

THE INTERSECTION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THAI VERBS FOR ‘TO PAY RESPECT’ AND THEIR SOCIOCULTURAL IMPLICATIONS ¹

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Abstract

Cultural words invariably capture the attention of scholars from diverse fields due to their intrinsic connection with societal values, customs, traditions, and beliefs. Nevertheless, in-depth investigations into cultural words remain relatively scarce in Thai. This research centers on examining two fundamental Thai verbs, *kràap* (กราบ) and *wâaj* (ไหว้), linked initially with acts of paying respect. Employing data analysis firmly rooted in corpora of naturally occurring language, the results uncover the expansive nature of these verbs, encompassing a wide array of pragmatic functions, including expressing gratitude, praise, apologies, and requests. In particular, they possess the autonomy to function as speech acts in isolation. Given the central role that the gestures of *kràap* and *wâaj* occupy within the communication framework, metonymy emerges as a critical factor underpinning the development of these pragmatic functions. This research illuminates novel pathways for the creation of culture-specific intensifiers. By shedding light on the intricate interplay between language and culture, this study enhances our understanding of the cultural nuances inherent in these linguistic concepts, thereby deepening our appreciation of how culture permeates language.

Keywords: cultural words, pragmatic functions, speech acts, metonymy, intensifiers

1. INTRODUCTION

Historical communication heavily relied on face-to-face interactions, but contemporary society has shifted toward remote communication, fundamentally altering interaction dynamics and channels (Boutet et al., 2021.) Today, communication transcends geographical boundaries, primarily occurring virtually rather than in person. This transformation holds profound implications for interpersonal relationships, linguistic dynamics, and rapidly changing societies.

Language and culture share a dynamic, mutually influential relationship (Brown, 1967; Imai et al., 2016; Jiang, 2000; Kramsch, 1998; 2014; Stanlaw et al., 2018; Völkel & Nassenstein, 2022; Whorf, 2012.) In traditional face-to-face interactions, spoken language seamlessly incorporates non-verbal cues like bodily gestures to convey nuanced cultural meanings (Goldin-Meadow & Alibali, 2013.) These gestures enrich communication by adding culturally specific and context-dependent layers of meaning. However, in today’s landscape dominated by written forms of communication, such as

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online chatting and social media, the absence of physical gestures poses a significant challenge (Jones et al., 2015.)

This transitional phase emphasizes culture's central role in shaping linguistic interactions, highlighting its dynamic and evolving nature (Smith, 2020.) Adapting communication strategies to the evolving digital discourse is crucial. Recognizing and proactively responding to these changes is essential for effective cross-cultural communication in our interconnected global society (Atay & D'Silva, 2019.) Examining how cultural body gestures evolve to convey comprehensive verbal meanings is challenging (Krauss et al., 1996.) It involves meticulously exploring how cultural norms intersect with language, leading to adaptations and redefinitions of non-verbal cues.

In Thai society, the terms *kràap* and *wâaj*² (or *krap* and *wai* in Romanization) exemplify this phenomenon. On the surface, *kràap* serves as a customary way of demonstrating reverence to figures such as Lord Buddha, monks, religious dignitaries, and members of the royal family, resembling a prostration. Similarly, *wâaj* functions as a standard greeting imbued with respect when Thais meet one another, with the added gesture of pressing their palms together at chest level in a budding lotus manner. Nevertheless, these practices extend beyond superficial observance and carry profound social and cultural significance. Notably, these acts of respect are often regarded as aesthetically pleasing and distinctive by foreigners, contributing to the authentic allure of Thai culture. Moreover, *kràap* and *wâaj* are deeply intertwined with the fabric of Thai society, serving as conduits for conveying complex layers of meaning and fulfilling various social functions.

Their multifaceted usage underscores their intricate cultural roles in Thai communication, reflecting a profound respect deeply embedded in society. Anuman Rajadhon (2015) explains that the term *kràap* is often added to sentences when speaking to someone of higher status or age, demonstrating deference and politeness. At the same time, *wâaj* is used when paying respects, especially to the elders and religious and revered figures. These words exemplify pragmatic meaning and offer insights into the intricate web of social hierarchy and traditional values within Thailand. Therefore, Hymes (1964) and Stanlaw et al. (2018) suggest that an in-depth analysis of the pragmatic functions of such terms is essential for comprehending the subtle nuances and inseparable link between language and culture in communication.

Traditionally, the verbs *kràap* and *wâaj* were limited to denoting physical actions signifying reverence and respect, often accompanied by specific postural adjustments. However, they now encompass a broad spectrum of implied pragmatic meanings that are context-dependent. For instance, example (1) demonstrates the conventional use of *kràap*, while example (3) illustrates the typical context for *wâaj*. Nevertheless, a meticulous analysis of modern language usage reveals that these terms have undergone semantic extensions, acquiring additional meanings contingent upon various situations, contexts, and communicative intents. This evolution in meaning is evident in example (2) for *kràap* and example (4) for *wâaj*, where new pragmatic functions have emerged, distinct from their original purpose of conveying respect.

(1) แม่กราบพระพุทธรูป

² The terms *kràap* and *wâaj* are phonemically transcribed to accurately represent the Thai words *กราบ* and *ไหว้*, respectively. Although it is expected to encounter the simplified forms *krap* and *wai* in non-linguistic contexts, which align with Romanization principles designed for broader accessibility, this paper adheres to linguistic transcription for precision and fidelity in rendering the Thai pronunciation. This choice aligns with maintaining linguistic accuracy and authenticity, crucial for scholarly rigor and a comprehensive understanding of the Thai language and culture.

*mêe kràap phrá?phúttharûup*³⁴
 mother *kràap* Buddha image
 'Mom prostrated herself to a Buddha image⁵.'

(2) หนูผิดไปแล้ว กราบค่ะพี่
nûu phít paj léew kràap khà phîi
 1.SG wrong go TAM *kràap* PTC 2.SG
 'It was wrong of me to behave that way. I am sorry.'

(3) เขาไหว้คุณตา
khăw wâaj khuntaa
 3.SG.M *wâaj* grandfather
 'He paid respect to his grandpa.'

(4) ซื้อมาให้เยอะมาก ไหว้เลยมึง⁶
súuu maa hâj jǐ? mâak wâaj
 buy come give much much *wâaj*
lɔɔj muɯj
 PTC 2.SG
 '(You) have bought me a lot. I am really thankful.'

To clarify this phenomenon, we examine examples (2) and (4), where *kràap* and *wâaj* assume meanings directly linked to their original semantic representations. In example (2), *kràap* is utilized to portray an act of apologizing as the speaker expresses guilt. Similarly, in example (4), *wâaj* takes on the

role of conveying gratitude and appreciation. These newly emergent meanings reveal the dynamism of language in response to communicative needs and purposes. The phenomenon elaborately links to the linguistic concept known as *speech acts*, wherein actions are performed through language.

Speech acts refer to actions performed through language, where utterances function as acts with intended consequences. Utterances can have different illocutionary forces, such as making requests, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, expressing opinions, or offering apologies. Understanding speech acts involves analyzing the intended meaning behind an utterance, the speaker's communicative intention, and its effect on the listener (Searle, 1969.)

Speech acts are not solely determined by the words used but are influenced by the context, the relationship between participants, and cultural factors. For instance, the simple question *Can you pass the salt?* can be interpreted as a request in a casual setting but as a command in a formal setting (Groefsema, 1992, pp. 115-117.) Pragmatics explores how speakers use language strategically to achieve their communicative goals and how listeners interpret these utterances in context (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001.) Understanding such pragmatic aspects of language sheds light on how meaning is constructed and con-

³ The data in this research paper were transcribed following the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and glossed, adhering to a general linguistic convention. The IPA transcription allowed for an accurate representation of the phonetic aspects of the Thai language. Additionally, the glossing in English facilitated a concise explanation of the morphological and syntactic structures present in the Thai sentences and utterances under analysis.

⁴ The standard Thai language has five tones as follows (Tingsabath & Abramson, 1993.)

mid tone	khaa	'to get stuck'
low tone	khàa	'galangal'
falling tone	khâa	'I'
high tone	kháa	'to engage in trade'
rising tone	khâa	'leg'

⁵ While the literal translation is provided here, it is essential to recognize that in Thai culture and tradition, the act of prostrating before a Buddha image carries profound significance, symbolizing a heartfelt reverence for Lord Buddha. This sacred practice is customary among Buddhist Thais, often exemplified when they offer their prayers before retiring for the night.

⁶ Traditionally, the utilization of the first-person pronoun *kuu* and the second-person pronoun *muɯj* is viewed as impolite and discourteous due to their non-standard and highly colloquial nature. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the choice of pronominal usage is influenced significantly by factors such as age, social status between conversational partners, location, and the specific context. Thus, using these pronouns can be prevalent among Thai teenagers of similar ages who engage in everyday conversations, especially when considering informal online interactions.

conveyed through linguistic interaction.

By studying culture-related words, linguists can uncover the underlying cultural knowledge and better understand the worldview and social dynamics of the community (Allard-Kropp, 2020; Głaz, Danaher, & Łozowski, 2013.) Additionally, identifying and explaining the cultural gaps and challenges that may arise in cross-cultural interactions promotes effective communication, reduces misunderstandings, and facilitates cultural exchange. Understanding words' specific cultural connotations and nuances is essential for accurate and effective communication across cultures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Thai Practices of *Kràap* and *Wâaj*

Anuman Rajadhon (2015) thoroughly examined the cultural significance of *kràap* and *wâaj* as pivotal expressions of respect embedded within Thai society. These customs hold deep cultural value and are long-standing social norms widely accepted among the Thai community. Although distinctions exist between *kràap* and *wâaj*, they also share notable similarities in their actions. To summarize Anuman Rajadhon's findings regarding these practices, we can explore them in the following paragraphs, revealing unique attributes and cultural functions within Thai society.

The practice of *kràap*, translates into English as *prostration*; often referred to as kneeling or bowing in reverence, this is a prominent symbol of respect in Thai culture. Notably, *wâaj*, translated into English as *paying respect*, is a subset of *kràap*, underscoring its close connection. During a *kràap*, an individual kneels upright with their haunches resting on their heels. Their hands take the form of a budding lotus, positioned just below the chest and then raised to the forehead as they perform the *wâaj*. The right hand touches the floor in front of the right knee, followed by the left hand, which is placed approximately a foot in front of the left knee. The right hand then moves parallel to

the left hand, with a significant gap between them, and the forehead is lowered until it touches the floor at the midpoint between the index fingers of the two hands. When performing *kràap* for the Lord Buddha, monks, or religious entities, it is customary to repeat the process three times, emphasizing the need for a graceful, unhurried motion to avoid a seesaw-like bowing movement.

Another variation of *kràap* exists where individuals part their hands from the budding lotus position while kneeling, placing palms on the floor simultaneously rather than one after the other. The remaining steps in this process remain consistent. Occasionally, a small stand with a cushion is provided for this purpose, but the sequence of movements in *kràap* remains identical, with the primary difference being the depth of the bow. In this alternative style, the bow is less profound. Gender differences in the execution of *kràap* are minimal, except for how women rest their haunches on their soles instead of their heels, as men do. Technically, this form of *kràap* is referred to as *benchangapradit*. This Pali term can be translated as a revered salutation with the five parts of the body organs, which include the forehead, the two palms of the hands, and the two knees touching the floor.

Similarly, *wâaj* is another customary Thai salutation that involves raising both hands with joined palms and gently touching the body between the face and chest. The degree of respect and courtesy conveyed through this gesture is directly proportional to the height at which the hands are raised. In the Thai social hierarchy, it is customary for an individual of lower age or rank to initiate the *wâaj*, and the recipient promptly responds with the same gesture. This formality, however, tends to be relaxed among individuals with close relationships.

In the Thai language, the term *kràap* is sometimes referred to as *kràap wâaj*, combining the elements of *kràap* and *wâaj*. Expanding its meaning, *kràap* signifies a polite and intimate request for kindness in everyday speech. When addressing the royal family, a customary term is *kràap thuun*, which implies informing or seeking approval

with a respectful *kràap*. For officials who are superior but not members of the royal family, the term becomes *kràap rian*, bearing the same meaning. The distinctions in these terms primarily revolve around the ranks of the individuals being addressed.

2.2 Cultural Words

Cultural words play a pivotal role in cultural linguistics, offering profound insights into the intricate social and cultural dimensions interwoven with language. The symbiotic relationship between language and culture underscores the essential nature of exploring these terms, facilitating a deeper understanding of a community's values, beliefs, practices, and underlying social structures, as Neuliep (2020) emphasized. A defining characteristic of cultural words lies in their semantic richness, as expounded upon by Goddard (2018.) These words often encapsulate meanings unique to a specific culture, lacking direct counterparts in other languages.

Wierzbicka (1991) argued that cultural words encompass complex concepts, convey nuanced emotions, and encapsulate profound experiences intimately tied to a particular cultural context within their linguistic boundaries. This unique capacity reveals layers of meaning that may be overlooked or inadequately conveyed through translation. Consequently, the exploration of cultural words enriches our understanding of linguistic diversity. It serves as a gateway to the intricate worldviews embedded within diverse cultures, thus highlighting the profound and multifaceted connection between language and the societies it inhabits.

As emphasized by Neuliep (2020), cultural words are inherently context-dependent, demanding a profound comprehension of the cultural norms and traditions underpinning their usage. Beyond their semantic intricacies, cultural words often encode subtleties related to social hierarchies and politeness levels, making it imperative to employ them correctly to maintain social harmony and exhibit respect,

as noted by Goddard (2018.) This heightened awareness equips language users with the tools to navigate cross-cultural communication adeptly, minimizing the potential for misinterpretations or inadvertent offenses.

In our increasingly interconnected world, intercultural communication takes center stage, as Lin (2020) highlighted. Lin emphasizes that comprehending cultural words is instrumental in fostering empathy and mutual understanding among diverse communities, significantly reducing the likelihood of misinterpretations and facilitating effective communication. In conclusion, cultural words hold immense value in linguistic studies, serving as beacons illuminating a community's cultural identity. Exploring their meanings, usage, and social significance enables a comprehensive understanding of a language and its speakers while promoting respect and appreciation for cultural diversity.

2.3 Speech Act

Speech act theory has firmly established itself as a foundational cornerstone within linguistics and the philosophy of language. This theory fundamentally relies on the concept that language transcends its role as a mere conduit for information. Instead, it operates as a potent instrument for enacting diverse speech acts, as Kissine (2013) highlighted. Austin's seminal work, "*How to Do Things with Words*" (1962), serves as the pioneering text that laid the theoretical foundation for speech act theory. Austin introduced the crucial distinction between constative and performative utterances, contending that language possesses a performative dimension that empowers it to generate actions and intentions, fundamentally reshaping our understanding of the dynamic interplay between language and human agency.

John Searle contributed significantly to the philosophy of language by building upon Austin's foundational ideas in his influential work titled "*Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language.*" Searle's work

offered a profound extension of Austin's insights. Within the pages of his groundbreaking contribution, Searle (1969) introduced the concept of illocutionary acts, representing the deliberate communicative actions achieved through speech. These illocutionary acts were not merely introduced but meticulously and systematically categorized into distinct types. Searle's taxonomy included assertive illocutionary acts, which involve making statements or conveying information; directive illocutionary acts, encompassing commands, requests, and suggestions; commissive illocutionary acts, which relate to commitments, promises, and obligations; expressive illocutionary acts, involving the expression of emotions, attitudes, or psychological states; and declarative illocutionary acts, which establish facts or bring about changes in the external world.

Searle's scholarly exploration did not stop at illocutionary acts; it also delved into the intricate notion of performatives, linguistic expressions capable of instantaneously enacting actions merely through their utterance. However, Searle (1969) noted that not all performative utterances automatically achieved their intended outcomes. He emphasized the existence of specific conditions, known as felicity conditions, which must be met for a performative to be deemed valid. These rigorous examinations by Searle illuminated the nuanced complexities inherent in the capacity of language to influence and shape social reality through the intricate web of speech acts, further deepening our understanding of the profound interplay between language and human agency.

The collaborative synergy of the works of Austin and Searle has yielded a comprehensive framework that delves deeply into the pragmatic dimensions of language usage. These contributions illuminate how language transcends its conventional role as a mere conveyor of information, demonstrating its profound capacity to perform various actions. Beyond its informative function, language emerges as a dynamic tool for shaping social reality and human interaction.

Central to this intellectual endeavor is speech act theory, which has left an indelible mark across a spectrum of academic disciplines. It has spurred nuanced philosophical discussions on language, intentionality, and meaning in philosophy (Green, 1999; 2000.)

Thus, recent speech act research plays a crucial role in revealing the significance of culture in fulfilling speakers' intended communicative purposes. In contemporary studies, researchers examine how speech acts vary across different cultures, languages, and social contexts. They investigate how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds use language to achieve specific communicative goals, such as making requests, giving commands, offering apologies, or expressing gratitude. Through cross-cultural comparisons, researchers identify the culturally specific norms and expectations that shape the performance and interpretation of speech acts (Jordens et al., 2006.)

Speech act research extends its purview to encompass the intricate domain of indirect or implicit speech acts, where the intended meaning veers from the literal interpretation of the words employed. This intriguing phenomenon is deeply entwined with the subtleties of cultural and situational contexts, highlighting the nuanced and sophisticated way culture molds the communicative intent behind speech acts (Kachru, 1998.) Contemporary studies in speech act analysis adopt an interdisciplinary stance, involving a meticulous examination of linguistic structures, semantic nuances, and the intricate web of social and cultural contexts that envelop communicative interactions. This holistic approach permits researchers to comprehensively understand the intricate interplay between language, culture, and social practices.

2.4 Metonymy

Metonymy, a captivating cognitive phenomenon, is a pivotal element in language and cognition, extensively explored and scrutinized within the literature, as elucidated by Panther and Radden (1999). This intricate

concept encapsulates a figure of speech wherein one word or phrase serves as a representative or reference for another concept or entity, their connection rooted in some form of contiguity or association, thereby establishing a cognitive bridge between the two (Koch, 1999). Metonymy manifests across various language levels, encompassing individual words, phrases, and sentences (Denroche, 2015). Its inherent role as a cognitive shortcut, aids in streamlining communication, enabling the human mind to grapple with complex ideas more expeditiously. Exploring metonymy's cognitive mechanisms and pragmatic functions in everyday language usage emerges as a fertile area of inquiry within linguistic scholarship.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) are early pioneers in cognitive linguistics, particularly concerning metaphor and metonymy. Their definition of metonymy involves the usage of one entity to symbolize another entity closely related to it. While they acknowledge metonymy's primary referential function, they underscore its contribution to comprehension. Metonymies, according to their perspective, are not arbitrary occurrences; instead, they follow systematic patterns and manifest as metonymic concepts such as *part for whole*, *producer for product*, *controller for controlled*, *place for institution*, and others. Furthermore, Lakoff (1987) posits that metonymic models are cognitive models that influence how we categorize information. Cognitive psychology experiments corroborate this idea, revealing that people perceive certain category members as superior examples, termed prototypes, frequently employed metonymically to represent the entire category.

Littlemore (2015) delves into facets of metonymy, encompassing metonymic extension, part-whole relationships, and causal metonymy, demonstrating how these different metonymy forms collectively enhance the economy and efficiency of the language. Her examination underscores metonymy's role as a cognitive shortcut, streamlining communication and reducing the cognitive load on

language users, enabling a more expedient understanding of the world's complexities. Beyond these cognitive benefits, metonymy is a pragmatic tool in everyday discourse, deftly conveying meaning and evoking specific mental images or associations. Examples such as The White House referring to the U.S. government or Hollywood to signify the American film industry illustrate how metonymy operates, invoking culturally embedded associations and shared knowledge that enrich and contextualize communication. Littlemore's exploration thus illuminates metonymy's multifaceted contribution to language efficiency, pragmatics, and cultural resonance.

Metonymic expressions are pivotal in shaping the pragmatic interpretation and meaning construction of discourse (Panther & Thornburg, 1998; 2003). Building upon this insight, Wachowski (2019) further underscores the profound pragmatic functions of metonymy in communication. His research illuminates how metonymy actively contributes to the intricate process of inference-making, wherein listeners or readers glean meaning beyond the literal interpretation of spoken or written expressions. Metonymic expressions frequently evoke a web of associations and mental imagery that effectively convey intended meanings, enriching discourse by introducing layers of significance and depth. This interplay of metonymy within communication showcases its inherent cognitive and linguistic importance, accentuating its role as a fundamental tool for shaping the nuanced and contextually rich world of discourse.

Metonymy has thereby proved a powerful linguistic tool, imbuing language with subtlety, nuance, and the ability to convey emphasis and spin (Denroche, 2015). This versatility lies at the core of language adaptability and precision in communication. Moreover, Denroche highlighted the pivotal role played by metonymy across various cultural activities, underscoring its significance in shaping discourse. Krišković and Tominac (2009) echoed this perspective, emphasizing that metonymic connections

between domains or subdomains within a functional domain facilitate the inferential processes that underpin language comprehension. These connections draw upon the universal human knowledge and embodiment, essential for interpreting metonymy.

3. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collected from Twitter (currently X), explicitly targeting all tweets that contained the words *kràap* and *wâaj* between March 2022 and April 2023. A monthly random sampling technique was applied to ensure a comprehensive representation of the data, resulting in 100 selected occurrences each month, thus providing a total of 1,200 instances for analysis.

Subsequently, a meticulous coding and labeling process proceeded regarding the 1,200 selected instances containing *kràap* and *wâaj*. This process involved identifying the pragmatic meaning of each sentence based on the corresponding speech act type, judging from the interpretation of the preceding and subsequent clauses. The analysis drew upon Searle's well-established classification of speech acts, which includes assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

Distinct subcategories were grouped within each speech act type to deepen the understanding of the data, focusing on the communicative purpose of the expressions. Notably, the subcategories within the expressives encompassed expressions of gratitude, praise, and apology.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of *kràap* and *wâaj* unveils their dual nature, involving direct semantic meanings related to paying respect and inferred pragmatic meanings serving communicative purposes. These findings are presented in five sections: Section 4.1 delves into the meanings of *kràap*, while section 4.2 explores the meanings of *wâaj*. Section 4.3 examines their transition into speech acts,

while section 4.4 discusses their culture-bound intensifiers, and section 4.5 elucidates the emergence of their pragmatic functions.

4.1 The Meanings of *Kràap*

The term *kràap* is traditionally associated with prostrating, representing a gesture of respect, as illustrated in examples (5) to (6).

(5) พลอยกราบคุณพ่อ

<i>phlɔɔj</i>	<i>kràap</i>	<i>khunphɔ̀w</i>
Ploy	prostrate	father

'Ploy prostrated herself to her father.'

(6) เมื่อวานได้ไปกราบท้าวเวสสุวรรณแล้ว

<i>mûawaan</i>	<i>dâaj</i>	<i>paj</i>	<i>kràap</i>
yesterday	TAM	go	prostrate

tháawwêetsuwan *léew*
Lord Vessavaṇa TAM

'Yesterday (I) went to prostrate myself to Lord Vessavaṇa.'

In addition to its primary semantic meaning of prostrating to convey respect, the term *kràap* also holds various pragmatic functions. These include the pragmatic functions of thanking, as demonstrated in examples (7) to (8); the function of praising, as depicted in examples (9) to (10); the function of apologizing, as evidenced in examples (11) to (12), and the function of requesting, as illustrated in examples (13) to (14).

(7) อยากกราบการ์ดทุกคนเลย ทำหน้าที่ดีมาก

<i>jàak</i>	<i>kràap</i>	<i>kàat</i>	<i>thúk</i>	<i>khon</i>	<i>lɔ̀xj</i>
want	<i>kràap</i>	guard	every	CL	PTC

tham nâathîi dii mâak
do duty good very

'(I) want to thank every security guard for their excellent work.'

(8) เป็นพรที่ดีที่สุด กราบอัญญาภคประดิษฐ์

<i>pen</i>	<i>phɔ̀wn</i>	<i>thîl</i>	<i>dii</i>	<i>thîisùt</i>	<i>kràap</i>
be	blessing	REL	good	most	<i>kràap</i>

ʔàtsàdaaŋkhápràdìt
INTS

'It is the best blessing. Thank you very much.'

- (9) อยากกราบความหล่อ
jàak kràap khwaamlò
 want *kràap* handsomeness
 ‘(I) greatly admire his handsomeness.’
- (10) กราบทีมแปล
kràap thiim plɛ
kràap team translate
 ‘(I) admire the translation team enormously.’
- (11) รู้สึกผิดแล้วครับ กราบเบญจาง⁷
rúusùkphít léɛw khráp
 feel.guilty TAM PTC
kràap bentɕaaj
kràap INTS
 ‘(I) feel guilty. I am really sorry.’
- (12) สำนึกผิดแล้ว กราบที่จากใจ
sămnúkphít léɛw kràap
 feel.guilty TAM *kràap*
phîi tɕàak tɕaj
 ADR from heart
 ‘(I) feel guilty. I am sorry from the bottom of my heart.’
- (13) เลิกทำแบบนี้เถอะ กราบล่ะ
lɔ̀rk tham bèɛp níi thɔ̀?
 quit do type this PTC
kràap PTC
kràap là?
 ‘Please stop doing that.’
- (14) ช่วยลูกชายฉันหน่อยนะ กราบแบมือ
tehúaj lúuktehaaj tehăn nɔ̀j
 help son 1.SG PTC
ná? kràap bæ *muuu*
 PTC PTC open hand
 ‘Please kindly help my son.’

The term *kràap* in Thai serves a dual purpose, encompassing direct semantic and

indirect pragmatic functions. Within this linguistic framework, *kràap* is not solely confined to the literal act of prostration; instead, it finds broader application in conveying the speaker’s intention to express specific, pragmatic functions. For instance, in examples (7) and (8), the word *kràap* does not indicate the physical act of prostration but rather signifies the speaker’s gratitude toward others, implied through verbal utterances. Similarly, in examples (9) and (10), *kràap* goes beyond physical prostration to represent the speaker’s praise for others through their spoken words.

Moreover, in examples (11) and (12), *kràap* does not merely denote prostration but signifies the speaker’s apology to others through verbal communication. Lastly, in examples (13) and (14), *kràap* extends its meaning beyond prostration to represent the speaker’s request for something from others through their spoken language. In sum, *kràap* is a versatile linguistic tool in Thai culture, accommodating direct and indirect pragmatic functions. It allows individuals to effectively convey gratitude, praise, apologies, and requests while adhering to cultural norms, highlighting its significance in facilitating interpersonal communication.

4.2 The Meanings of *Wâaj*

The term *wâaj* essentially denotes physically pressing the palms together at the chest and gently bowing the head as a gesture of paying respect, as illustrated in examples (15) to (16).

- (15) เจ้าบ่าวเจ้าสาวไหว้แขก
teâwbàaw teâwsăaw wâaj khèek
 groom bride *wâaj* guest
 ‘The groom and the bride paid respect to the guests.’

⁷ The authentic orthographic representations encountered within the corpus were preserved to maintain fidelity to the empirical dataset. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the conventional orthographic rendering sanctioned by the Royal Institute of Thailand (currently the Royal Society of Thailand) comprises two variants: a succinct form, denoted as เบญจางค์, and a more expansive rendition, designated as เบญจางคประดิษฐ์, (The Royal Institute, 2013, p. 682.)

(16) ผมไหว้อาจารย์ผู้ใหญ่ท่านหนึ่ง

<i>phǒm</i>	<i>wâaj</i>	<i>ʔaateaan</i>
1SG.M	<i>wâaj</i>	teacher
<i>phûujàj</i>	<i>thân</i>	<i>nùj</i>
adult	CL	one

‘I paid respect to a senior teacher.’

In addition to its primary semantic meaning of pressing the palms together at the chest and gently bowing, the term *wâaj* encompasses various pragmatic functions. These include the function of thanking, as depicted in examples (17) to (18); the function of praising, as evidenced in examples (19) to (20); the function of apologizing, as shown in examples (21) to (22), and the function of requesting, as illustrated in examples (23) to (24).

(17) เข้าใจเรื่องเพราะทวีตนี้เลย ไหว้ค่ะ

<i>khâwteaj</i>	<i>rûaŋ</i>	<i>phrǝ?</i>
understand	issue	because
<i>thawít</i>	<i>níi</i>	<i>lɔɔj wâaj khà?</i>
tweet	DEM	PTC <i>wâaj</i> PTC

‘(I) got it because of this tweet. I am really grateful.’

(18) ผากติดตามไอจีผมด้วย ไหว้ขอบคุณ

<i>fàak</i>	<i>títtaam</i>	<i>ʔajteii</i>	<i>phǒm</i>
entrust	follow	IG	1SG.M
<i>dúaj</i>	<i>wâaj</i>	<i>jǝw</i>	<i>kháp</i>
also	<i>wâaj</i>	get.low	PTC

‘Everyone, please follow my Instagram. Thank you so much.’

(19) เรื่องนี้ดีมาก ไหว้ไรท์เลย

<i>rûaŋ</i>	<i>níi</i>	<i>dii</i>	<i>mâak</i>	<i>wâaj</i>
story	DEM	good	very	<i>wâaj</i>
<i>ráj</i>	<i>lɔɔj</i>			
writer	PTC			

‘This story was well-written. (I) admire the writer enormously.’

(20) นี้ล่ะบริษัทที่ดี ไม่กดเงินเดือน ไหว้สา

<i>níi</i>	<i>khá?</i>	<i>bǝrisàt</i>	<i>thúu</i>	<i>dii</i>	<i>máj</i>
PRO	PTC	company	REL	good	NEG
<i>kót</i>	<i>ŋɔnduan</i>	<i>wâaj</i>	<i>sǎa</i>		
press	salary	<i>wâaj</i>	INTS		

‘This is a good company as it has anti-oppressive pay. (I) admire it enormously.’

(21) หนูขอโทษที่เข้าใจผิด ไหว้ค่ะ

<i>núu</i>	<i>khǝwthót</i>	<i>thúu</i>	<i>khâwteajphít</i>
1SG.F	apologize	COMP	misunderstand
<i>wâaj</i>	<i>khà?</i>		
<i>wâaj</i>	PTC		

‘I am terribly sorry that I misunderstood.’

(22) พวกกูสำนึกผิดแล้ว ไหว้มีง่ะ

<i>phúakkuu</i>	<i>sǎmmúkphít</i>	<i>léew</i>
1PL	feel.guilty	TAM
<i>wâaj</i>	<i>muŋ</i>	<i>lɔɔj</i>
<i>wâaj</i>	2SG	PTC

‘We feel truly guilty. We are sorry.’

(23) ไ้ลดเถอะ ไหว้ค่ะ

<i>kháj</i>	<i>lót</i>	<i>thǝ?</i>	<i>wâaj</i>	<i>là?</i>
fever	lower	PTC	<i>wâaj</i>	PTC

‘Please! May the temperature go down.’

(24) หยุดเถอะ ผมไหว้ค่ะ

<i>jút</i>	<i>thǝ?</i>	<i>phǒm</i>	<i>wâaj</i>	<i>là?</i>
stop	PTC	1SG.M	<i>wâaj</i>	PTC

‘Please, I beg you to stop that.’

In parallel to the term *kràap* discussed earlier, *wâaj* in Thai also exhibits a versatile capacity to convey both direct and indirect pragmatic functions, as illustrated by various examples. Just as *kràap* goes beyond its literal association with prostration, *wâaj* transcends the physical act of pressing the palms together at the chest, gently bowing, and assumes a broader role in communication. For example, in (17) and (18), *wâaj* represents the speaker’s gratitude towards others through verbal communication. Similarly, in (19) and (20), *wâaj* extends beyond bowing to symbolize the speaker’s praising others through spoken words.

Likewise, in (21) and (22), *wâaj* does not denote bowing but conveys the speaker’s apology to others through spoken language. Furthermore, in (23) and (24), *wâaj* transcends its literal meaning to signify the speaker’s request for something from others through verbal communication. Like *kràap*, *wâaj* is a dynamic linguistic tool in Thai culture, facilitating direct and indirect speech

recently acquired as a thoughtful gift for her, the friend who is leaving the comment.

ไหว้งาม ๆ

wâaj ɲaam - ɲaam
wâaj beautiful - beautiful
'I feel grateful to you.'

- (30) *A devoted admirer of a Chinese actor is leaving a comment on the artist's photo post, where the actor is seen dressed in a splendid, elegant, and attention-grabbing traditional Chinese martial arts attire.*

ไหว้พนมมือ

wâaj phanommuu
wâaj pressing the two palms
 together in a budding lotus
 manner
'I admire you.'

- (31) *A devoted fan of a Thai singer attempted to create a portrait of her favorite artist. However, the resulting picture did not capture the artist's likeness accurately. Subsequently, she shared the picture on social media along with a brief caption to engage with others.*

ไหว้ย่อ

wâaj jǝw
wâaj bend (a slight bend of the
 knees)
'I apologize to you.'

- (32) *A devoted fan of a Thai actor is responding to an anonymous post by composing a series of messages that include insults, alleging that the actor is arrogant and possesses undesirable habits. Following the initial post, several other fans have commented, urging the individual responsible to refrain from making baseless accusations against the actor, particularly labeling him as someone with negative habits.*

ไหว้ล๊ะ

wâaj là?
wâaj PTC
'I beg you.'

As with the example of *kràap* discussed above, *wâaj* demonstrates its capability to function as a complete speech act. By uttering the word *wâaj*, the speaker possesses the ability to express gratitude to others, as demonstrated in example (29), to offer admiration or praise to others, as illustrated in example (30), to extend apologies to others, as exhibited in example (31), or to make requests or appeals to others, as depicted in example (32).

4.4 Culture-Bound Intensifiers of *Kràap* and *Wâaj*

The corpus analysis reveals an intriguing observation about using culture-bound intensifiers in conjunction with the terms *kràap* and *wâaj*. As briefly discussed in the literature review addressing the diverse practices involving *kràap* and *wâaj*, it becomes evident that a spectrum of variations exists among these practices. These variations range from subtle distinctions to significant deviations in both form and expression. Each type of practice within this spectrum is a fundamental source for developing culture-specific intensifiers intricately linked to *kràap* and *wâaj*.

As speech acts within various contexts, *kràap* and *wâaj* possess the inherent capacity for intensification through diverse modes, exemplified by the forthcoming examples. This intensification process is inherently tied to the unique characteristics of each practice, shedding light on the dynamic and multifaceted nature of both *kràap* and *wâaj* within Thai culture. In the subsequent exploration, specific examples will be examined to elucidate how *kràap* and *wâaj* can be intensified, offering insight into their nuanced usage and cultural significance.

- (33) รูปนี้ดีมาก กราบสองมือ

rûup níi díi mâak kràap
photo DEMgood much kràap
 sǝwɲ muuu
 two hand

'This photo does look great.'

- (34) ขอโทษ กราบสองมือพนม ‘I do apologize.’
khǎwthôot kràap sǎwŋ muuu
 apologize *kràap* two hand
phanom
 pressing the two palms together in a
 budding lotus manner
 ‘I do apologize.’
- (35) เขาแสดงโคตรดี กราบสามครั้ง
khǎw sadeeŋ khôot
 3.SG.M perform extremely
dii kràap sǎam khráŋ
 good *kràap* three times
 He did a great job of performing the role.’
- (36) ขอบใจที่บอกเว้ย กราบไม่แบมือ
khǎwpteaj thii bǎwk wǎj
 thank COMP tell PTC
kràap mâj bæ muuu
kràap NEG open hand
 ‘Thanks for telling me.’
- (37) ขอบคุณทุกคนที่ช่วย กราบแบมือ
khǎwphkun thúk khon thii
 thank every CLF COMP
tehúaj kràap bæ muuu
 help *kràap* open hand
 ‘Thanks to everyone for the help.’
- (38) หยางหยางหล่อมาก กราบเบญจาง
jǎŋ jǎŋ lǎw mâak
 Yang-Yang handsome much
kràap bentēaŋ
kràap prostrate with five parts of
 the body
 ‘Yang-Yang is so handsome.’
- (39) เราขอโทษ กราบเบญจางคประดิษฐ์
raw khǎwthôot kràap
 1.SG apologize *kràap*
bentēaŋkhá?pradit
 prostrate with five parts of the body
- (40) มาอีกนะ กราบอัฐนาง⁸
maa ?iik ná? kràap
 come more PTC *kràap*
?àtsadaaŋ
 prostrate with eight parts of the body
 ‘Please come again.’
- (41) เปลี่ยนวันเถอะ กราบอัฐนางคประดิษฐ์
plian wan thǎ? kràap
 change day PTC *kràap*
?àtsadaaŋkhápradit
 prostrate with eight parts of the body
 ‘Please change the (appointment) day.’

The act of *kràap*, functioning as a speech act in various contexts, exhibits the capacity to be intensified through different modes. The intensifiers used alongside *kràap* from (33) to (41) encompass *sǎwŋ muuu* ‘with two hands,’ *sǎwŋ muuu phanom* ‘by gracefully pressing the two palms together in a budding lotus manner,’ *sǎam khráŋ* ‘three times,’ *mâj bæ muuu* ‘with two palms gracefully pressed in a budding lotus manner while touching the floor,’ *bæ muuu* ‘with two palms open upside-down while touching the floor,’ *bentēaŋ/bentēaŋkhá?pradit* ‘with five parts of the body organs touching the floor,’ and *?àtsadaaŋ/?àtsadaaŋkhápradit* ‘with eight parts of the body organs touching the floor’ respectively. The distinctive characteristics of each practice directly influence this intensification, further underscoring the rich and dynamic nature of *kràap* within Thai culture.

⁸ The genuine orthographic representation encountered within the corpus for this lexical item was conscientiously retained to uphold the integrity of the dataset. However, it merits attention that the Royal Institute of Thailand still needs to establish a standard orthographic form for this word. In their authoritative standard Thai dictionary, the sole main lexical entry about this term is the prefix *อัฐ-*, connoting “eight,” and it is followed by a compilation of associated lexemes derived through the utilization of this prefix (The Royal Institute, 2013, p. 1399.)

‘I am terribly sorry for having looked down on you.’

- (43) ลูกนี้หล่อมาก ไหว้พนมมือ
lúk ní lǝw mâak wâaj
 style DEM handsome much *wâaj*
phanommuu
 press the two palms together in a
 budding lotus manner
 ‘(He) does look graceful in this style.’

- (44) ในที่สุดก็กดบัตรได้ ไหว้ข้อมือถึงพื้น
najthiisút kǝw kòt bàt dâaj
 finally LNK book ticket TAM
wâaj jǝw thǝj phúuun
wâaj bend to floor
 ‘I finally managed to book a ticket.’

- (45) โบนัสออกแล้ว ไหว้จรดหน้าผาก
boonát ʔǝk léew wâaj
 bonus come out TAM *wâaj*
tearòt nâaphàak
 reach forehead
 ‘The bonus has finally been paid.’

- (46) ขอละ อย่าทำแบบนั้น ไหว้จรดพื้น
khǝw làʔ jàa tham bèep
 beg PTC NEG do like
nán wâaj tearòt phúuun
 DEM *wâaj* reach floor
 ‘I beg you not to do that. Please!’

The practice of *wâaj* reveals its versatility by being amenable to intensification through various approaches and forms. The intensifiers used alongside *wâaj* from (42) to (46) include *jǝw* ‘with a slight bend of the knees,’ *phanommuu* ‘by gracefully pressing the two palms together in a budding lotus manner,’ *jǝw thǝj phúuun* ‘with a bend of the knees till one is touching the ground,’ *tearòt nâaphàak* ‘by gracefully pressing the two palms together in a budding lotus manner and attaching the two thumbs to the forehead,’ and *tearòt phúuun* ‘by gracefully pressing the two palms together in a budding lotus manner and touching the floor’ respectively.

Similarly, the distinct features and nuances of each specific *wâaj* instance play a pivotal role in shaping how it can be intensified, adding layers of meaning and significance to this traditional act of respect. This intricate interplay between the practice of *wâaj* and its potential for intensification underscores its multifaceted and culturally rich nature within Thai society.

- (47) ขอบคุณมาก กราบงาม ๆ
khǝwǝpkhun mâak kràap
 thank much *kràap*
ɲaam - ɲaam
 beautiful - beautiful
 ‘I feel very grateful.’

- (48) ขอบคุณมาก ไหว้งาม ๆ
khǝwǝpkhun mâak wâaj
 thank much *wâaj*
ɲaam - ɲaam
 beautiful - beautiful
 ‘I feel very grateful.’

In addition to the unique attributes inherent in each *kràap* and *wâaj* practice, an intriguing aspect that contributes to their intensification is the holistic or integral process, which is perceived as beautiful or proper. This influence on intensification adds an unexpected dimension to the cultural significance of these acts. For instance, in examples (47) to (48), the phrase *ɲaam - ɲaam*, signifying ‘beautiful’ and referring to the overall perfection of the physical posture, intensifies the gratitude. However, when examining the available data, it becomes evident that this particular source of intensifiers is not as abundant as those related to the physical actions of *kràap* and *wâaj*.

The nuanced characteristics of each intensifier significantly enrich the understanding of how *kràap* and *wâaj* can be heightened in their expressions of respect and reverence. This unexpected influence of perfection within the broader context of these practices deepens our comprehension of their multifaceted nature in Thai culture. These gestures’ physicality and overall aesthetic

become integral to the nuanced expressions of respect and gratitude. Comparing these intensifiers among themselves reveals culturally embedded values closely intertwined with language. For instance, *kràap mâj bœ muuu* is strictly reserved for demonstrating respect to humans, whereas *kràap bœ muuu* is limited to religious figures and entities. Similarly, *wâaj* is commonly used among peers or individuals with close relationships, while *wâaj jô* and *wâaj tearòt nâaphàak* are preferred for showing respect to elders and individuals of higher social status. The selection of each intensifier for *kràap* and *wâaj* distinctly signifies the degree of intensity a speaker intends to convey, ranging from ordinary to moderate, to high, and then utmost. Thus, the choice of intensifiers in these practices serves as a cultural reflection of the Thai way of life.

Furthermore, this cultural intricacy underscores the integral role of language in reflecting societal norms and values. Through the utilization of intensifiers within *kràap* and *wâaj*, the Thai language intricately mirrors the importance placed on respect, hierarchy, and social relationships in Thai society. This linguistic feature transcends mere words and becomes a medium for conveying deeper cultural meanings. By exploring these linguistic nuances, we gain insight into the intricate tapestry of Thai culture, where expressions of respect are both verbal and non-verbal and where the choice of intensifier becomes a subtle yet profound indicator of one's cultural awareness and adherence to societal norms. Studying intensifiers in *kràap* and *wâaj* offers a window into the rich interplay of language and culture within the Thai context.

4.5 The Emergence of the Pragmatic Function of *Kràap* and *Wâaj*

Pragmatic functions within linguistics pertain to the intricate mechanisms by which language users employ linguistic elements to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of linguistic structures. These functions encompass communication's social

and contextual dimensions, enabling speakers to articulate their intentions, attitudes, and interpersonal dynamics through linguistic means. Pragmatic functions manifest through diverse linguistic phenomena, one of which includes speech acts.

By examining the pragmatic functions of *kràap* and *wâaj* in the preceding sections, we can discern the profound interconnection between these pivotal terms and the cultural practices they signify within society. These cultural elements are intricately interwoven into the fabric of language, and conversely, language conveys the intricate and nuanced meanings of these practices in communication among members of society. We hereby unveil a fundamental query: How do pragmatic functions emerge from lexical words that primarily denote generic actions associated with showing reverence? Understanding this process will show how language shapes and reflects societal norms and values.

Let us consider the pragmatic function of delivering apologies using *kràap* and *wâaj* as illustrative examples to elucidate this intricate process. Returning to the practical context within Thai society, a sense of guilt often ensues when an individual realizes they have committed a mistake or engaged in wrongful behavior. This inner guilt prompts individuals to embark on the practice of offering apologies and seeking forgiveness. In customary protocol, the wrongdoer typically begins by acknowledging their fault, followed by verbalizing their apology, concomitantly accompanied by the gestural actions of *kràap* or *wâaj*, depending on the status or rank of the person from whom they seek forgiveness.

Now, envision a scenario where you sit in front of a computer, engaged in a virtual chat with friends you have wronged. While you can still articulate your feelings of remorse and request forgiveness verbally, a noteworthy aspect emerges due to the shift in communication mode—from face-to-face or in-person interactions to a virtual setting. In this virtual context, the ability to physically convey the gestural expressions of *kràap* or *wâaj* is absent, rendering it challenging to fully manifest genuine self-awareness of guilt

and the earnest desire to apologize. This highlights a critical point: to achieve a successful apology, combining verbal expressions and practicing *kràap* or *wâaj* gestures is imperative. Both the verbal and gestural aspects of respect are integral components of the comprehensive process of seeking forgiveness.

Expanding their application into virtual realms, *kràap* and *wâaj* have found utility within the written language in online communication for delivering apologies and soliciting forgiveness, often without the need for a detailed confession of guilt or wrongdoing by users engaging in virtual discourse. It is worth emphasizing, however, that, following the wisdom encapsulated in a Thai proverb - “*Easier said than done,*” the mere utilization of *kràap* and *wâaj* has the potential to encapsulate the entirety of the process of apologizing and seeking forgiveness. Conversely, a mere verbal apology, devoid of the accompanying gestural practice of *kràap* or *wâaj*, may prove insufficient and lead to a failure to deliver an apology and obtain forgiveness. This becomes particularly conspicuous when we encounter instances of *kràap* or *wâaj* being employed as speech acts, further intensified by culture-specific intensifiers, signifying the types of practices and the frequency with which they are performed in succession.

Analogous to the real-world interpersonal interactions of expressing apology exemplified above, *kràap* or *wâaj* also exhibit a traditional and customary association with expressions of gratitude, commendation, and solicitation. Within conventional face-to-face discourse, individuals can convey these sentiments with and without recourse to the linguistic manifestations of *kràap* or *wâaj*. This duality in expression may entail the co-occurrence of verbal utterances and corresponding bodily gestures, speech alone while eschewing physical actions, or the sole reliance on these gestures in the absence of spoken language.

However, in virtual communication platforms where written language predominates, and the scope for non-verbal

communication is inherently limited, such as in platforms exclusively permitting text-based chat, the utility of *kràap* or *wâaj* becomes particularly salient. In such contexts, wherein communicators seek to convey emotions and sentiments deeply intertwined with their verbal messages, the recourse to *kràap* or *wâaj* supplants the mere deployment of commonplace lexical expressions, thereby facilitating the realization of intended communicative goals. Selectively employing elements of the speech act, specifically, the acts of expressing gratitude, offering commendation, and making requests, through the exclusive use of the bodily gestures denoted by *kràap* or *wâaj*, can indeed prove efficacious, underpinned by the metonymic linkage between these gestures and their associated communicative objectives.

When examined through the lens of the metonymy framework, it becomes evident that the actions of *kràap* and *wâaj*, particularly in the exemplified context of delivering apologies and seeking forgiveness, symbolize the requisite actions to accomplish intended objectives. This instrumental metonymy, referred to as “*means for purpose,*” underscores the intricate relationship between language and cultural practices, shedding light on the proliferation of standalone usage of *kràap* or *wâaj* as speech acts of apology, among other functions. This part-for-part metonymy, therefore, serves as a pivotal linguistic instrument, bridging the gap between the cultural customs associated with *kràap* and *wâaj* and their underlying semantic intentions, which language users aim to convey.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study conducted a comprehensive examination encompassing linguistic and sociocultural dimensions to explore the significance of two significant Thai cultural verbs, *kràap* and *wâaj*. The investigation revealed that *kràap* retains its core semantic essence, primarily serving as a means of conveying respect through prostration. Remarkably, it serves as a versatile conduit

for diverse speech acts, including expressions of gratitude, admiration, apologies, and requests.

Similarly, *wâaj* aligns with its fundamental semantic meaning, involving the conveyance of respect by pressing hands together at chest level, accompanied by a subtle bow. It also serves as a platform for executing various speech acts, echoing the functions of *kràap*, facilitating expressions of gratitude, admiration, apologies, and requests. This parallel between the two verbs underscores the nuanced intricacies of Thai cultural and linguistic practices, prompting a deeper exploration of the interplay between language, culture, and communication.

Further findings of this research yield a captivating revelation regarding culturally embedded intensifiers. These intensifiers intriguingly originate from various aspects, including the types, stages, postures, and frequency of performing the *kràap* and *wâaj* practices. What adds a layer of fascination is the observation that these intensifiers tend to surface more frequently in conjunction with *kràap* and *wâaj* when used as standalone expressions, carrying out the speech act functions encompassing thanking, praising, apologizing, and requesting, as previously elucidated. This interplay between linguistic intensifiers and the functions of these cultural practices accentuates the intricate dynamics between language, culture, and communication.

Moving beyond their literal lexical meanings associated with paying respect, *kràap* and *wâaj* transform into authentic speech acts when used independently, liberating them from the need for obligatory preceding or subsequent utterances. This linguistic property emerges through metonymic connections. For instance, when considering the context of delivering an apology, the physical gestures of *kràap* and *wâaj* are anticipated to complement the verbal expression of apology to attain the intended purpose. Consequently, these gestures become integral to the communicative scenario, akin to verbally apologizing. It becomes apparent that the physical gestures

of *kràap* and *wâaj* are strategically employed to signify the overarching objective, which in this case is the act of apologizing. This concept aligns with the notion of a part-for-part metonymy, wherein the actions of *kràap* or *wâaj* are employed to represent the broader speech act of apology, thereby elucidating the emergence of their speech acts within the Thai linguistic and cultural context.

These intriguing findings reveal a previously unrecognized cultural wellspring of intensifiers within an intensification process in the Thai language. It is fascinating that the distinctive characteristics inherent in each practice of *kràap* and *wâaj*, coupled with their integral and holistic processes, assume pivotal roles as sources for crafting intensifiers. These intensifiers, in turn, enhance the emphasis and significance of various speech act types conveyed through *kràap* and *wâaj*. This revelation represents a novel and noteworthy addition to cultural terms, deserving of dissemination among native Thai speakers and those learning the language as a foreign tongue. By understanding and incorporating these intensification nuances, individuals can use the Thai language more authentically and in a manner that closely aligns with native expressions, further enriching their linguistic proficiency.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study reveals the intricate nature of understanding the cultural words *kràap* and *wâaj* in Thai. The implications of this research hold significant value in cultural studies, cross-cultural communication, translation, and the teaching of Thai as a foreign language. The pragmatic meanings discovered through this study are not explicitly listed in dictionaries, as they transcend literal interpretations. Instead, these meanings are closely tied to cultural contributions and specific communicative purposes within various contextual settings, forming a comprehensive and natural understanding.

By employing the model of meaning analysis presented in this paper, we gain

insights into the linguistic dynamism of Thai cultural terms. Furthermore, this model enables us to document and observe ongoing phenomena and societal changes over time. Encouraging other studies to adopt a similar approach, focusing on pragmatic usage, and utilizing linguistic tools to analyze the mechanisms driving such semantic extension, can provide a deeper understanding of cultural evolution.

This research thus serves as a valuable foundation for future investigations into other culturally significant terms, offering a lens through which to explore the dynamic interplay of language, culture, and societal dynamics. By embracing the multifaceted nature of linguistic analysis, researchers can better comprehend the profound cultural nuances embedded within language and its evolution over time.

7. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This research acknowledges the inherent dynamism of meaning in language, which heavily relies on contextual cues. Despite diligent efforts to collect authentic and natural speech from tweets in everyday conversations, the study's limitation in fully capturing the nuances of concurrent speech usage are fully recognized. Gathering and observing data from real-life conversations is essential for gaining deeper insight. Establishing a spoken corpus would significantly enhance research findings, particularly concerning pragmatic meaning. Such an undertaking would vividly exemplify meaning in action, highlighting the intricate interplay between language and culture and facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Consequently, future studies focusing on spoken discourse are strongly encouraged, as they have the potential to illuminate the intricacies of language and its cultural relevance.

Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the Thai cultural lexicon extends far beyond the commonly cited terms *kràap* and *wâaj*. A rigorous examination of

Thai culture reveals the existence of numerous other lexical treasures, each imbued with intricate layers of meaning that may diverge significantly from their counterparts in diverse cultural contexts. Thus, there is a compelling need for thorough and systematic investigations into these linguistic phenomena to unearth their profound cultural significance. This exploration is paramount within linguistic scholarship and fosters a deeper cross-cultural understanding.

Beyond linguistic aspects, the study of Thai culture encompasses a multitude of practices, many of which have remained largely unexplored by scholars. These practices, deeply rooted in the Thai way of life, harbor untold stories and invaluable insights that can enrich our comprehension of the multifaceted nature of Thai culture. Scholars in the field are poised to embark on comprehensive research endeavors to shed light on these practices. In doing so, they can illuminate Thai culture's authentic charm and complexity, thus making meaningful contributions to the broader discourse on cultural diversity and intercultural communication.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1, 2, 3 = grammatical person, ADR = addressive, CLF = classifier, COMP = complementizer, DEM = demonstrative, F =

feminine, INTS = intensifier, M = masculine, NEG = negator, PL = plural, PTC = particle, REL = relativizer, SG = singular, TAM = tense-aspect-mood

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