

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Conclusion of Results of Research

The study “Questions as Indirect Speech Acts in Thai” was conducted in order to investigate language functions and the phenomenon of functions and grammatical forms in Thai contexts. The purpose of the study was to identify types of questions based on lexical items in syntactic or grammatical structures, to analyze the functions of each question type, focusing on WH-question and Yes-No question, in Thai communicative acts categorized by pragmatic analysis, and to explain how context and pragmatic competence are essential for perceiving the message in the forms of questions conveying messages as indirect speech acts in Thai. The data for this study were collected from daily life conversations using WH-questions and Yes-No questions conveying messages as indirect speech acts in 52 various situations, with 85 questions recorded from household settings, Central Airport Plazas and Tesco-Lotus Superstore, all in Chiang Mai. The results of the study can be concluded in the following sections.

##### 5.1.1 Types of Questions as Indirect Speech Acts

Types of questions identified by lexical items in syntactic or grammatical structure can be divided into two types.

### **Type 1: WH-Questions**

This question type is indicated by eight interrogative markers, which are ใคร ‘who’, อะไร ‘what’, ทำไม ‘why’, อย่างไร (ไง) ‘how’, ไหน ‘where’, แค่ไหน ‘how much’, เมื่อไหร่ ‘when’, and กี่ ‘how many’ and they can be positioned at the beginning, at the end of sentences, and attached with a question phrase in the sentence.

### **Type 2: Yes-No questions**

This question form is identified by eight interrogative markers, which are หรือ ‘or not?’, ไม่ใช่หรือ ‘isn’t that so?’, ไม่ได้หรือ ‘isn’t it possible?’, ไหม ‘general Yes-No question marker’, ใช่ไหม ‘isn’t it so?’, ดีกว่าไหม ‘is that better?’, หรือ ‘or yet?’, and หรือเปล่า ‘or not?’ in the final position of the sentence.

Based on 52 situations, and 85 questions, the data indicates that there are 48 WH-questions and 37 Yes-No questions conveying messages as indirect speech acts in Thai.

#### **5.1.2 Functions of Each Question Type**

Categorizing the functions of questions by pragmatic analysis, the questions can be broken down into twelve speech acts: request, persuasion, censure, criticism, complaint, greeting, refusal, sarcasm, topic switching, assertion, confirmation, and dispute.

WH-questions occurring in 48 questions performing the functions of ten speech acts are request, censure, criticism, complaint, greeting, refusal, sarcasm, topic switching, assertion, and dispute.

Yes-No questions appearing in 37 questions serving the functions of eight speech acts are request, persuasion, greeting, sarcasm, topic switching, assertion, confirmation, and dispute.

The findings reveal that the functions of WH-questions and Yes-No questions may overlap, and some questions can be used to convey more than one speech act as the message in the sentence. In addition, the understanding of language on grammatical form and speech acts should involve with context and pragmatic considerations in order to interpret and realize the speaker's real intention.

### 5.1.3 Essentiality of context and pragmatics

WH and Yes-No interrogative questions can indicate various different speech acts in varying contexts, even though they are constructed by the same WH or Yes-No markers.

According to the occurrence of eight WH-interrogative markers in varying contexts, firstly, *ใคร* can be used to perform five speech acts: censure, complaint, refusal, topic switching and dispute. Secondly, *อะไร* can be used to serve four speech acts: request, greeting, sarcasm and topic switching. Thirdly, *ทำไม* can be used to function as six speech acts: censure, criticism, complaint, topic switching, assertion, and dispute. Fourthly, *ยังไง (เง)* can be used to function as eight speech acts: request, censure, criticism, complaint, greeting, sarcasm, topic switching, and assertion. Fifthly, *ไหน* can be used to serve two speech acts: complaint and sarcasm. Sixthly,

แค่ไหน, เมื่อไหร่ and ที่ can be used to indicate the function of assertion, complaint and sarcasm speech acts, respectively.

On the contrary, eight Yes-No interrogative markers indicate different functions depending on the changing situations. Firstly, หรือ can be used to function as six speech acts: greeting, sarcasm, topic switching, assertion, confirmation and dispute. Secondly, ไม่ได้หรือ functions as two speech acts: sarcasm and dispute. Thirdly, ไหม can be used to serve five speech acts: request, persuasion, sarcasm, topic switching and assertion. Fourthly, ใช่ไหม can be used to function as three speech acts: greeting, sarcasm and assertion. Fifthly, หรือ functions as three speech acts: greeting, sarcasm and topic switching. Sixthly, ไม่ใช่หรือ, ดีกว่าไหม, and หรือเปล่า can be used to indicate the function of assertion, persuasion and request speech acts, respectively.

In the analysis of speech acts and speaker intent, or what speakers mean to convey in messages, only looking at grammatical forms and sentence structure is not adequate for the interpretation and realization of the speaker's real intention. Context and pragmatics are necessary to understand and realize the real meaning in the mind of the speaker, that is the intention of the speech acts so as to achieve communicative goals.

## 5.2 Discussion

Regarding the occurrences of the questions as indirect speech acts in terms of grammatical analysis, the findings illustrates that WH-question forms and Yes-No question forms can be used to perform indirect speech acts. This finding supports the studies of Wiese (1999) and Grundy (2000).

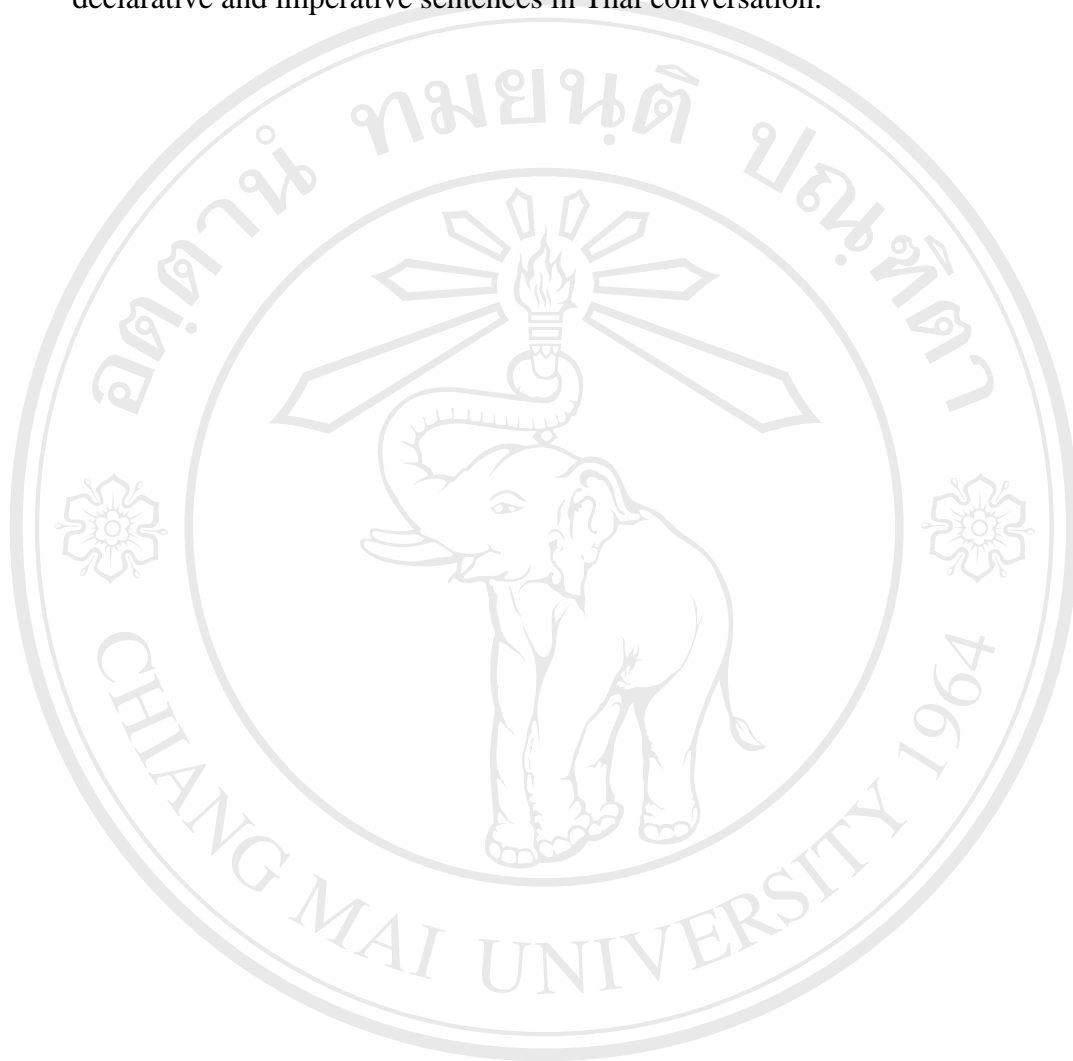
In terms of the functions, the study corresponds with Srinarawat (2001) and Hoonsringam (2001). Concerning the indirect functions of questions, this study shows that one or the same question may constitute various different functions in varying contexts and speech situations. Based on speech act analysis, Hoonsringam (2001) classifies the functions of the WH-interrogative marker, ทำไม ‘Why’ into seven speech acts, while my study considered both WH-questions and Yes-No questions as indicated by lexical items, and shows that the questions can function as twelve indirect speech acts: request, persuasion, censure, criticism, complaint, greeting, refusal, sarcasm, topic switching, assertion, confirmation, and dispute. Furthermore, the results also support the study of Hatch (1992), which maintains that there are several different functions of speaker utterance, and the same utterance act can be performed with a variety of different intentions.

In addition, based on pragmatic consideration, this study corresponds with Levinson (1983) and Banthumatha (1984). The analysis indicates that context and pragmatic interpretation are essential for perceiving a message and understanding the speaker’s real intention. Analyzing grammatical structures or implying lexical analysis is not adequate to determine the speaker’s intention. In summary, the analysis of language as grammatical form and speech acts are dealt with or related by context and pragmatic considerations, which are necessary to understand the speaker’s actual intention in order to achieve a communicative goal.

### 5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study examines questions as indirect speech acts in Thai under ordinary conditions in daily life conversations. Further research should be carried out under considerations of social status, cross cultural conditions, and gender, and include conversations between female interlocutors, between male interlocutors, and between male and female using questions as indirect speech acts in order to further understand the phenomenon of indirect speech acts. This study is concerned with WH-questions

and Yes-No questions as indirect speech acts in Thai. Further study should be done on other types of questions such as choice questions and on other sentence types such as declarative and imperative sentences in Thai conversation.



ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่  
Copyright © by Chiang Mai University  
All rights reserved