristic of political

language is the use of repetition during negotiations. Moreover, the study of power and political language is also closely related to these ideas. This can be seen in the research of Chaicharoen (2014) whose findings revealed that politicians typically used the verb *khǎw* (to ask for) in order to implicitly persuade people.

As a result, I became more interested in the demonstration of power through the use of political discourse, and as a dominant form of language use. The data from previous studies indicated that politicians use different first personal pronouns in public speeches, which are modified depending on the situation. This observation led to my decision to conduct research on power and the use of first personal pronouns.

The use of pronouns has long been a subject of interest to linguists in the area of semantics, in terms of the social relationships between the speakers, the variation of pronoun usage, and their statistical use. Kullavanijaya (2009) has conducted research on the semantics of pronoun, and the Zhuang personal pronoun system. The Zhuang dialects typically distinguish meaning based on gender, seniority, or the level of intimacy between the speakers. According to Rhekhalilit (2012) in Tai Lue - the Southwestern dialect of the Tai language, there are obligatory grammatical categories and social factors, such as the person, number, or gender, used to distinguish meaning. Moreover, Rhekhalilit also compared the variation in the usage of the first personal pronoun *raw* and *haw*, and suggested that these variations were the result of changes caused by hypostasis. These studies also revealed that semantics and variations also

caused such changes. Furthermore, a review of previous studies on the use of pronouns and power was conducted by Brown and Gilman (1960) with regard to the ‘pronouns of power and solidarity’. They collected data from a twenty-eight items of questionnaire about the usage of second person pronouns (T and V forms) by French, Italian and German students attending Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They also found differences in terms of pronouns of address among these groups of adults. The research also suggested that the semantics of pronouns can also reveal distinctions such as social structure or group ideology, reflect social relationships between the speakers and the listeners, and identify characteristics of the speaker.

My own observations, in combination with a review of the literature, inspired me to attempt to answer such questions as these: How are first personal pronouns used by politicians?; What is the relationship between first personal pronouns and social roles?; What are the social implications of political language? Therefore, the objectives of my study are to investigate the frequency of the use of first personal pronouns in political language, to analyze the semantic components of the first personal pronoun used by politicians, and to analyze the significant social roles that are reflected in the choice and use of first personal pronouns.

Procedure

The data collection procedure involved the collection of 20,000 words of political language, taken from a variety of sources, including speeches, interviews on media programs, official statements, and the official declaration of the dissolution of parliament, which were published on

public websites (See Table 1). I collected 10,000 words from males and 10,000 words from female politicians. They are representative of Thai politicians in general.

Following the first step of the data collection procedure, I established criteria for choosing first personal pronouns. Then I analyzed their semantic components through a componential analysis. Then I counted the frequency of the use of each first personal pronoun used in political language, calculated the frequency of the usage per 10,000 words, compared the frequency of the usage of each word, and analyzed the social attributes reflected from the most dominant first personal pronouns.

Results

The results of this study, as shown in Table 2, found that there are seven first personal pronouns used in Thai political language: *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners); *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality); *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners); *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners); *raw₁* (plural including listeners); *raw₂* (female excluding listener showing informality), and *phûak raw* (plural including listeners). Componential analysis found that these first personal pronouns contain four dimensions of contrast: *gender*, *number*, *including listeners*, and *formality*. I used a plus sign (+) to mark each feature which represented ‘to have’ or ‘to be’ in these dimensions and described the meaning of each pronoun. These dimensions of contrast and their features distinguish the meaning of each pronoun. I have provided a definition of each pronoun, and how each pronoun

Table 1: The Source of the Data on Political Language

| Source of data | Frequency of data (words) |
|--|---------------------------|
| Speeches | 5,000 |
| Interviews on media programs | 5,000 |
| Official statements, policy statement and the declaration of the dissolution of parliament | 10,000 |
| Total | 20,000 |

Table 2: Thai political first personal pronoun features

| No. | Pronouns | Meaning | number | gender | <i>inclusive listeners</i> | formality |
|-----|------------------------|---|--------|---------|----------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | <i>phǒm</i> | Male singular excluding listeners | +sin | + male | +excl | |
| 2. | <i>kràphǒm</i> | Male singular excluding listeners showing formality | +sin | +male | +excl | +formal |
| 3. | <i>phûak phǒm</i> | Plural excluding listeners | +plu | | +excl | |
| 4. | <i>dìchǎn</i> | Female singular excluding listeners | +sin | +female | +excl | |
| 5. | <i>raw₁</i> | Plural including listeners | +plu | | +incl | |
| 6. | <i>phûak raw</i> | | | | | |
| 7. | <i>raw₂</i> | Female excluding listeners showing informality | | +female | +excl | +informal |

can be distinguished from other pronouns by distinctive features in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, each of the first personal pronouns has a different meaning. In order to paint a clearer picture, the meaning of each dimension, the meaning of each word, and examples of their usage, as follows:

Number is the first priority dimension of contrast, distinguishing the meaning of pronouns in order to indicate the number of plural features, while other first personal pronouns possess singular features. speakers, divided into plural and singular. I found that *phûak phǒm* ‘we (plural excluding listeners)’ *raw₁* (plural including listeners) and *phûak raw* ‘we (plural including listeners)’ have plural features, while other first personal pronouns possess singular features.

Gender refers to the sex of the speaker, i.e. male or female. This dimension is used to distinguish the meaning of *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) and *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) from the meaning of *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners). It can be clearly seen that *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) and *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) are first personal pronouns which indicate a male speaker; *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) and *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality) are first personal pronouns which indicate female speakers, and *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners), *raw₁* (plural including listeners) and *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) are can be used by male or female speakers.

Including listeners means that the speaker or speakers include the listeners, and encourage them to take action, either as a

whole, or as individuals. These features can be divided into excluding or including listeners. This dimension is primarily used to distinguish between the meaning of the first personal pronouns *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners) and *phûak raw* (plural including listeners). It can also be seen in Table 2 that *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners) is a first personal pronoun which excludes the listener, while *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) is a first personal pronoun which includes the listeners.

Formality refers to the formality of the topic of conversation. This dimension is divided into formal and informal categories. It is used to separate the meaning of *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) from *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality). In other words, *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is generally used in an informal situation, whereas *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) is used in a more formal situation. Moreover, it can be used as an informal feature to show the meaning of *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality).

In order to make the meaning of each first personal pronoun obvious, a definition of each word and an example of the usage of each first personal pronoun in Thai political language appear in A-G.

a. ผม *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners)’

(1) ผมอยากจะทำให้พวกเราได้เห็นภาพแล้วจะได้
เข้าใจ

phǒm jàak cà hâj
I(male) want will COMP
 phûak raw dâaj hěn
 we get see
 phâap léew cà dâaj
 picture so will get
 khâwcaj
 understand
 ‘I (male) would like you to see the
 picture so that we will understand’

As the first example shows, a male politician can use the first personal pronoun **phǒm** (male singular excluding listeners). This term contains the features [+singular][+ male][+excluding listener], as indicated in Table 2.

b. กระผม kràphǒm (male singular excluding listeners showing formality)

(2) เจ้าอาวาสวัดชลประทานรังสฤษฎ์ ได้กรุณาแจ้ง
 ให้กระผมทราบว่า...
 câwaawâad wâd
 reverend temple
 chonlápràthaanraṅsàrid
 Cholaprathanrungrasalit (name)
 dâaj kàrúnaa
 get kind
 cêej hâj **kràphǒm**
 inform to **me**
 sâap wâa...
 know that...
 ‘The reverend kindly informed me
 that...’

As the first example shows, **kràphǒm** (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) can also be used to indicate a singular male which excludes listeners. However, the difference between **phǒm** (male singular excluding listeners) (from example 1) and **kràphǒm** (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) is that **phǒm** (male singular excluding listeners) is used by politicians in more

general situations, while **kràphǒm** (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) is used when a politician has a conversation in a more formal situation. It can clearly be seen that formality is an important dimension in terms of distinguishing the meaning of **phǒm** from **kràphǒm**. Therefore, the features of **kràphǒm** include [+singular] [+ male] [+excluding listener] [+formal].

c. ดิฉัน dīchǎn (female singular excluding listeners)

(3) ดิฉันต้องบอกว่าดีใจเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่ได้รับการ
 เชิญมา
dīchǎn thōṅ bòwk wâa
 I(female) have to tell COMP
 diicaj penjàanjǐṅ thī
 be pleased very much COMP
 dâajráp chɔn maa
 be invited come
 ‘I (female) have to tell you that I’m
 pleased to be invited’

It can be seen in example (3) that **dīchǎn** (female singular excluding listeners) is generally used as a first personal pronoun by female politicians. Thus, the meaning of **dīchǎn** (female singular excluding listeners) is [+singular][+female][+excluding listeners]

d. เรา raw (plural including listeners)

(4) แต่ผมยืนยันครับ เราคุยกัน เปิดใจคุยกัน หัวใจ
 ของท่านตรงกับผม
 tè phǒm jǐnjan khráp
 but I confirm PARTICLE
 raw khui kan pòd cai
 we talk together open mind
 kui kan hǔajai khǎṅ
 talk together heart of
 thân tron kàp phǒm
 you alike with mine

‘but I confirm, we talk openly together, your feelings are like mine.’

From example (4), politicians use *raw*₁ (plural including listeners) in order to include listeners. Therefore, [+plural] [+including listener] are important in terms of showing the meaning of this pronoun.

e. เรา *raw*₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality)

(5) ...แล้วก็เป็นส่วนตัวต่างๆ เราต้องลดเวลา

ส่วนของครอบครัวมาทำงานเพื่อส่วนรวม

...*léewkó khwam-pen-sùantua*
so NOM-private

tàantàay raw tóη lód
DET-all we have to decrease

weelaa sùan khòη krópkyua
time part of family

maa thamjaan phâ sùanruam...
come work for public...

‘For privacy, we have to decrease family time to work for the public...’

Examples (4) and (5) clearly show that politicians use *raw*₁ (plural including listeners) and *raw*₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality) similarly in terms of pronunciation, but differently in terms of meaning. *Raw*₂ is used for the meaning [+female][+excluding][+listeners] [+informal]. It can be seen that the female politician used *raw*₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality) with the interviewer concerning topics related to her daily life, which is considered to be an informal topic of conversation.

Thus, when comparing the meaning of *raw*₁ (plural including listeners) in example (e) and *raw*₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality) in example (f), it can be seen that they are obviously

different in terms of both gender and level of formality.

f. *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners)’

(6) วันนั้นพวกผมทุกคนที่ทำงานอยู่ในฝ่ายรัฐบาล

เสียใจทุกวัน เสียใจอย่างที่สุด

wannán

day that

phûak phǒm thúkkhon

we (not including listeners) everyone

thûi thamjaan

COMP work

jùu nai fàaj ráttthaban

be in party(side) government

síacai thúkwán

be sad everyday

síacai jàay-thúisùd

be sad ADV-very much

‘That day all of us (not include listeners) who work on the government side were sad everyday, very sad.’

It can be seen that politicians use *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners) when they exclude the listeners. This first personal pronoun is used as a plural, so its meaning is [+plural] [+excluding listener]. The first personal pronoun *phûak phǒm* (plural excluding listeners) is used in contrast to *phûak raw* (plural including listeners). The following is an example of this type of personal pronoun:

g. *phûak raw* (plural including listeners)

(7) ...ก็คงไม่อยากจะบอกว่ามาเป็นความกดดัน แต่

เป็นความหวังที่พวกเราทุกคนจะได้เป็นแรง

พลังในการที่จะขับเคลื่อนในเชิงรุก มากขึ้น

kòkoy mâi jàak

so no want

cà bòvk wáa ma pen

will tell COMP come be

kwam-kòddan
 NOM-pressure
tèε pen kwamwǎŋ
 but be NOM-hope
thūi phûak raw
 COMP **we(including listeners)**
thúkkon cà
 everyone will
daipen rεεŋ phàlaŋ
 be force power
nai kan thūi cà kàp klān
 in NOM COMP will drive
nai chεεŋ-rúk māk-khîn
 in offensive more
 ‘I don’t want to say it is pressure but it
 is hope that we all use it more
 proactively as a driving force’

which includes listeners. This first personal pronoun is in contrast with **phûak phǒm** (plural excluding listeners) as, for example in (6), which includes listeners. Therefore, the meaning of **phûak raw** (plural including listeners) is [+plural] [+including listener].

Based on the information above, I provide a definition and an example of each of the first personal pronouns used in political language. In order to compare the usage of each term, I have indicated the frequency of the first personal pronouns in Table 3 and Figure 1, and the frequency of the use of first personal pronouns is shown as follows:

The political use of **phûak raw** (plural including listeners) is as a plural form

Table 3: The Frequency of First Personal Pronouns in Thai Political Language

| No. | Political language first personal pronouns | Frequency of first personal pronouns (per 10,000 words) | Frequency of first personal pronouns (percentage) |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. | phǒm (male singular excluding listeners) | 56 | 0.56 |
| 2. | raw₁ (plural including listeners) | 42.5 | 0.425 |
| 3. | dīchǎn (female singular excluding listeners) | 15.5 | 0.155 |
| 4. | raw₂ (female singular excluding listeners showing informality) | 4 | 0.04 |
| 5. | phûak.raw (plural including listeners) | 2 | 0.02 |
| 6. | kràphǒm (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) | 1.5 | 0.015 |
| 7. | phûak phǒm (plural excluding listeners) | 0.5 | 0.005 |

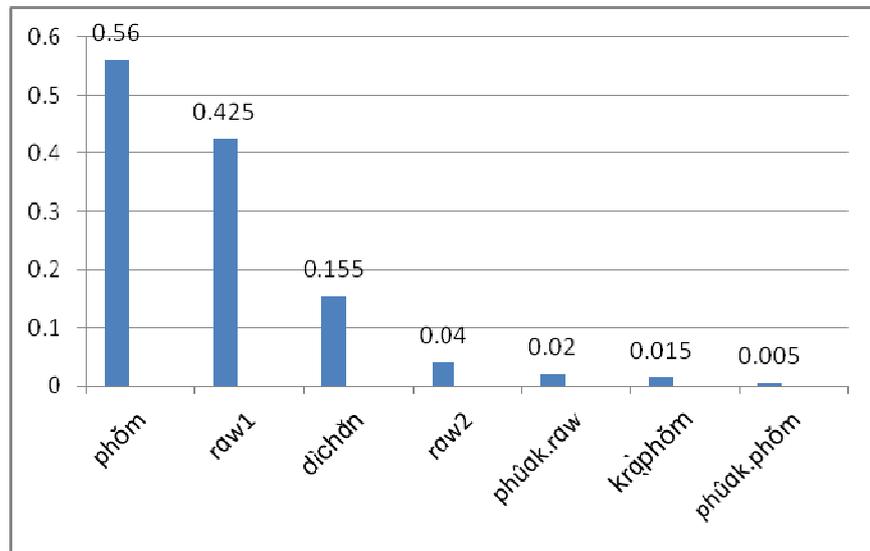


Figure 1: The Occurrence of First Personal Pronouns in Thai Political Language

As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 1, the result of the study shows that Thai politicians use *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) (0.56%) at the highest rate of frequency. When referring to singular first personal pronouns, it can be seen that there are 3 first personal pronouns which are marked by a singular meaning: *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) and *dīchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners). It can be seen that Thai politicians use *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) and *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) at higher rate (0.56%) and (0.015%) respectively whereas Thai politicians use *dīchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) at a lower rate (0.155%). This can be noticed that the frequencies of singular first personal pronouns marked by [+male] are higher than singular first personal pronoun marked by [+female]. From results of frequency and feature, it can be assumed

that male politicians play an ascendant role in Thai politics.

When referring to singular first personal pronouns used by male speakers, Thai male politician use *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) at higher frequency rate than *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality), while indicates that *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is a more general first personal pronoun used by politician than *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality). As Table 3 shows *phǒm* and *kràphǒm* differ in the feature of formality. Politicians use *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) when discussing to more formal topics of conversation. Therefore, *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) is often used in a specific situation while *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is a more general first personal pronoun.

Moreover, the result shows that Thai politicians tend to use *raw₁* (0.425) ‘we (plural including listeners)’ at a higher rate than *raw₂* ‘we (female excluding listeners showing informality)’ (0.04). It can be observed from Table 3 that *raw₂* ‘we (female excluding listeners showing informality)’ is used at lower rate by only female politician when referring to informal topic of conversation. On the other hand, *raw₁* ‘we (plural including listeners)’ is general used at higher rate by both male and female politician when referring to including listeners.

It can be noticed that politicians use *raw₁* with the same meaning as *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) but politicians tend to use *raw₁* (plural including listeners) instead of *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) because the result shows that politician use *raw₁* (plural including listeners) at a in higher rate whereas *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) is used at a lower rate.

As the result indicates when using a ‘we’ pronoun (*raw₁* and *raw₂*), Thai politicians tend to use first personal pronouns which includes listeners more frequently than first personal pronouns which exclude listeners. To support this, it can be noticed that *phûak phôm* (plural excluding listeners) is the least frequently used first personal pronoun. Politicians tend to use *phûak phôm* (plural excluding listeners), which is excluding listeners, at the lowest rate of frequency.

It can be observed that Thai politicians use an array of first personal pronouns, from maximum to minimum frequency, as follows: *phôm* (male singular excluding listeners) (0.56%) , *raw₁* (plural including listeners) (0.425%) , *dichăn* (female singular excluding listeners) (0.155%),

raw₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality) (0.04%), *phûak phôm* (plural excluding listeners) (0.03), *phûak raw* (plural including listeners) (0.02), *kràphôm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) (0.015) and *phûak phôm* (plural excluding listeners) (0.005%).

From the result of this study above, I hypothesize that the frequency and features of first personal pronouns used by politicians may reveal social attributes and characteristic aspects of the language of power which I will discuss in the next section.

Conclusion and discussion

This study revealed that Thai politicians use a distinctive pattern of first personal pronouns. From the results, it can be concluded that there are seven first personal pronouns used in Thai political language. Politicians typically use *phôm* (male singular excluding listeners); *kràphôm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality); *phûak phôm* (plural excluding listeners); *dichăn* (female singular excluding listeners); *raw₁* (plural including listeners); *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality), and *phûak raw* (plural including listeners). A summary of the componential analysis revealed that politicians typically use first personal pronouns with a meaning that depends on a number of factors: *gender*, *number*, *including listeners*, and *formality*. In terms of usage, it can be concluded that politicians use *phôm* (male singular excluding listeners) (0.56%) and *raw₁* (plural including listeners)’ (0.425%) the most frequently. The frequency and semantics of the use of first personal pronouns reflect a number of social attributes which I will discuss further.

The results of the study indicate that Thai politicians use *raw₁* (plural including listeners) with at the second highest rate of frequency, to include both the speaker and the listeners. The fact that this form includes the listeners clearly demonstrates that the choice of first personal pronouns has social attributes, in the usage of *raw₁* (plural including listeners) refers to a sense of solidarity between speaker and listeners. In other words, politicians use this particular pronoun in a manipulative fashion, in order to create a feeling of solidarity between themselves and the people that they are addressing.

Results also show that *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is the most frequently used. First personal pronoun *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is marked as a singular male speaker and demonstrates the exclusion of the listener. This indicates that *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is used generally by male speakers in both formal and informal situations. This is in contrast with *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality), which is used by male speakers when the focus is on the formality of the conversation topic. As in *example b*, a Thai male politician used *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) to converse with monks. Another example I found in this study is that a Thai male politician used *kràphǒm* (male singular excluding listeners showing formality) with the opening topic in an official policy statement when he mentioned the king. Although it can be said that political language is formal itself, the involvement of a higher status addressee in the topic makes political language more formal as the example shows.

Therefore, *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners) is the general first personal pronoun used by male politicians. The results of the study show that male politicians pay increased attention to formality, which reveals that politeness is highly valued as a social attribute.

The results of the study also indicate that Thai female politicians use *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) as a general first personal pronoun. However, it can be noticed that female politicians tend to use *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) at a lower rate than male politician use *phǒm* 'I (male singular excluding listeners) despite the equal number of males and females in the data collection. It can be noticed in this research that female politicians tend to use *raw₁* (plural including listeners) and *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality) instead of *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners). Therefore, *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) is used at a lower rate than *phǒm* (male singular excluding listeners). This observation suggests a direction for further research.

There are two first personal pronouns used by female politicians: *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners) and *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality). It can be observed that female politicians generally tend to use the first personal pronoun *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners), while *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality) is typically used to discuss more informal topics. As can be seen in the example, a female politician used *raw₂* (female excluding listeners showing informality) refer to herself as equivalent to the pronoun *dìchǎn* (female singular excluding listeners). In this research, *raw₂*

‘we (female excluding listeners showing informality)’ is used by female politicians specifically when discussing what they consider to be an informal topic of conversation, such as an interview about family life. Similarly, research by Rhekhalilit (2013:37) showed that the pronoun *haw* in standard Lao is used as the first singular pronoun when referring to lower formality in a conversation. Moreover, he also showed that the pronoun *raw* in standard Thai is used as first person singular referring to index intimacy. The finding of *raw*₂ (female excluding listeners showing informality) in this study seems to support these ideas.

These findings reveal that politicians can ‘lower’ themselves in order to show intimacy or to discuss an informal topic. In this way, it can be claimed that political language is the language of both politeness and solidarity. Prasithrathsint (2010) proposed that language and objectives are closely related. This research seems to support this idea. The use of political language can clearly reveal the social attributes of politeness and solidarity that politicians want their listeners to associate with them through their power of language.

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