

SPEECH STYLES IN FACEBOOK POSTING: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— The purpose of this study is to analyze the linguistic variation of Facebook status written by Thai native speakers, university students. The data used in this study was from 50 status postings on Facebook of 10 Facebook users, English major students, age between 18-20 years old. The data were collected from 5 status postings for each user and selected only status posting with or without uploaded pictures not include commenting messages and all were written in Thai. After collecting the data using Joos's stylistic framework it was found that speech styles used by the sampling units were mostly Casual and Intimate styles divided into linguistic features or lexical choice of status postings and orthography that the Facebook users used for posting their status

Keywords— Speech style, Facebook, linguistic variation

INTRODUCTION

Facebook is becoming more important for communication due to the enormous influence of the new media. Internet has fundamentally affected our lives and society in many ways. Therefore, it is no surprise that one of the affected areas is language and communication itself. [1] Online social networks are not a static entity, but change continuously and innovations for the use of the online social networks are frequently introduced because of the constant evolution of technology. These innovations are conditioned by the electronic medium, which, for its part, has an influence on the communication style used in online social networks, such as Facebook. [2]

Facebook has become a widespread and continuously expanding medium of communication over the last few years. Being a new media of social interaction, Facebook produces its own communication style. This study is focused on how Thai native speakers, university students, create the speech style in posting the status on Facebook. The investigations are based on a Stylistics Framework of Martin Joos [3]. The introduction starts with briefly presenting the definitions and then explain the methodology employed in the study in order to continue with some tendencies found. Firstly, the linguistic features of status updates on Facebook were examined. Secondly, some findings of the survey on stylistic variation between age groups were presented and group the way the users use their speeches on Facebook.

The study of style has been a central component in sociolinguistic research since Labov's pioneering work in 1966 [4]. However, the understanding of style has changed over time. One linguist who suggested a modified meaning of style is Nikolas Coupland [5]:

Style refers to ways of speaking – how speakers use the resources of language variation to make meaning in social encounters [...], how speakers project different social identities and create different social relationships through their style choices, and how speech-style and social context inter-relate.

In Coupland's concept, style is interpreted as a multidimensional entity. Style is not merely one axis of variation, it is the multidimensional axis of variation. It is how the speakers construct a 'way of being' or identify themselves by combining the social and linguistic resources available in a community. [6] In this way, speakers do not transfer meaning to the variants in an abstract sense, but create meaning for the variants and for themselves through negotiating combinations of variants (or styles) that are relatively similar or different to the combinations negotiated by other speakers sharing their sociolinguistic space. Therefore, style is in the first place the variety of forms of language use that the individual speakers employ in dialogue with others. According to Baron (2002) [7] people necessarily make stylistic decisions (consciously or not) every time they speak or write. Thus, Baron proposes the following functional definition of style: "language 'style' is the outcome of the choices we make about how to communicate what to whom".

Another influential linguist who presents a conception of speech styles is Martin Joos. Joos indicated the first three speech styles are all informal:

1. Intimate, the language used between, say, a husband and wife, almost nonverbal.

2. Casual, for friends, acquaintances, insiders, making use of slang, ellipses, and verbal formulas (“Been there; done that!”)

3. Consultative, language used in negotiating with strangers, distant acquaintances, or colleagues of unequal rank.

The fourth and fifth are formal styles:

4. Formal is required when the group becomes too large to permit participation, and the speaker is uncertain how much the audience already knows or how they might react. Hence, the language must become more cohesive, more detached, more carefully informative.

5. Frozen language, or a formative style is language used in a text that is read and re-read, that must stand intact, that must address an audience of absolute strangers, that cannot depend upon the speaker’s intonation or the reader/hearer’s asking for clarification. Literary texts, religious rituals, historic documents exemplify “frozen” language: Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Preamble to the US Constitution.

Good intimate style fuses two personalities. Good casual style integrates disparate personalities into a social group . . . [in which] the personalities complement each other instead of clashing. Good consultative style produces cooperation. Good formal style informs the individual separately, so that his future planning may be the more discriminate. Good frozen style, finally, lures him into educating himself, so that he may the more confidently see what role he chooses. (Joos, 1961)

According to Joss’s stylistics of speech, it can conclude the feature and response of each style as the following table. (Joos, 1961)

Style	Breadth	Response
Formal	Puristic	Better
Consultative	Standard	Good
Casual	Provincial	Fair
Intimate	Popular	Bad

Facebook is among the most trafficked social networking sites on the Internet. Social network sites are not a static entity, but change constantly and new functions are frequently introduced. Social network sites present a cheap and easy method to communicate via Internet and are extremely popular among young people. One of the most famous social network sites is Facebook. It is almost globally accessible and has an enormous number of users in constant expansion. Currently it has more than one billion users. Communication on Facebook is an interesting model of virtual communication. In the recent few years it has turned into an important communication mode for many people [8].

DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

This study aims at analyzing the linguistic variation of Facebook status written by Thai native speakers, university students. Facebook users tend to use more informal style in posting their status than formality.

The data used in this study is from 50 status postings on Facebook of 10 Facebook users, university students, age between 18-20 years old. The data are collected from 5 status postings for each user and selected only status posting with or without uploaded pictures not include commenting messages and all are written in Thai.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data collected, it can indicate that speech styles used by the sampling units according to Joos’s stylistic framework are mostly Casual and Intimate styles. The analysis is divided into 2 parts. The first one is linguistic features or lexical choice of status postings. The analysis reveals four linguistic features as follow:

1. Final particles are usually added to create politeness in Thai.

Most of the final particles found in the collected data are in informal Casual and Intimate style. The final particles found are free written with cluster simplification, intonation changed, and ungrammatical.[9] The final particles in Intimate style tend to have more intonation and final sound changed with long stretch voice.

Table 1

Formal style	Casual style	Intimate style
khráp	há, kháp, kháf	khráap, khráaf, khrách
khâ, khá	khraa	nâ háa
	nâ, nâ cá, câ	nâa, nố, là-nố
	à, à- nâ	

2. Personal pronouns are normally omitted in status updates. However, some pronouns can be found.

Table 2

	Formal style	Casual style	Intimate style
First person	phỏm, chẵn	pỏm, chán, nửu, phỏom	kuu
Second person	thề	kề	mề

3. Interjection is typically found in informal, Casual and Intimate styles. It's added to express the writer's feeling. The examples are as follow:

Table 3

óoy sà-cay!!!
éey-éey-éey-éey
mêeη
ú-tá !!!!
ay-yâ

4. Colloquial speech and slang is also typically found in informal speech styles especially in specific groups or societies. Asso.Prof. Amara Prasitheratnsint stated in her study that this kind of expressions are classified in Casual speech style. [10]

Table 4

sà-mốm won pay
tân-láak khay yàak pen sảaw sùt chík tốη sảy tủm hủu bẻp nủ
lềy
moη loη
doon tee
khree pà
ηủaη wêr

The second part of the data collected is orthography that the Facebook users use for posting their status. One of the orthography is Onomatopoeic which use to represent natural sounds. The examples are as follow:

Table 5

Laughing	Crying	Sighing
hủ-hủ	ηềề-ηềề	hề
hềề-hềề	hừừ-hừừ	ηề
kráak		
hảa-hảa-hảa	hoo-hoo	

Another one is the expressions and emoticon which is a set combined to express the feelings of the users. In this classification there is intentional misspelling added to simplify the complex orthographic forms and lower the formality.

Table 6

mây tôᵛᵛ cæ kan bỳ kôᵛ dâay !!!
méᵛ yen wan nîi # hîw sùt-sùt
thᵛᵛ láawww
à-rᵛᵛ mwâak-mwâak mwâak mwâak mwâak
rᵛᵛn fùt-fùt
maa kin khwâaw rᵛ maa tham aa-raayyyy
kháay thùuk mâakkkkkk
mᵛᵛᵛ dam chiaw ^_^ aa-yᵛᵛᵛ

CONCLUSIONS

It is true that social media is clearly having an impact on languages as we are familiar with unfriend and selfie. It is not only how fast these online platforms change, but also of how they influence the languages we use. The words that surround us every day influence the words we use. Since so much of the written language we see is now on the screens of our computers, tablets, and smartphones, language now evolves partly through our interaction with technology. And because the languages we use to communicate with each other tends to be more malleable than formal writing, the combination of informal, personal communication and the mass audience afforded by social media is a recipe for rapid change. [11] From the introduction of new words to new meanings for old words to changes in the way we communicate, social media is making its presence felt.

In the survey participants indicated that they use informal speech on Facebook because it is cool, glamorous and fashionable. Some also claimed that it is faster for them, which is probably because they are so used to it. Another justification is simply that users like it and find it's more beautiful. Furthermore, the informal speech serve as an identity marker for the participants. It's not only mark their personal identity, but also make reference to a regional identity. In some answers Facebook is mentioned, which shows that the participants are aware of the informal speech in these conversations and that they distinguish it from real speech. It could be considered a Facebook style as one of the informants denominates it. Therefore, this style used on Facebook serves to express an identity that is on the one hand, young, cool and fashionable, and on the other hand, identify the character of the users.

According to the findings analyzed and presented above, it can conclude that most of speech styles the sampling units in this study used for their status postings on Facebook are Casual and Intimate styles which can divided into two dimensions. One of them is linguistic features or lexical choice of status postings that consisted of final particles, personal pronouns, interjections, and colloquial speech and slang. Another one is the dimension of orthography, consisted of Onomatopoeic and a set of expression, emoticon and intentional misspelling to show the users' feelings when posting their status on Facebook. It indicates that Facebook status updates are mainly informal style. It is possible to expand and do further research in the area of others major students in the University [12].

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