

**An Action Research Study of
English Teaching in Grade Seven
At Bamrung Wittaya School, Nakhon Pathom,
Thailand**

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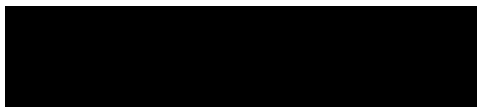
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Declaration

I, Itthinan Kimhachandra, declare that the Doctorate of Education thesis entitled *An Action Research Study of English Teaching in Grade Seven at Bamrung Wittaya School, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand* is no more than 60,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

Signed

August 15, 2010

Date

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List of Abbreviations

BWS	Bamrung Wittaya School
CCT	The Church of Christ in Thailand
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
ESL	Teaching of English as a Second Language
L2	The second language
MOE	Ministry of Education
NEA	National Education Act
S_nG_n	Student (n) of the group (n)

Abstract

This study is an action research project which was conducted to improve students' language learning performance and also my teaching practice by implementing the student-centred (Communicative Language Teaching: CLT) approach which is well known among foreign language teachers as a practical teaching approach to create the context of authentic language use in the classroom.

The research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of my effort to change my traditional teaching practice and also to improve the students' English learning performances and investigate factors which obstructed students from learning the English language and the most practical teaching arrangements which suitable for the school's context in the future.

The target group was the seventh-grade students at Bamrung Wittaya School in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand. The study was conducted in four cycles: the first cycle contained many basic communicative topics and grammar content in each week. Most of the learning activities were the animated language experiences which made the classroom atmosphere different from the past. The second cycle was adjusted followed the reflection of the first cycle. The learning topics were reduced to just a topic per week and focused more on students' communicative skill than the grammar point. Motivation strategies (rewarding, praising, creating a good atmosphere and rapport) were applied to promote the real use of English. The third cycle was adapted in accordance with the school's examination, then turned back to a usual research practice. Learning topics of research cycle four were set to respond to the students' requirements. Collaborating and questioning approaches were applied much more in this cycle to promote students' authentic use of the target language.

Teaching and learning arrangements in all four cycles of the project were conducted by a variety of animated language practices: pair-chatting, working in group (collaborative learning), role-playing, students' presentations in front of the class, questioning, playing games and singing songs to promote the real use of English. In addition, the researcher tried to change his previous role from the knowledge giver

and classroom controller to the facilitator and supporter of the students' target language practice. Practical teaching resources (cassette tape player, CD, pictures, flash cards) were also used in this project to support the effective teaching and learning.

Data from each former cycle was analysed and used to improve for the next cycle throughout the project. The data were collected by teacher's journal, interview, observation and the students' portfolio and were analysed by the coding technique of a qualitative method.

The results of the research showed that the communicative approach could create a new lively learning atmosphere which was different from the previous classroom climate as well as the students' positive attitude to learning and confidence to speak English. Moreover, it made confidence for the researcher, as a teacher, to apply and adopt any practical teaching approaches further for developing the target students' language competence in the future.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This project is an action research study conducted by the researcher as an English language teacher to investigate the outcomes of an implementation of the student-centred (Communicative Language Teaching, henceforth CLT) approach with grade seven students. The undertaking of this research project was in accordance with the goal of the current National Education Act (henceforth NEA) of B.E. 2542 (1999) which challenged all Thai teachers to leave a common teaching practice (teacher-centred: teachers as a classroom knowledge giver and commander) which, at present, was considered an impractical and inefficient teaching method to promote students' learning capacity and to adopt the new practical approach (student-centred) which was widely accepted by both educators and academics/scholars.

The reform of Thai education has brought about changes in many aspects, especially of the teachers' teaching practice and learning assessment dimension. The promise of education reform, which undoubtedly led to a great effect on Thai teachers in many ways during the years of the reform process, is that all children will receive a quality education. In addition to reorganizing the administration of education in Thailand, this legislation aims to change the practice of teaching in Thai schools. The first priority issue of the reform challenges Thai teachers to shift from a traditional teaching style, chalk and talk, to a "student-centred learning" approach in the classroom.

A learning approach that replaces lectures with active learning, integrating self-paced learning programs and/or cooperative group situations and ultimately holds the student responsible for his/her own advances in education (Nanney, 2003) is not a new idea for serving teachers who have graduated from a teacher training college. However, we cannot deny that, in a real classroom situation, many teachers still prefer a traditional "teacher-centred" teaching style that gives an important role to the

teacher for controlling and giving knowledge to passive students in the classroom who sit still, listen to the teacher, read books and do exercises assigned by teachers.

My own experience and informal discussion with other teachers in the school about the reasons why learner-centred teaching is not practiced accords with the findings of Songsiri, (2007, p. 7) Traditional teaching style is still commonly practised by most teachers because they are more accustomed to the old ways; it is easy both to control the classroom where students sit at the desks which were fixed permanently and just listen to the knowledge content that the teacher presents. Teachers evaluate the learning outcomes of the students mostly through a paper-based test.. This was also found by Chayanuwat (2003, p.4) and Saengboon (2006, p. 142) Moreover, it is long part of our culture always to train and treat children as passive learners and receivers. However, as Retallick (1993) indicated, the important factors for effective education are teacher quality and quality of teaching.

Therefore, as teaching practitioners, especially in this new era of education reform, we cannot refuse to adopt the new practical teaching-learning method to enhance our instructional skills and efficiency and also to address the challenges and problems we are experiencing within the classroom context.

1.2 Overview of the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999)

It was accepted that Thailand's economic and financial crisis in 1997 had been the result of our relatively weak human resource base. This crisis encouraged the need for a thorough re-examination of the country's human resource development system and at last led to the reform of Thai education by the promulgation of the National Education Act in 1999.

The principle objectives of the Act are to ensure that education aims for the full development of the people in all aspects: physical and mental health; intellect; knowledge; morality; integrity; and desirable way of life so as to be able to live in harmony with other people (NEA, Section 6, p.4). It was claimed to represent an unprecedented and long over-due break from traditional Thai education norms such as

lecturing and rote learning and instead sets the foundation for a more creative, questioning approach to studying. It is also a visionary document that creates a democratic framework within which desired educational outcomes are highlighted. It expresses high ideals and explicitly embeds education in terms of social and organizational change, highlighting the place of individual and institutional autonomy, while stating the desire for cultural consistency:

Education means the learning process for personal and social development through imparting knowledge; practice; training; transmission of culture; enhancement of academic progress; building a body of knowledge by creating a learning environment and learning society and the availability of factors conducive to continuous lifelong learning (NEA (English version), Section 4, p.2).

Paitoon (2002) stated that the declaration of the NEA in 1999 can be regarded as a significant turning point in Thai education because it was not only a change in philosophy of education but also in the methods of delivery and management. The purpose of education, according to the Act, is not only enabling the learners to work for society but also to be complete human beings.

The Act states clearly in section 22 the requirement to improve teaching arrangements from which it can be concluded that the student-centred approach should be applied to every level of education in Thai educational institutions:

Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality (NEA, Section 22, p.10).

Therefore, teachers or instructors must change their roles from guiding and knowledge transferring to helping, promoting and encouraging learners to acquire knowledge from various media and learning centres (Pitiyanuwat & Anantrasirichai, 2002).

The Act, moreover, devoted a full section (24) to learning reform, providing guidelines for a participatory approach to create a new teaching learning vision. The proposed learning reform was essentially a shift from focusing on content to focusing on human beings as learners and their needs.

Apart from the preference for a student-centred learning approach, another interesting aspect presented in the Act is the requirement for teachers to conduct a research study in their classroom. This matter appeared in section 30 of the Act:

Educational institutions shall develop effective learning processes. In so doing, they shall also encourage instructors to carry out research for developing suitable learning for learners at different levels of education. (NEA, Section 30, p.13)

However, the success of these policies depends on many factors: support from the school administrator; and support from government educational supervisors and the teachers themselves who all contribute to improving our country's education.

1.3 The context of the study

I am a secondary English language teacher and have taught the subject for about nine years at Bamrung Wittaya School (B.W.S.), a small to medium private school. The school is the oldest private school located in Amphur (district) Muang, Nakhon Pathom province, about 55 kilometres west of Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

Bamrung Wittaya School was founded in 1906 by British missionaries, Dr. Percy and Mrs. Mary Clark. Currently, the school is under the auspice of the Foundation of the Church of Christ in Thailand (C.C.T.). The school is located in downtown Muang Nakhon Pathom and has two sites merely 300-400 metres away from each other across on the same road (25 Mokara Road). The school's education at present is offered from nursery level to grade 9 with a total of about 900 students and about 55 teachers excluding janitors and workers in other school support departments.

Originating from a Christian missionary foundation, Bamrung Wittaya School has a school philosophy to help develop the virtue and also the educational quality of the people of Nakhon Pathom province. The school's motto encapsulates this: 'Virtue leads wisdom to develop a good life'. Many parents, therefore, send their children to study at the school expecting good care and treatment for their children and also good academic performance especially in the English language.

Bamrung Wittaya School, in common with other schools, has a vision and policies for continual development in many crucial aspects which are expected to enhance the quality of educational outcomes especially for our students. The most important policy of the school is to promote and encourage our teachers to continually develop as professional teachers. Therefore, change in teaching and learning practice of our teachers who mostly still utilise traditional teacher-centred teaching methods was set as one of the first priorities to be addressed.

The NEA mandated all practising teachers and instructors to implement the student-centred learning approach in the classroom. In reality, in many schools including B.W.S, such an approach is still used only occasionally by teachers. To implement a student-centred approach in the classroom is still a challenge for many teachers.

In the case of the secondary level at Bamrung Wittaya School, through my experience as an English teacher and also as assistant principal, I have found that our school also faced the problem of having many less able students who have a low academic learning performance in many subjects including English. It is unfortunately due to the fact that when our grade 6 students graduate, most of the more able and moderate students leave school to study in the big provincial secondary public schools within the surrounding area. The students who continue at B.W.S. and the newcomers, therefore, are rather less capable learners with low academic learning outcomes (This conclusion is based on data from each student's learning transcript in grade six). Such problems of having so many less capable students at our secondary level sometimes creates a negative image for the school as graduates achieve low academic learning outcomes when they complete their schooling.

Moreover, the traditional teaching method as cited above, in my opinion, is also one of the important factors having an effect on students' low learning performance by creating inactive learners. I started to realise that my current teaching practice which still employs the teacher-centred approach, focusing on grammar, students' literacy and rote learning is inappropriate and outdated and does not accord with my aspiration to change and develop my teaching practice to improve students' learning achievement and meet the aim of the NEA.

My higher education was not undertaken at a teacher training college, therefore most of my teaching styles and techniques were applied from my learning experience as a student, which was teacher-centred and mixed with my experiences attending the academic training courses and in-service seminars after I became a teacher.

Adopting a new teaching approach was not easy for me even though I had read about teachers implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) approach in the classroom. Just reading from books cannot compare with experiencing the real teaching context. In fact, I never had an opportunity to observe an actual situation of a teacher using a CLT approach in the classroom. I simply knew about its principles and could imagine its practice. Furthermore, although I have had many opportunities to participate in seminars since I began working as a teacher, most of these, which accorded with the research report of Silapasatham, 2007, p.2, only presented an abstract outline for this practical approach to teaching English. Most of the seminars I attended just had the teachers sit as passive listeners and watching transparencies from an overhead projector informing us about the benefit of the CLT and the practical outcomes which will occur for learners. Thus even teachers who were real practitioners never experienced CLT at all. In conclusion, these seminars were useless in that teachers, as practitioners, could not apply them to bring about good teaching and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, in Nakhon Pathom province, where I work, teachers who work in a private school have fewer opportunities to participate in practical in-service training or seminars than do teachers who work in a public school. I have searched the web site of the office of the educational area and discovered that when they arrange an

interesting in-service training or seminar, especially, in English, my school has never been informed or invited to join the training seminar. I have heard that it is because of the limited budget allotted from the central government, so training was only offered to public schools.

Many small to medium private schools still need more support and subsidies from the government if they are to achieve better quality outcomes for our country's education.

1.4 Action research for a teacher's professional development at B.W.S.

In order to improve students' performance in learning the English language and also to improve my professional practice as an English teacher to adopt a practical teaching approach, an action research project was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for my investigation of the effectiveness of implementing a student-centred (CLT) approach in my classroom context. The research study was conducted to answer the following questions

1. What are the outcomes of implementing a student-centred (CLT) approach in my class?
2. What are the factors that support or hinder the development of students' language competence?
3. What approach should be taken to teaching English at Bamrung Wittaya School in future?

The study focuses on my application of a variety of practical student-centred activities as a key strategy to encourage and create new active learners. It is hoped that this enquiry will motivate other teachers in schools to change or try a new practical learning approach in their classrooms and also serve as a significant contribution to the local community and will act as a research foundation upon which we can build knowledge for the future.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

Apart from this introductory chapter, the dissertation consists of a further seven chapters as follows:

Chapter two presents a review of literature related to the scope of the research project: the student-centred approach, CLT approach, classroom activities used in CLT, difficulties in applying the CLT approach in EFL context, CLT in Thailand and motivation to learn a second/foreign language.

Chapter three presents the research methodology: aims and objectives of the research project, research questions, the rationale for choosing action research as an appropriate method, participants in the research, data collection, data analysis and a concise statement of the implementation of all four research cycles and a summary.

Chapter four details the implementation of research activities, an analysis and reflection for research cycle one and changes needed for research cycle two.

Chapter five details an implementation of research activities, an analysis and reflection for research cycle two and changes needed for research cycle three.

Chapter six details an implementation of research activities, an analysis and reflection for research cycle three and changes needed for research cycle four.

Chapter seven details an implementation of research activities, an analysis and reflection for research cycle four.

Chapter eight presents the outcomes of the findings from the research project, the implications and discussions from the findings and also proposals for appropriate English teaching practice for English teachers at Bamrung Wittaya School and for other teachers who are going to apply action research to solve problems in the classroom or to improve students' learning performance and for teaching practice as professional development.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review focuses on the student or learner-centred approach, the CLT approach and motivation in second or foreign language learning. The purpose of reviewing the literature was to enhance my current understanding of theories and processes of applying such theories which related to my research project as well as to heighten my confidence in employing a new approach in my own classroom in order to develop my students' language performance.

2.1 A Brief Overview of the Student/Learner-Centred Learning Approach

Student-centred, learner-centred and even child-centred approaches are popular concepts among Thai educators and teachers, particularly, during the period of our country's educational reform since 1999. I perceive such concepts as a kind of teaching-learning approach which focuses on and gives more importance to the individual student's learning ability and potential. I expect it to be a more practical teaching method than the former traditional teacher-centred approach which dominated Thai education (also my own teaching style) for so long.

2.1.1 Definition

While references to student-centred learning abound in the literature, definitions are often confused with other teaching strategies, for example: self-directed learning, learner focused learning, autonomous learning, independent learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, authentic learning, problem based learning and constructivist learning (Sparrow et al, 2000). However, I have determined to focus simply on 'student-centred' learning as it was used as the preferred term both in the National Education Act and among practitioner-teachers at present.

According to Nanney (2003, p.1) student-centred learning is “a broad learning approach that encompasses replacing lectures with active learning, integrating self-paced learning programs and/or cooperative group situation, ultimately holding the student responsible for his own advances in education”. In a student-centred approach, students are seen as being able to assume a more active and participatory role than is usual in traditional approaches (Tudor, 1993). Harmon and Hirumi (1996, pp.267-271) stated that “Student-centred learning is where students work in both groups and individually to explore problems and become active knowledge workers rather than passive knowledge recipients”. They argued further that “in the student-centred approach, teachers become guides and mentors helping students access, interpret, organize and transfer knowledge to solve authentic problems, while students gain expertise not only in the content area being studied, but also in learning; they learn how to learn by discovery, inquiry, and problem solving” (Harmon and Hirumi, 1996, pp. 267-271).

McCombs and Whistler (1997, p. 9) defined student-centred learning by focusing both on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) and learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). Gibbs (1992, p.23 cited in Sparrow et al, 2000) stated that student-centred learning "gives students greater autonomy and control over choice of subject matter, learning methods and pace of study." This view emphasised three core characteristics of student-centred learning by encouraging the idea that students should have more input into what is learned, how it is learned, and when it is learned. An important implication of this definition is the need for students to assume a high level of responsibility in the learning situation and be actively choosing their goals and managing their learning. They can no longer rely on the lecturer to tell them what, how, where and when to think (Sparrow et al 2000).

Nonkukhetkhong et al (2006), in accordance with Gibbs (1992), stated that the “student-centred approach” includes concepts of self-education and life-long education by placing more responsibility in the hands of the students to manage their

own learning. This change requires teachers to change their traditional roles, requiring them to transform themselves from ‘tellers’ to ‘facilitators’ of knowledge and from ‘materials users’ to ‘teaching materials creators’ in order to promote students’ constructive self-learning or to help students learn how to learn.

Matsau (2007, p.20) cited Weimer’s definition of student-centred learning approach explaining that it focuses on students’ needs, what and how the students learn and the conditions which promote their learning. It is instruction that focuses on what learners are doing which results in the creation of responsibility in learning.

However, Nonkukhetkhong et al (2006) suggested that it is unrealistic to assume that all students will be able to make their own choices about their learning processes, especially young students or those at beginning levels. Thus, negotiations between teachers and students in developing a language curriculum or a language program are necessary processes (Brindley, 1984; Nunan, 1988 as cited in Tudor, 1993, p.23; Nunan and Lamb, 1996) but form a continuum along which levels and degrees of negotiation vary depending on the characteristics of the students. In such a situation, teachers have to be familiar with a wide range of teaching methodologies, learning materials, study options and be flexible and adaptable while school programs need to be resource rich to develop a successful student-centred curriculum that caters for a wide range of student needs (Tudor, 1996). Negotiation between the teacher and students to find the preferable and applicable teaching and learning contents and activities was a significant issue in the formulation of this research project.

2.1.2 Characteristics and Benefits of the Student-Centred Learning Approach.

Relating the definitions of ‘student-centred’ given above to my experience, I identified the primary characteristics of this learning approach as follows: firstly, the student-centred approach values students’ needs (Pillay, 2002, pp. 93-102), responsibility and capacity to learn effectively with self-paced learning (Hedge, 2000) by providing them with efficient learning activities (Nunan, 2002). Secondly, the approach promotes an active learning climate among students and collaborative manners, rather than passive learning as in the traditional approach, by expecting

students' participation in the total learning process (Watanabe, 1999). Thirdly, the approach promotes the authentic use both of teaching materials and contexts for effective teaching and learning. Fourthly, the teacher's role is changed into a learning facilitator rather than a knowledge giver as in the past (Pulist, 2002).

Cook and Cook (1998, pp. 59-63) presented the key elements of student-centred learning as the necessary work place skills: problem-solving, team skills, learning how to learn, continuous improvement, interdisciplinary knowledge, interacting and processing information, and integral learning technology. These elements were claimed to be very important for the students when they work in a real situation.

The student-centred approach has the potential to make learning a more enjoyable task for students and provide the opportunity for teachers to interact with students on an individual basis. Such an approach provides complementary activities, interactive in nature, allowing individuals to address their own learning interests and needs and move forward into increasingly complex levels of content to further their understanding and appreciate subject matter. (Nanny, 2003)

Teachers who apply a student-centred learning approach recognise the diversity of students' previous knowledge and difference styles of learning. Students learn by doing, rather than just by listening and doing meaningless tasks which are often not in context and therefore 'unreal' to them (Rogers, 2002). Such an approach is based on a belief that students will bring to the learning situation different beliefs and attitudes about the nature of language and language learning and that these beliefs and attitudes need to be taken into consideration in the selection of content and learning experiences (Nunan, 1998).

Since learning becomes more active rather than passively listening to the teacher, it becomes more memorable, for it is personalised and relevant to students' own lives and experiences and also relevant to the real world (Rogers, 2002).

2.2 Overview of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

2.2.1 Background

CLT is the language teaching approach which began in Britain in the mid-1960s as a replacement for the earlier structural method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This approach starts from a theory of language as communication where the classroom goal of instruction is focused on developing learners' communicative competence in the target language. CLT considers that a language is learned not by simply mastering structures but by achieving communicative proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.153). Therefore, students are encouraged to communicate using the target language through interaction from the beginning of the instruction.

CLT was developed after Hymes (1971) criticised that the conception of linguistic competence that Chomsky (1965) had proposed was partial and limited in effectively explaining how children acquire language. He said that Chomsky's concept of competence is insufficient because it pays no attention to rules of language use. Hymes (1971, p.15) stated, "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless". He goes on to state that to become an effective communicator or language user, a speaker must know how to use language not only grammatically but also appropriately in a given socio-cultural context, that is, "...the speaker must know what to say, with whom, and when, and where" (Hymes, 1971, p.16).

Based on Hymes' theory of "communicative competence", Canale and Swain (1980) refined this theory into the four dimensions of linguistic or grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Linguistic or grammatical competence refers to students' accurate and effective use of grammatical elements. Socio-linguistic competence refers to students' understanding of the social context in which communication takes place. Discourse competence refers to what language actually means in the context and strategic competence refers to the strategies that communicators use to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and

redirect communication. Since then, many researchers have developed theories and practices of Communicative Language Teaching (Brown, 1987; Canale, 1983; Hymes, 1971; Littlewood, 1981; Nattinger, 1984; Nunan, 1987 and 1989; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Widdowson, 1990).

2.2.2 Definition

To give a standard definition of the CLT approach is not easy because of the many interpretations of the concept (Sullivan 1996, p.120). It is a unified but broadly based and theoretically well informed set of principles about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching (Brown 2001, p.43).

The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defined CLT as “an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasises that the goal of language learning is communicative competence” (Richards et al 1992, p.65). According to the same dictionary, the approach has been developed by British applied linguists as a reaction away from grammar-based approaches. The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which is defined as the learner's ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communication in real-life situations (Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Power, 2003). In order to do so, learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but also the pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgcock, 2002). It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use of the target language (Kasper, 1997). In other words, without sufficient exposure needed for learners to notice and acquire the language input and chances to use the new knowledge, communicative competence is not likely to be promoted. Communicative competence includes the following aspects: knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions; knowing how to vary the use of language according to the settings and the participants; knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts; and knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (Richards, nd)

Galloway (1993) said that “Communicative language teaching makes use of real life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life”. Berns (1990, p.104) explained that in CLT, "language teaching is based on a view of language as communication, that is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing"

Nunan (1989) also demonstrated aspects of CLT that are common to many definitions:

CLT views language as a system for the expression of meaning. Activities involve oral communication, carrying out meaningful tasks, and using language which is meaningful to the learner. Objectives reflect the needs of the learners, they include functional skills as well as linguistic objectives. The learner's role is as a negotiator and interactor. The teacher's role is as a facilitator of the communication process. Materials promote communicative language use; they are task-based and authentic. (Nunan, 1989, p.194).

In CLT, language learning emphasises learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of rules, therefore meaning is the most important. Larsen-Freeman maintains that "Almost everything is done with a communicative intent" (1986:132). Accordingly, the process of meaning negotiation is essential in CLT (Paulston, 1974). In order to encourage students to communicate better, errors should be tolerated with little explicit instruction on language rules (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

However, whereas the ultimate goal of CLT is agreed upon as the achievement of communicative competence, differing methods (such as task-based language teaching and content-based instruction) produce a wide variety of syllabus designs and teaching procedures. In the earlier version of CLT, functional definitions of language were viewed as the alternative units that could be used to create communicative syllabi for language teaching (Wilkins 1972; Canale & Swain 1980).

CLT theories are different from the traditional grammar-translation approach which assumes that language consists of a finite set of rules and these rules can be learned one by one, in an additive fashion (Nunan, 1988). Nunan points out that language learning does not occur in the linear-additive fashion that a synthetic syllabus presupposes and thus the focus of learning should alternatively be on language use rather than on the language itself. CLT has claimed that knowing the rules of the language, such as structure and vocabulary, is not enough for foreign language learners to communicate in the target language, the students also need to know how to use the language (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

It can be stated, based on the above, that CLT presents a new way of language teaching that distinguishes itself from the traditional approaches. The aim of CLT is to foster the student's communicative ability, whereas the goals of traditional teaching methods (the grammar-translation, the audio-lingual methods and the situational language teaching) are to teach the students structural or grammatical competence.

2.2.3 Principles of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach

CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often elaborated as a list of general principles or features.

From my search in literature about the principles of the CLT approach, I found that many educators such as Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, pp.91-93); Oxford et al (1989); Nunan (1991, p.279); Williams (1995, p.12); Rodgers (2001) had identified the principles of the CLT approach within their own studies. However most of the principles presented, though having some differences in the details, were focused on the same directions. Firstly the goal of language teaching emphasized students' communicative competence by promoting real use of the target language to help students develop strategies for understanding language as actually used by native speakers (Canale & Swain, 1980). Secondly, CLT emphasises the use of authentic materials (according to Tomlinson as cited in Wu, 2009, p.130 and Noytim, 2006, p.49) 'authentic materials' or 'Realia' are "materials such as signs, magazines,

newspaper articles, brochures, train tickets, letters, advertisements, recording of news, graphic resources, graphs, charts, various audio and video resources, etc., which were originally used in real situations and were not designed for use in language teaching. Such materials are used in the classroom to expose the learners to language in real use in teaching the language (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Nunan, 1991; Long & Crookes, 1992; Noytim, 2006, p.49) to support and encourage students' communication (Mulat, 2003, p.22; Jung Mi Nam, 2005, p.24). Thirdly the teacher's role is changed to facilitator for effective learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000); Finally, CLT is a student-centred approach where every individual student possesses unique interests, styles, needs and goals and teachers should develop materials based on students' demonstrated needs in a particular class (Savignon, 1991). As Pica put it, "in keeping with its student-centred approach, the goals of CLT are focused on students and their success. Its concerns aim toward students' present needs, as well as future, and potential needs for language proficiency" (2000, p.4).

It can be concluded, from the principles presented above, that teachers who favour employing the CLT approach emphasise helping students to use the target language in a variety of contexts and also focus on learning language functions. Its primary focus is on helping students create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. This means that successful learning of a foreign language is evaluated in terms of how well students have developed their communicative competence, which can be defined as their ability to apply both formal and sociolinguistic knowledge of a language with adequate proficiency to communicate.

2.2.4 Cooperation in the learning process

From my insight after studying this kind of learning approach I found that cooperative learning is widely supported (Prapphal, 1991; Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk, 2004; Gwyn-Paquette & Tochon, 2002; Liang, 2004), as an effective teaching strategy of the communicative approach. The most direct evidence for the value of cooperating to learn has been provided by Slavin (1985, pp. 5-14) who evaluated the effects of working cooperatively on student achievement. The result of his study indicated that

working together to accomplish a common goal has positive effects on group relations. The goal for achieving success contributes to the process of learning because students tend to help each other (Gwyn-Paquette & Tochon, 2002, pp. 204-226; Slavin et al., 1985).

Kagan (1985) described the cooperative learning system as consisting of team building, management techniques and rewards based on a complex system of points. Richard-Amato (1988) viewed cooperative learning as a management technique. She suggested that “in cooperative learning, students help other students within groups of four to five persons in an effort to reach goals. Adaptations of cooperative learning can be effective at many age levels from the late elementary grades up through adult levels. It can be used in both second and foreign language teaching situations”. (p.193)

Collaboration in group learning encourages the learners to learn better. This is to suggest that collaborative learning provides opportunities for raising students’ awareness. Awareness of oneself as a learner and awareness of the learning process are obviously essential if any progress is to be made and the increase of responsibility is a purpose (Goddard et al, 2004, pp.3-13; Nunan, 1992).

Jacobs et al (2002, p. ix) defined cooperative learning as "principles and techniques for helping students work together more effectively." As the cooperative approach provides more opportunities for interaction, it appears crucial because it promotes learning (Edge, 1992a, pp. 62-70; Gwyn-Paquette & Tochon, 2002, pp. 204-226).

Based on these ideas, I decided to give students chances to achieve the language tasks by working together by pairs work and in a group of four or five students.

2.2.5 Change in Teacher and Student's Role

The type of classroom activities proposed in CLT implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. In the communicative classroom, the teachers' and students' roles are completely different from those they play in the grammar-translation approach. The teacher's role and function should become less dominant than before, but no less important (Zhenhui, 1999). Littlewood (1995, p.92) suggested that teachers using a communicative approach should redefine, to some extent, their traditional role: as general overseer of students' learning; as classroom manager; as consultant or adviser; as co-communicator; and as language instructor.

According to Breen and Candlin (1980, pp. 89-112) the teacher's role in a communicative classroom was divided into three parts: firstly an organiser of resources and as a resource; secondly a guide, encourager and manager of activities; and thirdly a researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge, abilities and actual and observed experience in the nature of learning.

Teachers who apply CLT organise language learning activities that rely heavily on the use of group activities or pair work. Teachers have to encourage students not to be afraid of English and not continue to perform as a passive learner (Kajornboon, 2000), but as an active participant of the classroom activities which are based on cooperative rather than individually focused learning (Nunan, 1989). Teachers will find themselves talking less and listening more (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Moreover, in the CLT context, teachers will learn along with the students (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001) which accords with the notion of 'life long learning'. Teachers must take part in this never-ending quest and, indeed, model this process for their students. Teachers learn more about their subject areas as they teach, as well as learning about how to teach (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Freeman & Richards, 1996 as cited in Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). While teachers as researchers employ methods such as conversations, interviews and case studies, these are written in narrative form (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Assessment of second language teachers goes beyond what the teacher is doing and investigates what teachers are thinking from the teachers' perspective (Farrell, 1999, pp. 213-218).

In my project I tried to encourage students to switch from their former passive learning styles to be active learners by having them participate in all language learning activities I arranged for them. I employed games, songs, quiz games, pair-work, group-work, etc. to promote their new required-characteristics. By doing so, it could create a new classroom atmosphere which was dramatically different from that existing in my traditional English classroom.

2.2.6 Classroom Activities used in CLT

The aim of CLT, according to Richard and Rodgers (2001), is the acquisition of communicative competence by student arrangement in meaningful use of language at discourse level. To accomplish this, the teacher can do by managing the classroom atmosphere, supporting learning resources and performing as a communicator. 'Classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing tasks that are mediated through language or involve negotiation of information and information sharing' (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p.165).

Learning activities in the CLT classroom are often carried out by students in small groups (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p.132). The communicative approach favours interaction among small numbers of students in order to maximize the time each student has to learn through meaningful negotiation. The teacher sets up the exercise, guiding students to achieve their goals of learning, then the teacher steps back and observes, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during the communicative activities is far from quiet. Students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task.

Sam (1990) stated that the characteristics of Communicative activities are purposeful beyond strictly practising particular structures; they are interactive often conducted with others and often involve some form of discussion; the situations in which the learners have to use language should be as realistic as possible and they are based on the information gap principle.

The learning activities arranged for students show that teachers are very interested in the needs and desires of their students as well as the connection between the language as it is taught in their class and as it is used outside the classroom. Richards, (n.d.) classified the activity types based on the outcomes of CLT as follows: Accuracy versus fluency activities; Mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practice; Information-gap activities; Jig-saw activities. Most of the activities presented reflect an important aspect of classroom tasks in CLT that are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups with authentic¹ use of the language. In this project, the activities I used for having students to learn and practise speaking English were carefully considered suitable for their learning capabilities and characteristics. They are as follows:

2.2.6.1 Using games for language learning

The reasons for using games in foreign language classroom were proposed by many educators (Richard-Amato, 1988; Thiagarajan, 1999; Gardner, 1999; Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 2005). Games add interest to what students might not find very interesting; games provide a context for meaningful communication; games can lower anxiety; games can develop students' skill of working together in a group; and games can connect to a variety of intelligences, etc.

Games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value (Uberman, 1998, pp.20-27). Lee (1979) claimed that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also said that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching programme (p.2).

There are many advantages of using games especially in foreign language learning (Richard-Amato 1988). "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely" (Richard-Amato 1988, p.147). They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their

¹ By authentic I mean use of the language in the way native speakers use it. Authentic materials, activities etc refer to those used in the culture and everyday experience of English native speakers.

opinions and feelings (Hansen 1994 cited in Uberman, 1998) as was noticed evidently in my project. They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Richard-Amato (1988) stated further that games "add diversion to the regular classroom activities," break the ice, "[but also] they are used to introduce new ideas" (p.147). In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is built up by utilising games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus 1994, p.218 cited in Uberman, 1998).

2.2.6.2 Using songs for language learning

Gugliemino (1986, pp.19-26) claimed that if a song is used in coordination with a language lesson it can be of great value. Lo and Li (1998, pp.8-11) argued that songs provide a break from classroom routine and that learning English through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the four language skills can be enhanced. The belief that songs provide enjoyment and develop language skills is also noted by several other authors (Adamowski, 1997; Bechtold, 1983; Domoney & Harris, 1993; Griffiee, 1992; Little, 1983; Monreal, 1982).

Schoepp (2001) stated that teachers' reasons for using songs in the classroom were identified into three main theoretical reasons: affective reasons; cognitive reasons, and linguistic reasons. Krashen's *affective filter hypothesis* explains how affective factors relate to language learning and why some learners learn and other do not. Krashen, 1982 (cited in Schoepp, 2001) explained that "for optimal learning to occur the affective filter must be weak. A weak affective filter means that a positive attitude towards learning is present. If the affective filter is strong the learner will not seek language input and in turn, will not be open for language acquisition". The application of this hypothesis is that teachers must provide a positive atmosphere to support language learning (Schoepp, 2001). The cognitive reasons for using songs are that songs can develop automaticity which is a component of language fluency by repetitive exercises therefore using songs can help automatise the language development process. Lastly, the linguistic reasons for using songs include that songs can provide practical chances for students to become familiar with colloquial English or informal conversation which is the genuine language they will be faced with.

2.2.6.3 Using scripted dialogues for language learning

In this project, ‘scripted dialogues’ which also found in other terms like ‘guided or controlled dialogues/conversations’ (Bailey, 2005) was used as a basic common tool for having the students initially practise speaking English on each learning topic. Scripted dialogue is an old technique from the audiolingual era that is still useful for lower-level students (Bailey 2005, p.42). By using this technique, the teacher provides a speaking model for students to imitate. Students follow directions and respond as accurately, rapidly, and naturally as they can (Li 2007, p.16). The purpose of using scripted dialogue is to present a situation of real language in which the student role plays in a safe environment before being met by the real thing. By using role-playing dialogues, the students come to own the language - to internalize the phrases used so they become a part of their repertoire of English (Iruio n.d., p.106).

Besides the positive aspect presented above, according to Jin (2007, p. 30), Denny (2007, p.2) and Brown (2000, pp. 74-75) using the scripted dialogues has some limitations, they are: (1) It over emphasizes the mechanical practice and ignores students’ English skills training and learning flexibility. (2) It focuses too much on the language structure and ignores the meaning of the language, so students’ reading and writing abilities are poor.

Because most of my target students were less able learners like the low level beginners in English speaking, thus, the reasons I firstly had the students practise speaking from the scripted dialogues were that I expected it was the first step to introduce and familiarize the students with simple or basic conversations patterns of each learning topic. My expectation was that students would eventually have opportunities to use these dialogues in conversation, making appropriate substitutions for the various nouns, adjectives, and verbs when they had to apply it further for their role-playing assignment.

Being aware of both two aspects of utilising scripted dialogues as well as my purposes of using it. I also try to encourage students to perform by handouts closed allowing for the students' total attention to be focused on the most like oral language conversation.

2.2.6.4 Using pair and group work for language learning

“Pair work” and “Group work” were commonly and effectively used for promoting the target language learning and practicing in both ESL and EFL classroom (Nunan and Lamb, 1996, p.142). Normally, in the literature, we usually have seen the two terms together as “pair and group work” (Atkinson, 1993; Bowen, 2004).

Wichaidij (1992, p.6) agreed with the argument that Thai students should be sensitized and promoted to practise speaking English in groups rather than being just pushed to get the ‘answer’ or ‘product’ of the task. Moreover, Rujiketgumjorn (2000, p.81) and Gray (2000, p.163) added that group-work activities help increase language interaction and cooperation among students. In this project, pair and group work were common activities I employed for promoting students’ participation and also having them to practise speaking English in all four research cycles (see in period two and three in the first week, the topic ‘Introduce his or her friends to the others’ in the second week, the topic ‘what time is it?’ in the third week, the topic ‘Day after Day’ and ‘My school’ in the fourth week, period four and five in the fifth week of research cycle one; period three to five in the first week, period three to five in the second week, period three to five in the third week, period two to five in the fourth week, period two to five in the fifth week of research cycle two and also in every week of the other two cycles).

In term of its definition, Brown (2001, p.177) defined group work as ‘a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language’. Fu (2006, p.44) identified such definition into four items:

- Group work involves several techniques;
- A group work comprises two or more than two members;
- The group is supposed to accomplish certain task;

- The task needs to be fulfilled collectively or collaboratively.

In addition, Brown (2001) and Harmer (2003) summarised the following principles in which group work is grounded:

- Fluency is over accuracy: students' target language speaking moves from units and pieces to more complex sentence structures faster and spontaneously.
- Group work provides students more opportunity to interact and use the target language more freely. Instead of merely having a short time to talk in teacher-fronted classes, students can participate longer in a small group and feel more confident to express their opinions and even make mistakes when just three or four classmates are looking at them as Brown (2001, p.178) stated that "small groups provide opportunities for students initiation, for face-to-face give and take, for practice [sic] negotiation of meaning, and for extended conversational exchanges, and for students adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible".
- Language learning is more meaningful. Instead of memorizing and/or drilling, students use language to talk about something that is appealing, contextualized and relevant to them as Brown (2001, p.57) stated that "Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning".
- Group work build up a positive atmosphere as some students will not feel vulnerable to public display that may cause rejection or criticism.
- Learner's responsibility and autonomy are encouraged by group work. "The small group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals" (Brown, 2001, p.178).
- Group work supports and encourages the application of the multiple intelligences theory as students make use of their own abilities to complete an assigned work. In this aspect, students can participate by doing what they like or are very good at.

- By employing group work the teacher has the opportunity to teach turn-taking mechanisms. As Kramsch (1992) suggests

teaching students how to take turns, as easy as this might seem, requires teaching a number of skills that are not automatically transferred from the mother tongue such as to tolerate silences, to direct gaze to addressees, to make use of floor-taking gambits, and to take longer turns (p.22).

Apart from the positive principles identified above, pair and group work also have disadvantages related to the loud noise students make in the classroom which may bother other colleagues. The teacher might face with difficulties controlling the class, especially in relation to discipline. The use of native language and lack of correction of mistakes may cause inefficient practice in the target language if the teacher is not aware and does not manage this issue well (Salas, 2005, p.4).

As a teacher and researcher in this project, I tried to learn in advance and was aware of the above two sides of applying 'pair and group work' in the classroom, especially the disadvantages aspect, so I could manage noises and discipline in the classroom. However, I had to acknowledge and accept students' use of L1 while they were practising English speaking due to their language learning ability background.

2.2.6.5 Using role-play for language learning

In this research project, I also utilised role-play to have students practise real use of English language (see in period two and three of the first week and the second week of research cycle one; period three and four in the first week, period three and four in the fourth week, period three and four in the fifth week of research cycle two; period three and four in the fourth week of research cycle three; period three and four in the fourth week of research cycle four).

Role-play refers to "drama-like classroom activities in which students take the roles of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation" (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992 as cited in Dammet, 2008, p.67).

Normally, role-play involves being an imaginary person usually in a hypothetical situation and sometimes in a real one (Venugopal, 1986). Livingstone (1983) defined role-play as a class activity which gives the students the opportunities to practise the language aspects of role-behaviour, the actual roles they may need outside the classroom. Richards (1985) stated that role-play involves a situation in which a setting, participants and a goal problem are described. Participants are to accomplish the task given, drawing on whatever language resources they can.

According to Wu (2009), role-play is to create the presence of a real life situation in the classroom. It is important in classroom communication because it gives students an opportunity to practice communication in different social contexts and in different social roles. The language applied in this activity varies according to the character's status, attitudes, mood, and different situations.

From the above descriptions, role-play is an activity which needs a person to take on a role that is actual or imaginary. It calls for interaction of participants as they try to complete a task which subsequently can develop the oral skills of them (Maley & Duff, 1995; McCaslin, 2000; Miccoli, 2003).

I utilised role-play as one of my teaching arrangements because it provides advantages to students as Sam (1990) has identified. It stimulates authentic conversations; is a fluency activity; is suitable for consolidation; creates sensitivity and a sense of awareness; increase motivation and self-esteem; is a break from routine; prepares students for real life and unpredictability. I had the students experience role-play by trying to focus on meaning and effective communication as the students had to achieve their goal with less concern about accuracy. This will increase confidence and motivate students to practise speaking English together (Al-Arishi, 1994, p.338).

2.2.7 Difficulties in Applying the CLT approach in the EFL Context

There are many reports on the difficulties of implementing a communicative approach especially in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) settings (Anderson, 1993; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Canh, 1999; Howard, 1996; Jung & Norton, 2002 as cited in Nonkukhetkhong et al (2006), Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Stapleton, 1995; Ellis, 1996; Leng, 1997; Li, 1998). These settings are environments in which students have little exposure to English outside the classroom, so the students are almost dependent upon whatever guided communicative practice they can get in the classroom. It is mainly in the classroom that they can learn “when and how to say what to whom” in English (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p.121).

Palmer (1979, pp.169-180) compared the effects of ‘traditional’ instruction and ‘communicative’ instruction involving extensive peer-communication based on language games. The subjects were Thai students of English. The results presented no significant differences in achievement between the groups.

Some researchers link the failure of the CLT approach to the inadequacies of the teachers themselves (Deckert, 2004). The study of Karavas-Doukas (1996, pp.87-197) with local secondary school teachers of English in Greece concluded that part of the problem stems from the teachers’ misunderstanding of the nature of communicative language teaching (CLT). She found that even when using textbooks designed for communicative activities, teachers tended to revert to traditional teacher-centred routines.

Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997) argued that the problems with CLT appear because (1) "the lack of firm linguistic guidelines led to a diversity of communicative approaches", (2) "current communicative testing methods fail to provide sufficient precision" and (3) in CLT, "the linguistic form is learned incidentally rather than as a result of focusing directly on linguistic form, ...and CLT is not in accordance with the principles of cognitive psychology" (pp.143-45).

Kumaravadivelu (1993) referred to teaching experience in India as well as North America and concluded that teacher trainers sometimes simply failed to equip teachers with the skills and techniques they need for implementing CLT in their classrooms. Focusing on cultural values that may interfere with CLT in Japan, Stapleton (1995) points out how Confucianism as a belief system in society is in conflict with underlying concepts of CLT. For example, Confucianism establishes the superior status and knowledge of the teacher over that of the student, thus raising the role of the teacher above the student. Ellis (1996) also raised questions about the basic compatibility of CLT with Vietnamese students, who have deeply rooted conceptions about social uses of language. In Vietnam, knowing and using the acceptable linguistic forms in interpersonal exchange is very important.

Li (1998), with observations from South Korea and Leng (1997), reflecting on teaching and learning in China, both report that local conditions are obstacles to the CLT approach. Li (1998, p.687) indicated that teachers in Korean secondary education have perceived difficulties in implementing these policies for various reasons (e.g. large classes, the scarcity of relevant authentic materials, lack of student prerequisite skills, continued use of grammar-based/traditional examinations, the absence of new forms of assessment to match CLT priorities, teacher-deficiency in spoken English, lack of training in CLT). Leng referred to the problems of too large classes, teachers' heavy teaching loads and outdated classroom equipment. She also pointed out how administrative practices in teacher assessment may even penalise teachers who use communicative techniques in their classes. Thus, it appeared that even the teachers who are well equipped with the theory and fundamentals of communicative language teaching face difficulty in EFL settings.

In Korea, Yoon (2004) has presented a number of limitations in attempts to introduce CLT into the Korean school system and also the study of Jeon and Hahn (2006) about high-school teachers showed that teachers had a high level of understanding of CLT, but had negative views about implementing it in their classroom.

Moreover, Bax (2003) criticized CLT for paying insufficient attention to the context in which teaching and learning take place. Yang and Cheung (2003) have taken secondary school English teaching in Hong Kong as an example and examined such barriers as large class size, lack of training in communicative techniques and the extensive language syllabus that deterred teachers from using CLT in their classes.

In case of Japan, Pacek (1996, p.336) and Sato (2002, p.80) identified the same limitations of a lack of suitable teachers' professional development which made the teachers continued to avoid implementing CLT. In addition, Nishino and Watanabe (2008) described avoidance of the communicative approach in Japanese schools being reinforced by teacher and student concerns about university entrance examinations, which do not seek to measure communicative competence an issue also noted by Gorsuch, (2000).

In China, Rao (1996, 2002) questioned the appropriateness of CLT to Chinese educational and cultural norms. Wang (2008) reported a wide gap between the principles of textbook designers, which emphasise the adoption of a learner-centred approach and the entire use of English in instruction, and the classroom reality, where teaching is still textbook-based, test-oriented and teacher-centred, with extensive use of the first language in instruction. In addition, Yu (2001) said that a lack of qualified teachers in schools was the biggest obstacle to the implementation of the CLT while Hu (2002, p.94) stated that the promotion of CLT has proved counterproductive and a mere 'matter of paying lip-service'

In Hong Kong, there is a wide gap between the curriculum intentions and the practical realities (Ruffell, 2006). It is due to inadequate teacher preparation and insufficient resources, leading to a lack of understanding about as well as belief in the principles of CLT (Carless, 2003, p.493).

In a recent study, Segovia and Hardison (2009) similarly reported teachers and supervisors are not quite confident about the feasibility of the proposed move from teacher-centred to learner-centred instruction. Littlewood (2007) reviewed CLT across

many Asian countries and identified all the issues outlined above, as well as a mismatch between the tenets of CLT and local cultures of learning.

2.2.8 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Thailand

In Thailand, English is commonly the first foreign language that Thai students have to study in schools (O'Sullivan & Tajaroensuk, 1977 as cited in Varasarin, 2007, p.14), but Thais' level of English proficiency, based on the scores of two international standardized tests, (TOEFL and TOEIC) is low when compared with many countries in Asia (Varasarin, 2007, p.14; Bolton, 2008, p.3-12).

In general, English is used by Thai people as a foreign language because it is not an everyday medium (Cook, 1991, p.5; Noytim, 2006, p.1; Damnet, 2008, p.2; Khamkhien, 2010, p.184). English is used mostly for the purposes of academic advancement, career advancement, and travelling abroad (Khamkhien, 2010, p.184). Moreover, in the foreign language classroom, Thai rather than native English teachers are generally responsible for foreign language teaching throughout the country (Baker, 2003; Weerawong, 2004; Saengboon, 2006, p.144; Wongsothorn, Sukakamolsum & Chinthammit, 1996 cited in Varasarin, 2007, p.13; Khamkhien, 2010, p.184).

The English language is taught through the mother tongue (Thai) in almost all English classes in schools (Weerawong, 2004; Khamkhien, 2010, p.184). In addition, though the communicative approach was determined by the current basic educational curriculum as the main teaching approach in the foreign language classroom, many experts and researchers noted that the methodology employed in the language classroom in Thailand is still traditional pedagogy (Promsiri et al, 1996; Waine, 1998; Puntakerngamorn, 1999; Maskhao, 2002; Saengboon, 2006; Punthumasan, 2007, p.3; Khamkhien, 2010, p.185). The language lessons are still directed to grammatical points and reading comprehension skills, which need heavy explanation and mistake correction (Maskhao 2002; Saengboon, 2006; Punthumasan, 2007, p.3; Khamkhien, 2010, p.185). Teaching arrangements are focused on traditional techniques such as translation, memorisation, repetition and drill (Saengboon, 2004). It is accepted that

many Thai teachers, including myself, feel happier to explain content in Thai. Some teachers certainly believe that by doing this, their students will understand the target language and also some teachers believe that teaching in the mother tongue is what students need and expect (Gebhard 1982, Mountford, 1986; Williams, 1992). More importantly, it is claimed that to prepare for the national university entrance exams, which are seen as the key to students' future success, the students need to practise examination paper exercises (Supervisory Unit, 1997).

Even though, in the Thai context, the student-centred approach is preferred by the 1996 and 2001 National Curriculum, the application of CLT in the classroom is still rare because many teachers find it difficult to change from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach (Stroupe et al, 1998; Kanoksilapatham, 2007). The new policy (Basic National Curriculum 2001) of teaching foreign languages using a student-centred or a communicative approach has been mandated from the top down. If it is to be successful, there is an urgent need to investigate the proficiency of English teachers and their capacity to apply the student-centred or CLT approach. This is particularly true for Thai rural contexts which faced a shortage of qualified teachers and scarce in-service training and teaching resources. Teachers need to have a chance to reflect on how they perceive the system, and how they implement the student-centred approach. This National Education Revolution Act (NERA) mandated reform is unlikely to be successfully undertaken without listening to the teachers' voices and responding to their concerns (Nonkukhetkhong et al, 2006).

Moreover, I found many academic journal articles, materials or even M.A./Ph.D./Ed.D theses at well known Universities in Thailand have been written on the theory and practice of using the CLT approach in the classroom but still report the failure of foreign language learning outcomes both in schools and universities to meet the demands for workplace English (Biyaem, 1997; Wiriyachitra, 2002; Keyurawong, 2002; Srivarakan, 2002; Tananuraksakul, 2003). Most CLT practices seem to be conducted just for a research thesis which lasted only for a short time. It is not the common practice of foreign language teachers in the whole country. Most of its implementation is different from what educators or policy makers have claimed it to be (Maskhao, 2002).

However, some research studies examined the implementation of the CLT approach in English classrooms and have shown that if the approach is implemented appropriately and continuously by the English teachers in the classroom, it may improve the students' language competency (Supabandit, 1987; Pathomkhong, 1987; Leuangrungruang, 1993; Sritongtes, 2001; Pato 2002; Songsiri, 2007).

2.3 Motivation in Second/Foreign Language Learning

Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the crucial factors that influence the rate of success of second language (henceforth L2) and foreign language (henceforth FL) learners (Dornyei, 1998; Brown, 2002).

Motivation provides the primary drive to initiate learning the second/foreign language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often boring learning process.

“Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities can not accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curriculum and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement” (Dornyei, 1998, p.117).

Therefore, the literature on this topic in my research project helped me, at least, to understand more about the practical factors affecting my students' language learning performance and to apply the knowledge of how to motivate my students in the classroom.

2.3.1 Definitions

There are many definitions proposed by researchers and educators in the field, however, almost all focus on specific factors that work together to create motivation (Root, 1999). Ames and Ames (1989) defined motivation as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts. It is important because it determines the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning (Ngeow, Karen Yeok-Hwa, 1998).

Oxford and Shearin (1994, p.12) state that motivation is “a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal. Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second

or foreign language; it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning”.

Gardner (1985, p.10 cited in Dornyei, 1998, p.122) defined second/foreign language motivation as “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity”; more specifically, motivation is conceptualised to include three components: motivational intensity; desire to learn the language; and an attitude towards the act of learning the language. Therefore, according to Gardner’s theory, ‘motivation’ refers to a kind of central mental ‘engine’ or ‘energy-centre’ that includes effort, want/will (cognition), and task-enjoyment (affect) (Dornyei, 1998, p.122).

Ellis (1994 cited in Root 1999 p.2) in an overview of research on motivation, asserted that motivation affects the extent to which language learners persist in learning, what kinds of behaviour they exert, and their actual achievement. Wlodowski (1985, p.2) explained motivation as “the processes that can (a) arouse and instigate behaviour, (b) give direction or purpose to behaviour, (c) continue to allow behaviour to persist, and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behaviour”.

2.3.2 The Nature of Motivation

Motivation is regarded as “a key component of a model of language learning” (Spolsky, 2000, p.158). Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced the notions of integrative and instrumental motivation. In the context of language learning, integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community, whereas instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes (such as employment or travel).

Dornyei (2001) classified motivation into three types: intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation describes behaviour performed for its own sake for experiencing pleasure and satisfaction, such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one’s curiosity. Extrinsic motivation involves the behaviours people

perform as a means to achieve some extrinsic reward (e.g. good grades) or to avoid punishment. Amotivation does not depend on any regulation, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, and is described by a ‘there is no point...’ feeling. (p.27)

Learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Elyildirim et al, 2006). In this project, I promoted and encouraged those features in the students by applying Dornyei’s motivational strategies by creating a relaxing atmosphere, cheering students, rewarding, giving suggestions and help and also establishing rapport with students.

2.3.3 Strategies for motivating students in the classroom

There were no serious efforts in the L2 literature to design motivational strategies for classroom application until the mid-1990s (Dornyei, 2001). As Dornyei stated “a growing number of publications have described motivational techniques, but the amount of research devoted to the question of motivating learners has still been rather meagre relative to the total amount of research on L2 motivation” (p.117).

Dornyei (2001, p.116) argued that “teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness”. Teachers should observe circumstances under which students acquire language and make adjustments toward creating optimal learning conditions which accord with the argument of McCombs and Pope, 1994 (cited in Dornyei, 2001, p.118) that “all students are motivated to learn under the right conditions, and that you can provide these conditions in your classroom”. In designing learning activities, the language teacher should remember that because language learning focuses on both the accuracy and appropriateness of application in various contexts of use, students must be given opportunities to participate as language users in multiple contexts (Ngeow, Karen Yeok-Hwa, 1998).

Dornyei (1994, pp.273-284) proposed the strategies for motivating students’ language learning. This set of strategies is very useful for teachers who are seeking to apply the motivational techniques to develop students’ learning performance in the classroom. They are: firstly to develop students’ self-efficacy; secondly to decrease students’

anxiety; thirdly to promote motivation-enhancing attributions; fourthly to encourage students to set attainable sub-goals; and finally to increase the attractiveness of course content.

Besides those strategies mentioned above, Dornyei and Csizer, 1998 and Williams and Burden, 1997 (as cited in Dornyei 2001, pp.138-140) proposed a useful and practical list of ‘macrostrategies’ called ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’ (see Appendix 1) and ‘A list of suggestions for motivating language learners’ (see Appendix 2) for teachers to realise when applying motivational strategies in the classroom.

Teaching students the learning strategies is another way to influence motivation levels (Niederhauser, 1997). The goal of teaching learning strategies is to help students become better language learners. Students who use learning strategies consciously can control how they learn so that they can be efficient, motivated, and independent language learners (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999 as cited in National Capital Language Resource Center). In this project I did not systematically apply learning strategies with the students due to my lack of knowledge of the topic, but I have realised its significance for helping and enhancing students’ target language performance while I was implementing the research procedures and I expect to utilise it in the future.

2.4 Conclusions

As a foreign language teacher in the educational reform era I strive to develop my teaching practice to achieve the goal of National Education Reform that requires a student-centred approach to be employed as the central teaching and learning norm in all Thai schools’ classrooms. This action research project, as a result, was conducted to reflect my intention to enhance the students’ language learning performance and at the same time to develop my teaching practice by implementing the ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (CLT) approach in my language class. The communicative approach which actually has the same principles as student-centred learning approach is accepted by both researchers and educators in the language instructional field as an

“innovative” way to teach English as second or foreign language (Celce-Murcia, 2001) and is widely acknowledged to hold great potential in creating an optimal language-learning environment. In addition, the approach is also claimed and encouraged by the Act to be adopted for developing students’ communicative competence by all language teachers in the whole country.

By implementing the CLT approach in this project I aim to encourage language learning through contextualized interaction around communicative functions. Students were encouraged to deal with a variety of interacting situations, in which the linguistic system is learned through the process of struggling to communicate, and knowledge about language is constructed through trial and error in their communication practice (Brown, 2001) arranged mostly in forms of both pair-work and group work. In addition, the practical teaching materials such as CD, audio cassette tape, pictures, flash cards, etc. were also used to support and promote the efficient teaching and learning procedures as well as to replace the primitive ‘chalk and talk’ teaching which was used for so long by the researcher.

The review of literature while conducting the research also encouraged me to realise and give value to students’ motivation as the important factor that can impact on the efficiency of language learning. To attain the research goal I have to recognize and create a supportive atmosphere (Dornyei, 2001) for motivating students’ effective learning and practising the target language. Not all of my review of literature was completed before the research commenced. The research into motivation was particularly useful when I experienced low motivation within my class.

Moving towards the student-centred approach brings challenges not only for me as a teacher but also for my students to become adaptive learners and focus attention on independent thinking. This project was only implemented on a small scale within my teaching context and also for just a short time in a semester. However, it is valued as an initial step and attempt as a teaching practitioner to apply the research processes for developing both teaching and learning simultaneously in the real context.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

This chapter outlines the research procedures and methodology I employed within my English classroom to improve students' language learning performance and also my teaching practice.

The aims of this research study were to evaluate the effectiveness of my effort to change my traditional teaching practice and also to improve the students' English learning performances. In addition, the study sought to identify the factors which obstructed students from learning the English language and the most practical teaching arrangements which suitable for the school's context in the future.

3.2 Rationale for choosing action research as my research method

Though there are many kinds of practical research methods, I decided to use the action research model of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which is composed of four phases: plan, act, observe, and reflect. Its fundamental notion of changing or improving practice is relevant to the main goal of my enquiry.

Action research which was developed by Kurt Lewin in 1946 concerns itself with taking action. According to Burns (2005), action research "takes an explicitly interventionist and subjective approach" (p.60). The research method has been widely used in the investigation of human behaviour and the social world. It emerged as a new approach to research which is more directly relevant to the ongoing work of practitioners. Wallace (1998) stresses 'the systematic collection and analysis of data relating to the improvement of some aspect of professional practice' (p.1).

The aims of the research method are to enable systematic investigation and solution of problems experienced by practitioners and their clients, to examine the effectiveness of their work practices, and to take methodical action to resolve those problems (Stringer, 1996).

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) gave a definition of action research as:

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out (p.5)

Corey (1953) also defined action research as the process through which practitioners study their own practice to solve their personal practical problems. Reason (2001) stated that:

the research has a primary purpose to develop practical knowing embodied moment-to-moment action by practitioner; has a collaborative intent; rooted in each participant's in-depth, critical and practical experience of the situation to be understood and acted in; truth is not solely a property of formal proposition, but is a human activity that must be managed for human purposes, and aims to develop theory which is not simply abstract and descriptive but is a guide to inquiry and action in present time (p.2).

As its name implies, the research has twin goals to achieve both action and research. The action aim is to bring about change or improve practice in some community or organisation programme or intervention; and a research aim is to increase or generate knowledge and understanding on the part of the researcher or the client or both, or some other community (Dick, 1992; Hughes & William, 2001).

The above statement is in accord with my research study which had two main aims: an action aim and a research aim. An action aim was to change from my former traditional teaching practices which focused much on the grammar-translation

approach to the new practical CLT approach and the research aim, by reflecting on my changes, was to evaluate the effectiveness of change on students' learning performances and also to look for an appropriate method to teach the English language for secondary students at Bamrung Wittaya School.

Action research has had a great impact on educational research and literature. It has been extensively used to research changes in teaching practice. Nunan (1989) refers to action research as a form of 'teacher-research...distinguished from other forms of research by its practical focus. Teacher-research should grow out of the problems and issues which confront teachers in their daily work' (pp.15-16). Field (1997) considers action research as 'a small-scale investigation undertaken by a class teacher' (p.192). Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) stated that:

In education, action research has been employed in school-based curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programs and systems planning and policy development. The linking of the term 'action' and 'research' highlights the essential feature of the approach: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching, and learning. The result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school, and better articulation and justification of the educational rationale for what goes on.

(p. 5-6)

Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) stated that the purpose of action research is to "increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring improvements in classroom practices." Wiersma (1994) added that '(A)ction research is usually conducted by teachers, administrators, or other educational professionals for solving a specific problem or for providing information for decision making at the local level.' Jonathan Snell (1999) stated that action research is concerned with trying to improve one specific point in a teacher's technique in a particular classroom using empirical measurement.

The main two aims of my enquiry related to practical outcomes as a part of my professional development in teaching. Prideaux, 1990 (cited in Cherry, 1999, p.3) has identified five potential outcomes of action research:

- a change in the situation, practice or behaviour of the client or ‘other’;
- improved understanding of the client’s situation or behaviour for both the client and the researcher/change agent;
- development in the competence and practice of the researcher/change agent;
- additions to the store of knowledge and theory available to the wider professional and general community;
- improved understanding of the processes through which individuals, groups, organisations or larger social systems change.

Another important feature of action research is that it is typically cyclic. Its later cycles are used to challenge and refine the results of the earlier cycles. Dick (2002, p. 2) stated that:

Action research is a flexible cycle process which allows action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same time. The understanding allows more informed change and at the same time is informed by that change.

The research process which runs through repeated cycles seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason & Bradbury, n.d.)

By implementing this project, I aimed to research my own practice of teaching more critically and reflectively (Oja & Pine, 1989; Street, 1986). It is not only an enquiry into my teaching in the classroom but also an opportunity to gain new knowledge and

skill in research method and applications. New knowledge gained results in changes in practice (Donato, 2003). Action research is often conducted to discover a plan for innovation or intervention and is collaborative (Donato, 2003). I hoped to become more aware of the options and possibilities for change. The research information is generally gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on educational practices in general, and improving student outcomes (Mills, 2003, p.4).

Stenhouse (1985) once said, “It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it” (p.vi). As teachers engage in action research they are increasing their understanding of the school process. What they are learning will have great impact on what happens in classroom, schools, and districts in the future (Beverly, 1993). Wallace (1998) saw action research as particularly applicable to language teachers. Moreover, action research can empower teachers to take leadership roles in their local teaching contexts (Wallace, 2000). Leaders for change get involved as learners in real reform situations. They build up their own theories of change, consistently testing them against new situations. They become critical consumers of management theories, able to sort out promising ideas from empty ones. (Fullan 2000, p.158)

In consequence, by implementing action research, I would be able to gain an insight, from observation and interviews, into my students’ perception of the new learning atmosphere and language activities they had to experience. In addition, I could apply the research outcomes to further develop my teaching techniques in the future.

3.3 Research questions

The principal research question was: *How can the student-centred CLT approach be employed to improve students' language learning performance at Bamrung Wittaya School?*

Three sub-questions are:

1. What are the outcomes of implementing a student-centred CLT approach in my class?
2. What are the factors that support or hinder the development of students' language competence?
3. What approach should be taken to teaching English at Bamrung Wittaya School in future?

3.4 Students: participants and collaborators in research

The research study was conducted in term two of the 2004 academic year, when I taught English to grade seven. The subjects of my research study were my 7th grade students. The class had a total of thirty students, sixteen boys and fourteen girls, aged between twelve and thirteen years old. These students graduated in grade six both from Bamrung Wittaya School and from other schools in the province. I was allocated a teaching time of five hours every week.

Most of the students were less able and had inefficient outcomes for English. It appeared in each student's learning report that their language learning, and also their performance in other subjects, was quite low, even though they had learned English for at least two to three years. The students and I had met each other in term 1 before I initiated this research project.

3.5 Data collection

In this project, judgements of research outcomes were based on students' work and their target language performance, so several methods were used for collecting data in order to increase the credibility of the obtained data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). They were the following:

1) A Portfolio of the students' language performance was used as a means of assessment in which a student's progress was measured. Each student had his/her own portfolio for keeping their work such as all working sheets of listening, reading and essay writing or short sentence writing exercises, and also other work assignments: cards for special events (Father's day card, Christmas and New Year card, Valentine card etc). I kept students' portfolios to analyze their language performance and progress after each cycle was completed and used them in parallel with other data collections over the period of research.

2) A teacher's journal (**see in appendix 5**): The teacher's journal is described as an excellent way to monitor teaching practice in a systematic but flexible way (Miller, 2004, p.41). In order to gain a deep insight and awareness of the teaching and learning process, I reflected on my teaching and my students' learning by taking a teacher's journal. Murphy (2001, cited in Yu, 2005, p.73) values a teacher's journal as a valuable source for gathering information about the teacher's own understanding and explanations of teaching. I wrote an account of what happened based on whatever I noticed and remembered while teaching the class in every period. It was a record of all actual activities and events that happened, the feedback of students, the learning atmosphere in the classroom and provided a reflection of the students' language ability and interest in joining in the activities.

3) An observation form which was prepared by myself to observe students' interaction and communication both in small groups, in pairs and individually. The observation form contained the expected lists of students' behaviours that happened in the classroom over the period of study in order to evaluate the improvement of students' language competency. I observed students' learning and working behaviour

every period, and after each period I ticked '✓' on the students who had acted in accord with the anticipated items. When each week was ended the students who had been ticked at least two times in a week got one mark and the students who acted less than two times a week got a zero. The reason I set the frequency of students' expected behaviour at merely two times a week were that my research project was offered the first opportunity for them to practise speaking English and, as most students were less able learners, I considered that this frequency provided a suitable performance indicator. Then after a whole five weeks of each research cycle students, who acted in accord with the anticipated observation items would get five marks. **(See an observation form and a sample of a summary of a five-week observation in appendix 3 and 3.1).**

4) A group interview at the end of each research cycle. The purpose of the interview was to get students' feedback on the new teaching arrangements and their requirements of learning activities in the follow research cycles. Five students were selected at random but students who had previously taken part in an interview were excluded because I used the same set of questions in all four cycles and also needed to get the new opinion from students. Thus twenty out of the thirty students contributed to group interviews. These aimed to better understand their problems, feelings and expectations from learning English

During the interview arrangement I acted as a discussion leader and tried to create a relax atmosphere for encouraging students' freely expression of his/her idea. Moreover, the interview data were used to reflect as well as to determine and prepare learning activities in the next cycle. **(See framework for interview and sample of a transcribed interview data in appendix 4 and 4.1).**

In short, all data collection methods were used consistently together both while and after the research procedures in all four research cycles as to made more reliability and credibility for the research outcomes.

3.6 Data analysis

In this research project, coding technique (open and axial coding) of Strauss and Corbin (1990) was used for analysing the data obtained from the researcher's journal and students' interviewing. Firstly, open coding was used to summarise and allocate the data into categories, then axial coding was used to put those data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories.

The students' interview was recorded on to audio-tape and was later transcribed. Then, all transcribed data were analysed to identify major content, categories and recurring themes. After that I interpreted the recurring themes and began writing up the outcomes of each cycle

Observations were analysed to show a subjective evaluation change in language performance and the other themes showed student response to the new approach and levels of participation as outcomes of the implementation.

3.7 The action research cycles

I designed the research project to investigate the effectiveness of my efforts to implement a CLT approach in my English language classroom and to explore the crucial factors that hindered my students from becoming more able language learners. The learning activities were undertaken both by group work interaction, pair work and also individually.

I divided the period of data collection and analysis into four cycles. Each research cycle included four procedures of plan, act, observe and reflect following the action research method of Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1982), and comprised 25 classroom teaching periods (an hour per period) within a 5 week-long cycle.

The research process allowed me to study events in my own classroom and to take steps towards solving problems as they occurred, and to reflect on the outcome.

3.7.1 Informed consent

Before the research project was undertaken, the issue of ethical informed consent was addressed. Firstly, I informed my students in advance about the study. All details of the research objectives, classroom activities, collection of data and the uses to which data were to be put were explained to everyone. Furthermore, I also had the students take letters to their parents to read and sign that described the details of my research project and to give permission for me to conduct the research with their children (See permission letter to students' parents and a consent form in appendix 6). The letter explained that the research project was not only for my professional development in teaching practice but also to help stimulate their children through the practical language learning activities.

In addition, I also confirmed that if students were unhappy to join in the research activities, they were free to withdraw from the research project at any time, which would not affect their final learning outcome in any way. All parents signed giving consent for their children to participate in the research project.

3.8 Research cycle one

3.8.1 The planning stage

Learning topics for the first cycle were prepared after I had considered what situations or contexts were appropriate for my students at the first step of learning a language to communicate in a real life situation. I found many interesting topics e.g. greeting, introducing myself, asking and telling the time, and so on. These are very useful for students at the starting point of learning a language. The 14 topics for the 25 hours of learning of the first cycle were prepared as follows:

Table 1: Learning topics of research cycle one

Week	Learning Topics		
Week 1	Greeting	4	periods
	Find someone who ...	1	period
Week 2	Myself	1	period
	Introducing friends to each other	2	periods
	What does your friend look like?	2	periods
Week 3	Parts of the body	1	period
	What time is it?	2	periods
	Seven days in a week	1	period
	Twelve months in a year	1	period
Week 4	Day after day	1	period
	Giving orders	1	period
	My school	2	periods
	What are you doing?	1	periods
Week 5	What are you doing? (continued)	2	periods
	Changing the affirmative sentence to an interrogative and negative sentence	3	periods

The learning topics and activities in the first cycle comprised common situations in their daily life which beginners in language learning should experience as Sudharsan (2006, p.25) argued that in the process of language learning, any knowledge that was not assimilated and related to their own experience would be soon forgotten.

However, learning topics retained the vocabulary and grammatical aspects. Most of my grade 7 students were slow students and since I had already taught them for a semester, I thought that these learning topics were most suitable for them at the beginning stage to learn language for communication (see section 2.2.6). In addition, I also employed games and songs in almost every week both for fun and for the target language practice purposes.

3.8.3 The implementation stage

Week 1 ‘Greeting’, ‘Find someone who ...’

The first week comprised two main learning topics: *Greeting and Find someone who....* *Greeting* was the topic was aimed at introduce and familiarize students with the common greeting sentences and situations. Students had to learn and practise the language with the teacher first, then with a buddy, and finally in a small group.

‘*Find someone who...*’ was the learning topic which expected students to walk around the classroom, with the written instructions in hand, to greet peers and to seek someone who had the exact qualifications given in the instructions within restricted time. Students had to report in English in front of the class when the time was up.

Learning activities throughout the first week were mostly undertaken by having the students practise the conversation (i.e the greetings and search phrases) in pairs, in a small group (in accordance with research considered in section 2.2.6) and also with me (I greeted and randomly asked students a set of basic questions to have them practise speaking: Hello!, What’s your name/nickname?, How old are you?, When is your birthday?, What is your school?, What grade are you in?, How do you go to school?, What is your address?, Where do you live?, What does your father/mother do?, What day is today?, etc.). In addition, the presentation in front of the classroom both by individually and couples was employed to provide more chances for the students to practise speaking English (as cited in section 2.2.5) while the mind mapping assignment aimed for the students to practise summarising learning content and writing to present their opinions.

Week 2 ‘Myself’, ‘Introducing friends to each other’, ‘What does your friend look like?’

The second week was arranged with three learning topics: *Myself, Introducing a friend to others and What does your friend look like?* The purpose of the first topic was to have students speak in English to present themselves in front of the class

telling about his or her personal details after they had time to prepare and discuss this with both teacher and friends.

‘Introducing his or her friend to the others’ was a learning activity using role play in a small group in which each one took turns to introduce a new friend to the others, The last topic intended students to describe the characteristics and features of their friends by learning some vocabulary and some sample sentences with the teacher in advance and to practise by themselves in a group setting.

**Week 3 ‘Parts of the body’, ‘Seven days in a week’,
‘Twelve months in a year’, ‘What time is it?’**

In the third week, students learned vocabulary for *Parts of the body*, *7 days in a week*, *12 months in a year* in order to resurrect knowledge of the fundamental vocabularies they had learnt in the primary school i.e. the organs in the body, days in a week and months in a year. These basic vocabularies should still be in their memory, but actually most students, especially in this classroom, had completely forgotten them. The topic *‘What time is it?’* aimed for the students to be able to ask and tell the time with anybody both orally and in a written format.

The learning topics and activities, though involved with parts of grammar, were determined to foster the students to use English as much as possible. Moreover, games (Vocabulary game, Hang man and Quiz) and songs (Head shoulders knees and toes, If you happy and you know clap your hand) were utilised to enhance the opportunity for the students to exercise listening and speaking as well as to increase an animated classroom climate.

Week 4 ‘Day after day’, ‘Giving orders’, ‘My school’, ‘What are you doing?’

In the fourth week, the topics to learn were *Day after day*, *Giving orders*, *My school* and *What are you doing?*. *‘Day after day’* was a topic that expected learners to tell their daily life activities on each day in all the week. *‘Giving orders’* aimed to have

students ask or request someone to do something for them, while *'My school'* expected students to give facts or information about his or her school to each other. The last topic *'What are you doing?'* aimed for the students to review the previous knowledge of present progressive tense. Learning activities were conducted by having the students work in a group to discuss together and write the progressive sentences and then present their work in front of the classroom.

Week 5 'What are you doing?', 'Changing the affirmative sentence to interrogative and negative sentence'

In the fifth week, the learning topics comprised of *'What are you doing?'* which continued from the fourth week, and *'Changing the affirmative sentence to an interrogative or negative sentence'*.

The learning content this week related mostly to grammar; however, the students also had a chance to practise speaking English by making a presentation when they finished the work.

3.8.4 The interview

The first group of five students were chosen randomly to participate in the unstructured interview after research cycle one was completed. The random selection was achieved by picking names of the students from a cup and this first group was then excluded from selection in further cycles. The students were invited to sit in a small circle and interviewed to express how they felt about the classroom activities and the learning atmosphere that had been changed to focus on the communicative approach.

I had to create a pleasant atmosphere by friendly discourse at the starting point and then asked them to feel free to give a useful response to me in order to take their comments to be analysed and considered for revising my lesson plan, to respond to their learning preferences in the next cycle.

The interview was composed of 16 questions which I had prepared and it took about fifty minutes to finish. (See in appendix 4 and 4.1)

3.8.5 Reflection

The reflection both on my teaching and on research after finishing the first cycle was done carefully to look for the issues and crucial points of my teaching to be adjusted in the next cycle to respond and help students to develop their language competence.

Reflection on research was about the outcomes (students' target language performance) of change and reflection on my teaching was focused on my action as well as strategies or techniques to help students to reach their goals. Reflection was associated with preparing and reviewing my journal and observation sheets. I considered my own satisfaction in teaching the new activities and the material I had prepared and student responses.

3.9 Research cycle two

3.9.1 Context

The research cycle one started changing the classroom atmosphere and also students' passive learning behaviour, but it was too short a time to see an improvement in the students' language performances. Students were generally excited and enjoyed the new learning activities arranged for them, thus almost everyone collaborated well with all arranged activities.

3.9.2 The planning stage

Before the commencement of research cycle two, the reflections from the first cycle were reviewed carefully and used as data to reformulate the new learning activities.

Five new learning topics were determined as the main teaching content for research cycle two to respond to students' needs. These learning topics were aimed for the students to have more opportunity to use English in the practical situations that might happen in the future. These learning topics were as follows:

Table 2: Learning topics of research cycle two

Week	Learning Topics		
Week 1	On the phone	5	periods
Week 2	Asking and Giving directions	5	periods
Week 3	Shopping	5	periods
Week 4	Talking to foreigners	5	periods
Week 5	Prices and Charges	5	periods

3.9.3 The implementing stage

Week 1 ‘On the phone’

The topic ‘*on the phone*’ was aimed at the students’ communication in English with people by phone. Firstly, students learned and practised with the new vocabulary and practical sentences. After that they were assigned to rehearse speaking English freely by using role-play both in pairs and in a group of three and then to show their language performances in front of the class.

Games and songs were also used for relaxing besides providing the students more chances to exercise the target language and lastly students were assigned to drill the writing exercise in a group.

Week 2 ‘Asking and Giving directions’

The topic ‘*Asking and Giving directions*’ was aimed at improving the students’ communication in English in the situation that they may have an opportunity to give

advice about directions to tourists and also in the situation that they need to know ‘the way to go’ in strange places they have never been to before.

Besides learning the new vocabulary and necessary practical sentences, students practised listening in groups from the audio tape spoken by native English speakers. Moreover, each group was to discuss together and build up sentences describing the ways to go to the target place and then the groups’ representatives were to present their work in front of the class.

Lastly, reading and writing exercise were arranged for every group to translate and summarize the story and then to complete the reading comprehension exercise.

Week 3 ‘Shopping’

The topic ‘*Shopping*’ aimed for the students to learn, practise and be able to use English for buying and selling things.

Students learned the new vocabulary and practised the practical speaking sentences, then rehearsed freely both in pairs and in groups the conversation. Pictures of goods were also used to challenge the students to create their own words for interacting in the “shopping” situation.

Moreover, songs and games were used to make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable. Lastly, students practised reading and writing in a group and also brainstormed ideas to complete the reading and writing exercise.

Week 4 ‘Talking to foreigners’

The topic ‘*Talking to foreigners*’ aimed for the students to be able to communicate with foreigners at least by using basic greeting and interacting conversation.

Students learned and practised the necessary vocabulary and practical sentences before they practised further to speak English by using role-play and simulation. In

addition, students enjoyed songs and games and also did the exercise by filling in the missing words of the song's lyric. Lastly, students practised reading and writing exercises together in a group.

Week 5 'Prices and Charges'

The topic '*Prices and Charges*' aimed for the students to be able to use English for asking the price and charges of the goods or services they wanted to buy.

Apart from the controlled session of learning and practising the new vocabulary and practical sentences, students got into pairs to rehearse the conversation about buying things. In addition, a group work activity to write their own conversation of the prices and charges situation was assigned and lastly every group was to show their language performance in front of the class.

3.9.4 The interview

Once research cycle two was finished the interview with the second group of five students was conducted. Students were interviewed with the same questions as the first group to express opinions about changes made in the research project. The interview atmosphere was better than when I did it with the first group.

3.9.5 Reflection

Reflection on my teaching arrangements and on research after finishing the second cycle was administered as for revising and organising the new teaching and learning activities in research cycle three. The reflective processes had been done in accord with the data collected.

3.10 Research cycle three

3.10.1 Context

Students, at the end of research cycle two, were enjoying changes arranged for them from the research implementation and the classroom atmosphere changed from passive to active. However, the students' language performances still needed to be improved further in the next research cycle.

3.10.2 The planning stage

Before the commencement of research cycle three, the data collected were reviewed and analysed carefully again to create the teaching plan for the third cycle.

A set of five new learning topics was arranged for research cycle three. These learning topics aimed for the students to have more opportunity for authentic use of the target language. Such learning topics were presented in table 3 below:

Table 3: Learning topics of research cycle three

Week	Learning Topics		
Week 1	What's the matter with you?	5	periods
Week 2	How about your opinion?	5	periods
Week 3	What's your hobby?	5	periods
Week 4	At the restaurant	5	periods
Week 5	How about your holiday?	5	periods

3.10.3 The implementing stage

Week 1 ‘What’s the matter with you?’

The learning topic ‘*What’s the matter with you?*’ aimed for the students to be able to communicate in English by asking and telling their friends or other people to know what’s wrong or what’s happened with them. In addition, students could suggest or provide the appropriate or practical solutions for each situation they were involved in. Learning activities throughout the week were arranged for the students to learn the new vocabulary and practical sentences were then practised speaking English in pairs and rotating within a group. Games and songs were used for relaxing as well as providing more practical chances for students to exercise the target language and lastly students were assigned to work with reading and writing exercises.

Week 2 ‘How about your opinion?’

The topic ‘*How about your opinion*’ aimed for the students to express their opinion about whatever happenings they have seen, heard or experienced.

The learning activities were set for the students to learn and practise the new vocabulary and speaking sentences then rehearse conversation both in pairs and in a group. A quiz game was employed to foster students’ listening and speaking performances and group collaboration was encouraged to improve reading and writing skills.

Week 3 ‘What’s your hobby?’

The topic ‘*What’s your hobby?*’ aimed for the students to be able to use English for asking and telling friends or other people about activities they always do for pleasure when they are not working.

Besides learning and practising the new vocabulary and communicative sentences, students were assigned as usual to practise the conversation both in group and in pairs

to ask and answer about their hobbies. Moreover, the presentation was also used for providing more opportunities for students to make authentic use of English.

Week 4 ‘At the restaurant’

The topic ‘*At the restaurant*’ aimed for the students to learn and be able to use English for communicating in the restaurant setting.

Role-play was employed as the main learning activity for this learning topic. Students were encouraged to create their own conversation situation by applying their language experience with phrases and vocabulary from handouts and tape dialogues.

The audio tape was also used for students to practise listening and speaking. Furthermore, students got in pairs to practise the conversation and group work assignment was encouraged to practise reading and writing.

Week 5 ‘How about your holiday?’

The topic ‘*How about your holiday?*’ aimed for the students to learn, discuss and share ideas about important holidays both Thai and international. In addition, students were also to share experiences about activities they always do on holidays. The learning arrangement throughout the week provided an opportunity for students to exercise the target language by a variety of activities such as the questioning method, using audio tapes and group work to practise speaking, reading and writing.

3.10.4 The interview

The interview response from the third group of five students was undertaken right after research cycle three had been finished. Students in general collaborated well to express opinions on changes from the research project. The interview was finished within fifty minutes.

3.10.5 Reflection

The reflective processes were undertaken again before I started implementing the final cycle. It is important as a researcher of an action research project to reflect carefully and continuously about what was done well and what should be adjusted after finishing each research cycle. By doing so I would promote the students to attain the learning goals at their own pace and also develop myself continually to be a professional teacher. The reflected issues were brought to re-plan in research cycle four.

3.11 Research cycle four

3.11.1 Context

The CLT approach created an animated and lively atmosphere in the classroom and it also provided the students the practical opportunity for authentic use of English. In addition, it changed passive students into active students. However, I was concerned that teaching English by utilising merely the CLT approach would not be suitable for my EFL classroom where most students were less able and had very low backgrounds in English. They did not have the motivation to use English for communication because English was not necessary for their living environment.

Therefore, I planned that the teaching arrangement should be mixed with reasonable and practical techniques appropriate for my target students' background and planned to develop all four language skills for them at the same time.

3.11.2 The planning stage

The reflection of research cycle three was used as the practical database for re-planning the teaching and learning arrangements for research cycle four. The main features to be focused on in the research cycle four were presented as follows:

1. To plan and determine the learning topics from the students' requirements.
2. To encourage students' collaboration in groups for improving their responsibility.
3. To employ more questioning to encourage students' authentic use of English and also to reduce their rote learning.
4. To increase the proportion of reading and writing practice in every learning topic for improving students' literacy performances.

The new five learning topics deriving from the students' requirement had been set to be the main theme of research cycle four. These learning topics were presented as follows:

Table 4: Learning topics of research cycle four

Week	Learning Topics		
Week 1	Sports	5	periods
Week 2	Animals	5	periods
Week 3	Food and Drink	5	periods
Week 4	My family	5	periods
Week 5	Famous people & Occupations	5	periods

3.11.3 The implementing stage

Week 1 'Sports'

The topic '*Sports*' aimed for the students to be able to communicate or share opinions about kinds of sport, the common features of each sport, how to play it and also their favourite sports.

Pictures of famous athletes and many kinds of sport were used for questioning and encouraging students to practise listening, speaking and writing. Moreover, the group work collaboration was set for many activities e.g. a quiz game to practise listening and speaking, a vocabulary competition, a reading and writing exercise, the writing of a short essay and a presentation in front of the class.

Week 2 ‘Animals’

The topic ‘*Animals*’ aimed for the students to share opinions about different kinds of animals, the animals they were interested in and to describe the features and also the nature of animals.

The learning arrangement throughout the week were conducted with many kinds of activities for students to practise all four skills of the target language: the use of pictures for questioning students, playing games and songs, students’ presentation in front of the class, a group work assignment to practise speaking, reading and writing.

Week 3 ‘Food and Drink’

The topic ‘*Food and Drink*’ aimed for the students to learn and communicate with other people about food, fruits, vegetables and flavours of food.

Pictures of many kinds of fruits, vegetables and desserts were utilised for questioning students to practise listening, speaking and also writing skills. In addition, students were to practise conversation both in pairs and in groups and then made a presentation in front of the class. Students’ cooperation in reading and writing exercises was also encouraged.

Week 4 ‘My family’

The topic ‘My family’ aimed for the students to be able to communicate and exchange information about their family with other people.

Learning activities were conducted by questioning, role-playing, playing games, reading and writing exercises, writing short essays and also conversation practice.

Week 5 ‘Famous People and Occupations’

The topic ‘*Famous People and Occupations*’ aimed for the students to learn and communicate about famous people and their desirable occupation and also be able to express opinions or share information about the duty or task of the job they were interested in.

The pictures of famous people and people with different jobs were utilised both for playing games and for questioning and encouraging students’ authentic use of English. Moreover, a group work assignment was set giving a list of the vocabulary about occupations and for each student to write a short essay about their desired job, and the reasons they would like to have such a job. The topic ended with a presentation in front of the class.

3.11.4 The interview

The final interview provided useful feedback from students after research cycle four was finished. The last group of five students was asked the same questions to express opinions on changes. The subjects generally responded to the questions actively. The interview took about fifty minutes to finish.

3.12 Summary

To help students to improve their language learning performance and also to develop my teaching techniques, action research procedures, widely used in the educational area, were conducted for fulfilling my goal. There were four cycles in this research project. Each cycle was prepared and implemented carefully to encourage and promote students’ active and interactive learning which had never happened before within my teaching context. As a teacher and researcher in this research project I received good cooperation and responses from the students to my efforts to implement

a new teaching approach. In addition, I also learned how to work more rigorously, flexibly and patiently to help and encourage the students to learn English more efficiently.

In short, this research study provided the practical opportunities both for me and the students to experience with the new approach, but each student, however, has their own background and capacity in learning the language so they could not reach the same target equally but each student made progress by their own pace after the project was completed.

CHAPTER 4

ACTION AND OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH CYCLE ONE

4.1 The teaching component of research cycle one

Week 1 - Learning topic: *Greeting, Find someone who ...*

The first week comprised two main learning topics: *Greeting* and *Find someone who...* I started the learning topic with *Greeting* for the reason that it is a basic situation and also essential, everyday use, for a person to meet with another.

Firstly, I started the activities by calling the students to greet each other with common sentences e.g.

Good morning (student's name)../Hello! ...(student's name)..., How are you today?, What's your name?, How old are you?, When did you get up? What time did you get up in the morning?

For some students, I added more questions to talk with such as

How do you come to school? Where do you live? How many people are there in your family? How many boys or girls are there in the classroom? and so on.

These questions were used flexibly depending on each student's language skills. I found that almost half of the students could not respond to my questions; most of them could merely say *Good morning* and, perhaps, could tell his/her name to me. Moreover, there were six students that expressed confusion about how to reply to the two questions '*How are you?*' and '*How old are you?*'

Once I stepped into the language interaction session, the classroom atmosphere became quickly silent. Students seemed nervous about how to respond to my questions. But, after they realised that I did not expect a perfect response from them, the classroom climate became better.

Before a session of practice in the target language by themselves, the students were to practise with a variety of the greeting words and sentences in the handout issued by me (see appendix 8). I tried to encourage them to share the meaning of the words and sentences, firstly, in Thai and then in English (if they were able). After that, the students were asked to walk around the classroom to greet and chat with their friends as much as they could while they had to watch the time that I wrote on the board to change their word greetings in accordance with the written time. Students were allowed to act freely, to shake hands, hug a friend and to raise a hand to greet one another.

It was evident that the students were enjoying and eager to join in the activities. The classroom was full of sound and movement. There was a lively atmosphere. I noticed shyness between boys and girls, rosy cheeks on some couples when they greeted and shook each other's hand.

The learning activities in the second and third period were conducted for the students to have the chance to speak English with their friends by a variety of activities: role-play, singing a song, chatting with a buddy or in a small group. Some couples were asked to present in front of the class as well and they, at first, felt shy to step out from their seat but, finally, collaborated well.

In the fourth period, students were assigned, individually, to generate a mind map of the topic '*Greeting*' after they had finished reviewing the language with me. The work of many students, especially the boys, was not satisfactory in quality: their handwriting and neatness was poor and also their work was found to be copied from some more able students.

The first week ended with the topic '*Find someone who ...*'. After a session of language review had been completed during every learning period and I had already made sure they understood the rules of the activity, the students started the language activities. Most of the students collaborated well though some of them, from my observation, pretended to walk around the class as the others did, but just stopped to chat or tease their friends after they had done the activity for a while. The activity ended with a presentation by each student in English in front of the class. I was pleased to see many students attempt to present their work in the target language, but each student could only present for a short time because of their restricted English.

Week 2 - Learning topic: *Myself, Introducing friends to each other, What does your friend look like?*

The second week started with the topic '*Myself*' in which I expected the students to speak in English in front of the class telling about their personal details. After entering the classroom, I greeted the students as usual and reviewed, shortly, some vocabulary, then took them into the learning activities by telling them what topic to learn. I also showed them a sample of my own and in the end I assigned them to prepare and rehearse for ten minutes before presenting in front of the class.

While students were practising and rehearsing, I walked around the class to observe and give suggestions to some students if they needed them. From my observation, the boys had paid less attention to practise the language than the girls. They began to tease each other and spoke in Thai shortly after I had them prepare and practise the language activity by themselves. But, when I walked directly to them they stopped joking and pretended to speak English. I did not punish or get angry with them, but just told them to focus on their duties.

Before the time was over, some students (mostly boys) came to me and told me that they could not speak English in a long sentence. They asked me if they could just say their name, surname, age, job, and at which school they are studying. They said they could not do more than this. I agreed with them, but encouraged them to try some more before the time was over.

Ss: Krue Tom ('Krue' is a Thai word means the teacher, 'Tom' is the researcher's pseudonym), I could not speak English in a long sentences. Could I say just my name, surname, my age, my job and school?

T: It will be OK for you if you have done your best, but try first. There is time still remaining.

It was acceptable with just this first step to see my students start to open their mouths in English. Many students tried to speak as much as they could whereas some students simply spoke for less than a minute after they had consumed ten minutes for preparing. I think I must create more practical language activities for them to practise with an expectation that they will make progress in the following spirals.

I employed role-play for the topic '*Introduce his or her friend to the others*'. Firstly, I provided them with the practical vocabulary and sentences which they need to use within the learning topic, then told them what they had to do further in a group. I asked a couple of more able students to rehearse with me in order to show in front of the class as an example for other students before they were assigned to practise the conversation freely in a group. A problem for me during the research activities was that though I tried many times to repeat and speak English slowly to make sure that the students could understand what I had said or described to them, there were many students who still didn't fulfill my expectations, so, at last, I was forced to speak with them in Thai.

When it was time to present in front of the class, each student in a group took turns to introduce a new friend to the others. I noticed that the girls could often perform better than the boys though not in all cases. While boys were tardy to step out from the seats, girls were more active and willing to show their efforts.

The last topic '*What does your friend look like?*' was arranged for the students to describe the characteristics and features of their friends in English, and they were also to produce, after a conversation session, a drawing of a friend's face and written details of the peer they had chosen.

I contributed to the learning activities as usual by providing them with the practical vocabulary and sentences they needed for practice by themselves. To make sure that my students understood what I expected them to do, I showed them first by describing the characteristics and features of a volunteer and later I had the class practise together before they rehearsed on their own. In general, all students collaborated well with me.

The classroom atmosphere was livelier than it used to be. Now, the former picture of passive students who sit stiffly and sleepily in a seat has disappeared. It is replaced with language practising sounds and the students' movement which, actually, should be the common atmosphere of the foreign language learning classroom.

Week 3 - Learning topic: *Parts of the body, Seven days in a week, Twelve months in a year, What time is it?*

The third week was arranged to focus mostly on reviewing the basic vocabulary that students should know: parts of the body, seven days in a week, twelve months in a year and the topic '*what time is it?*' which aimed for students to be able to ask and tell the time with each other.

Firstly, I provided a vocabulary sheet of parts of the body, days in a week and months in a year for students to learn together as a whole class, then I had the students play a vocabulary game: '*Hangman*' and sing songs: '*Head shoulders knees and toes*'. Another learning activity for the students to authentically use the target language was for each group to discuss and write sentences that must have the vocabulary they were studying. This activity seemed challenging for some students, but it was, at the same time, too difficult for others. Lastly, I had each individual student draw a picture of the human body, then colour and fill in the name of each part of the body in the picture. In addition, each student was assigned to design and draw his/her creative picture of seven days and twelve months individually.

The classroom atmosphere was lively and amusing when the students sang songs, played games, drew and coloured a picture. But it was evidently boring and tiring for them when I stepped in with the grammar and writing practice session in which the students were to write English in sentences.

For the topic '*What time is it?*' the students, firstly, learned and practised together with the teacher the basic sentences they have to use when asking about and telling the time. I had the subjects practise both orally and in a written format. Most of them collaborated well except for some boys who always joked and teased each other during the drill. I also had the students play a puzzle game (asking questions in English) to practise the listening and speaking skills by giving candy as a reward for whoever could respond to the questions correctly. The class was animated and actively played the game, but from my observation, most of the students still used the Thai language to speak in a group. There were just a few of them attempting to speak in English though I tried to encourage everyone to speak the target language.

Students were assigned to practise a conversation with a buddy before I randomly called some couples to present in front of the class. A few couples performed well while other couples still had problems with communication in English. Lastly, each student was assigned to produce his/her individual work which is part of a written task.

Week 4 - Learning topic: *Day after day, Giving orders, My school, What are you doing?*

The learning topics of the fourth week were *Day after day, Giving orders, My school, and What are you doing?*

'*Day after day*' was a topic expecting the students to tell their daily life activities on each day in a whole week. It was also expected the learners were to bring the two topics they had learned last week: '*What time is it?*' and '*Seven days in a week*', to apply to this learning period. After a review of the normal language session, I, firstly, had the whole class discuss in groups, and then a representative of each group came

out to present in front of the class about what were their daily life activities. I encouraged the students to present in English by telling them that I just needed them to communicate meaning and I didn't mind or was not too strict about the language form. This had made them feel comfortable to express ideas with each other and also to present to the whole class. However, from my observation, the girls had paid more attention to the learning activities and cooperated better than the boys did.

After a whole class activity, I had the students work together in groups and do individual projects. I had provided them handouts to learn before starting the assignment and told them to create a product on their own and not to copy the idea from the sample sheet. However, it came to my notice that most of the students still copied the idea from the sample dialogue.

The topic '*Giving orders*' aimed for the students to ask or request someone to do something for them. After a usual session of greeting and reviewing vocabulary with students, I started the learning activity by having the whole class do whatever I commanded them: *stand up, sit down, open your book to page ..., close your book, listen carefully to what I say, raise your right/left hand, clap your hand* etc. Moreover, I called some students to stand up and do whatever I told them: *turn on/off the fan/light, please, open/shut the window, please, stand up, sit down, give me your book/ruler/pen/eraser*. The words I used were easy for some students to listen to and to act on, but, actually, more than ten students didn't understand what I had told them to do. They just acted out by noticing and following friends.

The topic '*My school*' expected the students to give facts or information about his or her school to each other. This learning topic was implemented both inside and outside the classroom. After a usual class greeting and vocabulary reviewing session in the early part of every learning period, I took the students who were divided into groups to walk around the school and explore whatever they could see on their field trip. Every group had to write everything they saw in English as much as they could. When the groups went back to the classroom, each group was assigned to write an essay to detail about places in school they had gone to and what they had seen during the trip and also to write the vocabulary of the things they saw. In the end every group had to

present their work in front of the class. The group that was judged the best would get a reward from me.

The students were very happy and had fun with this learning activity. They helped each other to look for the words in the dictionary of things they saw. However, the girls were more active than the boys; they paid attention to the learning activities and focused in the mission longer than the boys. When it came to the presentation time, the girls performed absolutely better than the boys.

The last topic of the week was ‘*What are you doing?*’ that aimed for the students to review parts of the language grammar but by trying to focus on communicative learning activities. In the first period I planned to focus on reviewing tenses which the students had learned previously. The students were encouraged to recall and share ideas about tenses and the meaning of statements we were discussing.

Though I tried to create an atmosphere of language interaction by encouraging the students to communicate with me in English, it appeared that just a few students were able to take part in the language activity while the others could not. The students had started to show bored expressions because the content of this learning topic was focused mostly on grammatical forms that were difficult for them.

Week 5 - Learning topic: *What are you doing? Changing the affirmative sentence to an interrogative and negative sentence*

In week 5, the learning topics were comprised of ‘*What are you doing?*’ which continued from the fourth week, and ‘*Changing the affirmative sentence to an interrogative or negative sentence*’. The learning content still focused on grammar, but attempted to use a communicative learning approach.

The first period was initiated by reviewing items of the present progressive tense which the students had learned last week, but after a weekend had passed, it seemed better to remind them again because I realized, from my observation, that there were

some students who had not understand at all while I was conducting the language activities.

At first, I described and gave examples of the progressive sentence for the students, then the whole class together discussed and told me the progressive sentences they had created to check their understanding. Lastly, I had each group discuss together then write five progressive sentences with the meaning on paper and present them to the class.

To write merely five sentences in the present progressive tense seemed very easy for the more able students or the average students, but actually, in the real world of the foreign language classroom, it is so difficult for any students who consider English to be a bitter pill, to write such sentences they were assigned. Two groups of boys exposed their problem being unable to start writing though I tried to describe to them slowly and gave them examples of the progressive sentence. They became desperate in their attempt to finish the work and started teasing and joking together while the other groups were working. However, shortly before the time was ended, these students did write some sentences hurriedly and carelessly on paper in order to have something to present to the class even though it was incorrect.

The last three periods aimed for the students to be able to use English in the three forms of language communication: affirmative, interrogative, and negative. The learning activities comprised language form and language animated activities to keep away from simply reading, writing, and exercises in the book and on the blackboard.

The first hour consisted of a review session of all three forms of language interaction. Students, firstly, were challenged to recall and express their knowledge of each type of sentence structural form. Then, the students in each group were called randomly to reply and convert the sentences written on the blackboard to another form of sentence I had told them. There were just some students who could give the answer correctly and walk confidently in front of the class to transform the given sentences into the required sentences, while the others looked uncertain and nervous to be called to practise the learning activities.

Two periods later, the learning activities were implemented with a song and game and also students were to practise speaking English with a buddy. Before singing a song, the students had to learn the vocabulary, the meaning, and also to practise reading the lyrics to make sure that they could really sing and understand the song they were singing. The games I had the students play were a vocabulary game and a competition game in which I had each group change the sentences I determined to another form of sentence I required. The winner was the group that could answer the fastest and correctly. I prepared the candy for rewarding the group that won the game. The learning atmosphere was livelier than the first period, but the students still preferred using Thai to English for discussing in a group while enjoying the activities.

Lastly, the students were assigned to practise the writing exercise by changing the affirmative sentences into negative and interrogative sentences. Moreover, each group was also to compose affirmative sentences and change them into interrogative and negative sentences on their own in order to check that the students really understood the topic they were learning.

4.2 Students' responses from the interview

After research cycle one had been completed, the first group of five students was invited to participate in the group interview to give feedback on the research activities. Before starting the activity, I explained to the students about the reasons for and objectives of the interview session and told them to freely share their opinion without being afraid of me.

However, at first, students kept silent after I asked them a question and provided them time to share opinions. All of them hesitated to be the first person to start sharing ideas, so I had to ask and encourage each one to speak out. The students' hesitation to express their opinions was possibly because they lacked confidence about how other students will think of them because they have been brought up in a collective culture like other Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, China and Vietnam.

Such behaviour is common in Thai culture so that the students usually keep their ideas to themselves and dare not share their opinion whenever they are interviewed or asked to discuss ideas in a group until they feel safe, comfortable and confident to join in the activities. Also students do not criticize teachers or their approach as this may be seen as an attack on the esteem of the teacher who is older and respected. After I treated the students in a friendly manner and created a warm atmosphere, they seemed to have more confidence to express their opinions than at the beginning and later they shared their opinions naturally without my encouragement.

The students' responses from the interview showed some interesting points which were very useful for adjusting in the next cycle.

4.2.1 Students' comments on the previous and the present method

I started by asking the students to express their opinions comparing the former learning method with the present method in order to investigate their learning preferences. I found all students in the group satisfied with changes in the learning atmosphere at present while they made unfavourable comments about the traditional method:

a. The inherited problems with the previous method

- The previous learning atmosphere is boring

The students considered that learning English language previously by just sitting and listening to the teacher was boring.

บรรยากาศการเรียนก่อนหน้านี้มันน่าเบื่อ ง่วงนอน ไม่ค่อยสนุก ทำให้ง่วง พวกเราแค่

นั่งฟังครูสอน ทำแบบฝึกหัด ท่องศัพท์ แล้วก็ฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษที่ครูให้พูดนิดหน่อย

(Learning atmosphere before this term was boring and sleepy. We learned English by just sitting and listening to the teacher, doing grammar exercises, learning lots of vocabulary by rote and practising only a few sentences for

speaking given by the teacher.) (S1, S2, S4, S5, G1)²

Two students added that they did not think it is useful to learn English by the former teaching and learning method if compared with the learning at present that provides them with a practical opportunity to have a real experience with the target language. (S2, S3, G1)

Moreover, the students said that the former classroom atmosphere did not stimulate eagerness for learning, so they sometimes did not pay attention to the lessons.

บางครั้งพวกเราก็พูดคุย และเล่นกัน เพราะบรรยากาศมันไม่ค่อยน่าเรียน ทำให้ไม่อยากเรียน

(Sometime we tease and joke with friends because the learning climate and activities did not motivate our eagerness to learn English.) (S4, S5, G1)

They said that the teacher always used the same teaching style in every period which is boring and uninteresting. This made them bored and not pay attention while learning in the classroom.

ที่ไม่ค่อยตั้งใจเวลาที่ครูสอน เพราะว่า เรียนแบบเดิม ซ้ำ ๆ แล้วมันน่าเบื่อ

(I didn't pay attention while the teacher was teaching because I felt bored with the teacher's teaching style which used the same teaching format in every period.) (S1, S3, S4, G1)

However, my journal observations during the research activities made me skeptical of the students' argument. Although, at present, the learning activities had changed into an animated atmosphere, there still were some students who teased and joked together

¹ The allocation of source codes has been used as follows:

S denotes the individual students number 1-5

G denotes the group to which the students belong, from 1-4

² The quotations appeared were summarised from multiple contributions of the same opinion.

even though they were assigned to experience the target language (data observed in a teacher's journal of period 5 in the first week, period 1 in the second week, and of the topic '*what time is it*' in the third week). So, at this moment, it cannot be concluded absolutely, that boredom was the actual cause of some students' teasing and joking behaviour during the classroom period.

- Students were demotivated by learning focused on grammar

The students said that learning English, particularly the part of grammar and reading-writing exercises, is difficult. They do not like it because they did not always understand what the teacher had explained.

แกรมม่ามันยาก ไม่ชอบเรียน มันเข้าใจยาก ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจที่ครูอธิบาย โดยเฉพาะ

การเขียน ทำผิดพลาด

(Grammar is difficult! I don't like it. It's hard to understand about the grammar and tenses the teacher explained and the most difficult is the writing exercises which I always do mistakes.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

Moreover, the students said that they felt that learning grammar was unachievable, that they did not understand the lessons, always made mistakes and got low learning outcomes; sometimes it made them weary, hopeless and tired.

ผม/หนูไม่เข้าใจแกรมม่า เลยทำผิดพลาด มันเลยเบื่อ ไม่อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

(I don't understand the grammar lessons and always do mistakes. It makes me bored, unhappy and wouldn't like to learn English.)
(S1, S3, S4, G1)

เรียนแกรมม่ามากเกินไป ทำให้นักเรียนไม่ค่อยอยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

(Learning English by focusing on grammar has discouraged many students to study it.) (S2, S5, G1)

- Lack of opportunities for practising and using of English language in the classroom

The group said that learning English previously rarely gave them an opportunity for authentic use of the language inside the classroom. The teacher always used the Thai language as a medium of instruction and mostly focused on grammar, reading and other language exercises in a passive learning atmosphere. They said the teacher always had them read and summarize the story from the book, learn new vocabulary by rote, translate from English into Thai, and later have them complete the reading comprehension exercises. Most of those learning lessons and activities have been implemented with students in the Thai language.

การเรียนแต่ก่อนนักเรียนไม่ค่อยให้ฝึกฟังและพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ส่วนใหญ่ฝึกอ่านและ
แกรมม่า และครูก็สอนเป็นภาษาไทย

(The former learning activities didn't give opportunity for us to practise speaking and listening to English because it mostly focused on grammar, reading and language exercises for which the teacher always speaks Thai in the class.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

I accepted that the students' criticism of the traditional method was valid and that it had happened in the English classroom at our school and, according to the new curriculum, we are expected to change it. However, it is undeniable that the traditional classroom climate can not be changed as rapidly as we need, so it still remains, even at present, in the school because the teachers still need time to learn and try the new teaching method and students also need to familiarize themselves with it.

b. Students' feedback on the present method

- A more positive (or improved) learning atmosphere

All students in the group expressed satisfaction with the changes of learning activities and atmosphere when compared with the previous method.

ผม/หนูชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบปัจจุบันมากกว่าแต่ก่อน เพราะบรรยากาศ

การเรียนมันเปลี่ยน มีกิจกรรมให้เล่น ให้ฝึกพูด

(I prefer studying English at present to the studying in the past because the learning atmosphere was changed by animated learning activities.)

(S1, S4, S5, G1)

ผม/หนูชอบการเรียนแบบตอนนี้ มันไม่น่าเบื่อ ไม่ง่วงนอน ได้ฝึกพูด มันดีกว่า

แต่ก่อน

(I like to learn English in this term. It's not boring and sleepy, we also have chances to practise speaking English, it's better than learning in the past.) (S2, S3, G1)

- Enjoyed with games and songs

The students said that games, songs and other animated learning activities made the learning atmosphere at present more interesting and enjoyable. Moreover, they said that playing games and singing songs could help them dare practise speaking English and also to learn and review English vocabulary, so they proposed to me to apply as many games and songs within the language learning activities as I can arrange for them.

การเรียนในตอนนี้ มีกิจกรรมหลายอย่าง ทำให้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษสนุก ไม่เครียด มี

การร้องเพลง เล่นเกม

(Studying in this term has many activities to do. I like it and feel (it is) more enjoyable to study English. It doesn't stress (us), we have chances to play games and sing songs.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

ผม/หนูชอบตอนที่ครูให้เล่นเกมพวก Hangman ทายปัญหา ทายคำศัพท์ และร้องเพลง

มันทำให้การเรียนภาษาอังกฤษน่าสนใจมากขึ้น

(I liked it when the teacher had the students play games such as hangman,

quiz game, vocabularies game and also sing songs such as the song 'head shoulder knees and toes' and 'Hello! what's your name?' etc. It made English learning more interesting.) (S2, S3, S4, G1)

ผม/หนูคิดว่าการเล่นเกมกับร้องเพลง ช่วยให้นักเรียนได้ทบทวนคำศัพท์ และทำให้

นักเรียนกล้าพูดภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้นเช่นกัน

(I think playing games and singing songs can help students a lot to learn and review English vocabularies. It is also encouraged us dare to speak English automatically.) (S1, S3, G1)

ผม/หนูอยากให้ครูสอนร้องเพลง และเล่นเกมเยอะ ๆ

(I would like the teacher to apply more games and songs for teaching us.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

Songs and games are very valuable in developing powerful access to the new language by being enjoyable, fostering confidence, and increasing attention span and motivation to learn. Then, if games and songs were used in coordination with a language lesson they can be of great value.

It was good for me, as a teacher, to hear that the students were happy with changes to the teaching and learning activities which were implemented by songs, games and animated activities. This might imply that I am on the right track to help students to improve their language competency with a suitable teaching and learning programme.

- Less stress from grammar

A number of comments indicated that they found the class less stressful than previously, largely because of less emphasis on grammar.

การเรียนเทอมนี้ ทำให้เครียดน้อยลง และดีวก่อนหน้านี้ที่เน้นแต่แกรมม่ากับ

การอ่าน

(Learning at present is less stressful and better than previously which

focused on grammar and reading exercises.) (S3, S4, S5, G1)

ผม/หนูชอบวิธีที่ครูสอนในเทอมนี้ มันไม่ได้เน้นแกรมม่ามากเกินไป ทำให้นักเรียน

มีความสุข ไม่เครียด

(I like the teacher's teaching method in this term. It does not focus too much on grammar. The students are happy, not serious.) (S1, S2, G1)

- Authentic use of the language

Students considered that learning English by the authentic use of the language for communication is more useful and practicable than learning by just reading, writing and doing language exercises. They said this learning method provided them with a chance to utilize language they had learned practically and it will be useful for them when they meet foreigners and can communicate in English with them.

ผม/หนูคิดว่าเรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบฝึกพูดมีประโยชน์กว่าเรียนแบบเน้นแกรมม่า

กับการอ่านและเขียน

(I think learning English for communication is more useful than learning by just focusing on grammar, reading and writing.) (S2, S3, S5, G1)

มันมีประโยชน์เวลาเจอฝรั่ง จะได้เข้าใจ แล้วก็พูดกับเขาได้

(It is useful when we meet foreigners because we can understand and speak English with them.) (S1, S4, G1)

ทำให้พวกเรานั่นใจมากขึ้น ไม่กลัวที่จะพูดกับฝรั่ง

(We will have more confidence, not (be) afraid to speak English.) (S2, S3, S5, G1)

Students appreciated the usefulness of learning the target language through authentic use of it. An opportunity for authentic use of English is an important factor in

promoting language learning. Offner (1997, p.1) stated that “the only way to become a good driver is to practise driving. The only way to be able to play an instrument well is to practise playing it. Likewise, the only way to become a good English speaker is to practise speaking English”. So, if the students really have a good attitude to the CLT approach as they had said and do keep trying to practise speaking the language, I hope that they will be able to be successful in learning English in the future.

- Lack of opportunity to use English in real life

The students, however, mentioned that their opportunities to use English in real life are limited. Furthermore, even in school, they rarely have a chance to use English with anyone unless in the English classroom.

พ่อและแม่และคนแวดล้อมของผม/หนู ไม่ได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ เพราะพูดไม่ได้

(Our parents or any people around us (in our living context) can not speak English and don't use it at all.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

Most of them expressed that the only opportunity for them to speak English outside the classroom is when they travel to some places and meet, by chance, foreigners which does not happen very often in real life.

โอกาสพูดภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน มีแค่ถ้าได้เจอฝรั่ง ตอนไปเที่ยว แต่ไม่บ่อย

(An opportunity to use English outside the classroom is just when we meet foreigners in tourist places, but it happens not often.)
(S1, S2, S3, G1)

It is unfortunate that students have limited opportunities to experience the target language. However, the main purpose of the research project is to adopt and implement the communicative approach in my English classroom to provide the students with the practical opportunities to utilize the target language for improving their communication competency which depends on their efforts to use the target language. The more the students have a chance to practise the real language in the practical situations the faster they can develop their communication skill. So, it is my

responsibility to try to divert the grammatically focused classroom into the new language animated classroom with the expectation that the language learning atmosphere as well as the students' communication performance in the second cycle will be better than in the first cycle.

4.2.2 Student suggested changes for the next cycle

I asked the students to propose changes in the learning activities for research cycle 2 as that might help them to enjoy the learning experience and have better learning outcomes. The students proposed the following:

- **Reduce a grammar session while adding the language animated activities with more songs and games**

The students would like me to reduce sessions of learning focused on grammar, writing and reading exercises while adding more songs and games to play and experience more with the target language.

อยากให้ครูให้นักเรียนได้ฝึกพูดมากขึ้น รวมทั้งร้องเพลงและเล่นเกม ให้ลดการเรียน

แกรมม่า การอ่านและเขียนลง

(I would like the teacher to give us more speaking practice also with songs and games while decreasing learning grammar, writing and reading.)

(S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G1)

The group said that they want to learn English with the least possible grammar sessions and they will be very happy to learn English with more games and songs or any other animated activities. They said that if teaching and learning English has been done like this earlier, they might possibly be able to speak English better than at the moment. (S2, S3, G1) “ถ้าแต่ก่อนได้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบฝึกพูดอย่างนี้ น่าจะพูดได้ดีกว่านี้”.

In fact, what the students have put forward to change from the grammar focused to the communicative focused is the primary goal of my research project and, it is how I had

planned to adjust the teaching content for them in the next research cycle. Thus, it makes me feel more hopeful, at the moment, that the research project will be able to improve the students' language performance in the future.

- A climate of relaxation, not stress

The students would like me not to feel so challenged or become stressed when they still cannot read, write and speak English because it will make them stressed and afraid to take risks in experiencing the target language and afraid to join in the learning activities as well.

อยากให้ครูสอนสนุก ๆ ไม่เครียด อย่าคาดหวังกับนักเรียนมากเกินไป มันจะทำให้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษอย่างมีความสุข

(I would like the teacher to teach us in an enjoyable atmosphere. Don't expect too much with our language performances. It will make students happy to learn English.) (S1, S5, G1)

ตอน/เวลาที่ครูดุ ทำให้ไม่อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

(I don't want to learn English when the teacher gets angry with the students.) (S2, G1)

ไม่อยากให้ครูเครียดเวลานักเรียนอ่านไม่ออกหรือไม่เข้าใจ มันทำให้พวกเราเครียดไปด้วย

(I don't want the teacher to stress too much when the students don't understand, and can't read English. It makes the students stressed as well.) (S3, S4, G1)

4.3 Reflections

This section records my reflections on research cycle one. The reflective data were presented in two main sections: reflection on change and reflection on research.

4.3.1 Reflection on change

The implementation of research cycle one succeeded in changing the classroom and learning atmosphere. The formerly passive students were improving to become active learners. The students appeared quite happy with most of the language-activated activities and began adjusting themselves to the new learning approach.

I had reflected carefully on some of the practical experiences after the conducting of the first cycle. These analysed items were the data for adjusting and improving the research activities in the next cycle.

- The animated or active classroom

The classroom atmosphere, after conducting the research activities, was obviously livelier than it used to be. The old picture of a silent and dormant classroom had disappeared. It was a positive change to implement the CLT approach to develop the students' language learning proficiency. The students, at the moment, responded well to the new learning approach by collaborating in all the language activities. All students were encouraged to take a risk in experiencing the language in a friendly atmosphere. The classroom, then, filled with the sounds of students practising speaking the target language which was really different from the past.

Before the commencement of the research project, the classroom was filled with passive students who just sat in silence and listened to me while teaching and describing the subject content. This reflected the traditional teacher-centred approach which gave the teacher the role of the controller of the classroom (Napoli, 2004). Therefore, sometimes both students and I fell asleep because of this learning scheme and also the very hot weather. After initiating the research activities, I was impressed

to see that when the learning activities had been changed to focus on the language interactive purpose, the sleepy classroom climate disappeared. It turned into an active climate of students showing a good response and cooperating well in all learning activities by trying to walk around the classroom to practise and make conversation with their friends both in pairs and in groups despite the fact that they used both English and Thai to communicate with each other. Most of the students looked happy and satisfied with the new learning activities in which they had participated.

This changing atmosphere was a good start in my effort to look for the most suitable learning activities for my students though it did not reflect all students' behaviour in the class and also even though their oral skill was still at a basic level.

- Good collaboration

A record in my teacher's journal showed that most of the students seemed to enjoy the new changed atmosphere and also collaborated in most of the animated learning activities despite the fact that there were some students who were inactive especially in the grammar focused exercises. In general, it was quite the most lively classroom atmosphere I have experienced. However, I am aware that this was just a new experience and new learning climate for the students which is different from previously, thus it's usual to get quite a good response, feedback and collaboration from the students.

The important thing I have to do for the next cycle is to conduct learning activities that will comply with the students' needs and interests in order to keep getting good collaboration from them further in the future.

- Students' and teacher's good rapport

Before the commencement of the research activities, two-way communication between the students and myself had rarely occurred in the classroom. Our interrelation was mostly based on formal asking and answering to check and evaluate the students' understanding of the language learning and exercises. But, after I had

changed the learning activities to focus on a communicative learning approach which encouraged the students with a variety of enjoyable language experiences, the students' behaviour changed in a positive way. The new learning climate made the students feel free to speak out, to share their ideas and dare to get in touch with me more than previously.

The goal of the language communication oriented classroom will be successful if the relationship created between the learners and the teacher is a positive one. Therefore, I tried to build up a comfortable learning climate and also to communicate with the students in a friendly way. This has made them feel fearless to approach and chat with me.

- Students' rote learning

From my observation, students preferred using the learning style they were used to. Most of them relied on rote learning to practise the target language with peers. They always copied the sentences directly from the sample dialogues without any adjusting and copied the work from each other. The students could not create their own sentences to communicate with one another even though I tried to help and encourage them to produce their own words to practise speaking and to do the work by themselves. However, this was just the beginning of my intention for change. I hope it will be improved in the next cycle when the students are more familiar with the new learning activities and can realize the benefit of having the language communication skill. I have to look for practical solutions to cope with this restrictive behaviour of the students.

- A communication problem

Most of the students did not understand what I had said in English to them even though I tried to repeat it and speak slowly. There were just a few students who could understand some of my words and could give responses directly to me. This usually forced me finally to speak Thai in order to proceed with the learning activities and to keep on working through my teaching plan.

Our students rarely had an opportunity to learn English by authentic use of it. They were instructed mostly in the Thai language because the traditional grammar-translation method did not aim for communicative competence. Thus, the students need more opportunities to practise the speaking and listening skills in the next cycle.

- Students' low literacy skill

This caused the students to be unable to complete language exercises whenever I had them practise and create their own conversation to communicate with peers. Although I had provided them the photocopies of the sample sentences to practise, since they could not read and understand the word syntax or syllables, many students, therefore, could not practise language by themselves.

I often found that many students wrote the sound of the English words or sentences they have heard in Thai in order to help them to practise the language smoothly with friends. I cannot deny that, at least, it is a good idea to solve the main problem of their limited reading performance, but I am concerned that this solution will not be good practice for them in the long term if they do not try to learn the language by improving their true potential.

In addition, students so often hear the sound of the target language incorrectly, so that when they wrote the misunderstood words in Thai and practised them by rote with a buddy without coming to get any advice from me, their language pronunciation was wrong and very difficult to correct later.

However, as Offner (1997) proposed 'to be a good speaker, it is also necessary for the learner to be a good listener'. Then, I think that, in the next research cycle, I will have my students practise active listening by really tuning into what is being said and reading facial features and gestures, rising and falling intonations, speed and inflections if possible by using newspapers, magazines, movies, radio, etc.

- Grammar-translation teaching focus

My instruction in the first cycle still had many sessions focused on grammatical knowledge. This might have decreased or obstructed the opportunity for students to

practise the real language. I mentioned in the first week when the research project was initiated that I intend to instruct the students in the first cycle in the fundamental grammar because of these students' very poor English background.

In addition, it appeared, from my observation and the interview, that the students still faced difficulties with the grammar sessions though I had tried to convert the grammar topics into animated communication activities. Therefore, in the next research cycle, in order to keep on the main purpose of the research project, I am going to reduce the teaching focused on grammar items and in turn give much more focus to the communication aspects.

- Issue of gender

The girls, in this classroom context, were more active in learning and showed more responsibility than the boys. It is obvious that the work done by the girls was always better than the boys' in all aspects.

From my observation, the girls cooperated well in all learning activities. In addition, they had longer concentration in joining the language activities than the boys. This undoubtedly resulted in the outstanding performance of the girls whenever they had to present work in front of the class. There were also some girls who behaved no differently from most of the boys and also there were a few boys who performed as well as the girls. But, generally from my observation, the girls applied learning strategies better than the boys.

Many researchers have found that gender can have a significant impact on how students learn a language. For example, Oxford et al. (1993) reported that females scored higher means than the males in a Japanese language class. Numerous researchers have focused on the differences between the genders in the use of language learning strategies. A common finding is that female students employ more learning strategies and/or employ strategies more effectively (Nyikos, 1990; Erhman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, et al., 1988).

Moreover, the students' current work in portfolios showed that the writing and reading skills, particularly of the boys, needed strongly to be improved. The boys' work was unsatisfactory in neatness and the language syntax that appeared in their work was very limited. Furthermore, their work was often found to have been copied from the original of one of the more able students and was done in a hurry without checking before being submitted to me.

Two boys' groups from the total of three, performed unproductively in group work assignments. Each boy seemed to lack motivation and commitment to complete the assignment. They did not show any effort to start and discuss together the work. They often waited to copy the work from the other groups when it was completed. However, this was not just an issue for the English classroom, in fact it was also a problem that all the secondary teachers had faced and had complained about the boys. It was a challenge, an issue for all secondary teachers to seek a solution.

- Cultural impact

Students were nervous and showed uncertainty in speaking English together when I randomly called on some couples to show their conversation after a period of free practice. Many couples said that they were not ready to present their conversation. It is possible that the students might be afraid of making a mistake which perhaps would be laughed at by their friends. In Thai culture, the students feel safer to sit still in a seat as passive learners in the class and do nothing which might be judged by the teacher as a mistake.

Our traditional teaching and learning practice has successfully made passive youths good listeners and followers. The youths were taught to obey or believe whatever the older people or the teacher had said regardless of their own ideas or different thinking. So, a good classroom or a good teacher in the past would be judged by the success in controlling the students and having them sit still and silently in a seat, staring at the blackboard and the teaching content without making the least sound to disturb the learning climate.

In order to fulfill my research aim to change and improve the students' language learning outcomes, I have to create a new culture of fearlessness or self-confidence in the face of experiencing language. The communication-oriented classroom which I am trying to build should be lively with the sound of students practising the target language in the classroom, not filled with dormant and inactive students.

4.3.2 Reflection on research

4.3.2.1 Students' language performance

The outcome of research which aimed to improve students' language performances was not yet accomplished by the end of the first cycle. The summarized data from Table 5 shows that students' language performance still needs continual development.

During the research activities, in each teaching period I observed students' behaviour while practising and working on the target language, then after the class I checked (✓) on the name of each student who repeatedly performed the observed behaviours for a whole week and then I used the table below to summarise students' performance and development once a week for the whole period of each research cycle.

Table 5: Students' language performance

Items	Observed behaviours	Number of observed students (N=30) B = 16, G = 14	
		Boy	Girl
1	Try to speak English when asking and answering questions with the teacher.	1	2
2	Being observed to put in effort and can speak English with friends when working in a group.	0	2
3	Being observed to put effort and can create their own words or sentences for rehearsing speaking and presenting in front of the classroom.	0	2
4	Be able to understand content from listening practice and questioning in English fairly*.	2	3
5	Participate in the language learning activities actively.	12	14
6	Be able to read, understand and tell the meaning of words, sentences or reading passages fairly*.	2	5
7	Be able to write basic/simple words, sentences or short passage/essay in English.	3	7
8	Showed attempt and be able to finish work assignment within a determined time.	3	9
9	Completed work assignments with a good quality.	2	12
10	Focus on learning or practising the target language to finish the work assignment (can control themselves to attain the goal).	2	6

* Fair is a Level 2 performance. See Appendix 7 for clarification.

- Students' listening and speaking performance

The observed research data show that the students' communication performances needed to be developed further in the next cycle. It seems at the moment that students' listening and speaking performance is just at the beginning level because there have been just three to five students from a total of thirty in the class who were able to understand words or sentences they have heard in English and also only a few students could create their own dialogue during the interaction session.

However, in the case of the communication skills, speaking and listening, I accepted that it is impossible for anyone who has never experienced the target language before to make good conversation just in a very short time. So, it is acceptable for me, currently, to see the students start speaking English to interact in the language

classroom. As a result, the best thing for me to do for the students, as a teacher, is to provide them with more practical chances to practise language conversation to improve their communication performance further.

- Students' reading and writing performance

With regard to the literacy aspects; reading and writing, I was quite worried about the students' performances of the two skills which still appeared to be lower than an average standard of secondary students. At the moment, there were just four or five students who could understand and tell the meaning of words or sentences they had read correctly.

I observed that merely six to seven students were able to read and understand the content they had read from the reading passages and also not more than ten students were able to write simple words or sentences in English. This left about twenty students or more than sixty percent of all students in the class who could not even read and write the simple English words and sentences which form the basic primary level. They made mistakes so often when they were to read together in class that I had to arrange a time for reviewing and training in both the new and the old vocabulary for them at the beginning of almost every learning period.

- Students' responsibility

Responsibility and autonomy are the other important issues to be developed especially for the boys. The data showed that the boys' groups usually were slow in starting any language activities especially those which required a group contribution.

From my observation, the students had tried to use English simply when they were assigned paired work to practise the language conversation by role-play or other activities that they were to present in front of the class. But once language drills had been conducted by focusing on the group contribution, students approached the activity mostly using the Thai language.

Many students, particularly the boys, had a very short concentration span and were hopeless in practising the target language. They seem inclined to tease or gossip with each other a while after they had been assigned to practise language by themselves without control from me. This manner resulted in their low performance in English with a slow progression from the starting point.

- The individual's work quality

Most of the students, at the moment, can use English language only to a limited extent in their work. In addition, I always found that they prefer to copy the work from the more able students rather than to complete it by themselves. Moreover, most of the students' work has been done hurriedly and is of low quality. It was noticeable many times that the work was completed a minute before it had to be submitted to me. This behaviour needs to be improved in the followed cycles.

4.4 Changes to be made for the next cycle

There are some changes that need to be made for the next research cycle in order to create a more appropriate learning atmosphere for my students and to improve their language learning outcomes. These changes respond to the students' needs and will provide them with more practical activities to develop their language learning competency.

- Reduce the grammar focus and increase the time for communication practice

"The more the student is exposed to the target language, the faster and easier it will be to assimilate the language. Like in all learning, the more time spent, the better the progress made" (Offner, 1997, p.4). To reduce the constraint of learning English for communication, the part of learning which focuses on grammar will be decreased in the next research cycle in order to make the students feel free to learn and practise the target language. I hope this will release them from a feeling of a hard time with the

grammar and can help them be able to develop their communication skills faster than in the first cycle.

Besides suffering from grammar focused teaching, my students are disadvantaged in achieving the communicative goal in English by the fact that they all live in an environment that does not use English. So in order to support them to improve their communication ability, I, as a teacher or a facilitator in CLT classroom, will provide them with more chances to experience the target language by the practical activities. Such practical activities which can facilitate the students with the communicative skill e.g. role-play, simulation, pairs chatting etc. will be the major language activities provided for the students to practise the conversation in the next cycle.

The other necessary thing to do to encourage students to exercise the target language is that I have to keep on trying to speak English with students in the class. At least, the class should start with listening and speaking drills which should not focus excessively on language form.

- To build up students' confidence to interact with the target language

As communication is the goal of a communicative approach, the important point to make is that English is not just a set of rules. The initial purpose then, is not accuracy of use (though this might come later), but to communicate. The focus should be on the ability to get one's ideas across, not on how correctly something was said or how many grammatical mistakes were made.

I will try to create an energetic atmosphere of learning English by cheerful words and also to challenge the students to dare to speak English without worrying about making mistakes. In addition, giving rewards to students who show fear of using the target language for communication will be used to promote a language lively atmosphere as well.

- Apply more songs and games for a lively atmosphere as well as create more necessary vocabulary

I will apply more songs and games to make a more enjoyable and active learning atmosphere and also to facilitate the language acquisition and interaction activities. I hope that students will have a positive attitude and then would like to learn more in English. Furthermore, another benefit of using games and songs in the language classroom is that it can provide the students with more chances to review or even to build up the new vocabulary. The benefit of employing songs and games in the second/foreign language classroom was presented by many educators and researchers.

Lo and Li (1998) stated that songs provide a break from classroom routine, and that learning English through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the four language skills can be enhanced.

The belief that songs provide enjoyment and develop language skills is also noted by several other authors (Adamowski, 1997; Bechtold, 1983; Domoney & Harris, 1993; Griffiee, 1992; Guglielmino, 1986; Lems, 1984; Little, 1983; Monreal, 1982).

Gugliemino (1986) stated that songs have become an integral part of the language experience, and if used in coordination with a language lesson they can be of great value. Woodall & Ziembroski (2004) asserted that using songs is a natural way to experience rich language in a pleasurable way.

In addition, Saricoban and Metin (2000) have found that songs can develop the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking while Eken (1996) presented benefits from utilising songs in the language classroom: to present a topic, a language point, lexis, etc; to practise a language point, lexis; to focus on common learner errors in a more direct way; to encourage extensive and intensive listening; to stimulate discussion of attitudes and feelings; to encourage creativity and use of imagination; to provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere; to bring variety and fun to learning.

Games as well as songs have also been used as a practical medium of teaching in the language classroom. W. R. Lee (1979) said that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. Richard-Amato (1988) and S. M. Silvers (1982) agreed with using games to be fun but warns against overlooking their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching. There are many advantages of using games. "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely" (Richard-Amato, 1988).

Hansen (1994) stated that games are highly motivating and entertaining, and can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings. They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato (1988), they, "add diversion to the regular classroom activities," break the ice, "[but also] they are used to introduce new ideas". In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus, 1994).

More support comes from Zdybiewska (1994), who believes games to be a good way of practising language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future.

- Reduce students' rote learning behaviour

Learning by rote is perceived as not good practice for students in the long-term because the knowledge does not reflect understanding by the learners and normally, will stay with them just for a short time. If the students learn the English language without truly understanding what they are learning, and cannot even produce their own words for communication in the necessary circumstances, outcomes are less fruitful. Generally, providing and encouraging students with more practical chances for the authentic use of the target language as well as utilizing more songs and games in a comfortable learning atmosphere are accepted to be the effective measures to move the students away from rote learning. The use of some practical resources: audio-visual aids like pictures, flashcards, audio-tapes should be fully utilized to support the drills as well.

- Reduce the number of learning topics per week

My research experience in the first cycle showed me that if there are too many learning topics for the students to learn in a week, the students will have merely a short time on each topic to learn and practise conversation which is fruitless for them and, of course, will soon be forgotten.

Therefore, in order to help the students to have more experience with the target language and improve their communicative competency, each learning topic should be provided, in the next cycle, long enough for the students to practise and review the language effectively.

- To encourage students' responsibility and try to solve students' short attention span

Appropriate measures and encouragement should be given to students to reinforce their initiatives and responsibilities to learn and practise the target language. I have found in my English class that the boys especially and some girls lack effort to fulfill their work assignments. I observed many times that the students did not try to practise the conversation drill and finally showed no intention of further action.

Therefore, to develop the proper practice for students, I should act as a facilitator and helper to guide students to develop their effective learning habits in the following cycle.

CHAPTER 5

ACTION AND OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH CYCLE TWO

5.1 Context after research cycle one

Research cycle one created a lively atmosphere for the students to learn English. It had encouraged the students who formerly were passive learners to start becoming more active performers in the classroom. This was shown by the data both from the students' interview and the teacher's journal which recorded that students were happy and enjoyed most of the arranged research activities.

The learning activities in the first cycle, however, still had been implemented by mixing the communicative approach and the traditional grammar approach. Therefore, after research cycle one was completed and the students had been invited to comment about the positive and negative aspects and also to suggest changes they needed in the second cycle, the students expressed their opinions that grammar was confusing and difficult. They proposed that I reduce these sessions while providing them with sufficient time to practise authentic language communication activities such as language games, songs, role-play etc.

In addition, from my observation and experience in the first cycle, providing the students with too short a time for learning and practising each topic made it impossible for them to build up language skill because language learning is a time-consuming process (Gardner, 2001, p.1, 3) which can not be accomplished overnight. It would be more reasonable to extend the time for each learning topic longer than in the first cycle.

The other important factors which had been perceived to promote the students' success in learning English were the students' confidence to interact in English and the students' autonomy to concentrate on the target language practice (Gardner, 2001, p.3). Confidence and autonomy were also needed to promote the students to learn and develop their language performance in the second cycle.

Therefore, the main features derived from both the students' requirements and my intentions of the revised program for the research cycle two were:

- Reduce the grammar session and build up more opportunity for students to make authentic use of the target language in order to reduce students' rote learning behavior.
- Apply more songs and games for a lively atmosphere as well as create more necessary vocabulary.
- Reduce the number of learning topics per week.
- Promote students' self confidence and autonomy to interact with the target language.
- Try to solve students' short span learning behaviour.

5.2 Planning for the second cycle

Before I started implementing the research activities in cycle two, the reflections on the first cycle were reviewed carefully and used as data to reformulate the learning activities. It was evident that the students preferred learning English in an animated classroom to learning as a passive learner. Moreover, the students also needed more chance to experience the language within a relaxed learning atmosphere with the least grammatical demands and a reasonable teacher's expectation of their language proficiency.

As a result of analysing the feedback, five new learning topics were prepared as the main teaching content for research cycle two to respond the students' needs. These learning topics aimed for the students to have more opportunity to use English in a practical situation that might happen and be useful for them in the future. These learning topics were as follows:

Week 1 - <i>On the phone</i>	5	periods
Week 2 - <i>Asking and giving directions</i>	5	periods
Week 3 - <i>Shopping</i>	5	periods
Week 4 - <i>Talking to foreigners</i>	5	periods
Week 5 - <i>Prices and charges</i>	5	periods

5.3 Implementation of the research cycle two

Week 1 - Learning topic: ‘*On the phone*’

The aim of the learning topic was for the students to be able to communicate with persons in English by phone. Everyday, in each learning period, before I started the main theme of the learning activities, after greeting the students, I would randomly call some students to practise speaking English by asking them the set of basic questions I prepared e.g. *What’s your name/nickname?, How old are you?, When do you get up in the morning?, Where do you live?, How do you come to school?, How many people are there in your family?, What does your father/mother do?* etc. In addition, I also communicated with them by using the situations related to the topics they had learned in cycle one. Moreover, some couples were called to interact together and the students were also to review the vocabulary for some minutes as a language warm up activity.

The learning activities in the first two periods focused on new vocabulary and speaking sentences with the meanings which were relevant to the learning topic. The students were, initially, instructed to practise pronouncing the words and the communicative patterns of the phone conversation situation with me. In sum, most of the students collaborated well and practised the conversation actively.

In periods three and four, after the language controlled practice session, the students were assigned to practise, independently, speaking English by using a role-play both in pairs and in a group of three while I acted as a facilitator and also observed their attempts. I encouraged the students to act freely as if they were talking with each other on the phone and I also challenged each group by providing them with different calling situations to practise, which ranged from an easy dialogue to a longer complex dialogue. Most of them selected an easy dialogue to practise except the two groups of girls who attempted to practise the longer, more difficult dialogue.

About fifteen minutes before the time was up, I called each group to perform the role-play they had practised in front of the class to show their language performance and also to get suggestions from me. Almost every group gave a good performance depending on their language skills except for some less able students who still could not speak English in sentences. These students needed time to practise more and I encouraged them to try further.

Games and songs were also used to relax the students besides providing them with more chances to experience the target language in other kinds of activities. I had the students sing a song and play a game whenever I noticed that they started losing attention from the language practising activities and began to joke and tease together. The students liked to sing songs and play games and the classroom atmosphere once again filled with fun and loud noises while they enjoyed the activities.

In order to fulfill the research aims, I tried to create an interactive language climate as much as possible. The students were encouraged to speak English in all activities, even though many of them still could not use English to communicate effectively. They still preferred rote learning by copying the sentences from the sample sheet without creating their own language. They gave the excuse that they could not recall or create their own speech because it is not easy for them. I agreed in this case, however, I suggested that they try and start with a short sentence first and they agreed to try.

In the last period, after a session of language warm up and animated language activity, thirty minutes before the time was up, the students were assigned to do the writing exercise in a group of five (fill in the blank with a missing word) which aimed to evaluate their perception of the learning topic after the four periods of language practice in the week. Many students, from my observation, attempted to do the exercises. They discussed and worked actively together and when they did not understand or were unclear about some issues, they came to get my suggestions. However, there were also some less able students for whom I had to provide help and suggestions until they could finish the work.

Week 2 - Learning topic: *'Asking and Giving directions'*

The topic *'Asking and Giving Directions'* aimed to provide the students with the necessary vocabulary and practical sentences to communicate with foreigners in the situation where they may have an opportunity to give advice about directions to visitors or tourists and also in the situation that they need to know 'the way to go' in strange places they have never been to before.

In period one and two, after the early session of the language warm up activities, the students learned, as usual, from the handout I had provided them. They learned the new vocabulary and practical sentences which would have been used during the free use of the target language. Firstly, I had the whole class read the vocabulary and sentences themselves to check their reading performance before they were to practise reading with me later. It is difficult and unclear to check who, actually, could read and who could not read English, by having the whole class read together, because all the students pretended to open their mouths, since they knew that I was observing them. When I called a student to read individually, I found that there were many students who had a very low reading skill. Most of these students could not even recall the English alphabet (a-z) or could not spell the simple English words or sentences at all. This was a big issue for every secondary teacher at Bamrung Wittaya School to face with very low students who graduated from grade 6 both from our school and other schools.

In the third period, after the usual language review session, the students were assigned to work in a group of five to practise listening to the cassette tape spoken by an English native speaker. It aimed for the students to look for the right way to go to the destination in the exercise sheet I had provided them. Most of the students enjoyed this learning activity and they helped each other try to listen and discuss in the group. But for some students, it was a tiresome activity because I heard the complaint in some groups that they could not catch the words said by the speaker and understood nothing. However, I tried to cheer them up and help them by repeating the cassette many times and also told them some strange words, which seemed too difficult for them to understand. Then, when we had completed the second exercise, a positive outcome was that the students improved their listening performance by completing the exercise faster than the first one.

The learning activities in period four were also focused mostly on group activities. I had each group work from the exercise sheet to discuss together and build up sentences describing the ways to go to the target place I selected for them, and then in the end, a representative of each group had to present their work in front of the class while the other groups had to check if the information presented could really lead them to the right place or not.

This activity was not too difficult for the learners to complete because they had already learned the practical vocabulary and sentences so every group could finish the work and did it correctly. However, though it was not a big issue, I noticed that the students preferred using Thai to discuss in a group to using English.

Period five was set for developing the students in reading and writing performance. I could not neglect to teach these two important language skills because I had realized after conducting research cycle one that my students still needed to develop such language skills, and it is also in accordance with the National Curriculum and the school's assessment systems required the instructor to evaluate the students' learning performances in reading, analyzing and writing. So, I had to set my instructional planning to cover reading and writing skills in order to prepare my students for taking the school's mid term and final examinations.

The students were assigned to read a short story together in their group. The members of each group had to help each other to translate and summarize the story and then to complete the reading comprehension exercise. After that, the group's representative went out in front of the class to present their work before I helped them to conclude the story and examine the exercise at the end of the period.

Many groups actively helped each other to finish the assignment but two less able groups, I noticed, had a problem in starting reading and doing the exercise. These students could not read and understand the story. Therefore, I provided help and gave suggestions to them and they seemed satisfied with my changing role as a helper and facilitator. However, it needed time to encourage or cheer up the students who had low self esteem to develop their learning potential. They were always inhibited by the thought that the English language is difficult.

Week 3 - Learning topic: '*Shopping*'

The topic '*Shopping*' was focused on the animated learning activities that familiarized the students with buying and selling situations using the English language. In the first and the second periods, the students learned and practised the vocabulary and the practical sentences for use if they were in the "*Shopping*" situation. The learning climate was good. The students collaborated to read and practise the language with me. However, in the second period, after the time-consuming controlled session, I wanted to know the effect of such activities on the students. I called each student to stand up to review reading aloud the vocabulary and sentences they had learned and practised for two days to check their performance individually. It appeared that seven students still could not read English, fourteen students could read a little better than the first group and the nine remaining were ranked from (Level 2) with some mistakes to good (Level 1). See the students' ranks in appendix 7

Periods three and four were designed for the students to practise speaking English freely both in pairs and in a group of three to experience the language on their own. I had them, initially, practise from the sample sheet, and then challenged them to create their own words for their interaction in the "*shopping*" situation. I provided pictures

of the commodities that I had cut from magazines, brochures and leaflets for the students to use for practice. Most of them paid good attention to exercise the language within a lively learning atmosphere. From my observation, there were a few couples who started to create and use their own language though the others still could not. This made me happy that my research project could start improving the performance of at least a few students.

Songs and games were used to make the learning more enjoyable. Every time before I had the students sing songs or play games, I would have them learn the vocabulary and practise the sentences to make sure that they really understood what they were singing and playing. The students were happy with these two animated activities, however from my observation, playing games seemed more exciting for them than singing songs because every group would like to be the winner of the competition, so it encouraged all members in the groups to think and work actively together.

In the last period, I had the students get together in a group and brainstorm ideas to complete the reading and writing exercise. But, before starting such activity, I had them sing a song and play a game to establish an energetic climate for learning. In addition, they had to review what they had learned through the week.

The exercise was just filling in the blanks with the correct missing words. It was not too difficult for the students to complete if they worked together. Thus it subsequently appeared that many groups could finish the exercise while I had to provide help and suggestions for the two less able groups to accomplish the goal.

Week 4 - Learning topic: *'Talking to the foreigners'*

In the fourth week, the students learned and practised communicating with foreigners. It is normal for many Thai people that whenever they meet foreigners, they are afraid to be asked questions or be addressed in English, since they lack confidence in communication skills as a result of the former traditional teaching and learning method which focused mostly on grammar, reading and writing competence.

The initial step of implementing the animated language in both the first and the second period began with the controlled session by having the students in the whole class learn and practise the necessary vocabulary and the practical sentences to speak with foreigners. The pairs were also added to increase the opportunity for individual practice. The students started to familiarize themselves with the process of learning and collaborated well. The classroom was full of the sound of active students practising the target language.

I had the students practise speaking the language in both the third and the fourth period by using role-play. Firstly, the students were encouraged to apply and utilize their language experience from the first two periods to rehearse unrestricted communication with peers, then after the rehearsal I had each pair perform their conversation in front of the class. The classroom was filled with the energetic sound of the students interacting. A few couples came up curiously to ask me 'how to say this.....' in some sentences they needed but were still unsure how to speak out.

Songs and games were additionally used to make the topic more enjoyable and improve the learning atmosphere. However, before the students sang a song, I challenged each group to listen to the song carefully and to do an exercise by filling in the missing words of the song's lyric. This activity was fun and interesting for the students, but it was not easy for them to listen and complete the task in a short time because they were not accustomed to the language used in the song, so I had to repeat the tape cassette many times, and at last to help them by telling some difficult or confusing words until they began to understand and could do the exercise. Furthermore, I had them learn and practise the lyrics, the pronunciation, and then the gist of the song as well.

The activities in period five were arranged for reading and writing development. I intended to have the students work and discuss together in a group. However, the exercise which needed reading and writing competence was rather difficult and boring for the less able students. Though I tried to help and cheer them up, they did not try to think and do it, while the others attempted to finish as I requested. At the end, before the time was up, the students and I working together translated and corrected the

answers of each group. Then, to evaluate their reading performance, I had the students read the story as a group before I called each one to read later individually.

In concluding, I could see examples of both improvement and no improvement in the language of my students.

Week 5 - Learning topic: '*Prices and Charges*'

In the last week of research cycle two, the students were instructed in '*Prices and Charges*'. This learning topic was closely related to the topic "*Shopping*" in the third week and the students could integrate the two topics and apply them together.

Every day in the early part of the learning period, I had the students warm up, as usual, by reading and speaking the vocabulary and the basic sentences they had already learned. It is necessary for them to repeat and practise, at least the basic speaking sentences as much as possible for it will be useful for them someday in the future when they meet foreigners. In general, the students collaborated well in the activities I had arranged for them. Many students had evidently improved both their reading and speaking performances and showed more confidence in presenting to me. However, for some students, I found both skills had improved very little.

Day 1 and day 2 were set for the practice of the new vocabulary and practical sentences of the learning topic. Firstly, in period one, I had each group read by themselves the vocabulary and sentences for me to listen and to check their pronunciation. I noticed that most of the groups except the two less able ones tried to discuss together actively to read and practise both the words and sentences. One good thing I noticed was that each of the more capable students in the groups always performed as a key person to help and train their friends, but unfortunately for the two less able groups, none of them could read English well enough to act as the group leader. However, they had enough courage to tell me that they could not read and needed my help. The students subsequently repeated the vocabulary after me and read the sentences and also learned the meaning of the words they were learning.

After the language warm up session in the second period, the students were told to get in pairs to practise a conversation about buying things using the sample dialogues in the handout I had provided them. The students got into pairs and started conversing actively. I played my role as facilitator of the language practice by walking around the classroom to encourage and help some couples that had trouble during their language exercises. There was a lively learning atmosphere, so most of the students, when they came to present their conversation to me, had done a good job depending on their language competence.

The third and the fourth periods were set for free language use in a group. The students were assigned to work in a group to build up their own conversation for use in the prices and charges situation, and in the end every group had to present their work in front of the class. The girls' groups, typically, were evidently more energetic in meeting the goal than the boys. Whenever they were unsure about their work, they did not hesitate in coming to ask me for some suggestions and then went back to work further. The time in the third period was mostly spent on the students' preparation of the script writing and rehearsing the interaction. The classroom, then, was filled with the sound of students' discourse though it was spoken with both English and Thai.

When period four came, every group hesitated to be the first one to show their work. The reason they provided for such behaviour was that they were not quite confident of their work and they still needed time to review and rehearse their work again before the presentation. I accepted their request and then provided them about ten minutes more to prepare their work as they asked. After that, each group made a presentation with the order selected at random by drawing the group number from a cup.

The last period was arranged for the students to review all the learning topics they had experienced in cycle 2. I had the students together review all vocabulary and sentences they had learned since the first week, then after that they got in pairs to use the language to interact with each other topic by topic. In addition, whenever I told them to change the conversation topic, the students had to change their buddy as well.

5.4 Changes made after research cycle one

In conclusion, the revised activities in research cycle two designed to respond to the students' expectations were related to the following features:

- Reduced grammar sessions while creating more practical activities in the language used

The grammar session was reduced to minimize the obstacle for students to learn English in the research cycle 2 as they required. Most of the learning activities I conducted for the students emphasized the active language activities: role-play, simulation, pairs discussion, which encouraged students to practise speaking the language.

In addition, games and songs were also utilized more dramatically in this cycle so as to support and encourage students to interact together in English within a lively atmosphere.

- Reduced the number of learning topics per week.

The teaching and learning topics for the whole second cycle were set simply at 5 topics and each topic was arranged for a whole week as to provide the maximum opportunity for students to experience the target language.

This adjustment was very beneficial for the students as they had enough time to get used to and also to practise each conversation situation longer than in the first cycle. It also lessened the students' rote learning behaviour.

- Use practical resources for learning: cassette tape, CD

I used more audio cassette tapes and CDs to support and facilitate the authentic language drills. By applying such practical technologies appropriately in the language learning classroom, it seemed very useful for the students to improve their communication skills especially the listening performance. Moreover, it could be noticed that whenever the learning context involved games and songs the classroom climate became more relaxed.

- Minimise stress on the students' language performance

It has been well documented that language learning anxiety created by a tense classroom climate is a powerful negative factor that hinders students' learning motivation and achievement (Young, 1999 as cited in Cheng and Dornyei, 2007, p.162). Therefore, as the goal of research cycle two was switched to focus on the students' communication, most of the learning arrangements were implemented in an animated atmosphere. In addition, I tried to change my former practice as knowledge giver and controller to become supporter or facilitator of students' language experiences.

I tried to apply Dornyei's (2001) suggestion to build up a comfortable atmosphere for language interaction and also to encourage and help the students to practise speaking English without any serious or stressful expectation. This reduced classroom anxiety as well as increasing students' confidence and also motivated the language interaction climate more than before.

5.5 Students' responses from the interview

A new group of five students was chosen at random from students in the classroom excluding the previous first group of five students in cycle one. They participated in the informal interview after the research cycle two had been completed. A set of questions (see appendix 5) which had been used with the first group in cycle one were used again to explore and investigate their feedback on the research activities.

5.5.1 Favourable responses

a. Positive attitude to learning English

- Having more enthusiasm to learn English

The students expressed the view that changes resulting from the research activities in the classroom made them more enthusiastic about learning English. They said that learning English at the moment did not bore them and they did not fall asleep as in the past. At present, when it was time for an English lesson, they felt more enthusiastic to learn the subject which was different from their feelings in the past.

เดี๋ยวนี๊ พวกเราชอบและตั้งใจเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากกว่าแต่ก่อน เพราะได้ฝึกพูดจริง ๆ

(At present, we're happy and pay more attention to learn English because we prefer learning English by real use of the language to just listening to the teacher.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G2)

The students also accepted that English is important for them at present for it will provide them a better opportunity to get a good job or even get a better working position in the job.

ผม/หนูรู้ว่าปัจจุบันภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญมาก มันจะช่วยให้หางานได้ง่าย และคนที่พูดภาษาอังกฤษเก่ง จะก้าวหน้าและได้ตำแหน่งดีกว่า

(I realize that English language is very important for students at present. It will be very necessary in the future to get a good job and we will progress faster in a job if we can speak English well.) (S4, S5, G2)

- The animated classroom.

The group had a positive opinion about the learning activities at present. They said they liked many activities that I had arranged for them to learn the language. They said that such activities made them enjoy learning the target language which was different from the past.

ผม/หนูสนุกกับกิจกรรมที่ครูให้พวกเราฝึกในเทอมนี้ เช่น ฝึกพูด เล่นเกม มันทำให้พวกเราสนุกกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ อยากให้ครูสอนแบบนี้ไปเรื่อย ๆ

(I am happy with the activities the teacher has arranged for us at present such as pair chatting, role-play, information gap. It has made the students enjoy learning English and I would like to learn like this further in the future.)
(S1, S3, S4, G2)

พวกเราสนุกที่ได้ฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับเพื่อน ไปรอบ ๆ ห้องเรียน และการฝึกฟังยังช่วยให้ได้ฟังจากการสนทนาเป็นภาษาอังกฤษจริง ๆ มันมีประโยชน์สำหรับนักเรียน

(We enjoyed walking around the classroom to practise speaking English with our friends. Furthermore, the listening practice also gave a good chance for us to experience with real conversation in English. I think it's very useful for students.) (S2, S5, G2)

Moreover, the students said that they were happy to learn English through games and songs. They hardly ever fell asleep after the commencement of the research activities. They said games and songs could help them to improve their language skills especially their listening and speaking performances.

เรียนภาษาอังกฤษด้วยเพลงและเกมมันดี มันสนุกและไม่น่าเบื่อ อยากให้ครูให้เล่นเกมกับร้องเพลงเยอะ ๆ

(Learning English with games and songs is very good. It's fun and is not boring. I hope the teacher will use games and songs a lot.) (S1, S2, S5, G2)

เกมกับเพลงทำให้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษสนุก พวกเราได้ฝึกฟังไปด้วย ทำให้ไม่เบื่อเรียน

(Games and songs made it fun to learn English, the students can practise listening at the same time. It won't make the students get bored with the learning, but on the contrary we like to learn it.) (S3, S4, G2)

- Less pressure with grammar.

The group was happy and preferred to learn English with the fewer sessions of learning focused on grammar. They said grammar made them stressed and they did not like to learn English because they hardly understood the grammar rules and usages when they had to learn about them.

ผม/หนูชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษที่มีแกรมมน้อย ๆ เรียนแบบนี้ดีแล้ว

(I like to learn English with the least grammar because it's difficult to understand. Learning like this is very good.) (S1, S3, G2)

แต่ก่อนมันเครียด ไม่สนุก เวลาเรียนแกรมม่า เพราะไม่เข้าใจ แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ไม่เป็นแล้ว

(We were stressed by the grammar in the former time because we didn't understand it, but now we do not feel like that.) (S2, S4, S5, G2)

- Learning by real use of English.

A chance to really use the English language for speaking is necessary for the students to improve their communication skill. The group mentioned that they liked learning English by this method because it gave them a chance to use the real language. It is more useful than just learning grammar, reading and writing, but they could not use the language to communicate.

ชอบเรียนอังกฤษแบบเทอมนี้ มันสนุกและมีประโยชน์ ไม่ต้องปวดหัวกับแกรมม่า มีโอกาสได้ใช้

ภาษาอังกฤษฝึกพูด ทำให้ไม่ง่วง

(I like to learn English at present. It's fun and useful for students, and I didn't have a headache with the grammar which is difficult and boring.

We had chances to use language for speaking. I don't fall asleep anymore.)

(S1, S2, S4, G2)

เรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบได้ฝึกพูดดีกว่าแบบเก่า มันมีประโยชน์ จะได้พูดกับฝรั่งได้ ไม่กลัวที่จะพูดกับฝรั่ง

(Learning English by using the language for communication is better than the old method. It's useful for the students to use it for speaking with foreigners. It helps us to not be afraid to talk with them.) (S3, S5, G2)

b. Student's development

Students were also asked to reflect on their improvement after research cycle two had been completed. Their contributions follow:

- Having more confidence to speak English

The students said that at present they had more confidence to speak English than in the past because the research program provided them with good opportunities to practise conversation in English. It is different from before when they rarely had a chance to exercise in English.

เดี๋ยวนี้ พวกเรากล้าพูดภาษาอังกฤษมากกว่าแต่ก่อน เพราะว่าได้ฝึกพูด แต่ก่อนไม่ได้ฝึก

(Now, we risk speaking English more than in the past because we had chances to practise conversation in English which formerly we rarely had like this.)

(S2, S3, G2)

เรียนภาษาอังกฤษก่อนหน้านี้ เรียนแต่แกรมม่ากับอ่านแล้วก็ทำแบบฝึกหัด ไม่ได้ฝึกพูดเลย ตอนแรก ๆ

เลขอายุไม่กล้าพูด แต่ตอนนี้ไม่อายแล้ว

(Learning English previously focused mostly on grammar and reading exercises, students didn't have an opportunity to practise speaking English at all, so, at first we felt shy and lack of confidence when were to speak English, but now it's better.) (S1, S5, G2)

- Having more positive attitude to learn English

Two students expressed that the new teaching approach made them felt good to learn English because they were not so stressed with the difficult grammar and reading exercises as they had been previously. This facilitated their eagerness to learn English in the future.

พอครูเปลี่ยนมาสอนแบบนี้ ทำให้รู้สึกดี อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น จะทำให้พูด
ภาษาอังกฤษได้

(I started having a better feeling to learn English since you (the teacher) had implemented the new teaching activities. It could encourage the students to master the language in the future.) (S3, S4, G2)

- Groupwork skill development

The students stated that the new learning approach had facilitated their groupwork skill. The learning arrangements conducted by pairs-chatting and groupwork collaboration could train them to improve their teamwork contributions.

เรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบนี้ ทำให้พวกเราฝึกทำงานเป็นทีม ได้ฝึกพูดกับเพื่อน และทำงาน
เป็นกลุ่ม

(The research activities have promoted our cooperative skill. We have developed such skill by pairs-chatting and groupwork collaboration arrangements.) (S3, S4, G2)

5.5.2 Students' criticism and suggested changes

a. Students' criticism

- Lack of opportunity to use English in real life

The students mentioned (in common with students in group 1) that they did not have any chance to speak English outside the classroom. Therefore, after walking out from the English class, the communication skills they just practised would soon be forgotten.

พอออกจากห้องเรียน ก็ลืมที่ฝึกพูดสนทนา เพราะไม่ได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกห้องเรียน

(We usually forget the conversation we had practised when we stepped out from the English class because we did not have a chance to use it again.) (S1, S2, S3, G2)

พอเลิกเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ก็ไม่ได้พูดภาษาอังกฤษอีก กับครูก็ไม่ได้พูด ยิ่งที่บ้าน ไม่มีใครพูด
ภาษาอังกฤษเลย

(We did not use English after the English class even with the English teacher, we spoke together in Thai outside the classroom. Moreover, my parents or anyone near me could not speak English at all.) (S4, S5, G2)

- Pressure from the restricted time and the teacher's expectation

Even though I tried to lessen my expectations of the students' language performance, they still mentioned stress resulting from the standard of work I required from them. Moreover, they commented about the restricted time I had provided for them to practise for a presentation. Very often, it made them felt unsure of their performance.

รู้สึกบางทีครูให้เวลาฝึกพูดน้อย พอตอนต้องพูดหน้าชั้น เลยพูดไม่ค่อยได้ มันยังไม่พร้อม

(I feel, sometimes, the teacher gave the students a very short time to practise the conversation, so when we had to present in front of the class, we could not do it efficiently because we were not ready to do it.) (S1, S2, S3, G2)

ถ้ายังฝึกพูดไม่ค่อยได้/คล่อง พอเวลาหมด บางครั้งมันก็ตื่นเต้น เครียด

(We were excited and stressed when the time for practice was up when we still could not have an effective conversation.) (S4, G2)

- Illiteracy concern

Two girls in the group expressed their concern that the learning, at present, focused too much on communication and would give students less chance to develop their reading and writing skills. They were worried that, subsequently, they would perform poorly in those skills as well because of the fact that they rarely have an opportunity to speak English in real life.

ถ้าฝึกพูดอย่างเดียว ก็กลัวเหมือนกัน เดี่ยวจะอ่านไม่ออก เขียนไม่ได้

(I'm concerned that the students won't be able to read and write English well if we had to practise a lot in conversation.) (S1, S4, G2)

They proposed that I (the researcher) should maintain a session of reading and writing exercises because it's still important for them if they are going to study at a higher level and also they thought that these two skills, actually, were not the main problems for them to learn English.

ครูน่าจะยังให้นักเรียนฝึกอ่านเขียนไปด้วย เพราะมันก็สำคัญเหมือนกัน ตอนเรียนสูง ๆ

(Teacher should maintain having the students learn or practise with reading and writing because it's useful for us to be good in English and to learn in a higher level in the future.) (S1, S4, G2)

They said that it is not too difficult for students if they try to practise to read and write. Another student agreed with them, but said that, however, the teacher should not have the students read or write too difficult matters. (S5, G2)

b. Students' suggestions

- A chance to learn English outside the classroom

The students needed a chance to learn English outside the classroom. They said that it is more interesting to experience the target language in a different place from a square box.

อยากให้ครูพาไปเรียนนอกห้องเรียนบ้าง จะทำให้นักเรียนอยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(I would like teacher to take the students to learn English in other places outside the classroom, it will make the learning climate more interesting and help the student feel more enthusiastic to learn English.)

(S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G2)

- An opportunity to learn English with more practical resources

The students needed to learn the language by other practical means such as listening in a sound laboratory.

อยากให้ครูพาไปเรียนที่ห้องแล็บ เล่นเกมคอมพิวเตอร์ ดูหนัง ฟังเพลง จะทำให้นักเรียน

อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(The teacher should take us to learn English in sound lab room, with a computer, seeing the movie or listen from a tape. It will make us would like to learn English much more.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, G2)

In the case of learning English on the computer or by watching movies, owing to the school's lack of resources, I told them frankly that I could not respond to their needs, however I suggested for them some interesting websites: google; yahoo; student

weekly, etc. in case they would like to learn or practise English by themselves at home or during the computer learning hour at school. I supported and encouraged the students to practise watching movies in the English language if they really wanted to improve their interactive skills. At the end I praised the students for having good ideas to develop their language skills.

5.6 Reflections

The changes and adjustments in research cycle two were a good experience for me as a teacher to find ways of improving in the next cycle. The reflective data both on change and on research of research cycle two are presented below.

5.6.1 Reflection on change

- Students more active to learn English

After the grammar session was decreased in research cycle 2, it was evident that the students were more enthusiastic to learn English than in cycle 1. Almost every time when I had the students work or practise conversation in pairs and in a group, they would quickly get together and do the activity. Without being confused by grammar, the students were happier to join any language activities they had been set. Most of the activities involved active student participation with the aim to have students use the target language for communication as much as possible.

- A good rapport

The research activities improved relationships between teacher and students. The students, at present, do not hesitate to approach me. They often come to me requesting help and sometimes have a light-hearted conversation with me. The formerly fearful and silent students now have absolutely disappeared.

At the end of research cycle two, the change that has been most evident is the students' behaviour in the learning context. Most of the students, for the time being,

look happy and satisfied with the language activities in which they had participated. The old picture of a silent classroom has disappeared. All students were encouraged to take a risk to experience the language in a friendly atmosphere. It is a sign of good things happening.

However, the research outcomes in the other aspects still need to be improved further in the next cycle. The students, at present, have just started to improve their language competency and there are also other issues that need to be changed. All four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) of language performance still have to be improved in the following cycles.

- A communication problem

I still had a communication problem with the less able students at the end of research cycle 2 and it is unfortunate that these students are the larger group in this class, so I always have a hard time and they did not easily understand what I have said to them.

Almost every time I explain the rules of joining the language activities, I had to repeat the explanation at least twice before I could be confident that the activity could get started. Finally, if I still felt that the students did not understand my explanation, I would switch to speak Thai with them.

However, this was not a crucial problem of implementing the research activities because the positive attitude of the students to learning English was impressive and the collaboration they gave to me, during the class, to complete all the assignments was significant.

- The teacher's English performance

This is also a crucial problem for non native English speaking teachers that we cannot utilize the target language fluently. In every period, I always tried my best to speak English with the students, but as I am not a native English speaker, sometimes, I had

to stop and recall some vocabulary before speaking out. I often had a feeling that I could not yet speak English as fluently as I needed to.

It is unfortunate that the students and I live in the same environment that English is rarely used for interaction in daily life, so this can affect our confidence when we have to speak English.

- Accuracy versus fluency

It cannot be denied that both accuracy and fluency are significant in language learning. In English teaching with the focus on the grammatical approach which I formerly employed, accuracy is emphasized more than fluency. Students in the class were instructed to focus on linguistic detail. They were accustomed to the exact words and could not put up with ambiguity. So the question sometimes had arisen whether accuracy or fluency should dominate, recognizing the students' low language ability.

Beginners like my students should have good fundamental English, which is primarily, though not solely, built on accuracy. It is believed that if bad language habits are formed and are not corrected in time, they are difficult to break. Moreover, for the students who are learning English in a non- English-speaking country, there is little chance for them to learn an acceptable form of English outside the classroom. So, in order to achieve accuracy, my students need rigorous language training in their classes.

However, it does not mean that accuracy is 100% error-free, which is impossible. I always realize that during the controlled language practice sessions for my students, a high degree of accuracy should be required. Not only are the students encouraged to make as few errors as possible, but they are also expected to manipulate the language system as spontaneously and flexibly as possible.

- Students' learning style

The students still learned by rote when practising the target language. They did not try enough to change this, thus they could not create their own language to communicate with one another even though I tried to encourage them.

It is not easy to change the rote behaviour they were used to within a short time because they have relied on it so long for learning in almost every subject. Moreover, the restraint of their limited English vocabulary also obstructed them from being able to create their own English conversations. However, I hoped that by applying the communicative approach which provided the students with chances for authentic use of the target language, they will improve in the future.

- Group collaboration

Each group in the class performed differently depending on the English background of individual members in the group. When I had the students work together in a group the more able learners always got together to form a group separate from the less able learners. This resulted in a big difference in the quality of work I received from them.

In the more able groups, students helped each other actively to complete the work, which was absolutely different from the less able groups where each student just sat still waiting for someone to start to work and that each person had to proceed with the work until it was completed while the others could provide little support beyond a cheerful word.

The lesson I have learned about the group work from both cycles was that the less able students should not have been together in a group because they could not manage or motivate themselves to work together until the work was completed. They did not show any attempt to do the work even though I tried to encourage them every period. I have to do something in the next cycle to change these students to improve their learning behaviour and outcomes.

5.6.2 Reflection on research

5.6.2.1 Students' language performance

The observed data in Table 6 after finishing research cycle two showed that there was an improvement on some students' learning behavior when compared with the first cycle. The implementation of the research activities in the second cycle had resulted in the development of some students

Table 6: Students' language performance

Items	Observed behaviours	Number of observed students (N=30) B = 16, G = 14			
		Spiral 1		Spiral 2	
		boy	girl	boy	girl
1	Try to speak English when asking and answering questions with the teacher.	1	2	2	7
2	Being observed to put effort and can speak English with friends when working in a group.	0	2	0	5
3	Being observed to put effort and can create their own words or sentences for rehearsing speaking and presenting in front of the classroom.	0	2	2	8
4	Be able to understand content from listening practice and questioning in English fairly*.	2	3	3	6
5	Participate in the language learning activities actively.	12	14	12	12
6	Be able to read, understand and tell the meaning of words, sentences or reading passages fairly*.	2	5	3	8
7	Be able to write basic/simple words, sentences or short passage/essay in English.	3	7	3	8
8	Showed attempt and be able to finish work assignment within a determined time.	3	9	4	10
9	Completed work assignments with a good quality.	2	12	2	12
10	Focus on learning or practising the target language to finish the work assignment. (can control themselves to attain the goal)	2	6	2	7

* See Appendix 7.

- Students' listening and speaking performance

Research cycle two had made an improvement in students' listening and speaking performance. Though the students were a long way from being fluent, the research project started encouraging them to risk speaking English and they could now speak longer than previously.

At the moment, at least, the students can greet each other and speak some basic sentences such as *What's your name? How old are you?, What is your favourite ...? What time is it? What is your father/mother? or What does your father/mother do?, Where do you live?, How many people/.... are there in your family/classroom/...? .*

The summarized data in Table 6 showed that the number of 9 students (2 boys and 7 girls) which increased from 3 (1 boy and 2 girls) were observed trying to speak English, though not in every period, when asking and answering questions and also the number of 5 girls (increased from 2) had tried to speak English when they were working or sharing ideas in a group though it was just short and simple words or sentences and mixed with the Thai language.

In addition, the number of 10 students (2 boys and 8 girls increased from only 2 girls in research cycle one) were noticed sometimes making an effort and were able to create their own communicative sentences for presentation in front of the class though just short and simple sentences. In case of students' listening performance, I witnessed 9 students (3 boys and 6 girls increased from 5 in cycle one) being able to understand some contents from listening practice though the remainder still needed further improvement.

Such improvement might imply that my changes in research cycle two could start building up students' confidence and also developing their listening and speaking skills.

- Students' reading and writing performance

Eleven students (3 boys and 8 girls increased from 5 in the first cycle) were observed to have (Level 2) performance in reading and writing skills after research cycle two was completed. I noticed that they could read and translate better than formerly but still performed at a slow speed.

From my observation, the students' reading performance had improved more than their writing performance which increased by just 1 student in item 7. When they were to work in groups the students could read and translate the passage at a fair (Level 2) level but their writing performance still needed further development in the next cycle.

- Students' responsibility

Students' responsibility had been considered an important issue especially for the boys in this classroom context. When I had the students work in groups or practise speaking English, many boys had been observed to practise less than I expected. They still preferred teasing each other.

From my observation, many boys had a short attention span for learning and practising the target language. Once they faced difficulties they usually quit and started joking and teasing each other. Moreover, some boys were noticed to interrupt other students while practising the language. This issue needed a practical solution from all teachers at secondary level.

- The Individual's work quality

The quality of students' work did not improve in this research cycle. Most of the boys still finished and submitted their work with low quality. However, this also happened in every other subject, thus I and other teachers would have to help one another to solve this problem.

5.7 Changes needed for the next cycle

Some changes or adjustments need to be made for the next cycle both for responding to the students' requirements and helping the students to improve their language competence.

- Solving the students' short attention span and lack of responsibility.

One important issue I found with my students, particularly the boys, was that they had a short attention span and lacked responsibility to learn and practise speaking or complete the work assignments.

Therefore, motivation strategies to promote students' responsibility will be implemented in the next cycles.

- Integrate the more able and less able students in the same group.

I noticed in both research cycles that the less able students, if joined together in the same group, could not make progress in their language performance. Therefore, in the third cycle, I will try to mix the more able and less able students together in the same group in order to have the faster help and work with the slower by an expectation to see the development in the less able students.

- Provide the students with more reading and writing exercises.

The research activities made the students try to speak English and also create a lively classroom climate, but, at the same time, the students' reading and writing performances were improving rather slowly. However, according to the basic curriculum, the students still have to take a paper-based examination that evaluates their reading and writing skills. Therefore, it is necessary to organize or adjust the learning activities to provide opportunities for the students to practise reading and writing in the next cycle. In addition, in my opinion, the less able students need extra time to practise much more in reading and writing, thus in research cycle three, to

help them, I will set a time after lunch twice a week to have them practise more in those two necessary skills.

CHAPTER 6

ACTION AND OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH CYCLE THREE

6.1 Context after research cycle two

Research cycle two ended with improvements especially in the learning atmosphere and also in a few students' communication performance while most students still showed little sign of improvement. In fact, if considered in a positive light, this research project was really the first time students learned English for communication, so I was satisfied to see a few students in the classroom willing and trying to use English for communication with their friends by themselves without any intervention from me. I understood that it was impossible for my students to speak English freely and fluently only two months after the research had been started. Language communication skill needs time for learning and practicing (Gardner, 2001).

The difference between research cycles one and two was that the teaching arrangements of research cycle two responded much more directly to students' requirements to focus on the target language interactive activities by reducing the part of grammatical learning while applying more practical language animated activities: songs, games, pair chatting, role-play, group working and simulation. As a result, the learning topic each week of research cycle two was arranged to provide an opportunity for the students to have an authentic experience with the target language as far as I could provide.

6.2 Planning for the third cycle

Before the commencement of research cycle three, the data (teacher's journal, observing data, students' portfolios and the students' feedback from an interview) were reviewed and analysed carefully to develop and adjust the new teaching plan.

The issues which students proposed from the group interview for research cycle three were the following:

- Use more teaching resources and instruments. (cassette tape, VCD, computer)
- Provide the students with an opportunity for learning outside the classroom.
- Apply more songs, games and animated activities for learning.
- Give rewards for some suitable performances.
- Keep on having the students practise and develop reading and writing skills.

I acknowledged that students preferred learning English as active learners using animated activities rather than being passive learners. Moreover, students needed more opportunities to learn and practise the target language by a variety of practical activities and resources which previous groups had also proposed. However, I could not respond to all the students' needs for the reasons presented below.

In case of the teaching resources, I told the students that I could have them learn and practise speaking and listening more just by the cassette tapes or CDs, but I could not provide them with computer and VCD (watching movie) due to our school's constrained resources. The school had a computer room on each site and it was used fully on weekdays for computer instruction. Another point was that I also could not have the students learn the target language by watching movies because the school did not have a television free for use at the moment (all televisions were used in a computer room, drama room and also available at the nursery and kindergarten site).

Learning outside the classroom especially ‘outside school’ was another point that students proposed during the interview. This was a good idea and really interesting, but as I had to plan ahead for such activity, therefore it was rather difficult to conduct during the school’s semester as it would affect other teachers’ instruction because all teachers had planned their teaching schedules in advance. Moreover, according to the school’s regulations, if a teacher wanted to take students to learn outside school, he/she must prepare and propose the project in advance for getting permission from the school’s assistant principal (academic) and also the administrator. Teachers also had to seek support from other teachers for changing the teaching period as well as arranging a vehicle for taking the students to the target place.

In addition, it is rather difficult and inconvenient for only one teacher (myself) to take care of and control all thirty students when outside the school and also to finish all activities within a determined time including the travelling time. For those reasons above, I told the students that it was more convenient and possible to conduct this activity in the next semester.

Responsibility was another issue of my students. From my experience in both previous cycles, I found that many students lacked responsibility which is the essential attribute of successful learners in all subjects. I intended to use collaborative learning to promote responsibility by having the more and the less capable students work together in the same group because when I had the students form a group to work or practise the target language, I usually found that, students formed a group on the basis of personal relationships or with students who had the same level of learning performance. I saw that the more capable students hardly ever worked with the less capable students. I expected that the more capable students would be able to help and encourage their slower partners to concentrate on learning activities and in consequence to improve their learning outcomes. Therefore, in research cycle three I decided to try setting up the new groups by integrating the more and the less capable students together for promoting students’ good behaviour.

Moreover, during the research cycle three a midterm examination was set in accordance with the school's usual operating schedule. The test is paper-based which required a level of literacy competence to pass the test. As a result, I had to adjust my teaching to focus more on reading and writing to help prepare my students for the test. This was a requirement of the workplace and I must follow the system, even though I was conducting the research project.

Owing to the new basic educational curriculum (2001), besides teaching and evaluating the target language by aiming at the communicative purposes, the regulations of the assessment system also require teachers to measure students' competency in reading, critical thinking and communicative writing.

Therefore, I had adjusted my lesson plans, particularly, during the second and the third week by switching the conversation practice time to the language warm up session which took about fifteen minutes in every learning period and after that I had the students review and practise grammar, reading and writing exercises. To do this, students still had an opportunity to interact together with the target language though it seemed merely a short time.

As a result, the main features of the revised program for the research cycle three were:

1. To set up new groups of students by mixing the more and the less capable students together in a group.
2. To promote students' cooperative learning and responsibility.
3. To reward students' good performance and work.
4. To adjust the teaching and learning time in the second and third week to allow the students to practise more literacy skill as a preparation for taking the test and also to set up extra time to tutor the less capable students in literacy skill.

A set of five new learning topics, was chosen to support the main theme of research cycle three. These learning topics aimed for the students to have more opportunity to use English in many practical situations that might happen in real life and might be useful for them in the future. The learning topics were below as follows:

Week 1 - <i>What's the matter with you?</i>	5	periods
Week 2 - <i>How about your opinion?</i> (Expressing Opinions)	5	periods
Week 3 - <i>What's your hobby?</i>	5	periods
Week 4 - <i>At the restaurant</i>	5	periods
Week 5 - <i>How about your holiday?</i>	5	periods

6.3 Implementation of the research cycle three

Week 1 - Learning topic: '*What's the matter with you?*'

The learning topic '*What's the matter with you?*' aimed for the students to be able to communicate in English by asking and telling their friends or other people what had happened to them. In addition, students could also suggest or provide an appropriate, practical solution for each situation.

In the first period of the third cycle, I initiated the research activity by establishing new groups of five students mixing the more and the less capable students together in every group with a hope that the more capable students would help and encourage their colleagues whenever they worked and practised speaking English together in a group. Therefore, all 4 or 5 boys and girls who had been considered, when compared with other students in this classroom context, as the more capable students, and who formerly always stayed together in the same group were separated into each new group.

However, when they were separated from their group, the more capable boys and girls, firstly, seemed unhappy and were unwilling to collaborate with my regrouping purpose. I had to explain my purpose and that I hoped them to be the leader of each group in order to help explaining what I had said in English which might be rather difficult for their colleagues. Moreover, I also hoped they would encourage the team to complete the work. They subsequently accepted my request but with a little concern appearing on their faces.

At the time of the language warm up session in every learning period, if I did not conduct any special activities for the class, I always had the students review vocabulary and sentences they had learned in both the first and the second cycle. Some students were randomly chosen to speak English by being asked the basic questions they had practised formerly. Moreover, in some periods, I would build up the situations which related to the learning topics that the students had experienced before and then called some couples to show their communication ability.

When I introduced the main content, students learned and practised the new vocabulary and conversation sentences of the learning topic: *What's the matter with you?; What happened with you?; What's wrong with you?; I've got a headache; I've got a stomach ache, backache, toothache, etc.*

At the end, each group practised the conversation freely on their own. I challenged and encouraged the students by preparing some candy for the groups that could present their language performance in front of the class within the given time. This could motivate the students to try to practise more actively and finally quite a few students could get the candies from me.

In period three and four, each group was assigned to practise, independently, speaking English by chatting in pairs and rotating within a group while I acted as a facilitator of the interaction setting and also an observer of their practice. I encouraged the students to feel free to practise the conversation without worrying about making a mistake especially in a very long dialogue. Bailey (2005, p.173) stated that “in general, the

practice in Communicative Language Teaching is not to interrupt a learner to react to an error if he is communicating his message successfully even with the error”.

At last, before the time was up, I called each group to present their work in front of the class to show their language performance. Many students, in my opinion, did a good job according to their language competence while there were also many students whom I still had to help.

Games and songs were used to relax the students as well as providing them with more chances to experience the target language with other kinds of activity. The purpose of using games and songs was not only for enjoyment but also for learning the target language naturally. They provided practically a more active and entertaining classroom atmosphere without any pressure on students to strive to meet learning goals. I could witness some unaware students speak out in English even though it was only a word or short sentence despite the fact that they always kept quiet in the usual classroom climate. However, it was impossible in the real world foreign language classroom that the teacher could expect and compel students to interact with the target language all the time because it clearly appeared in my classroom that students preferred to speak Thai rather than English.

The last period was focused on reading and writing practice. I had every group read by themselves a short story from the textbook for fifteen minutes and summarize the story they had read. Then when the time was up a representative of each group presented their work in front of the class.

At the beginning, I saw every group actively work together. Then, after five to ten minutes passed, some students began to tease and talk together. When I asked them to keep concentrating to help their group to finish the work, they told me that they couldn't read and understand the story. I then helped the students and also encouraged them to keep on trying to finish the assignment. I also prepared the candy for this activity. However, I noticed that they still had a short concentration span for the work. Mixing the more and the less capable students together in the same group, in my context, did not motivate or bring about active learning behaviour for the less capable students.

When fifteen minutes passed, none of the groups had finished the assignment. Most of the students had the same problem that they knew the meaning of only a few words in English, so they took a very long time looking up words in the dictionary.

I extended time for the students to thirty minutes and also circulated the class to provide help for the groups. In consequence, many groups did finish and presented their work in front of the class.

Week 2 - Learning topic: *'How about your opinion?'*

The topic *'How about your opinion?'* aimed to give students an opportunity to express their opinion about events that they had seen, heard or experienced. However, as I had mentioned at the beginning that the teaching plan which was set for both the second and the third week in cycle three had to be adjusted a little bit due to the school's examination period. I needed time to tutor the students to understand and practise grammar, reading and writing in order to help them take the test successfully.

In the first period, instead of having the students learn directly through the text sentence by sentence as before, I started the activity by having the students work in pairs and in a group to interact with each other by using the handouts I gave them. I wanted to see whether the students could start learning by themselves. I found, from observation, that the students tried to practise speaking English just for a short time at the beginning, but after that they began losing their intention to practise the target language and started to tease and play together.

I started to realise that my good intention to have the more capable students help or encourage the less capable students to improve their learning behaviour might not succeed because, in fact, the more capable students as defined in this classroom context were just equal to average students in other classrooms. Therefore, when they were mixed in the same group with the majority of less capable learners, they were soon influenced and swallowed up by the group's characteristics.

I had the students read and summarize the main ideas of the story they had read and also learn the grammar usage of the learning topic while I walked around the classroom to provide help. I tried my best to explain slowly and give examples to students, however many of them still did not understand. This reflected that apart from knowing just a little vocabulary, students also lacked necessary basic grammatical understanding.

From the second to the fifth period, owing to the time constraint set for the conversation practice, I had the students learn and practise, briefly, vocabulary and speaking sentences as usual. After that I used pictures of famous people: actors or singers, animals and some interesting pictures such as celebrating a party, a religious ceremony, smiling people, lonely people, or crying children for the students to express opinions about in English. I also utilised a quiz game and candy to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere as well as to encourage and develop their communication.

When it was time to get into the reading and grammar learning session, I employed cooperative learning for the students to work, to do an exercise and present it to the class. Moreover, every group was to practise writing by discussing together and then writing up the communicative sentences.

From my observation, having the students learn by group collaboration was better and more practical than having them learn individually since the students had an opportunity to discuss and share ideas together though I usually noticed the more capable students mostly were the ones who finished the work.

Week 3 - Learning topic: *'What's your hobby?'*

The third week was set for the students to practise asking and telling about what they have as a hobby but it was still in the period of the school's midterm examination. So time provided for conversation practice was limited to just fifteen minutes in the early session of every learning period and the latter part was set for the practice of reading and writing.

Due to the time constraint for communication practice, the students, therefore, only had an opportunity to practise speaking English with a few short basic communicative words and sentences. This made me feel like the classroom was turning back to the old picture of having the passive and inactive students.

I clearly experienced the different classroom climate between the two weeks of the school's testing and the learning which focused on the communicative purpose when students were happier to learn in an interactive atmosphere than to learn by focusing on literacy. However, we cannot deny that good literacy skill is very important and necessary for students in the EFL context for it is used much more than the communicative skill. Therefore, it is the duty of the teacher to build up practical and interesting activities to promote and develop such skill for students.

Week 4 - Learning topic: '*At the restaurant*'

The learning activity and atmosphere in the fourth week returned to the normal practice of the research procedure. I planned to employ role-play as the main learning activity for the topic '*At the restaurant*' this week.

Before I started to conduct the research procedures again I had to remind the students once more about the aims and the continuity of the research project in order to get good collaboration from them as in the first and second cycles. I was pleased that the students were willing and looked happy to be back again in the animated learning climate.

Besides the above agreement, I tried again to encourage the more capable students in each group to act as group leader when I had the students work in groups. What I had done was to invite the more capable girls and boys after class and asked for their cooperation to perform as a role model for their colleagues to pay attention and attempt to practise the target language and also to help their friends as much as they could. I told them directly that I would like to see the students help each other to improve their target language learning outcomes and also to speak English at least with basic words or sentences.

In the first period, I had the students listen to the conversation from a cassette tape between the customer and the waiter in the restaurant. After that I asked them questions to check their understanding. I found that merely three students from the thirty in the class had grasped a few words or sentences spoken on the tape, so, it appeared in consequence that no one could understand the content of the conversation. Hence, not many students were able to answer the questions I asked them. However, I was impressed by seeing many students try to listen and share their opinion during the activity.

After listening to the cassette tape, all students practised the necessary vocabulary and practical sentences before they were left to freely rehearse speaking from conversation dialogues in pairs or in a group of three. It was fortunate that students had already got used to the learning arrangement and participated well. Then the classroom, in consequence, was full of the sound of language practice.

In the second period, I reviewed the students' understanding of the cassette tape they had listened to in the first period. Seven or eight students showed an improvement in understanding and could better respond to me when they were asked questions. After a warm up session, students were assigned to get into pairs to practise the conversations from the handouts. For this period, whenever they had finished practising the dialogue, each pair had to present their language performance to me to evaluate their progress and then they were assigned more complicated dialogues to practise.

The third and the fourth periods were set aside for each group to rehearse a role-play as if they were having a meal at the restaurant. Students were assigned to build up their own conversation situation by applying their language experience with phrases and vocabulary from handouts and tape dialogues. What had happened at first was that most students told me that they could not do this activity because it was very difficult for them. However, I told them to try first and I would also help and make suggestions to them.

From my observation, the more capable student was the first person to finish the assignment. Thus, I had to encourage the less capable students to help the team to think and work. As a facilitator for students' language practice, I circulated the room checking the progress of each group and also providing help and suggestions to the students.

Many groups worked until they had finished while some groups could not attain the goal. Thus, I rewarded and gave compliments to the groups that completed their work and showed their performance to their friends in front of the class, and I did not forget to cheer and encourage the other groups to work further and present to me outside the classroom.

Period five was assigned for the students to practise reading and writing. Group collaboration was employed to support and provide an opportunity for the students to discuss and work together. I provided the reading and writing exercise sheet for the students to read and do the exercise (fill in the blanks, see in appendix 8). Before they did the writing exercise the group had to read, translate and summarise the main idea of the story they had read and then each group had to present their understanding to me within the determined time. Every group collaborated well.

Week 5 - Learning topic: *'How about your holiday?'*

'How about your holiday?' was the last topic of the third cycle. It aimed for the students to learn, discuss and share ideas about important holidays both in Thailand and internationally. In addition, students were also to share experiences about activities they always do on holidays.

As a language warm up in the first period, I started the learning activity by having an informal conversation and asking the students some questions about their knowledge of the important holidays. I also had the students exchange ideas about activities in which Thai people always engage on these days. What do Thai people always do on Khao Pansa, Makha Bhucha, Visakha Bhucha, Piya Maharaj, Chakree day, the King

and Queen's birthday etc.? In addition, I had the students share ideas about their activities on those days.

About half of the students participated and exchanged opinions actively during the discussion. I also tried to encourage the students to speak in English though they seemed happier to speak and respond to me in Thai. However, I didn't pressure them too much to use the target language because I would like to have the students practise speaking the target language gradually or step by step. I think it was better than to accelerate them which might make stress and discourage students from trying to develop their communicative skill (Bailey 2005, p159). I just told them that I would like to see an improvement in their interacting skill which, someday, might be useful for them. After that, I noticed quite a few girls try to respond to my questions in English, however I realised that it was impossible for them to speak English all the time. At this moment, I was pleased that my project could give the students confidence to speak English.

Handouts of essential vocabulary and practical communicative sentences were provided for students as usual after a warm up discussion. It was very necessary for my students to learn and practise before they moved to the next step of uncontrolled speaking practice both in pairs and in a group. The training was just a regular language control session in the whole class, so there were no problems with the practice collaboration. What really concerned me was how many students could really understand what they were saying.

The overall climate of language learning and practice in the second period was fine. The activities were the same as the first period and most of the students collaborated well to use the target language except some boys and a few girls with short concentration spans. In this second period, some students were called, at random, to exchange details about their activities on holiday. Many students shared their opinions in English, but only with short words or sentences while a few could speak a little longer. Most of the students still persisted with the rote learning method. A few students could present their language performance without depending on the sample sentences in the handouts.

In the third period after a routine language warm up we reviewed some basic essential words or sentences. I had the students practise listening to a cassette tape of the conversation between two people who were talking about their activities on holiday and then answer questions. Students actively listened to the tape but it appeared at the end that no students could understand the words or sentences spoken in it. When I asked them questions, no one could respond correctly. However, I was impressed to see many students were keen to listen to the tape even though it seemed so fast and hard for them to be able to understand the dialogue. Later, when I gradually keyed them step by step, some students began to show a better understanding than at the initial step.

I used the questioning method for the latter part to expose students to the target language. From my observation, less than ten students could understand some of my questions and made an effort to respond to the questions in English whereas the other students did not show any signs of understanding at all. However, it was a good thing to see the faster students try to help or explain the meaning of questions for their less able colleagues.

In conclusion, the learning atmosphere at the moment was evidently very much better than the first three weeks of research cycle three but what still dissatisfied me and made me unhappy was that I could see only a little improvement in language performance by most of the students.

In the fourth and fifth period, I gave work sheets detailing six important holidays in Thailand for the students to practise reading in a group. Students in each group had to read the story, discuss together, summarize the main idea of the story and then draw a mind map of the holiday they had read to show the importance of each holiday and what sort of activities Thai people always do on those days. I allowed the students to discuss together and present both in English and Thai because of their restricted English so they were happy to do the work.

6.4 Changes made after research cycle two

The followings changes were made in research cycle three to respond to the students' requirements and also to promote the students' suitable learning behaviour in the classroom.

- Integrating the more and less capable students in the same group.

In research cycle three I had set up students' new groups by integrating the more capable students with the less capable students in the same group. My purpose of doing this was to have the prior group help their slower colleagues to improve the target language performance as I had reasoned above.

From my observation, the new group-setting had not given as good results as I expected. The more capable students could not help and encourage responsibility among their less capable partners. I noticed many times that the more capable students had to finish the work with little help from their partners in the group. As a result of this change, I decided not to continue trying this idea further in research cycle four.

- Utilising more teaching resources for practising the target language.

I utilised more audio cassette tapes and CDs particularly about the conversation in situations to support and facilitate the authentic language practice. By applying these resources mainly for listening practice, it created an active learning climate, and started improving, though just a little, some students' listening skills so that they could grasp the spoken words or sentences faster than formerly. Most of the students still did not make much progress. However, using such resources could help promote students' eagerness to practise the target language because I noticed that whenever the learning activities were conducted by listening practice from CDs or audio cassette tape, the students were happy and actively took part in all the learning activities.

- Employing cooperative learning

In research cycle three, I mostly had the students practise speaking English and work in groups hoping to have them help one another to improve their language performance and also encourage group responsibility. From my observation, most of the groups responded well to the approach though some groups had a problem which I must watch to help and encourage them to attain the goal.

However, in my opinion, most students benefited more from their collaboration in a group while learning and working than having them learn individually because they had opportunities for discussing and exchanging ideas with friends as well as sharing duties to finish the work. Therefore, I will continue to utilise this approach in the next cycle.

- Providing the students with more reading and writing practice

As research cycle three was during the school examination period, my students needed to be tutored to pass the test successfully. I adjusted the time in the second and third week to have them practise more reading, writing and grammar.

In addition, I set the extra time, after lunch two days a week, for the less capable students to practise reading and writing with me. I set aside these times to help the target students because I, as a teacher and assistant principal in the student affairs division, had other duties to do on other days (all teachers had to supervise students during the break time for two days a week and to undertake many other duties in the school).

I could not set the special time for training the less capable students in the evening, after school or on the weekend because firstly, it was inconvenient for students who lived too far away from school to stay late for learning after school and go back home by bus or the special vehicle. (I have explained in chapter one that most of our secondary students were less able learners and some lived far away from school). Secondly many students found it inconvenient and difficult to go to school at the

weekend. (No one can take them to school; they had to take care of the house or younger sister/brother because parents have to work on the weekend; it was inconvenient coming to school because the van did not run; they would like to play at the weekend, and did not need to learn; etc.).

In summary, the adjusted time for preparing students to take the test benefited the more able students as they could have time to practise reading and writing ahead before taking the test while it did not benefit the slow students so much.

The extra time set for less capable students was arranged to accord with the time when the target students and I could meet together due to the fact that there are many special activities (after lunch) in the school that both the students and I must attend, so it did not have much effect on improving the students. However, it was my responsibility to hold this activity to help these students further in the following cycle.

- Rewarding the students

In research cycle three, when the students performed well in their language practice and presentation I would reward and praise them to keep on doing good things. This clearly motivated students to learn more actively and join in any language activities I had arranged for them. Rewarding was one of extrinsic motivational strategies I employed effectively in my project for promoting and encouraging the students to practise the target language and finish their work.

Rewarding was not new to me and the subjects but it was often used effectively at any time we needed or expected active participation and good work from the students. Therefore, it will be used further in the next cycle for motivating students' learning and practising the target language.

6.5 Students' responses from the interview

A new group of five students who were not the same group as the former two cycles was selected and invited to join the interviewing arrangement after the research cycle three had been completed. Before I started asking the students, in order to make them relax to express ideas, I had an informal conversation with them, telling them about the aims of the interview and asking them to share ideas freely and frankly since the data from the interview would be very useful for me to further develop the practical learning activities for the next research cycle.

6.5.1 Favourable responses

I initiated the interview by asking the students to express opinions about the positive aspects they found from the new learning arrangement I had conducted for them. The observations they made were quite similar to the opinions that the previous two groups in the first and second cycle had expressed. They are as follows.

a. Positive attitude to learning English

- Happy with the learning atmosphere and activities

All students expressed good feelings about the learning atmosphere. They said they enjoyed most of the language practice activities and did not fall asleep as previously.

บรรยากาศการเรียนแบบนี้สนุกดี ดีกว่าแต่ก่อนที่ครูสอนแบบเก่า

(Learning atmosphere at present is fun. It's better than the previous time before you (the teacher) conducted a research study.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3)

เรียนแบบนี้ดีกว่าแบบนั่งฟังครูสอนเฉย ๆ มันง่วง

(Learning English like this is better than just sitting and listening from teacher which make the students feel asleep.) (S2, S4, G3)

ชอบให้ครูสอนแบบนี้มากกว่า มันไม่เหมือนเดิม น่าเรียนมากกว่าแต่ก่อน ทำให้กล้าถามครูมากขึ้น

(I appreciate your methods of teaching currently, because you have made a large change from before, we can ask you and you answer us. It's a pleasant learning climate and better than before.) (S1, S5, G3)

They also said that they were happier to learn English with games, songs and real target language communication practice. (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3) Such activities made them enjoy learning English as an active learner. It was not boring like the learning climate in the past. One student in the group said that learning English language should be like this when they were in primary school to make them love to study the target language, but in reality it was not. (S2, G3)

- Less stress than learning focused on grammar

The students stated that they preferred studying English at present because it was no longer dominated by grammar contents and exercises. They hardly understood the grammar rules because they are too complicated for them and make them unhappy and stressed. They would not like to learn English with lots of grammar as before.

แกรมม่านั้นยาก ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ไม่ชอบเรียนที่มีแกรมม่าเยอะ ๆ เรียนแบบนี้ดีแล้ว ชอบ

(Grammar is difficult. We don't understand and we don't like to study English by focusing too much on grammar. Learning with these animated activities is better, we like it.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3)

มันไม่เครียด พอไม่ต้องเรียนแกรมม่า

(We feel less stressed after the teacher reduced the teaching which focused on grammar.) (S1, S2, S4, G3)

The students, however, agreed with the teacher that it was still necessary for them to learn and practise grammar, reading and writing lessons because these were important language skills for them, if they can, to study at a higher level.

- More useful for students

Students said that learning the English language by focusing on the communicative approach is more useful for them than learning focusing on a traditional grammar translation approach because it might be useful for them to use the English language to communicate with foreigners.

ผม/หนูว่าเรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบฝึกพูด มีประโยชน์กว่าเรียนแกรมม่า เพราะว่าจะได้พูดกับฝรั่งได้

(I think learning English by practising speaking is more useful for students than learning the grammar because we might really use it to communicate with foreigners someday.) (S2, S5, G3)

เราจะกล้าพูดกับฝรั่ง ถ้ารู้คำที่จะใช้พูดกับเค้าได้

(We will dare to speak with foreigners if we know some useful words or sentences for interacting with them.) (S1, S2, S4, G3)

- Enjoy learning English with practical instruments

The group liked it when the teacher had them practise listening from a cassette tape. It was fun and useful for them to practise and improve their listening skill.

ชอบตอนที่ครูให้ฟังเทปแล้วถามคำถาม มันสนุกดี ได้ฝึกฟังไปด้วย

(I liked the activity that you (the teacher) had the students practise listening from the cassette tape and asking questions when we had finished listening. Such activity was fun and useful for improving our listening skill.) (S1, S2, S5, G3)

พอฟังเพลงแล้วครูถาม ทำให้ฝึกคิดไปด้วย แล้วก็ตอบเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ มันดีกว่าเรียนในหนังสืออย่างเดียว

(Your questions after listening practice made us more active to think and discuss together. I think it's very good for students to practise reflecting and giving response with the target language. It's more practical than just having the students do exercises in notebooks.) (S2, S3, G3)

- A kind teacher

The students explained that while I was implementing the research project they had received rewards (candy) from when they did a good job. This made them happy and more willing to learn English than in the past.

บรรยากาศตอนนี้มันดีกว่าแต่ก่อน ครูก็ใจดี

(Now, you (the teacher) have built up a friendly and comfortable atmosphere to learn English.) (S5, G3)

ครูแจกท็อฟฟี่ ตอนที่นักเรียนพูดได้ดี

(Teacher also gave us rewards when we have done well with our work. It's good!) (S1, S2, S4, G3)

ครูใจดีกว่าเดิม ทำให้กล้าถามครูเวลาไม่เข้าใจ หรืออยากให้ครูอธิบาย

(Teacher is now kinder than previously. This made us dare to speak with you or ask questions when we didn't understand and need suggestions from you.) (S3, G3)

b. Student's development

I also had the students reflect on their improvement in English after I had conducted research cycle three. Students' responses are presented below.

- Confidence to speak English

Students said that at present they had more confidence to speak English than formerly because they had chances to practise and use the target language more often than learning in the past.

เดี๋ยวนี้ กล้าพูดภาษาอังกฤษมากกว่าแต่ก่อน แต่ก่อนกลัวพูดผิดเลยไม่กล้าพูด แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ดีขึ้น แต่ก็ยังมี
กลัวอยู่นิด ๆ

(Now I think I dare to speak English more than previously. (S2, S3, G3)

Before now, we didn't dare to speak English because we afraid of making mistakes. But, it is better though we still afraid of doing it.) (S1, G3)

I asked them to describe what they really meant by saying that they dare to speak English at the moment because I had never seen them speak English by themselves unless I had them practise in the classroom. Their responses were

ผม/หนูหมายถึง เดี่ยวนี้พวกเราได้ฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษ แต่ก่อนนี้ไม่ได้เรียนแบบนี้ ทำให้ไม่กล้าพูด กลัว
ผิด แต่เดี๋ยวนี้กล้าขึ้น อย่างน้อยก็ในห้องเรียน

(I mean that at present we (students) had more chances to practise speaking English in the classroom while formerly we hardly learned like this, so formerly we didn't dare to speak English even in the classroom because we afraid of making mistakes. But now it's better we dare to interact in English at least in the classroom.) (S1, S2, S3, G3)

แต่ก่อนอาย ไม่มั่นใจ ในชั้นเรียนก็เหมือนกัน แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ค่อยลง

(Previously, students felt shy and lack of confident to speak English even in the classroom but now that feeling was less.) (S4, S5, G3)

- Team work improvement

The students explained that learning and practising the target language by groupwork collaboration was better than individual learning because they had chances to help, share ideas and discuss together. It made them felt more confident than to learn and work alone because whenever they didn't understand something about what the teacher had just explained, in case they didn't dare to ask the teacher to explain again, they would asked their colleagues to help describe it. Moreover, they said that this learning method also provided them with a practical and useful skill of working in teams.

เรียนเป็นกลุ่มดีกว่าเรียนคนเดียว เพราะนักเรียนช่วยกันได้ ไม่เข้าใจก็ถามกัน

(Learning in a group was better than learning individually. We can ask and help each other to finish the work.)(S3, S5, G3)

บางทีพวกเราไม่เข้าใจ ไม่กล้าถามครู ก็ถามเพื่อนให้อธิบายให้ได้

(Sometimes (if) we didn't dare to ask teacher we could ask our friends to explain for us.) (S4, S2, G3)

เรียนแบบนี้ทำให้ฝึกทำงานเป็นกลุ่ม

(This learning method also helped train the students to develop their group work skill.) (S1, S2, G3)

The students' comments helped to confirm my observation that the students were more active and happier to learn English than before. All this reassured me that group and pair work could help to improve their participation and motivation to learn English. However, things always have two sides because while groupwork was useful for some students to practise working together, at the same time, it gave a chance for

the lazy or inactive students to leave responsibility to a few colleagues in the group to finish the work. This unsuitable behaviour challenged me to look for measures to deal with it. I think, it needs more time to correct students' long-established behaviour.

6.5.2 Students' criticism and suggested changes

a. Students' criticism

When asking the students to reflect on the limitations of the new learning approach they perceived from the research implementation, they gave some interesting answers.

- Do not have an opportunity to use English

All students in the group said that they did not have opportunities to use the English language outside the classroom at all either at school or at home. They said that no one was willing to interact with them in English because they were shy of making a mistake when speaking English because such language was not used commonly by native or local Thai people. Then, no matter how much they had learned and practised speaking English in the classroom, after the class each day they had no chance to use it again until the next period, so, whatever they had tried to learn and practise in the classroom was soon forgotten.

ผม/หนูไม่ได้พูดภาษาอังกฤษเลยพอเรียนอังกฤษเสร็จ มันน่าจะลืม ถ้าไม่ได้ใช้

(I didn't speak English at all after the class. So, it will soon be forgotten if we don't use it after this term or in the future.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3)

ไม่มีใครพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ทั้งที่บ้านและที่โรงเรียน เลยเหมือนไม่ค่อยมีประโยชน์ที่จะฝึกพูด ถ้าไม่ได้ใช้

(No one speaks English in our community either at school or at my home so sometimes it seemed fruitless for us to practise speaking the target language without a chance to use it in daily life.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, G3)

It cannot be denied that what the students had said is the reality of our living context. Moreover, I think the students' family background was also one of the important factors discouraging them from aspiring to speak English as well because almost of the students' parents were ordinary people who didn't have a higher education background; they have to work hard for a living so they do not have much time to take care of their children. The information I had received showed that almost half of these students do not live with their parents but live with their grandparents or their relatives. Some students had the problem of separated or divorced parents as well.

In addition, two students said that although English language is going to have an important role for Thai people in the future, it seemed far away from them. (S3, S5, G3) They said they probably would not have a chance to speak English much for their career in the future, so it was really not necessary for them to put any effort into practising speaking English. Moreover, it was not shameful for them if they could not speak English because lots of people in Nakhon Pathom cannot speak English as well.

- Practise communication only is not enough

The students accepted that they had limited English knowledge so they were not confident that my new teaching approach could help them to improve their English language learning outcome and performance.

ผม/หนูคิดว่า สอนแบบฝึกพูดมันก็ดี สนุกดี แต่ก็กลัวอ่านหนังสือไม่ออก เขียนไม่ได้ กลัวสอบตก

(I think it's good and fun that the teacher teaches us to practise speaking together, but I'm afraid that such practice doesn't help develop the students' reading and writing skills. Therefore, students won't pass the examination at the end of semester.) (S1, S2, S3, G3)

จริง ๆ ในความคิดของผม/หนู เรียนแบบฝึกอ่านเขียนก็ดี เพราะจะทำให้เข้าใจเนื้อหาที่เรียน

(Actually, in my opinion, learning by practising reading and writing were not too bad for the students because it help us easier to understand the learning content and finish our homework.) (S2, S4, G3)

- Stress from time-restricted assignments

The students indicated that I (the teacher) sometimes made them stressed by having them practise the conversation or complete the work assignments within a restricted time, so on quite a few occasions that they could not finish the work within the determined time or finished with unsatisfactory outcomes.

บางครั้งมันก็เครียด เพราะครูให้เวลาให้ฝึกน้อย บางบทสนทนามันยาก ต้องใช้เวลาฝึกนาน

(Sometimes, we were stressed from your restricted-time assignment because some dialogues and work assignments were difficult for us and needed a longer time to rehearse or operate.) (S2, S4, G3)

นักเรียนต้องรีบ ๆ ฝึก ทำให้ยังพูดไม่ค่อยคล่อง

(Students had to complete the work by rushing and produced low quality within a short time.) (S1, G3)

However, I had explained my intention to the students that every working assignment needed a definite time to complete, so I would like to train them to finish the work assignment within a given time. I also told them to realize that in reality, I often extended a deadline for them on quite a few occasions.

b. Students' suggestions

- Learning outside the classroom

Students said that the teacher should arrange more chances for them to learn English language outside the classroom because it will help change the learning climate and encourage the students to be keen to study English.

ผม/หนูอยากเรียนนอกห้องเรียนบ้าง เป็นการเปลี่ยนบรรยากาศ ทำให้ออกเรียน

ภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(I would like to learn outside the classroom. It will help change the learning atmosphere and also students will be keen to learn English.) (S1, S2, S4, G3)

เรียนแต่ในห้องเรียนบางทีมันก็น่าเบื่อ ครุ่น่าจะพาไปเรียนนอกห้องเรียนบ้าง

(Learning merely in the classroom is sometimes boring for us, so it's good if you (teacher) take us to learn outside the classroom.) (S3, S5, G3)

- Learn with more practical instruments/resources

The group stated that they would like to learn English language with more practical teaching resources.

อยากให้ครูให้เรียนกับคอมพิวเตอร์บ้าง เล่นเกม ดูหนัง มันสนุก แล้วก็อยากเรียน

ภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(I would like to learn English sometimes with computer games, movies (VCD) and CD songs. It will help make the learning climate more interesting and enjoyable.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3)

- Keep on teaching by explaining

The students indicated that teaching by explaining was still important for them because it made it easier and faster for students to gain understanding with the content of the learning topic. However, it should be mixed properly with the communication practice to create a lively learning atmosphere.

สอนแบบอธิบายก็ดี ยังจำเป็นสำหรับนักเรียน เพราะบางหัวข้อมันยาก ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ถ้าครูอธิบาย จะ

เข้าใจง่ายขึ้น เพราะหลายครั้งที่ทำงานไม่เสร็จเพราะไม่เข้าใจ

(Teaching by explaining is still important for us (students) because some learning topics were difficult for students to understand within a short time.

The teacher's explaining will make it easier and faster for us to understand the knowledge content. It happened quite often that we could finish the work assignment but we didn't really understand what we had done.)

(S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G3)

6.6 Reflections

6.6.1 Reflection on change

- Influence of group norms on individual student behaviour

I have learned that group norms had influenced the individual student's behaviour. From my experience of mixing the more and the less capable students together in research cycle three, I found that though the prior group still performed well and tried to finish the work, their eagerness to learn and practise the language was clearly decreased or demotivated by their slower colleagues' behaviour in the group. Therefore, in research cycle four I will have the students join groups freely as in former times.

- Group collaboration

Even though mixing the more and the less capable students in the same group did not change the latter's behaviour, I observed that having the students work together in a group was more practicable than having them learn and work individually because when students were working together they could ask each other any things they did not understand and generally they could exchange ideas together or give a useful suggestion to their slower partners.

- Students' learning style

When research cycle three was completed, it still appeared that most students preferred learning by rote. From my observation, students had always rehearsed the communicative sentences directly from the handouts without any adaptations.

However, I noticed that some students sometimes started trying to create their own sentences for communication and presentation in front of the class while other students did not show effort or any improvement in this aspect at all (data presented in Table 6.6.2.1 item 3).

- Evaluation issue.

The school's policy to challenge teachers to adopt a communicative approach for teaching the students seemed in conflict with the assessment system. After implementing the research activities, I was faced with the problem of an assessment system that still has the teachers evaluate the language learning outcomes in linguistic aspects: grammar, reading and writing as well as critical thinking. Even though teachers had started trying to change their teaching to focus on a communicative purpose and also to assess learning outcomes in the relevant aspects, formal assessment had not changed.

This presented a dilemma for me and I reflected many times about what should I firstly select and focus on between the communicative competency and the linguistic or literate competency especially for my less able students. One side was for developing their communication ability while another side was for preparing them to take a paper-based examination.

Moreover, the students' comments during the interview made me reflect that there should be a balance between a communicative approach and academic or content knowledge (cognitive) approach. As a teacher, I should not make decisions by myself to adopt one teaching style while abandoning another or simply make a judgment that this teaching method is better than that based on only my opinion and experience.

Therefore, the adoption of a certain kind of teaching method should be decided by two factors: students' learning needs as well as the teaching materials available. In conclusion, teaching methods should alter with students' learning needs as well as the degree of difficulty of the teaching materials. As Cook comments:

It is rare to encounter a classroom that is a pure version of one or other of these teaching styles as none of them fully satisfy all the needs of any real class of students; nevertheless they provide convenient reference points for the discussion of language teaching. (Cook, 2000, p.174)

6.6.2 Reflection on research

6.6.2.1 Students' language performance

Table 7: Students' language performance

Items	Observed behaviours	Number of observed students (N=30) B = 16, G = 14					
		Spiral 1		Spiral 2		Spiral 3	
		boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
1	Try to speak English when asking and answering questions with the teacher.	1	2	2	7	2	8
2	Being observed to put effort and can speak English with friends when working in a group.	0	2	0	5	0	5
3	Being observed to put effort and can create their own words or sentences for rehearsing speaking and presenting in front of the classroom.	0	2	2	8	2	8
4	Be able to understand content from listening practice and questioning in English fairly*.	2	3	3	6	3	7
5	Participate in the language learning activities actively.	12	14	12	12	10	12
6	Be able to read, understand and tell the meaning of words, sentences or reading passages fairly*.	2	5	3	8	3	9
7	Be able to write basic/simple words, sentences or short passage/essay in English.	3	7	3	8	3	9
8	Showed attempt and be able to finish work assignment within a determined time.	3	9	4	10	4	10
9	Completed work assignments with a good quality.	2	12	2	12	2	12
10	Focus on learning or practising the target language to finish the work assignment. (can control themselves to attain the goal)	2	6	2	7	2	7

* At Level 2. See Appendix 7

- Students' listening and speaking performance

Students' listening and speaking performance improved a little from research cycle two. I noticed the number of 10 students (increased from 9) had tried to respond (asking and answering) to me in English, though not in every period.

I still noticed the same number of 5 girls tried and dared speak English when they were working or discussing in a group though it was just short and simple words or sentences and mixed with Thai language as well as the same number of 10 students sometimes put an effort and were able to create their own conversation sentences, though just short and simple, for presentation in front of the class.

In the case of students' listening performance, I witnessed 10 students (increased from 9 in spiral 2) able to understand some content from listening practice while the remaining students did not show any improvement at all.

It may be implied that students' listening and speaking skills were improving gradually after they were given chances to learn and practise the target language by the communicative approach. Therefore, if the students get more chances to learn the target language continually, their communicative performance will be improved.

- Students' reading and writing performance

Twelve students (3 boys and 9 girls increased from 11 in research cycle 2) were observed to read and write fairly (at level 2, see students' ranks in appendix 7) after research cycle three was completed. But for the other students, I still could not see any progress.

Students' reading and writing performances are an important issue so that I have to look for some practical activities to help them to develop these two necessary skills. However, I think that it needs time to attain the goal because all four language skills are long term developmental efforts.

- Students' responsibility

Students' responsibility was also an important issue for students in this classroom especially for the boys. When comparing the boys and the girls in item 8, 9 and 10, it appeared that these characteristics had not improved at all in the boys' group after completing research cycle three. I still noticed the same number of boys (2-4 boys) showed suitable behaviour.

In the case of the girls' group, there was improvement in items 8 and 10. I noticed that my regroup experiment made some girls adjust themselves with suitable practice. However, I still could not solve the problem of unsatisfactory work quality of the two girls in item 9.

- The Individual's work quality

Individual work quality did not improve. Many students, mostly the boys, still did the work and finished with low quality. However, it was not my main aim of conducting this research project, so I might address this issue in the future.

6.7 Changes needed for the next cycle.

- Arranging the new learning activities mixing the conversation practice appropriately with reading and writing drills/exercises

After research cycle three had been completed I was quite certain that I should not prepare learning experiences to focus only on communicative competence for my target students. Although the language interaction competency has been perceived and accepted by educators to be the basic requirement for all foreign language learners, in some contexts, however, having the students focus only on conversation was not relevant to the learners' living environment and requirements.

It is quite clear from the students' reflections in all three research cycles that the students did not have any chances to interact in English at all after the English learning period. Therefore, even though the teacher had put in so much effort to have the students practise conversation, it is impossible to accomplish this intention just in a short time especially with very less able and inactive students.

As a result, the most suitable solution to me to help these target students' language performance was to have the students learn and practise all four important language skills at the same time because if the teacher had focused too much on merely some language skills such as listening and speaking the other essential language skills will soon be the critical problems/issues for students in the future.

The next task for me in the research cycle four is to look for practical learning activities that can support all four important language skills for my target students.

- Looking for practical solutions to reduce students' rote learning behaviour

Students' rote learning behaviour was the crucial barrier for developing their creative thinking ability. Most Thai students were accustomed to the passive learning style and also to the traditional memory paper test, so it is not easy but not impossible for teachers to help the students to build up the appropriate characteristics.

In research cycle four, I intend to help the students to reduce their rote learning practice and change their traditional learning style to be an active thinking learner. My intention seems very difficult to achieve with the target students but it is very important to help them to develop their reflective thinking in the future.

- Looking for the appropriate measures to promote students' responsibility

Responsibility is an important factor for all successful learners, but certainly it couldn't be built up just in a short time. The target students had been encouraged

continually by all teachers to improve their responsibility but this was still unsuccessful.

It is very challenging for me to deal with such problems and I hope that at the end of this research project I can improve at least some students' learning behaviour.

CHAPTER 7

ACTION AND OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH CYCLE FOUR

7.1 Context after research cycle three

Research cycle three ended with an improvement in classroom atmosphere. At this time, the learning climate was better than previously. The students could adapt and were happier with the new learning approach than the traditional grammar-translation method (data from students' interview in cycle 3). In addition, the students started to have a positive attitude to learning English.

From my experience of conducting the research activities and evaluating the students' language progress from the first cycle to the end of the third cycle, I was rather confident and agreed with Chayanuwat (2003, p.1) that teaching English by utilising merely a single approach (CLT in my project) in the EFL context where the students rarely had an opportunity, outside the classroom, to use English was not the best way for my target students. I think that my teaching arrangements should be mixed with the reasonable and practical techniques appropriate for my students' background, an approach that can develop all four language skills in them at the same time.

On one side, if considered in a positive aspect, the communicative approach was good as it provided an opportunity for the students to use authentic English within the animated and lively atmosphere. The students, hence, changed from passive to active learners. However, to employ merely the CLT approach was unsuitable for my EFL classroom where most students were less able learners and had a very low background in English and also they did not have any motivation to use English for communication because English was not necessary for their living environment.

I was concerned that to focus too much on the communicative approach would decrease the students' time to practise and develop their literacy skill which is still necessary and important for them to learn at a higher level.

At present, all Thai students who finish grade 3, 6, 9 and 12 have to take the national test which is called the 'O-Net'. The test aims to evaluate the standard of the students' learning outcomes in all schools in Thailand and is used to assess the academic standard or quality of the schools. The test is normally a paper-based test which requires students' to have good literacy skills. If the students do not have strong literacy skills, they cannot take the test successfully.

7.2 Planning for the fourth cycle

Before the commencement of research cycle four, I had an informal meeting with the students in the classroom and asked them to propose the learning topics they were interested in or would like to learn for the last cycle. The students proposed many topics such as sport, animals, games, music, art, food and drink, family, occupations, movies, famous people, travelling, etc.

However, when I asked them to suggest ideas for the language experience they need for those topics above, they could not specify exactly the language activities they required or expected beyond playing games, singing songs, learning by computer or learning outside school. So it was rather challenging for me to design and apply such topics to the communicative contexts and activities to respond the students' requirements.

In addition, the analysed data from all sources (the students' responses and suggestions from the interview and my journal in research cycle three) were also considered and reviewed for the planning of the fourth cycle.

Thus, the main focus of research cycle four was as follows:

1. To plan and determine the learning topics from the students' requirements.
2. To encourage students' collaboration in groups to improve their responsibility.
3. To employ questioning to promote confidence and students' authentic use of English as well as reducing their rote learning.
4. To increase the proportion of reading and writing practice in every learning topic to improve students' literacy performance.

Five new learning topics derived from the students' requirement were chosen to be the main themes for research cycle four. These learning topics were as follows:

Week 1	<i>Sports</i>	5	periods
Week 2	<i>Animals</i>	5	periods
Week 3	<i>Food and drink</i>	5	periods
Week 4	<i>My family</i>	5	periods
Week 5	<i>Famous people and occupations</i>	5	periods

7.3 Implementation of the research cycle four

Week 1 - Learning topic: ‘Sports’

‘Sports’ was one of many topics that had been proposed by the students during the informal meeting before I started conducting research cycle four. It was a topic that many students were interested in and they had told me they would like to learn about it.

This topic aimed for the students to be able to know the name of specific sports in English, to describe the common features of each sport and also how to play it.

In the first period, I took about ten minutes for greeting and reviewing the previous knowledge together with the students, then I started the learning topic by questioning the students (e.g. Do you like playing sports?, What kind of sport do you like the most? or what is your favourite sport?, Why?, Can you play football/table tennis?, Can you tell me the usefulness of playing sports?) to arouse the students’ attention. I also employed pictures of the famous athletes for asking and stimulating the students to talk about them in English.

It was good for me to see the students join the activity actively, though many students took time to think before they could speak out. Next, I had the students join in groups and brainstorm to list the vocabulary of sports in English as much as they could within fifteen minutes and then each group’s representative had to present their work in front of the class when the time was over.

From my observation, every group tried to think and help each other to finish the work. Most of them already knew some sports which have the same name in Thai (the name had been borrowed in Thai) e.g. football, volleyball, ping-pong, hockey, skiing, badminton, basketball, tennis, judo, snooker/billiards, gymnastics, etc. Other words beyond those listed above depended on each group’s capability of looking the words up in the dictionary.

While each group's representative was presenting, I wrote all the names of the sports they presented on the blackboard and then when the presentation was finished, I worked with the students to think of and add some sports missing from their presentation. At last, before the time was up, I had the students read aloud the vocabulary to check their reading performance both individually and as a whole class. The students were also to write the vocabulary in their notebook for reviewing. The learning atmosphere was quite good with all students collaborating well throughout the period.

I used a quiz game in the second period for the students to practise listening and speaking. I played the game by reading many short sentences which detailed each kind of sport for the students to listen and discuss together in a group and then tell me what kind of sport I was asking them. For example:

Example 1

1. It is a popular sport around the world.
2. The time determined for playing this game is divided into two main sections. Each section is 45 minutes long.
3. Only one player can use hands but the other have to use the leg and head to play in the game.
4. The players play by kicking and hitting by head.
5. Normally, it has 11 players in a team.

Answer Football

Example 2

1. It is a famous sport in South East Asia region.
2. Thailand and Malaysia always win this kind of game.
3. It has three players in a team.
4. The players can use his/her hand only when they serve/start the game after that they use only the leg and head.
5. The winner is the team which can reach the determined score.

Answer Takraw

Example 3

1. We play this game on a table.
2. The table used for playing the game is coloured green and has six holes.
3. The player uses a long stick (cue) to play/hit the ball.
4. The balls have many colours. (red, white, black, green, yellow etc.)
5. Each colour has different score.
6. The player who get the highest score is the winner.

Answer *Snooker*

After the students provided the name of those sports correctly, I asked them further questions to extend their opportunity to practise speaking English. Can you play tennis?/volleyball?...?, Do you like to play football?...Why?, How often do you swim?, Can you please tell me how to play basketball?, etc.

I tried to encourage students' team collaboration instead of having them work individually because I wanted to have the students think and share knowledge or ideas in a group and I also did not want to create the language anxiety for the less able students. I always emphasized that the students should think together in a group in responding to my questions.

I was impressed that the students enjoyed the game. Every group tried actively to listen and compete to be the winner to give the right answer though I noticed that students preferred speaking Thai to English while they were discussing and enjoying the activity in a group.

In the third period, I used pictures of many kinds of sport as learning resources for the students to practise speaking and writing by having them look at the picture I was showing. Then every group had to think and write sentences which related to the picture and present their work in English. Furthermore, the representative of each group had to write their created sentences on the blackboard. After that I examined the sentences on the blackboard together with the students and corrected the wrong sentences.

This activity was interesting as well as challenging for the students to think and create a sentence. However, when I noticed that any groups faced a problem in their work I would help and also cheer them up to keep on practising to develop themselves.

In the fourth period, after the regular language warm up activity and also having the students enjoy games and songs, I had the students join in a group to do further activity. Every group was assigned to choose a kind of sport they were interested in then prepared and rehearsed a presentation script describing the game they had selected. Later, every group had to present their work in front of the class.

With this activity, students had to do everything from start till finish and I, as teacher and facilitator, walked around the class to check and provide help or suggestions for groups in need. This work assignment (preparing a script) seemed rather challenging for the students. After I had finished describing the aim and the detail of the activity, many groups took some time to choose the game they were interested in. At last, I noticed that many groups had made a decision to choose the same sport, such as all the boys' groups selected football while the girls' groups selected table tennis and badminton.

When I asked the reason they chose the same game, they said that it was convenient and easier for them to recall the vocabulary of a familiar game to prepare a script and they could get help from the other groups as well. I accepted their reasons if they need to help each other. Therefore, when it was the presentation time, I found that many parts of the presentation of the groups that chose the same game had almost the same words and patterns. It implies that students still preferred to copy the sentences directly from each other without adjusting them. This was an issue that needed a further improvement in the future.

In period five, I had the students work in groups for twenty minutes to translate the short story I had provided in handouts. After that each group's representative was to present their work in front of the class.

From my observation, some students' reading skill had improved but the work still depended much on the key persons who kept on working until the work was finished. However, students worked together in groups better than previously.

The students practised the writing exercise to answer questions after finishing the reading activity. I had the whole class read and translate the questions and also do the exercise together with me. In summary, the students' reading and translation performance was improved a little but their writing skill still need to be developed further.

Week 2 - Learning topic: '*Animals*'

The topic '*Animals*' aimed for the students to share opinions about different kinds of animals, an animal they were interested in and to describe the features and the nature of animals.

In the first period, after a common greeting and reviewing activity, I introduced the learning topic by using pictures of animals and also applying questions to keep the students' attention e.g. Do you have any pets at your house?, What are they?, What are they like?, Who can tell me about a good or bad side of having pets in the house?, Do you know what animal is the symbol of Thailand? Of Australia? What is the biggest land animal? What animal is the king of the jungle? etc. After that I allowed the students fifteen minutes for a group work assignment to write the names of animals in English as far as they could.

I was impressed that the students worked together actively. I could hear some students consult together about how to spell the words while other students were trying to look up the words in the dictionary. When fifteen minutes passed I had every group present their work and write the words on the blackboard and then practise reading aloud for me to listen and check and also to correct their misspelling. Finally, I had everyone write all vocabulary in the notebook for further review.

After the language warm up and review in the second period, I had every group send a representative to the front of the class to pick the name of an animal from papers I had placed in a cup. Then, the representative acted in the manner of or made the sound of the animal that he/she had picked for the group to guess what kind of animal he/she was acting.

Every group had to brainstorm and try to create sentences which gave more details about the animal they picked and then competed to present their sentences to me. The winner was the group that could make up the most correct sentences.

The students enjoyed the activity especially when the representative acted in the manner of the animal for the groups to guess and respond. The classroom was full of laughter. This activity had made the students dare to speak English though the syntax was not correct. However, I suggested to them the right word and sentence all the time.

In period three, before I started the main learning session, I had the students play the vocabulary game (hangman) and sing songs for twenty minutes. After that I initiated the learning activity by having the students join a group, then I showed them pictures of an animal to discuss and make up sentences describing it and present them to me.

Every group had to create as many sentences as they could and send the representative to write the sentences they had prepared on the blackboard. At the end I had the students practise reading together and I helped to correct their mistakes.

In the fourth period, after the language review session, I had the students work in groups to select a kind of animal they were interested in. The members in each group had to discuss together and write a paragraph describing the animal they had selected and later the group's representative had to present their work in front of the class.

I walked around the class to check and give suggestions while the groups were working. It took some time for the students to write the sentences in English because of their English background. From my observation, students could think and create

the sentence in Thai but it was not easy for them to transform Thai sentences into English because their vocabulary was restricted. However, it was good that students dared approach to me and ask for help. I was happy that students were not afraid to approach their teacher as in former times.

The presentation was fine but finished within a short time because almost every group could not write many sentences. However, I praised them and said that I knew that every group had done their best and I understood that writing practice is the most difficult part of learning a foreign language.

The last period focused on reading and writing practice. I had the students work in groups to read and translate a short story from the exercise book and they practised writing after finishing the reading activity.

Though the reading and writing skills were still the major issue for many students so that I had to keep close to help and encourage them all the time, the students' reading performances improved, when compared with the previous cycles but they still needed further practice. In summary, each group could read and translate the story fairly well (Level 2) according to their English background and potential.

Week 3 - Learning topic: '*Food and drink*'

The topic '*Food and Drink*' was designed for the students to learn and communicate with other people about food, fruits, vegetables and flavours of food.

In the first and second period, after greeting the students and reviewing the previous knowledge, I gave every group ten minutes to learn the necessary vocabulary and sentences themselves from the handout I had provided. After that I called each group to stand up and read aloud for me to listen and evaluate their reading performance.

I walked around the classroom to observe and provide help for the students. I could notice that many students wrote the pronunciation sound in Thai language above the vocabulary. This implied that many students still learned the new vocabulary by rote

and still could not combine and spell the words proficiently. However, from my observation, about ten to twelve students (mostly the girls) worked well and could read more than half of the vocabulary in handouts.

Next, I used pictures of fruit, vegetables, dessert, ice cream and beverages for the students to see and speak in English to describe whatever they had seen in the picture. I also employed questioning to encourage the students' reflections in English e.g. (I showed the picture and asked the students: What is it/this? What do/can you see in the picture? How many oranges/apples/...are there in the picture? Have you ever eaten pomelo/water melon/...?, Do you like it? What is your favourite fruit/food/...? Why? Please tell me about the fruit/food/dessert/... you see in the picture: What colour is it? How about its shape? etc.

Most students tried to respond to me though they had a problem with their restricted vocabulary. When I tried calling someone to interact with me, it appeared that some of them took time to think and many times they told me that they could not respond to me in English because they had forgotten the English words. However, I was not strict and allowed them to speak both English and Thai.

Periods three and four were arranged for the students to practise conversation both in pairs and in a group. At first, I told the students to get in pairs to practise asking and answering by using the set of questions I had asked them in the former two periods, such as: What is your favourite fruit/food/...?Why?, Have you ever eaten lychees/Japanese food/...? Could you please tell me how to make fried rice/green curry?... etc.

I had the students practise and rehearse the conversation freely in pairs for twenty minutes as I walked around the classroom to observe and help some couples. I also had the pairs switch every two or three minutes. After the time was up, a pair that was talking together had to perform their language rehearsal to me. The students collaborated well with the practice. The classroom was lively with the sound of the students rehearsing.

I assigned the students a further group work task to choose a kind of food or fruit they were interested in, then the group brainstormed to make sentences describing the food or fruit they had chosen. Lastly, every group had to present their work in front of the class.

From my observation, students worked actively well together and whenever they had any problems they did not hesitate to come to ask for my help and suggestions. However, I also did not neglect to provide special care for some needed groups to help them to finish the assignment.

The presentation was well done, each group's presenter gave a good performance up to their English skill level and the girls still made better presentations than the boys.

The last period was set for the regular reading and writing practice. Group collaboration had been encouraged. In this period I had the members of each group help each other to read out aloud and translate sentence by sentence. It took longer to finish reading the story but I intended to have the students practise reading and translating at the same time while I identified and corrected their mistakes. In summary, many groups actively worked and helped each other to attain the goal except for some students I still had to help to finish.

Week 4 - Learning topic: '*My family*'

The topic '*My family*' aimed for students to be able to communicate and exchange information about their family with other people.

At the outset, students were to learn and practise the basic vocabulary and conversation sentences which related to the learning topic. Firstly, I had all students learn and read aloud together the vocabulary from handouts I had provided (see appendix 8). Then, I had the girls and the boys again take turns to read vocabulary and sentences for me to listen and check their speech.

Most students read fairly well (level 2) depending on their individual skill except a few students whom I still had to help. In fact, before the research project was conducted I always had the students practise combining and spelling the words and I still had them practise in the extra time I set for them while I was implementing the project, but the less able students continued to progress slowly.

Later, I told the students to get in pairs to practise conversation from the sample dialogues in the handouts for fifteen minutes. At the end, each pair performed in front of the class. In general, students collaborated well to practise the conversation. The classroom was lively with the sound of the communication practice. The presentation was good depending on each pair's language competency.

In the third and fourth period, after greeting and reviewing the former vocabulary and conversation sentences, I called some students to stand up and asked them questions about their family e.g. How many people are there in your family? Do you have a brother/sister? How many brothers/sisters do you have? What does your father/mother do? Where do you live? How old are you? How old is your father/mother/brother/sister? etc.

After that I employed role-play for having every group to review the conversation of the topic I determined for them. I told them to create conversation and talk together freely about the determined topic.

I tried to have the students review the previous conversation in almost every period because I realised that our living environment did not support them to develop a communicative skill. As a result, the students did not have any incentive to speak English outside the classroom and they forgot it soon.

Next, the students were told to get in groups and circulate to rehearse asking and answering together about their family by applying the conversation sentences from the handouts given. The students rehearsed together actively and some pairs were randomly called to perform their conversation as well.

Further, students were assigned individual work to write an essay describing their family. I allowed the students to work and discuss together freely in their group or with friends in the other groups. I provided them twenty minutes to finish the work and then every one had to present their work in front of the class.

From my observation most students, except a few with a short-attention-span, worked actively until the time was up. The presentation standard depended on each student's language competency.

The last period was allocated for reading and writing practice. The students worked in groups to read and translate a short story in their workbook. After that I had every group present their work so as to evaluate their translation performance.

The students worked actively in groups and helped each other to read, look up the words in the dictionary and translate the story while I walked around to help and encourage them to keep on trying and working. This has developed a good rapport between the students and myself which was one of my current objectives.

Week 5 - Learning topic: '*Famous people and occupations*'

The topic '*Famous People and Occupations*' was set for the final week of the research project. It aimed for the students to learn and communicate about famous people: superstars (actors/actresses, singers, athletes), politicians, businessmen and their desirable occupations. In addition, students were also expected to be able to express opinions or share information about the duty or task of the job they were interested in.

After the session of language warm up and review in the first period, I introduced the main learning activity by showing pictures of famous people and people with different jobs: actors/actresses, singers, the prime minister, politicians, policemen, soldiers, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, pilots, farmers, businessmen, etc. I showed the picture and called some students in every group to stand up and asked them questions:

Who is she/he? What does the man/woman in the picture do? Can you tell me the duty/task of the doctor/pilot/...? What would you like to be in the future? Why?

The classroom atmosphere was good and most students paid attention and joined in the activity. I noticed that the discussion between the members in each group showed an effort to think, discuss and help each other prepare the answer for me. Thus, when I called the students to answer questions they could respond to me fairly well (level 2) up to each individual's language competence.

After that, I had students join in groups again to list the vocabulary about occupations in English as much as they could and later they presented the work to the class. From my observation, students could recall and present orally many jobs in English though they could not write those words correctly on the blackboard. This was good and accepted because at least students can utter the words in English.

In period two, I had the students play a competitive game of speaking out in English. I showed the pictures of people of each occupation then I had each group think and create sentences which related to the picture as much as they could then present verbally to me to assess and give them a score if the proposed sentences were acceptable. The activity was challenging for some students, but it was good that most of them presented actively to join in the activity.

In the third and fourth period, after I had the students review the former vocabulary and conversation sentences. I assigned them further individual work to select the occupation, which each student was interested in or would like to have in the future. Students had to write short essays telling about their interest or desired job and the reasons they were interested in or would like to have such a job. In the end, everyone presented their work in front of the classroom.

The students were allowed freely to work individually, in their group or even with the other groups depending on their needs. I could see all students actively working together, maybe, because they knew that they were to make a presentation in front of the class.

From my observation, from the beginning, many students wasted time selecting his/her interesting job. They could not make a decision about their desired occupation and then start writing a paragraph. I had to circulate around the classroom to give suggestions both for groups and individuals. After providing suggestions for the students, the situation was better and students worked until they finished.

The big issue for the students was they knew merely a few words in English, so they took a long time to write just a sentence. However, one thing that made me happy was that the students worked together and helped each other actively and whenever they needed help they did not hesitate to come to ask for my suggestions.

I had the students rehearse making a presentation together before I started calling each one to present in front of the class. In summary, the work and presentations differed according to the individual's language background. The atmosphere was pleasant as I had introduced games and songs to entertain the students whenever I noticed that they were losing attention from the learning program.

In the last period, the students and I together reviewed all the learning topics and content we had experienced in the fourth cycle. I summarized all I had the students learn and practise along the five weeks of the cycle. After that, I said "thank you" to the students for good collaboration throughout the implementation of the research project.

7.4 Changes made after research cycle three

- **The learning topics were determined from students' proposals.**

Every learning topic in research cycle four was based on students' proposals from their interests. I wanted to have the students learn anything they were interested in so as to respond to their needs and also to encourage them to make an effort to practise the target language actively and efficiently.

The proposed topics had been planned and applied through practical activities which were expected to develop the four language skills. In general, the students were active and collaborated well with all learning arrangements. However, according to the difference in students' English background and individual learning behaviour, in a short time, language improvement was achieved only by some students.

- **More focus on group collaboration to promote students' responsibility.**

Collaborative learning was used intensively in research cycle four. I always had the students learn and work together in groups with an expectation to develop both their teamwork responsibility and their language competence.

In summary, the students performed well in group collaboration; they worked together efficiently on each individual duty. However, the biggest obstacle for some students was their short working span which may be derived from their restricted language background and lack of autonomy. So, another important thing to facilitate the students' learning progress was to encourage language motivation and self direction.

- **More questioning applied to encourage students' authentic use of English and decrease their rote learning.**

I created more opportunity for students' authentic use of English by employing a questioning approach to have the students practise speaking with me in every learning topic. Questioning has been studied and used successfully by many researchers (Long and Sato, 1983; Brock, 1986; Van Lier, 1988; Lynch, 1991 as cited in Shomoossi, 2004) as a practical teaching technique for communicative purposes especially in teaching English as a second language (ESL).

However, the achievement of applying questioning to the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) depended on many factors: students' language background, students' preferable learning behaviour, students' language motivation and the students' living environment, etc.

Moreover, from my experience of conducting the research project, although the questioning method was able to encourage the students' attention, it was not the most effective method to develop their communication performance.

- **Increased proportion of reading and writing practice in every learning topic.**

In research cycle four, I allocated more time for the students to practise reading and writing in every learning topic. The practice had been conducted mostly by teamwork assignment which aimed for the students to learn and share ideas together to improve their literacy competence as well as to improve their group working skills.

I also helped the students by reviewing, examining and giving suggestions for their work. From my observation, the students' reading and writing ability improved continually since the research project had started except for a few less able students. However, it occurred at a different speed between the less and the more capable students.

7.5 Students' responses from the interview

A new group of five students that excluded the fifteen persons who had taken part in previous interviews, was invited to participate in the interview after the research cycle four had been completed. Firstly, I did the same as I had done in all the former cycles by creating a friendly atmosphere and explaining the purpose of the interview then asking them to express opinions freely and frankly.

7.5.1 Favourable responses

I asked the group to express opinions about changes they felt better than the traditional learning atmosphere. The students responded to me as follows:

a. Positive attitude to learning English

- A lively classroom atmosphere.

All students agreed that the learning atmosphere was better than previously. They enjoyed most of the learning activities I had arranged for them which changed the passive and sleepy classroom into an animated and friendly classroom.

บรรยากาศห้องเรียนแบบเดิมมันน่าเบื่อ ทำให้ไม่อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ง่วงนอนด้วย

(The traditional classroom atmosphere was boring it made the students not like to learn English and always felt sleepy.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G4)

บรรยากาศการเรียนเดี๋ยวนี้ดีกว่าแต่ก่อน มันสนุก มีกิจกรรม ได้ฝึกพูด ร้องเพลง เล่นเกม
ชอบเกือบทุกกิจกรรมที่ครูให้ฝึก

(Learning atmosphere at present is fun and better than previously, the former classroom was changed to be an active classroom. We liked most of activities you had us learn and practise.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G4)

- Authentic use of English.

The students explained that learning English by having an actual opportunity to practise speaking was useful for them as it could be used for communication with foreigners and for their work in the future. In addition, it made them have more confidence to speak English.

เรียนภาษาอังกฤษแบบได้ฝึกพูดมีประโยชน์ จะได้คุยกับชาวต่างชาติได้ เป็นประโยชน์ใน
การทำงานด้วย

(Learning English by having chances to practise speaking is useful for us to use it for communication with foreigner and for working in the future.)
(S1, S2, S5, G4)

พอเรียนแบบได้ฝึกพูดทำให้กล้าพูดภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(We dared speak English much more after you had us learn by authentic use of English.) (S1, S2, S5, G4)

- A practical teaching approach.

Students said that my teaching arrangement currently was better than previously. It had many practical activities (pair chatting, role play, practice listening from a tape, playing games, singing songs) for them to learn and practise with the English language.

ครูสอนแบบนี้ดี มีกิจกรรมเยอะแยะให้นักเรียนฝึกภาษา ดีกว่าแบบเดิม จะได้พูดได้ แล้วก็

สนุกด้วย

(Your new teaching style at present is good it has many activities for us to learn and practise the language. It is more enjoyable and useful for students than the previous method.) (S1, S2, S4, S5, G4)

เรียนแบบนี้ทำให้ไม่เครียด ไม่เบื่อเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

(The new teaching method could reduce stress and boring to learn English.)
(S1, S2, S3, S5, G4)

b. Student's development

I also asked the students to reflect on their improvement in research cycle four. They responded as follows:

- Teamwork skill.

The students said that learning English at present had facilitated them to learn and work in groups more effectively. It improved their teamwork skills of sharing duties and helping each other to finish the work assignment.

เดี๋ยวนี๊ พวกเราทำงานเป็นกลุ่มดีขึ้น เพราะครูให้ทำงานกลุ่มบ่อย ทำให้มีความรับผิดชอบมากขึ้น

(At present, we worked better in a group because most of the learning activities had been conducted by a workgroup assignment which could improve our individual responsibility.) (S1, S2, S4, G4)

กิจกรรมที่ครูให้ฝึก ทำให้นักเรียนได้ฝึกทำงานด้วยกัน ทำให้พวกเราช่วยกันทำงานจนเสร็จ

(Learning activity facilitated the students to practise working together which could develop our skill of helping each other to finish the work.) (S3, S5, G4)

- Confidence.

Students said that they had more confidence to speak English owing to the learning activity at present which provided them more opportunities to practise speaking. They dared much more to speak English with friends and with me (the teacher) without concerns about making grammar mistakes.

พอมีโอกาสดิ่ฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ทำให้กล้าพูดภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(Having more chances to practise speaking English had developed our confidence to use English for communication.) (S1, S5, G4)

กิจกรรมที่ครูให้ฝึกในเทอมนี้ ทำให้มั่นใจมากขึ้นในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ เพราะได้ฝึก

ในห้องเรียน

(Learning activities at present made me feel more confident to speak English because we had an opportunity to practise conversation in the classroom.) (S2, G4)

- Listening and speaking.

Two students thought that their listening skill at present was better than previously. They said they could start grasping what I had spoken in the classroom, but, in the case of speaking they thought they still needed to be developed further because, at present, they could just greet and interact in English by just the simple speaking sentences. (S2, S5, G4)

7.5.2 Students' criticism and suggested changes

a. Students' criticism

- Do not use English in real life.

The group asserted that they knew that English is important but in real life they did not have an opportunity to speak English outside the classroom at all, so the conversation they had practised will soon be forgotten. Some students in the group added they did not think that speaking English would be necessary for their career in the future.

ส่วนใหญ่พอเรียนเสร็จ ก็มักจะลืมที่ฝึกพูดในห้องเรียน เพราะไม่ได้พูดภาษาอังกฤษอีกเลย

(We always forgot what we had learned and practised in the classroom because we did not speak English at all in real life.) (S1, S3, S4, S5, G4)

คิดว่าอาชีพในอนาคต ไม่จำเป็นต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ และเวลาหรือโอกาสที่จะได้พูดกับ

ฝรั่งก็น้อยมาก

(I think that my career in the future does not necessitate the use English and my opportunity to speak English with foreigners is very few.) (S3, S4, G4)

As cited previously, most of my students' parents were working people and local employees coming from small agricultural merchant families who do not have any opportunities to speak English. Whatever they had said was influenced by their living

environment. No matter how much I tried to motivate them to make an effort to learn and practise English, they did not respond to my attempt as much as I expected.

- Could understand merely some parts the teacher had said or explained in English.

Students told me that they did not have a good English background, so they could understand just some parts of my speaking or explaining in English, and it, sometimes, made them bored and tired of learning English.

ผม/หนูไม่เก่งภาษาอังกฤษ เวลาครูพูดภาษาอังกฤษเลยไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ เพราะมันยาก เข้าใจแค่

บางคำ เลยทำให้ไม่ชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

(My English is not good, so it was difficult to understand what the teacher had said or explained in English. We can understand just a word or some parts of it. Thus, for some time it made me not like to study English.)

(S3, S4, G4)

Students' comments made me realise that, in the future, I must be more careful about my English speaking because, in reality, there might have been some students who could understand just some parts of my speaking or explaining. As English is not the first language used in our daily life, students need much more time to practise and develop their communicative skills. Therefore, I must always check students' understanding so as to provide help in accord with the student's need and capacity.

b. Students' suggestions

- Would like to learn with native English speaking teacher.

Students suggested that they would like to learn English with a native English speaking teacher because it would motivate their enthusiasm to learn and speak English.

อยากให้มีครูชาวต่างชาติมาสอน มันจะกระตุ้น/ช่วยให้นักเรียนอยากเรียนและอยากฝึกพูด

ภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(I would like the school to have Falang (native English speaking teacher) to teach English for students. It will encourage and motivate students to learn and speak more English language.) (S1, S2, S5, G4)

- Field trip.

Though I had outlined the reason for being unable to take the students to learn outside school for this semester, they still raised the issue of field trips.

อยากให้ครูพาไปเรียนข้างนอกห้องเรียนบ้าง เป็นการเปลี่ยนบรรยากาศ ทำให้ออยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น

(We would like the teacher to take us to go on a field trip. It will help changing the learning atmosphere and can encourage learning English.) (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, G4)

I accepted their good idea and asserted to them that it was possible for the future if I planned this activity in advance.

7.6 Reflections

7.6.1 Reflection on change

- Students' more active to learn.

I found from my observation that students paid more attention and were more actively involved in learning English after I had them propose the learning topics themselves. The proposed topics came from the students' interests and learning requirements, so they attracted them to focus longer on the language activities. This is supported by the principle of student centred learning that the students should have chances to choose

and determine their own learning preferences to develop their enthusiasm to learn and to fulfill their inquisitiveness.

- Teamwork improvement.

From my observation in research cycle four, students performed better in teams. By applying more questioning and encouraging the students' work in groups, I noticed that students were more active in discussing and working together. All this reassured me that questioning students on the basis of their group/pair work could help improve their participation and motivation.

In addition, utilising more questioning in the classroom had provided the practical chances for some students to practise and improve their English interactive skills as well.

- Good responses to the questioning approach

Students had responded well to the questioning approach employed to encourage collaborative thinking in their groupwork. In almost every learning period I utilised the questioning method to challenge the students to help each other to think and discuss together. I usually took photos into the classroom and had the students in each group practise set questions and also answer the questions which were set by other groups. This made an active climate of students brain-storming together in a group trying to set questions and also to respond to other groups' questions. It was clearly more enjoyable when I prepared some candies for rewarding the groups that had done well. Therefore, applying the questioning approach seemed to be one of the practicable methods I can use further to encourage collaborative thinking in my EFL classroom

- Students' lack of creative/lateral thinking.

This was also the result of the traditional teacher-centred approach or passive learning classroom that has been long established in Thai education. Students were always

treated only as knowledge receivers so their creative thinking performance was rather restricted.

However, it is fortunate that the provision of current Thai education is changing to focus on fostering the students' creative thinking. Therefore, I expect that this issue will be improved soon if students are continually trained with practical or appropriate arrangements.

- The individual student's language aptitude.

From my own teaching experience, I noticed that each student had different potential and capability to learn a foreign language. Some students performed well in language learning, they could learn and understand quicker and performed better than the other students of the same level while some students took so long to conceive and apply the knowledge for their work assignments.

My observation supported the notion of the individual learner's language aptitude and the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) which stated that each student has a different capacity to study and succeed within the learning arrangements.

- Students' attention span.

Students' attention span still needed to be improved further after the research project had ended. Although I noticed in research cycle four that the learning topics determined by the students' learning preferences could foster a more active classroom atmosphere, it could not extend the students' attention span, especially the boys, to focus on the language exercise as long as it should be. The students' short attention span still occurred regularly at the average of a little over ten minutes after I had the students start working. This was also a problem across all school subjects with these students and needs to be addressed by teachers collaboratively.

7.6.2 Reflection on research

7.6.2.1 Students' language performance

Table 8: Students' language performance (the comparison of the four cycles)

Items	Observed behaviours	Number of observed students (N=30) B = 16, G = 14							
		Spiral 1		Spiral 2		Spiral 3		Spiral 4	
		boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
1	Try to speak English when asking and answering questions with the teacher.	1	2	2	7	2	8	3	9
2	Being observed to put effort and can speak English with friends when working in a group.	0	2	0	5	0	5	0	5
3	Being observed to put effort and can create their own words or sentences for rehearsing speaking and presenting in front of the classroom.	0	2	2	8	2	8	3	9
4	Be able to understand content from listening practice and questioning in English fairly.	2	3	3	6	3	7	4	9
5	Participate in the language learning activities actively.	12	14	12	12	10	12	12	13
6	Be able to read, understand and tell the meaning of words, sentences or reading passages fairly.	2	5	3	8	3	9	4	10
7	Be able to write basic/simple words, sentences or short passage/essay in English.	3	7	3	8	3	9	3	10
8	Showed attempt and be able to finish work assignment within a determined time.	3	9	4	10	4	10	4	11
9	Completed work assignments with a good quality.	2	12	2	12	2	12	2	12
10	Focus on learning or practising the target language to finish the work assignment. (can control themselves to attain the goal)	2	6	2	7	2	7	2	9

- Students' listening and speaking performance (Items 1, 2 and 4)

At the end of research cycle four, twelve students (increased from ten in cycle three) were observed, to try to speak English when asking or answering with me, though not correctly. In addition, when the students were to present in front of the class, these twelve students (increased from ten) were observed to try to use English in the presentation though mixed with Thai language.

However, when the students worked in a group, I noticed just the one group of five students present a continual effort to speak English with their friends.

- Students' reading and writing performance (Items 6 and 7)

At the end of research cycle four, fourteen students (increased from twelve) performed as fair (Level 2, see students' ranks in appendix 7) in reading skill and thirteen students (increased from twelve) also performed at level 2 in writing skill.

Students still need further intensive practice in the future in these two skills of the students because it is very important for students in the EFL context to utilise such skills for taking the paper-based examination to enter and study in a higher education institution.

- Students' responsibility (Items 3, 5 and 8)

Students' self-directed learning and responsibility also improved a little with the girls. I noticed no improvement with the boys. Lack of responsibility among boys is a challenging issue both for me and the other secondary teachers at our school. It may be developed as a future collaborative research project.

- The Individual's work quality (Items 9 and 10)

The quality of students' work did not show improvement after finishing research cycle four. It was also the important issue which needed a practical solution in the future after the project.

Overall, the changes in the four cycles were more evident in relation to participation, climate of the classroom and general student satisfaction. I was unable to observe any marked improvement in language performance. However, the project was conducted only over one semester and others (significantly Offner, 1997) have observed that improved language performance takes time to achieve.

7.7 Conclusion of research cycle four.

The changes in cycle four were that the learning topics were developed from students' needs, more stress was placed on some language activities, more focus was placed on group collaboration, the questioning method was applied and more time was allocated for reading and writing practice. These changes resulted in good responses from the students and also showed some improvement by them. The classroom atmosphere, in general, was active. However, students still needed help to improve their language performance.

From my experience of undertaking this research project for a semester, the adoption of the communicative approach for changing and developing my teaching and for improving the students' English performance had created a lively learning atmosphere and a positive attitude which were the factors to promote or motivate effort to learn English. However owing to the students' low background in English, they required much support to make their language progress.

However, in my school's context, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and the students rarely have a real chance to use English for communication with any people or foreigners. In addition, the common testing system both at school and for entering a higher educational institution is still based on a written test which requires good literacy skill. Therefore, in my opinion, the most appropriate teaching arrangement particularly for my classroom context should be flexibility by mixing many practical teaching approaches.

In short, learning the foreign language is a time-consuming practice and experience and also needs the students' to have a lot of motivation to achieve their target language goal. Therefore, I and the other teachers in the school must keep on helping the students to improve their English performance further in the future.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the answers to the research questions, implications and recommendations from my research findings.

8.1 The answers to the research questions.

The research project had the main question as “How can the student-centred (CLT) approach be employed to improve students’ English learning performance at Bamrung Wittaya School?” with three sub-questions as follows:

1. What are the outcomes of implementing the student-centred learning (CLT) approach in my class?
2. What are factors that support or hinder the development of students’ language competence?
3. What approach should be taken to teach English at Bamrung Wittaya School in the future?

8.1.1 The outcomes of implementing student-centred learning (CLT approach) in my classroom.

8.1.1.1 The outcomes on research study

This section will present the outcomes of the research study summarised from the analytical findings of all four research cycles. However, firstly, the major research events and the outcomes will be outlined. This research study, though small in scale, was very useful to enhance my knowledge and capability as a teacher, to learn to apply and adopt the new teaching approach and also gradually improve the students’

target language competence. It was a first and crucial step as a school's flagship program to make an effort to change from the traditional teaching approach (Grammar-translation) to the practical new one (CLT).

At the outset of research cycle one, I tried to build up the new classroom learning atmosphere by changing from the traditional teaching and passive learning style to start having the students practise speaking English with the common communicative topics: greeting; find someone who ...; myself; introducing friends to each other; what does your friend look like? etc. I encouraged the students to try to speak English, even just a word or short sentences, for interacting with each other and the teacher without being afraid of making mistakes. However, I still maintained having the students learn the basic grammar in the lessons as, in my opinion, it was important and necessary for them to learn and have knowledge about the grammar. In our living environment students do not use English as a medium of communication, but, mostly, for taking the examination and studying at a higher level. Moreover, I also tried to change my role from a knowledge giver and classroom controller or commander to be a helper and facilitator of the students' target language learning and practised promoting a good rapport between the students and myself.

It appeared after the implementation of the first cycle that my attempt could start making a more lively learning climate than in the past. However, from my observation, the students' language performance in research cycle one had not noticeably improved. Moreover, reflecting on the data from the first cycle made me to realise that having the students learn and practise the target language with too many topics per week and also the grammar provided major obstacles for them to attain the learning goals.

In the second cycle, I adjusted my teaching arrangements, in accordance with the data from research cycle one, to promote students' confidence and speaking practice by reducing the learning topics per week as well as the grammar content. I also encouraged and motivated students to try to speak English by employing more animated learning activities: role-play; pair-chatting, group work, practising listening to the cassette tape spoken by an English native speaker, using games and songs,

making a presentation in front of the class and using pictures from magazines, brochures and leaflets for the language practice.

From my observation and the interview, most students offered good responses to the new approach (CLT). They collaborated well in almost every learning activity despite their restricted English. Moreover, the students also dared to approach me and ask for help after the classroom atmosphere was changed by the teacher and students' good rapport.

After research cycle two was completed, most of the students started to show signs of improvement especially in confidence and also some students performed better in speaking English after they had more opportunities to practise the target language. Moreover, I noticed that the students were happier and more active in learning English when focused on grammar.

In the third cycle, students' individual conversations were promoted. Apart from having the students practise interaction with each other from the sample dialogues in the handouts, I tried to challenge and motivate them to build up their own words or sentences and to rehearse speaking both in pairs and in groups. I realised that this was not easy for the students, but it was good to see that quite a few of them tried to fulfill the tasks, and, of course, I did not stop providing help and taking care of some students in need.

I noticed that almost half of the students showed more confidence to speak English than at the beginning of the research project. The students, in research cycle three, showed less reluctance or fear of making mistakes in speaking English. This made me feel more confident in applying and utilising the appropriate teaching approach to develop both my students' language competence and myself as a professional teaching practitioner.

In the fourth cycle, the learning topics were set to respond to the students' requirements. I provided an opportunity for the students to propose their interests or favourite learning topics. Moreover, in research cycle four, besides having the

students experience the animated language arrangements as in the previous cycles, I employed more questioning and cooperative learning to promote the students' authentic use of English both by individuals and in groups. The students also had been advised for sometimes to apply the language learning strategies (LLSs) to support their target language practice and enquiry.

In summary, I was impressed by observing many students change from passive to active learners. They could work well together in a group. A few more students, in research cycle four, expressed more confidence in speaking English and also having a positive attitude to learning the language. They collaborated well in most activities I had them experience which obviously changed the classroom atmosphere to be better than in the past.

As was outlined above, on the whole, the research project resulted in improvements in many aspects both for the students and myself (as a teacher and researcher). Thus, the research outcomes are summarised as follows:

a. Change in classroom learning atmosphere

Classroom atmosphere was changed noticeably after I started conducting the research procedures. All learning activities which I arranged for the students to learn and practise the target language (role-play, games, singing songs, pair-chatting, group working [cooperative learning], quiz game/questioning and a presentation in English in front of the class) had resulted in animated and lively learning and changed students from passive to active learners.

From my observation and experience in the past, the traditional classroom atmosphere had caused passive learning behaviour. The former teaching was managed and controlled absolutely by myself while students just listened to me describing the subject and imparting linguistic knowledge and did the exercises they were assigned. The relationship between the students and myself was rather formal. Most students did not dare to ask me to repeat whatever they did not understand during the learning periods or exercises. Thus, many students asserted, from the interview session after

each research cycle, that they did not like the previous learning atmosphere because it was stressful and boring (see p.74-77).

I was happy when students expressed from the interview that the research project was able to create a pleasant and supportive learning climate and they preferred it to the past (see students' quotations in pages 78-80, 111-113, 145-148, 180-181).

In addition, a friendly learning climate had made the students begin to dare to come to me and ask questions when they did not understand or required my suggestions or help.

I agreed with Ruso (2007) that a comfortable learning atmosphere is one of the important factors to foster students' proficiency in learning English. A lively or enjoyable learning atmosphere will promote the target language learning. In addition, this research project made me realise that teachers should provide an opportunity for students to express opinions about our teaching arrangements. It is very useful to be aware of students' needs to continually analyse, adjust or develop our teaching arrangements.

b. Students' positive attitude toward learning English

Before the research project was implemented, most students had a negative attitude to learning English. Students expressed opinions from the interview session that they felt English was difficult and boring. In the past, they could not learn English successfully because they were unable to understand grammar and the subject content that the teacher presented to them. It had made them dislike English (see students' quotations in pages 74-75 and see in index 4.1 'a sample of interview after finish a research cycle one' Q. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 p. 247).

I concluded that students' previous negative attitude to learning English resulted from their bad experiences in many aspects: their unsuccessful learning in the past, the teachers' teaching techniques and styles, the teaching aims which focused too much on grammar and literacy skill, unfavorable learning atmosphere, lack of practical teaching materials, etc.

However, it appeared, at the end, that the research project started to change students' attitude to English learning. The data from the interview after finishing each research spiral showed that students started to have a positive attitude especially to the new teaching arrangements. All students expressed the view that the new teaching approach which they learned and practised the target language made a lively learning atmosphere. It made them happier to learn and enjoy the learning activities than in the past (see students' quotations in pages 78-80, 111-115, 145-148, 180-181 and see in index 4.1 'a sample of interview after finish a research cycle one' Q. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 p. 247). Moreover, the communicative approach also changed students' former perception that English learning faced them with the difficult and ill-favoured grammar lessons. During the research implementation, I could notice that if students were satisfied and enjoyed both the learning activities and atmosphere, they would express eagerness or willingness to participate happily in the language activities arranged for them.

Having a positive attitude is perceived to be one of the important variables which encourages and promotes students' learning effort and success. It was a good thing for me as a teacher and researcher to know that my research project could promote the students to have a positive attitude to English learning which I hoped would support them to learn English better in the future. From my experience I agreed that whenever the students have a good view of a subject they will enjoy learning and put in effort to achieve the learning goal of the target language.

c. Students' confidence to speak English

At the end of this project, after students were offered opportunities to practise speaking English, I observed that some students' confidence to speak English had improved compared with before the project. There have been three to four students, although with a limited level, who clearly dared to speak English with their friends whenever I had the class practise conversations without being afraid of making mistakes while the other students started to risk speaking English. Therefore, when the project was finished, it was good that I had found about four to five students who

not only had more confidence to speak English but they also had improved to be able to speak longer sentences more correctly and fluently (**see table 8, p.189**).

Learning a foreign language especially for communicative purposes is time-consuming. It is a skilful performance for which students need opportunities for practice both inside and outside the classroom to develop their speaking. As Offner (1997) said:

language learning on the road to fluency is a long process that cannot be hurried. Keeping a positive attitude and a steady schedule is more important than any immediate results (p.2).

My research project was conducted merely for a semester, so I did not expect that students would be able to speak English fluently but, at least, this project was the initial step of my effort to change or adjust my own teaching to provide opportunities for students to learn English by aiming at communicative purpose.

I believe that if students were given more opportunities to practise speaking English continually, their confidence to interact with English will gradually improve. The more the students have opportunities to practise speaking English, the more confident speaking skill will be developed (**see students' quotation in pages 114, 149, 182**).

This research project was also the flagship project of English teaching at Bamrung Wittaya School for the future, which will tend to focus much more on the communicative purpose. It means that all English language teachers will have to develop themselves to use English as a medium of teaching as much as they can. However, the most important thing is that students' needs should be addressed and their confidence to speak English should be promoted.

d. Students' Language Performance.

Whilst student participation generally improved, learning outcomes did not show marked improvement. As **Table 8 (p.189)** shows, many students improved activity

and participation with only girls in the group showing improvement in work performance by completing assignments in a timely fashion at an acceptable standard. Whilst I can take comfort from Offner's (1997) assertion that a positive attitude is more important than immediate results, improved performance will have to be addressed in the future. This is an issue that attention to the following factors may improve.

8.1.1.2 The outcomes for the researcher

a. My confidence to use a communicative approach

This research project aimed at developing both myself as a teacher and the students' language performance. From the outset, the project was sparked by my concern and skepticism about the result of my traditional teaching styles which resulted in ineffective learning by students.

In the past before the project was conducted, students scarcely had opportunities to practise speaking English both inside and outside the classroom. It was because the goals of my former teaching were focused mainly on students' grammatical and literacy competency. Those, in fact, stemmed from both my former language learning experience and also from our living environment in which English speaking was not used or at all necessary in our daily life. Therefore, I was not surprised to find at the starting point of the project, that most of the students could speak only a few words of English and could not speak English longer than for one or two sentences.

However, my confidence, of this change, was increased after the project had been implemented and I started to see positive outcomes happen both on, even though, some students' learning practice and performance as well as the classroom atmosphere.

The change of teacher style was also felt. Some students mentioned, during the interview session, their stress and unhappiness stemming from the previous teaching and learning atmosphere. They commented that my former teaching which focused

too much on grammar and language content as well as my serious expectation on their language performances had demotivated students' language learning acquisition. However, they asserted that the new teaching approach could help solve many of these problems.

Besides a pleasant and interactive learning atmosphere, my changed-role from a knowledge giver and director to a supporter, facilitator and counsellor was able to promote and encourage a friendly learning atmosphere. By doing so, most of the students were satisfied with the new learning atmosphere and also my new role. This has resulted in an improvement of some students' language performance.

All good comments that students expressed during the interview session about the new teaching approach showed clearly that they were satisfied and happy with it.

8.1.2 Factors to support or hinder the development of students' language competence.

This section addresses research question number two: what are factors to support and hinder the development of students' language learning performance especially within my own teaching context. Those factors were as follows:

a. Factors to support the development of students' language performance

From my experience and observation in all the research cycles, I summarised the factors which support the development of students' language performance as follows:

- Motivation

Motivation is an important factor in second/foreign language learning achievement (Dornyei, 1994; Norris-Holt, 2001; Tanaka, 2005; Jun-kai, 2008). It helps promote and encourage students to put their effort to learn and practise speaking English. Liu (2007) stated that motivation enhances second/foreign language acquisition.

In the past, I taught the students by focusing too much on the grammar-translation approach. I always talked to the class like a lecturer and acted like a dictator. The learning atmosphere was passive. Such teaching style, according to Rui (2004), had a negative effect on the students' language learning acquisition.

In this research project, I applied intrinsic motivation with my students. I tried to build up a *pleasant atmosphere* (see in p.63 paragraph 1,3, p.66 paragraph 2, p.67 paragraph 1, p.68 paragraph 1, p. 69 paragraph 2 of research cycle 1; p.98 paragraph 4, p.103 paragraph 3 of research cycle 2; p.128 last paragraph, p.129 paragraph 2, p.131 paragraph 2 of research cycle 3; p.161 paragraph 4, p.164 paragraph 3, p.170 paragraph 5 of research cycle 4) *and activities* (see p.63 paragraph 4, p.66 paragraph 4, p.67 paragraph 2, p.68 paragraph 4, p.71 paragraph 1 of research cycle 1; p.98 paragraph 3, p.100 paragraph 1, p.101 paragraph 4, p.102 paragraph 2, p.103 paragraph 2, p.105 paragraph 2 of research cycle 2; p.129 paragraph 2, p.131 paragraph 2, p.136 paragraph 2 of research cycle 3; p.160 paragraph 2, p.162 paragraph 2, p.164 paragraph 3-4, p.166 paragraph 2, p.170 paragraph 3 of research cycle 4) *which support and encourage students' real use of English as well as to change my role as a facilitator of the students' language learning experiences* (see p.98 paragraph 1, p.99 paragraph 1, p.101 paragraph 2, p.102 paragraph 4, p.104 last paragraph of research cycle 2; p.129 last paragraph, p.134 paragraph 1 of research cycle 3; p.162 paragraph 3 of research cycle 4). *I gave cheerful words or compliments* (see p.100 paragraph 1 of research cycle 2; p.134 paragraph 2 of research cycle 3; p.162 paragraph 1, p.165 paragraph 2 of research cycle 4) *and also rewarded the students* (see p.67 paragraph 2, p.69 paragraph 1, p.71 paragraph 1 of research cycle 1; p.128 paragraph 4, p.129 last paragraph, p.134 paragraph 2 of research cycle 3) *when they performed well in the language activities I had them practise. This motivated the students to learn and practise English actively.*

- Practical teaching materials

Using a variety of practical teaching materials such as cassette tapes (see p.100 paragraph 1, p.103 paragraph 3 of research cycle 2; p.133 paragraph 1, p.136 paragraph 1 of research cycle 3), CD songs, VCD, flash cards, pictures (see p.101 paragraph 4 of research cycle 2; p.131 paragraph 2 of research cycle 3; p. 159

paragraph 3, p.161 last paragraph, p.163 paragraph 4, p.164 paragraph 4, p.166 paragraph 2, p.169 last paragraph, p.170 paragraph 3 of research cycle 4), etc. promoted and encouraged students' interest and eagerness to learn and practise the target language. In this project, whenever I used the cassette tapes or CD songs to have the students practise listening and speaking and also the pictures or flash cards to encourage the language use, many students presented more attention and enthusiasm to learn and practise the language than the previous method of chalk and talk (just listening to the teacher's outline and doing the exercises).

This research project also encouraged me, as a teacher and researcher, to be more active in thinking and preparing both the practical learning activities and instruments for the students. In addition, I had to work and reflect rigorously on the outcomes of my efforts to improve both my teaching practice and the students' learning outcomes.

b. Factors hindering the development of students' language competence

In my teaching context, there were barriers to motivation on English language learning which affected students' learning efficiency. The factors that hindered the students from learning English were identified in this project as follows:

- Students' negative attitude on learning English

I realised that my former teaching which aimed mainly at the students' achievement in grammar and reading had created a negative attitude to English learning. It made the students to feel that learning the English language was difficult, and so they did not like to study this subject (**see students' quotations in pages 74-76, in index 4.1 'a sample of interview after finish a research cycle one' Q. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 p. 247).**

After the research project was implemented, however, the classroom atmosphere was changed and the students were happy with the learning activities that I had arranged for them: playing games, singing songs, pair-chatting, role-playing, etc. The students mostly participated in the language activities actively (**see students' quotations in pages 78-80, in index 4.1 'a sample of interview after finish a research cycle one' Q. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16 p. 247).**

- Students' low literacy and low self-esteem

Quite a few of the students in my class were slow learners and had a weak language learning background, thus they always thought that they might not be able to learn English successfully. This caused an inactive and hopeless attitude towards making an effort to learn and achieve the learning goal.

From my observation while conducting the research project, I found that the low literacy students especially in reading performance also made for slow progress in communicative skill. It was because every time when I had the students review the conversation dialogue in the given handouts as homework, many of them did not finish the assignment because they could not read and pronounce English by themselves.

However, I did not neglect this issue although I was employing the communicative approach in my project. I set some extra time for the students to practise reading after a lunch time but as I had other duties and responsibilities in the school one semester did not give enough time to show marked improvement. Many students, as a result, did not improve in reading by the end of the project.

Reading and writing skills are very important for the students who learn English especially in the EFL context where they have few opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom. Therefore, besides improving the students in communicative skill, I also needed to help develop their reading performance at the same time.

- Cultural barriers

Being afraid of 'losing face', feeling shy or being laughed by the other students when making mistakes is another factor that obstructed students from daring to practise speaking out in English whenever they were not sure about the right words or sentences to express an opinion or interact both with me and their friends. This norm had much influence on many students' learning behaviour especially in my teaching

context. It makes the students sit still, keep silent and look down at the desk. They do not dare to look at the teacher when they were asked questions or were asked to express or share ideas in English because they were nervous and afraid to be called to speak out. Actually, such behaviour also happens with many Thai teachers including myself when we were in the same situation as the students. It is because we were taught in this way and to be confident or depend only on the right or perfect answer.

Therefore, while implementing the research project I tried to change this manner by telling the students that I did not mind the mistakes they made as we (the students and I) are not native speakers of English. I told them that even the teacher (myself) cannot speak English perfectly without making mistakes. I cheered and praised some couples when I had seen them try to practise speaking out in English. This gave a better outcome and more students attempted to practise speaking English.

- Students lack of opportunity to use the target language

In the past, I did not teach English for communicative purposes. Therefore, students scarcely had any opportunity to practise speaking English both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, though this project aimed at the students' communicative performance by having them practise speaking as much as they could, in their real life outside the classroom students did not use English at all (**see students' quotations in pages 77, 81, 82, 116, 151, 183 and in index 4.1 'a sample of interview after finish a research cycle one' Q. 13, 14 p. 259, 260**)

Though the research project did start to build up students' positive attitudes toward English learning, in fact, both the school's context and students' family environment did not support or encourage their speaking practice. Therefore, students' communicative performances improved only rather slowly and I had to have the students review the previous learning topics in almost every learning period.

8.1.3 A practicable English teaching scheme for the secondary students at Bamrung Wittaya School.

In this section I would like to present my idea for a new English teaching approach for the secondary students at Bamrung Wittaya School. After my research project was completed, I was convinced that the suitable and practical English teaching for the secondary students at Bamrung Wittaya School should be based on the student-centred learning approach by aiming both at students' communicative and literate competency. This is because most of our secondary students had a poor performance in all four language skills. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to maintain having the students practise and develop their literacy skills to meet the standard of the national examination and learn further in a higher level.

In addition, though I found that applying a communicative approach could evidently foster students' confidence to speak English and start to have a positive attitude toward learning such language, most of the students' communicative performance did not show clear progress when the research project was finished. Thus, in reality, there were other variables: students' English background, the school context and the students' living environment that did not support and motivate their real use of English.

However, as a foreign language teacher in the educational reform era, I realise that the effective teaching and learning should be administered by applying a variety of practical interactive teaching arrangements in order to create an active and enjoyable atmosphere for encouraging and motivating students to learn and practise the target language attentively.

Below are my proposed English teaching processes for the secondary students at Bamrung Wittaya School.

a. Knowing the students' learning background and styles

Firstly, it is necessary for teachers to know about the students' learning backgrounds and styles to prepare and plan, in advance, the appropriate learning experiences for them. If the teachers have information about the students' learning performance, it will be an advantage to build the teaching arrangements and evaluation methods in accord with their capacity and performances.

In my case, the project was conducted in term two, so I had already known the students' learning backgrounds from both the learning transcripts after they finished grade six and their learning outcomes in the first semester. However, in the case of the students' preferred learning styles which were not easy to notice in the traditional classroom, the research project helped me to learn, by observing, and adjust my teaching continually as to respond their needs. Therefore, in my opinion, the need for teachers to be flexible and be able to adjust their approach after the program starts is also important for successful teaching.

b. Employing a variety of teaching approaches or techniques

The teacher's teaching approach and technique is a very important factor to encourage and promote students' language learning. The foreign language teachers should be able to employ a variety of teaching approaches and techniques especially animated and authentic language-use activities for suitable language learning situations. In my project, I tried to have the students experience a variety of interactive and participative language activities: pair-chatting, role-play, group work (cooperative learning), questioning, practising listening from the cassette tapes, learning outside the classroom (topic 'my school' in week four of research spiral one), writing practice, playing games and singing songs to promote both the students' communicative and literacy competence.

By doing so, it resulted in a positive outcome. Most of the students cooperated well with the learning activities I had arranged for them. The classroom atmosphere was changed to be clearly livelier than in the past

c. Applying the motivational strategies

The teacher should be able to apply a variety of motivational strategies within different situations so as to promote efficient language learning. Below are motivational strategies I had employed in the project which can also be applied in the other foreign language classrooms.

- Building up a supportive learning atmosphere

A lively or enjoyable learning atmosphere can promote and encourage students' learning eagerness. The teacher should realise that students can learn efficiently in a relaxed climate. In my project, I tried to have the students enjoy learning the target language by providing them with a variety of learning activities. I also did not strictly correct students or require perfect performance as I had done formerly. The result was satisfactory according to the students' responses from the interview.

- Teacher and students' good rapport

A good relationship between the teacher and the students can foster or facilitate productive language teaching and learning. It can decrease students' anxiety and stress when they were called to answer questions, give opinions or to show their English performance in front of the class. In addition, students also dared to ask the teacher when they did not understand what the teacher had taught them.

In my project, I tried to change my role from the previous time and by treating the students in a friendly way I usually talked and smiled with them both inside and outside the classroom.

- Using practical teaching resources/materials

Using practical teaching materials can promote and encourage efficient language learning. In my project, besides employing a variety of learning activities: pair-chatting, group-working, singing songs and playing games, role-play, etc., I always

utilised the cassette tape, CD, pictures and flash-cards as my common teaching resources for promoting students' learning and practising the target language. From my observation, utilising such resources was clearly able to create and promote the students' active learning and practising the target language as well as a lively atmosphere different from the past.

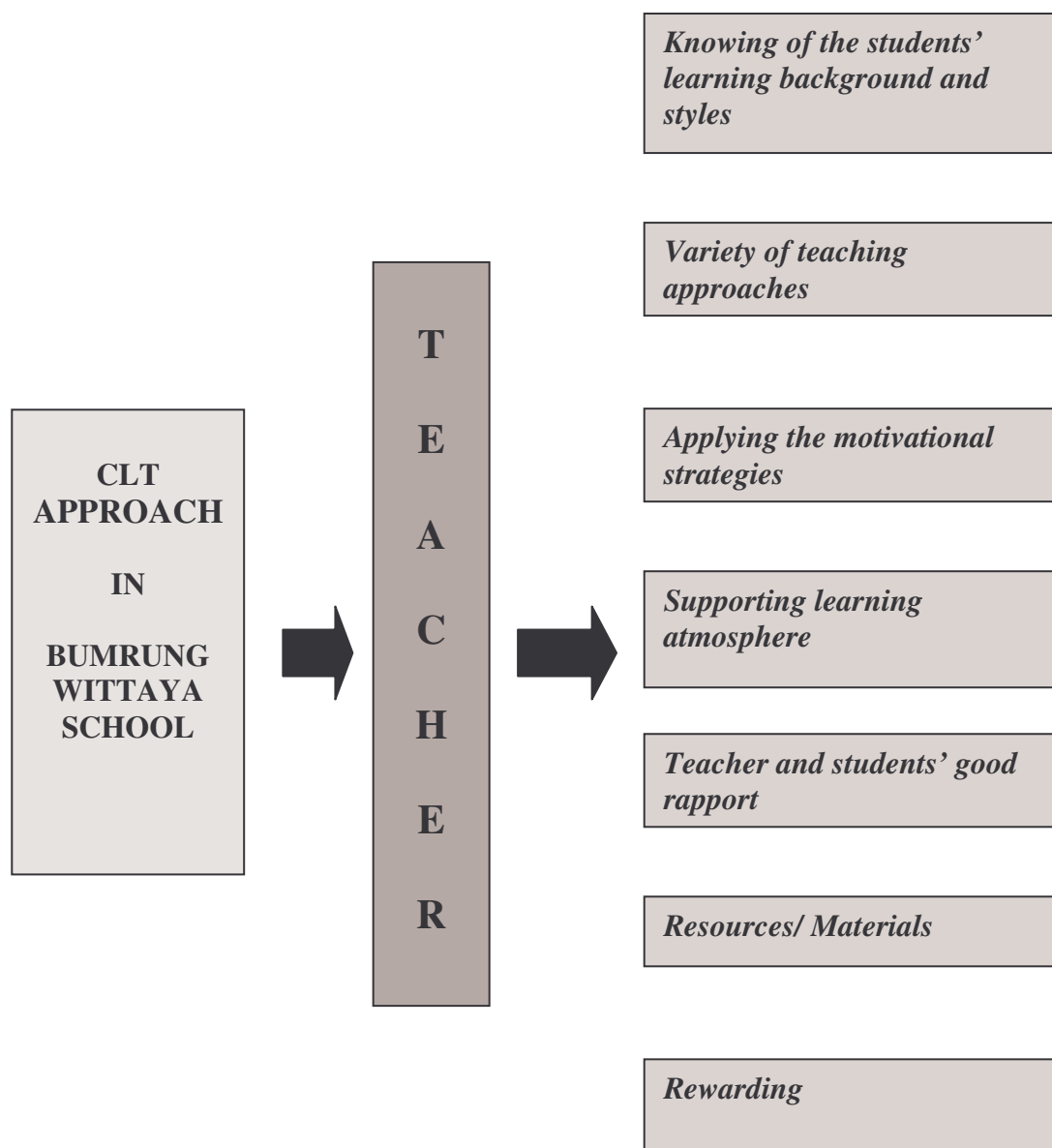
However, there were practical and interesting options (computer, seeing a movie and a field trip) that I could not make use of in this project due to the school's resources, constraints and system of operation. I hope that, in the future, these practical resources will be available and used commonly.

- Rewarding

Rewarding is one of the effective motivational strategies I used successfully with my students. As English is not the first language used in our daily life and necessary for the students to use for interacting with anyone, therefore, I had to employ rewards to promote students' active practice and achieve both the target language learning assignments and goals.

However, I also tried to infuse the students to realise the importance of English by telling them the benefits or advantages to the people who can speak foreign languages.

Figure 1 Approaches should be taken to teach English at Bumrung Wittaya School in the future



8.2 Implications of the research project for English language teaching.

This research study, although small in scale and conducted only in a short time, has produced some interesting and significant results which are expected to make a contribution to the effective improvement of teaching English both at Bamrung Wittaya School and, may be, the other schools which find themselves in a similar situation.

Firstly, the results of this research study showed that the teacher's teaching approach and techniques were important variables which affected the learning atmosphere and also the students' learning behaviour. Therefore, as a teacher, if we would like to see the development in the students' language performance, the teacher should be able to utilise a variety of teaching approaches and techniques to support students' learning preferences. Moreover, a good teacher should learn how to motivate students to learn and also to train them to use learning strategies which are suitable for each student.

In addition, Bilash, et al (2004) mentioned that there are factors influencing Thai teachers' abilities to adopt CLT in their classroom. They are first: teachers must understand CLT, second: teachers must be willing to commit a great number of out of class hours, third: teachers need to learn (be taught and supported) to overcome doubts and limitations in their beliefs about teaching and learning, about their students and themselves, fourth: teachers require a number of key supports in order to succeed at implementing communicative activities in their classroom, fifth: teachers require time to prepare materials for interactive activities, a reduced teaching load, sixth: collaborative action research provides an opportunity for professional development at a deep level.

Therefore, if we need to see progress both in the teacher and the students in English teaching and learning, those arguments above must be considered carefully and adopted seriously and appropriately for each school's context.

8.3 Recommendations

In this section, I propose some recommendations for effective English teaching at Bamrung Wittaya School. The most important idea here is blending language learning into students' lives as in the following figure.

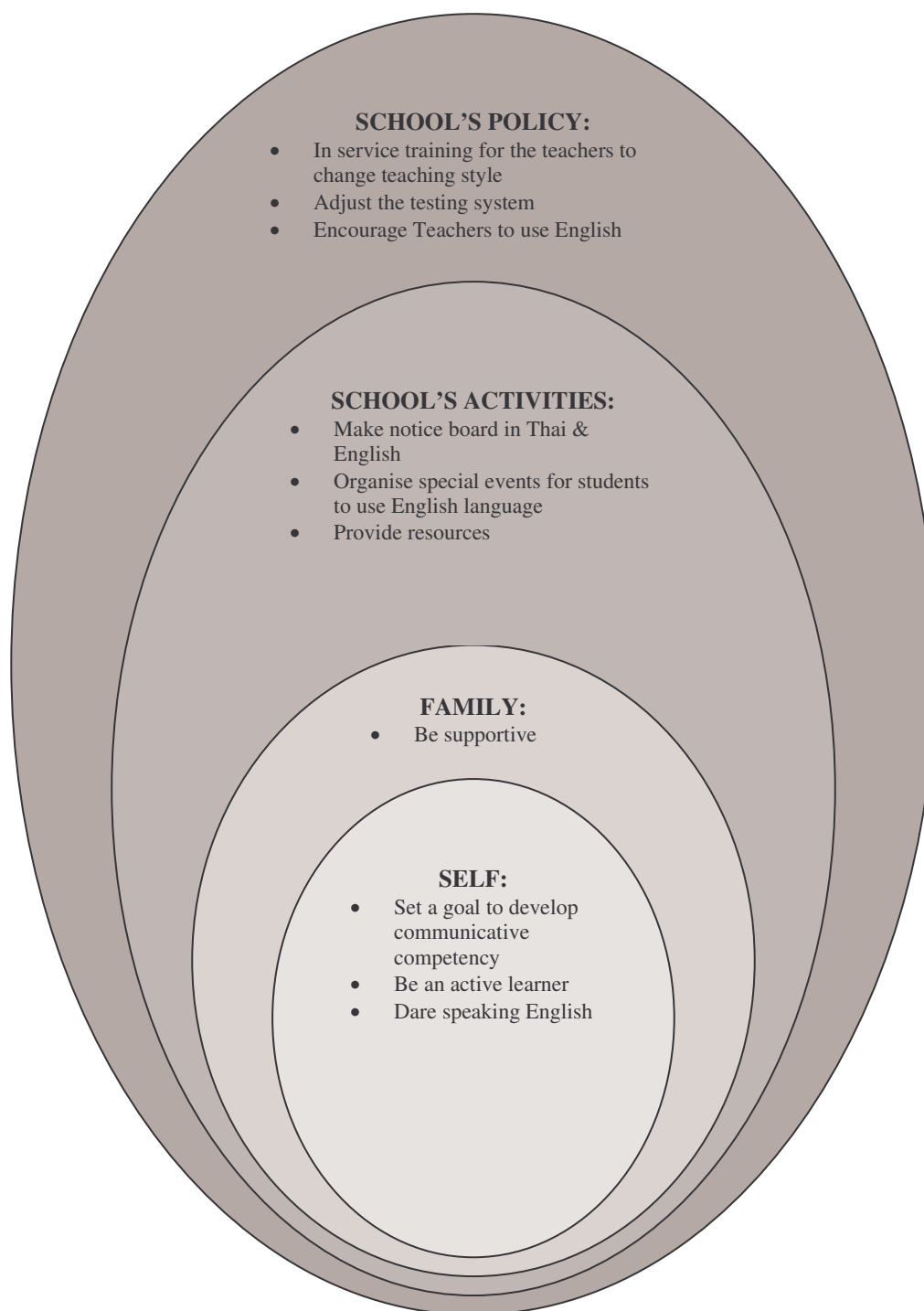


Figure 2 Blending language learning into students' lives

1. Employing the communicative approach from the start of schooling

As we perceive that the communicative skill is time consuming, if we want to promote or develop students' interactive performance, students at Bamrung Wittaya School should learn English by aiming at communicative competency from the start of their schooling. In the near future we cannot deny that English will have much influence on Thai people not only in a big city but also in a suburban area, thus the school should prepare the students for this time.

Furthermore, to adopt a communicative approach successfully the school's administrator should encourage all Thai teachers to speak English in the classroom as much as possible to foster the development of both the teachers' and students' communicative skills. At present, all English language teachers at Bamrung Wittaya School use Thai as a medium of teaching. Many teachers, actually, are the same as the students, cannot communicate in English, for they also do not use English in their daily life. Therefore, unless we have good English speaking teachers, we cannot employ a communicative approach successfully.

2. A supportive environment or activities

The school's environment can be set or adjusted to promote foreign language learning. For example, all the school's information boards and signs can be written both in Thai and English.

In addition, the school can regularly organise special events to provide opportunities for the students to practise using English for communication such as an English camp, an English movie festival, inviting a native English speaker as a guest, a field trip, an English contest or competition, etc.

3. In-service teacher training

The school should set up a training programme or even provide an opportunity for the teachers to attend an extra training course outside school. The important factors to

hinder the successful adoption of the CLT approach in the school are the teachers' lack of understanding of such an approach and also the teachers' level of communicative performance. All teachers including myself still need more practice in listening to and speaking in English. Therefore, support from the school will encourage all the foreign language teachers to apply the CLT approach confidently, and in consequence will result in overall language improvement both in the teachers and students.

4. The adjustment of the testing system

The testing system in foreign language learning both at school and for entering a higher level should be adjusted to focus more on students' communicative performance. The traditional paper-based test should be reduced if we want to have all foreign language teachers apply seriously a communicative approach in the classroom which will accord with the goal of the national curriculum.

5. Sufficient teaching and learning resources

The school should have sufficient practical and necessary resources such as televisions, CD or cassette tape player, DVD player, computer, etc. to support the efficient learning and practice of the target language.

If the students have chances to learn and practise the target language with a variety of practical resources, I think their language performance will be improved at last.

8.4 Strengths and weaknesses of this research project

The implementation of this research project provided great benefits to me as a researcher and teacher to learn and develop my work but, as it was my first time to apply the CLT approach, the research project had strengths and weaknesses which I acknowledge in order to improve foreign language teaching and research in the future.

8.4.1 The research strengths

It was not easy to reflect on the strengths of my research implementation. The application of the CLT approach might be common practice in other school contexts, but this research project covered the first pilot project of my school. Therefore, the strengths I present below are specific to my school context.

a. The first strength of this research project was that it was the first attempt to conduct an action research for adopting the CLT approach in my school which, consequently, could gradually help encourage other foreign language teachers to start employing the CLT approach in their classroom. In addition, as I was also the school assistant principal, this research project provided a model for other teachers to follow or even improve when they undertake their own research studies later.

This project, moreover, was able to lead and encourage other English language teachers to dare to start using English, though only a little at present, as a medium of teaching in the classroom which was very useful both for the teachers as a development in their teaching practice and for the students to have the practical opportunities to learn and practise using English for communicative purposes.

b. The second strength was the aims of the research study which included the improvement of students' learning performance as well as developing my teaching practice.

The aims, which originated from my intention to help the students to learn English more efficiently, encouraged me to start trying to learn and seek a variety of practical and productive teaching activities to fulfil my expectations. They pushed me to develop myself to work as a professional teacher as well as to gain more confidence and skill of English teaching which accorded well with the goal of action research that promoted the combination of theory and practice.

8.4.2 The research weaknesses

Apart from the strengths, the research weaknesses were carefully examined and identified for perceiving and seeking for a better improvement in the follow research study.

a. The first weakness of this research project was connected with the methodology used for collecting and analysing the research data. In this project I utilised merely a qualitative method to collect and analyse the data.

My reason for utilising merely a qualitative method in this project was that I intended to give priority, according to the features of CLT approach, to the students' communicative performance as well as their learning attitude and classroom atmosphere, thus I thought that such a method was suitable for my purpose of conducting the research project. In addition, I thought that a paper-based (pre-post) test or any statistical measurement of a mean score and t-test was not appropriate for the project.

However, at the end of the project, I have learned and acknowledged that the research outcomes will be more creditable and reliable if I employed both the qualitative and quantitative method in correspond well together. This issue will be reviewed and taken into account for my future research implementation.

b. The second point to be considered as weakness of this research project was that I failed to plan initially to have the students learn and practise using LLSs to support and enhance their language learning performance.

In fact, at the beginning of the project I did not have sufficient knowledge about LLS, so I had no idea and did not plan to use it, in advance, before the research activity was started. However, I have learned a lot about LLS while I was running the research procedures and finally, at present, I perceived its importance and usefulness for helping students to achieve their target language learning goal.

I hope that I will have an opportunity to apply LLS intensively with my students in a future research or teaching setting.

c. The third weak point of this research project was it had too many cycles (four cycles) within merely a short time of the second semester. Thus, there was little difference in the reflection and analytical outcomes of each research cycle.

Having too many cycles made it difficult for me at the data-reflecting stage because each research cycle had too short a duration to show any clear change or improvement by the less able students who in reality, need more time to be developed. I learned that I must plan more carefully the number of research cycles before getting started in the next research project.

d. Another limitation of this research implementation was that I had to conduct the research procedures under the school's regulated testing system which is irrelevant to the goal of the CLT approach. The school's assessment was a paper-based test which was aimed mainly at measuring students' literacy performance, thus, to help my students to pass the examination, during the third cycle, I had to change my teaching focus to have students practise more reading and writing skills. This provided a good example of the conflict of the NEA policy with the actual practice in the school context.

8.5 Conclusion

To help students improve their English learning performance was the goal of this research project. It started, at the outset, from my concern about my students' unsatisfactory learning performance. Thus, I wanted to help them to learn English more efficiently by implementing a CLT approach which is a student-centred learning approach and was strongly promoted and encouraged by the Thai National Education Act of B.E. 2542.

I decided to employ action research as my research method which responded to my intention of both improving students' language competence and developing myself to

fulfil the provision of the National Education Act of B.E. 2542. The act requires teachers to adopt and apply research procedures as normal practice in our classrooms to bring about the most productive teaching and learning in Thai education.

To undertake this research project made me realise that there were many factors affecting students' language learning efficiency: motivation, learning atmosphere, learning instruments/resources, students' attitude to the target language, culture, students' learning background and students' living environment. Therefore, while implementing the research procedures, I had to apply these factors to promote my students' English learning.

Moreover, I learned from the project that instead of using just a single teaching approach, I must be flexible to apply a variety of teaching techniques and styles for fostering and encouraging students to learn and develop themselves to achieve their learning goals. It is the duty and responsibility of the teachers to help students to discover their favourable learning styles. However, I also had to be aware first that students have different learning styles, then tried my best to respond to them with the most suitable teaching and learning arrangements.

This action research study also encouraged me to work more rigorously and reflectively which was very useful for my development as a teacher. I learned to use the reflective data from the previous cycle for adjusting and developing my teaching arrangements in the next cycle which I had never done before. I acknowledged that teachers can really adopt or apply research procedures in class to support and develop our instructional efficiency which finally will benefit our students' learning performances.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The ‘Ten commandments for motivating language learners’

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1. Set a personal example with your own behavior.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learner’s linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language class interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalise the learning process.
9. Increase the learners’ goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarise learners with the target language culture.

(Source: Dornyei & Csizer, 1998, p.215)

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Appendix 2

A list of suggestions for motivating language learners

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1. Recognise the complexity of motivation.
2. Be aware of both initiating and sustaining motivation.
3. Discuss with learners why they are carrying out activities.
4. Involve learners in making decisions related to learning the language.
5. Involve learners in setting language-learning goals.
6. Recognise people as individuals.
7. Build up individuals' beliefs in themselves.
8. Develop internal beliefs.
9. Help to move towards a mastery-oriented style.
10. Enhance intrinsic motivation.
11. Build up a supportive learning environment.
12. Give feedback that is informational.

(Source: Williams and Burden, 1997, p.141-2)

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Appendix 4

Questions used in the interview

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1. What kinds of learning activities do you like when compare between the former learning activities and currently learning activities? Please give your reasons.
2. What do you think about English as a subject? / How about your opinion about English subject? / How do you think about English subject?
3. Is English important for you? in your opinion
4. Do you think that you will have a chance to use English in the future or not?
5. Would you like to speak English?
6. Do you like to study English? Why?
7. Is English difficult for you? Why?
8. Is learning English boring for you? How to make it interesting?
9. Please give reasons why your English performance is not good?
10. What is the learning activities you expecting from the English teacher?
11. What are the important factors obstructing you to learn English well?
12. What topics do you want to learn in English?
13. Do you have an opportunity to speak English at your house/home?
14. Outside your school, Where can you practise English?
15. Does English help you to find/look for the job or to promote your progression in a career?
16. What is your favorite activity in learning English?

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APPENDIX 4.1

A sample of students interview after finishing research cycle one

(All the names used in this interview were pseudonyms)*



วันนี้เป็นการสัมภาษณ์หลังจากการทำวิจัยวงแรกเสร็จสิ้นลง มีนักเรียนที่ถูกสุ่มด้วยกันจำนวน 5 คน มี อาทิ (S1), แอนนี่ (S2), ปนัด (S3), อมร (S4) และ รัชชลี (S5) ซึ่งจะสัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับรูปแบบการเรียนการสอนในภาคเรียนที่สอง โดยถามความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนต่อการจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับการเรียนในเทอมแรก นักเรียนมีทัศนคติเป็นอย่างไร

Today is an interview after the research cycle one was finished. There are five students were random selected to join this administer. An interview is about a current classroom situation by asking students' opinion about an English language teaching arrangements when compare with the term one.

Q 1, (T): คำถามแรกที่ครูจะถาม คือ นักเรียนชอบการจัดกิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ

รูปแบบ ไตมากกว่ากันระหว่างเทอม 1 ที่ผ่านไปกับเทอม 2 ที่กำลังเรียนอยู่ นักเรียนช่วยแสดง

ความเห็นว่าคุณชอบเรียนแบบเน้นไวยากรณ์ กับอ่านเขียน หรือในเทอมที่ 2 นี้ ที่มีการเรียนการสอน มีการสนทนาบ้าง มีเล่นเกมบ้าง นักเรียนแสดงความคิดเห็นได้เสรีเลย ใครอยากพูดก่อน

(The first question I would like to ask all of you is 'What kind of learning activities do you like when compare between the former learning activities and currently learning activities? Please give your reasons? Who want to be the first?)

(S3): ชอบเทอม 2 มากกว่า (I like term two.)

(T): S3 คิดอย่างไร ทำไมจึงชอบเทอม 2 มากกว่า? (Why do you like term 2?)

(S3): มันมีการเล่นเกม ร้องเพลง (Because in this term, there are playing games and singing songs.)

(...): silent...(no one speak)

(T): คนอื่นล่ะ! เมื่อเปรียบเทียบ 2 เทอม, เทอม 1 กับเทอม 2 ที่ผ่านมา เราชอบรูปแบบการเรียนการ

สอนของเทอมใดมากกว่ากัน (Other students! How about your opinion? if to

compare between term 1 and term 2 which term do you prefer?)

(S4): ชอบเทอม 2 (Like term 2)

(S1): เทอม 2 (Term 2)

(S2): ชอบเทอม 2 มากกว่า (Term 2 is better.)

(S5): เทอม 2 (Term 2)

(T): เทอมที่ 2 เหตุผลเพราะอะไร? (Term 2!, why?)

(S3): เพราะว่ามีหลายอย่างปนกัน ไม่นั่งแกรมม่ามาก

(Because there were lots of activities to do and didn't focus much on grammar.)

(S5): ที่ผ่านมานั่งแกรมม่ากับแบบฝึกหัดเยอะ บางทีมันก็น่าเบื่อ (In the past, the teacher

focused much on grammar and exercises. It's boring)

(S4): เทอมนี้ ไม่เครียดกับแกรมม่า (This term we don't stress with grammar.)

(T): ทำให้เราเป็นยังไง? (How did it make you feel?)

(S3): ร่าเริง ... ไม่เครียดอะ (It's fun, not stress from learning grammar.)

(T): ไม่เครียด ทำไมถึงไม่เครียด? (Not stress!, why do you say that?)

(S3): เพราะว่า เทอมที่ 1 มันเน้นมากไป แล้วมันไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ เทอมที่ 2 มันมีการร้องเพลง ฟ้อน

คล้าย (Because in term 1 it focus much on the grammar we don't understand but

in term 2 it has singing songs which we feel relax)

(T): ในเทอมที่ 1 หรือแต่ก่อนการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นยังไง? (How about your opinion of

learning English in term 1 or formerly?)

(S4): แต่ก่อน น่าเบื่อ ง่วงนอน (In the past is boring and sleepy.)

(S2): แต่ก่อนแค่นั่งเรียน ฟังครูพูด แล้วก็ฝึกทำแบบฝึกหัด ไม่ค่อยได้ฝึกพูด (We just sit, listen to the teacher and do exercises. Having few chances to practise speaking)

(T): อ้อ...(Umm...) อะไรอีก? (What else?)

(S1): มันต้องท่องจำเยอะ... ไม่ค่อยได้ (We must remember lots of vocabularies, but we couldn't)

(S5): ท่องจำเยอะ ๆ มันน่าเบื่อ ง่วงด้วย ต้องนั่งฟังครูสอนอย่างเดียวน (To remember lots of vocabularies is boring and sleepy. We must just listen to the teacher.)

(S3): ว่าเทอม 2 ก็ดีเหมือนกันล่ะครู ดีแบบว่าได้ผ่อนคลาย แบบไม่เครียดมาก เรียนไวยากรณ์มาก มันเบื่อเหมือนกัน (Term 2 is good because we can relax not stress with too much grammar which is boring.)

(T): ถ้าเทียบเทอม 1 กับเทอม 2 เรียนแบบไหนมันทำให้ง่วงนอน เรียนเทอม 1 ง่วงนอนไหม?

(S1): ง่วงนอน (Yes.)

(T): น่าเบื่อเปล่า? แล้วเทอมสอง?... (Is it boring? How about term 2?)

(S1): เทอมสองดีกว่า (Term 2 is better.)

(T): ใครมีอะไรเพิ่มเติม ว่างอีก... (What's else?)

(S2): เรียนแต่ก่อน มันไม่ได้ฝึกสนทนาแบบนี้ เรียนแต่แกรมม่า ทำให้ไม่อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ (In the past, we did not learn like this. To learn merely grammar has discouraged many students to study English.)

(S4): เรียนแต่ก่อน มันไม่ได้ฝึกพูด เลยบางครั้งไม่ค่อยตั้งใจเรียน เล่นกับเพื่อน (Learning in the past lacked of practise speaking, then sometimes we did not pay attention to learn and tease with friends.)

(S3): เรียนแบบนี้ มีประโยชน์กว่า เอาไปใช้ได้ (Learning like this is more useful than previously. We can use English for communication.)

(T): อ้อ...(Umm...) มีอะไรอีกมั๊ย... ใครจะเสริม (What else?)

(...): No one speak.

Q2, (T): อะ...คำถามข้อต่อไปนะคะครับ นักเรียนมีความคิดอย่างไรต่อวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ?

(Next question is “What do you think about English as a subject?/ How about your opinion about English subject?”)

(T): อะ...ใครจะตอบก่อน? (Who want to be the first one to answer?)

(S2): ก็คิดว่าดีค่ะ สามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับคนต่างชาติได้ แล้วถ้าไปเมืองนอก ไปไหนมาไหนก็

จะสะดวก (It’s good. It helps us to speak with foreigners and if we go abroad, it’s convenient to go anywhere.)

(T): ความคิดเห็นของเราต่อวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ (Your opinion about English subject)

(S5): ก็ชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ แต่ก็เบื่อเป็นบางครั้ง เวลาที่มีแต่เขียนบนกระดาน ชอบแบบเรียนบ้าง

เล่นบ้าง จะสนุก แล้วจะอยากเรียน (I like learning English, but sometimes I feel

bored if we have to learn only doing exercises on the blackboard. I like to learn by both playing and doing exercises. It will be fun and make us want to learn English.)

(T): S1 คิดอย่างไรต่อวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ? ในความเห็นของ S1 (How about your opinion on English? S1)

(S1): ก็เรียนสนุกดี แต่บางครั้งก็จะเล่นกับเพื่อนที่กลุ่ม (It’s fun, but sometimes I also tease with friends in the group.)

(T): เรียนสนุกแล้วทำไมต้องเล่นกับเพื่อนด้วยล่ะ? (You said that “it’s fun”, then why did you tease with your friends?)

(S1): Just smile...(No answer.)

(T): คนอื่นล่ะ...มีความคิดอย่างไรกับวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ? (What else? other students)

(S3): ชอบเรียนนะ เพราะว่าไม่เครียด ตอนเทอม 2 ไม่เครียดมาก และมีการผ่อนคลาย (I like learning English because it’s not stress in term 2. It’s relax.)

(T): S4 ว่าไง? (How about you S4?)

(S4): ได้รับความรู้มากขึ้น (ครู – อ้อ) ได้รู้เกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษว่ามันเป็นอย่างไร เพื่อมีคนมาถามเรา

ชาวต่างชาติ เราจะได้ตอบเขาได้ (We get much more knowledge to speak with foreigners if we have a chance to interact with them.)

(T): ภาษาอังกฤษง่ายมะ ความคิดเห็นของเราต่อวิชานี้ การเรียนมันง่ายมะ

(Is English easy? How about your opinion on this subject?)

(S4): ก็พอได้ (It's rather O.K.)

(S2): ก็ผสมผสานกันไป ง่ายบ้างยากบ้าง (Both easy and difficult.)

(S3): ปานกลาง (Both.)

(S2): เรียนได้เรื่อย ๆ (So so)

(T): เรียนได้เรื่อย ๆ หมายถึงว่า บางเรื่องก็ง่าย...(What do you mean? So so)

(S2): บางเรื่องก็ง่าย บางเรื่องก็ยาก (Some topics are easy and some... are difficult)

(T): แล้ว S5 ละ (And how about you S5?)

(S5): ทำให้เราได้เรียนรู้เกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษ เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเก่งขึ้น (It helped us to learn and know more in English. Also to learn better.)

(T): S5 ว่าวิชานี้ง่ายหรือยาก? (Do you think English is easy or difficult?)

(S5): ทั้งง่ายและทั้งยาก (Both.)

(T): อ้อ... (Umm...)

Q 3, (T): นักเรียนคิดว่าวิชาภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญสำหรับนักเรียนหรือเปล่า?

(Is English important for you? in your opinion)

(S5): มีเพราะเวลาเราไปที่ไหน ไปเจอกับต่างชาติ เขาเข้ามาถามก็จะได้คุยกับได้สะดวก (Yes,

because when we go anywhere and, if sometimes, meet with foreigners, we can talk to them.)

(T): ได้มีโอกาสคุยบ้างหรือยัง? มีโอกาสใช้บ้างยัง? (Do you have a chance to use English yet?)

(S5): ยังไม่เคยเลย! (No, not yet.)

(T): แล้วคนอื่นคิดอย่างไร ภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญกับเราไหม คิดว่าไง? (Other students!, how about your opinion?)

(S3): มี! เวลาไปเที่ยวเจอชาวต่างชาติถามเกี่ยวกับเมืองไทย จะได้พูดสื่อสารกันรู้เรื่อง มีความรู้ด้านภาษามากขึ้น (Yes, it is useful when we take a trip and meet with foreigners if they ask us about Thailand we can communicate with them, and then have more knowledge in English.)

(T): ครับ! ใครว่าอย่างไรต่อ ความคิดว่าภาษาอังกฤษสำคัญต่อตัวเราหรือเปล่า? คนอื่นว่าไง S1 ว่าไง! (Yes. Anyone else? Is English important or useful for you? in your opinion.

S1! How about your opinion?)

(S1): สำคัญ (Important!) (T): อ้อ...เหตุผล! (Umm...please give reasons!)

(S1): ถ้าเราไปทำงานที่ต่างประเทศ เราก็จะใช้ภาษาอังกฤษได้ (If we go working abroad, we can speak English.)

(T): อ้อ...คิดจะไปทำงานต่างประเทศเลย เรือ! แล้ว S2 คิดว่าภาษาอังกฤษสำคัญไหม?

(Umm...you think you are going to work abroad!... (teacher turns to S2) How about your opinion? S2)

(S2): สำคัญ แบบว่าเวลาฝรั่งมาถามเงี่ย! ถามที่ท่องเที่ยว ถามทางไป มากๆด้วยกันจะคุยกันได้สะดวกเพราะรู้ภาษาอังกฤษทั้งที่โรงเรียนและที่บ้าน (Important! Because if there is Falang ('Falang' is used commonly by students which, in general, refers to the westerners or native English speakers) come to ask us about tourist places, directions or other general topics, we can talk with them.)

(T): แล้วมีโอกาสได้พูดคุยบ้างหรือยัง? (Do you have a chance yet?)

(S2): ยังไม่เคย (No, not yet.)

(T): แล้ว S4 ละ! ภาษาอังกฤษมีความสำคัญสำหรับเราไหม? (Teacher turns to S4 and ask “Is English important for you? S4)

(S4): สำคัญ! ทำให้เรามีความรู้ (Important! It helps us to have more knowledge.)

(T): อ้อ...ยังไง? (Umm...,please give more details.)

(S4): จะได้อ่านหนังสือภาษาอังกฤษรู้เรื่อง เรียนรู้เรื่อง (We will understand when to read the books in English and to learn in the classroom.)

Q 4, (T): อะ ขอต้อไปนะครับ ลองคิดว่าตัวเราจะมีโอกาสได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในอนาคตหรือไม่? แต่
 ละคนให้เราลองคิดว่าตัวเราจะมีโอกาสไหม?

(Do you think that you will have a chance to use English in the future or not?)

(S5): ใช้บ้างไม่ใช้บ้าง เป็นบางครั้งใช้เวลาเรียน (Use it for sometimes, only in the classroom.)

(T): ส่วนใหญ่ S5 คิดว่าได้ใช้ในเวลาเรียน แล้วหลังจากเวลาเรียน เวลากลับบ้าน จะได้ใช้ไหม?

(Using for sometimes in the classroom! How about after school? Do you have chances to use English?)

(S5): ก็เคยครั้งหนึ่ง ที่น้ำตก เขื่อน แต่ไม่รู้เรื่อง (Yes, only once at the waterfall, but did not understand.)

(T): แล้วคนอื่นละ คิดว่าตัวเราในอนาคตต่อไป เมื่อเราโต ทำงานแล้ว เราจะมีโอกาสได้ใช้
 ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่?

(S3): ไม่ค่อยได้ใช้หรอก (No, hardly have a chance to use it.)

(S1, 2, 4): ไม่ค่อยได้ใช้ (No, hardly have a chance to use it)

(T): อ้อ...ทำไมล่ะ ถึงไม่ได้ใช้ (Umm...why do you think that you won't have a chance to use English?)

(...): เงียบ... (Silent!...may be, they are thinking)

(S2): อาจจะใช้บ้าง แต่น้อย (May be, we use it for some time, but the least)

Q 5, (T): เอ้า ok. คำถามต่อไปนะครับ นักเรียนอยากพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้หรือเปล่า? พูดในระดับที่

สื่อสารได้เลยนะ (O.K. next question is “Would you like to speak English?”)

(S2): ได้ค่ะ..อยากพูดได้ (Yes, I would like to speak English.)

(S1): อยาก; (S3): อยาก; (S4): อยาก; (S5): อยาก (Everybody say “yes.”)

(T): เพื่ออะไร ? (What for?)

(S2): ก็คุยได้ตอบกับชาวต่างชาติได้สะดวก (To communicate with foreigners.)

(T): อ้อ...(Umm...) แล้วมีอะไรอีกไหม นอกจากพูดกับชาวต่างชาติ (what else, unless speaking with foreigners)

(S4): เวลาไปเที่ยวเมืองนอก (When to travel abroad.) (T): อ้อ ... (Umm...)

(...): Silent

Q 6, (T): คำถามข้อต่อไปนะครับ คือ พวกเรา (นักเรียน) ทั้ง 5 คนเนี่ย! ชอบเรียนวิชาอังกฤษหรือ

เปล่า? นักเรียนแต่ละคนชอบเรียนอังกฤษรึเปล่า? ขอเหตุผลด้วย

(Next question is ‘Do you like to study English? Why?/Please give reason’)

(S5): ชอบเรียน จะได้พูดเก่ง มีความรู้เกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษ (Yes. Because I will be able to speak English well and also have knowledge about English.) (T): อ้อ...(Umm...)

(T): มีอะไรอีกมั๊ย? (What else? other students!)

(S2): ก็ชอบคะ เพราะว่าเรียนอังกฤษเอาไว้ใช้ได้ (Yes, because we can use it.)

(T): S1 ชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมั๊ย? ตอบในความคิดเห็นของนันทน์เลย บางคนอาจจะชอบเรียนคอมก็ได้นะ (S1! How about you? Do you like to study English?)

(S1): เมื่อก่อนไม่ค่อยชอบ แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ ดีขึ้น เพราะว่าเรียนสนุกขึ้น (In the past, I don’t like studying English, but now it’s better. Because it’s fun.)

(S4): เดี่ยวนี้ ชักเริ่มชอบ (Now, I start like to study English.)

(S3): เมื่อก่อน เรียนแต่แกรมม่า ไม่ค่อยชอบ แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ ดีขึ้น (In the past, just had to learn about grammar, so I didn't like it. But, now, it's better.)

Q 7, (T): คำถามต่อไปนะครับ ภาษาอังกฤษยากไหม สำหรับนักเรียน?

(Next question: "Is English difficult for you? Why?")

(S3): ไม่ค่อยยาก แต่ถ้าเมื่อก่อน ยาก ไม่เข้าใจ (Not much, but if in the past...it's difficult because I didn't understand.)

(S2): บางครั้งก็ยาก บางครั้งก็ไม่ แล้วแต่... (Both easy and difficult, it depends...)

(T): แล้วแต่อะไร? อะไรที่ยาก? อะไรที่ง่าย? (Depend on what? What make you feel difficult or easy?)

(S2): ถ้าเรียนแกรมม่า ก็ยาก ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ถ้าเรียนแบบนี้ ก็ไม่ค่อยยาก สนุกด้วย (If we have to learn with grammar, it difficult, but if to learn like this, it's not difficult. It's fun.)

(S4): แกรมมามันยาก ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ทำผิดพลาด เลยเบื่อ ไม่อยากเรียน (Grammar is difficult. It's hard to understand and I always make mistakes, so I feel bored and don't like to learn English.)

(S5): ถ้าเรียนแต่แกรมม่า อ่าน เขียน ก็ยาก (If just to learn only grammar reading and writing, it's difficult.)

(T): แล้วเดี๋ยวนี้ เป็นยังไง? (How about learning at present?)

(S5): ดีขึ้น ไม่ยากแล้ว (It's better, not difficult.)

Q 8, (T): นักเรียนคิดว่าการเรียนอังกฤษน่าเบื่อเปล่า? ถ้าน่าเบื่อ ควรทำอย่างไรให้น่าสนใจ?

(Is learning English boring for you? How should to make it interesting?)

(S3): ถ้าเป็นแต่ก่อน ก็น่าเบื่อ แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ไม่แล้ว (It's boring in the past, but, at present, it's not.)

(T): ทำไมล่ะ? (Why?)

(S3): เดิมนี่เรียนสนุก ไม่น่าเบื่อ ไม่ค่อยมีแกรมม่า (Now, learning is fun, not boring, don't have much grammar.)

(T): แล้วคนอื่นล่ะ ว่าไง? (Other students!, how about your opinion?)

(S5): แต่ก่อนเรียนแต่แกรมม่า เลยน่าเบื่อ เดิมนี่ไม่แล้ว (In the past, it's boring because we had to learn only grammar. But, now, it's O.K.)

(S4): เดิมนี่มีกิจกรรมให้ร้องเพลง เล่นเกม เลยไม่น่าเบื่อ (Now, there are singing songs and playing games. Not boring.)

(S1): ถ้าได้เล่นเกม ร้องเพลง ฟังเพลง ก็ไม่น่าเบื่อ (If we learn by playing games, singing songs and practise speaking like this, it's not boring.)

(S2): ถ้าเรียนเน้นแกรมม่า ก็น่าเบื่อ ถ้าเรียนแบบนี้ ก็ไม่ (If learning focus on grammar, it's boring, but if learning like this, it's not.)

Q 9, (T): นักเรียนช่วยให้เหตุผลหน่อยว่าทำไมทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของเราจึงไม่ค่อยดีเท่าที่ควร?

(Please give reasons why your English performance is not good?)

(S1): เพราะมันไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ไม่ค่อยตั้งใจเรียน (Because I don't understand and not pay attention to learn.)

(T): S2 เป็นไง? เฉพาะภาษาอังกฤษนะ S2 (How about your opinion S2?, only English)

(S2): ไม่เข้าใจ อ่านไม่ออก ชอบเล่น (Do not understand. Can not read and like to play.)

(T): S3 ล่ะ? (And you S3?)

(S3): ไม่เข้าใจ บางครั้งก็ชอบเล่นกับเพื่อน (Do not understand and, sometimes, like to play with friends.)

(T): S4 คิดว่าภาษาอังกฤษเราเป็นยังไง? (How about you S4? How do you think about your English language?)

(S4): ปานกลาง (Just fair.)

(T): เราดูจากอะไร? เราจึงตัดสินว่าเราปานกลาง (How do you evaluate that you are fair in English?)

(S4): ดูจากเรา เราสามารถอ่านคำศัพท์ออกอยู่ แต่ว่าหนูพูดแบบจำ พูดแบบท่องจำไม่ได้เอาไปใช้จริงๆ อ่านยังตะกุกตะกักนิดนึง อ่านได้ม๊ยะ ก็อ่านได้อยู่ (I am able to read some vocabularies, my reading is fair and speaking a bit but mostly by rote.)

(T): S5 คิดว่า ภาษาอังกฤษของเราเป็นอย่างไร? (and you S5, how about your English language?)

(S5): ไม่ค่อยดี (Not good.)

(T): ทำไมล่ะ? (Why?)

(S5): ไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ ทำไม่ค่อยได้ (Do not understand and can not do exercises)

Q 10, (T): นักเรียนอยากให้ครูจัดกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษในรูปแบบไหน?

(What are the learning activities you expecting from the English teacher?)

(S3): มีแกรมมน้อยๆ ร้องเพลงกับเล่นเกมเยอะๆ จะมีความสุขมาก (Have few grammar and have lots of games and songs. We will be very happy.) T: อือ... (Umm...)

(S1): ร้องเพลง เล่นเกม เยอะๆ (Sing songs and play games a lot.) T: อือ...คนอื่น ว่ายังไง? (Umm..., other student, how about your opinion?)

(S2): อยากฝึกพูดเยอะๆ ลดเรียนแกรมม่า แล้วก็การอ่านเขียนที่ยากๆ ถ้าแต่ก่อนเรียนแบบนี้ น่าจะพูดได้เยอะ (Want to practise much more speaking, reduce grammar, reading and writing which were difficult. If learning like this in the past, may be, we can speak better than at present.)

(S4): เรียนแกรมมน้อยๆ เล่นเกมกับร้องเพลงเยอะๆ ฝึกพูดด้วย (To learn with the least grammar, but playing games and singing songs a lot.)

(S5): ให้ฝึกพูด ลดฝึกอ่าน เขียน แล้วก็แกรมม่า (To have students practise more speaking, reduce reading writing and grammar.)

Q 10 (followed), (T): แล้วบรรยากาศในชั้นเรียนล่ะ... อยากให้บรรยากาศการเรียน เป็นยังไง?

(How about the learning atmosphere do you want?)

(S1): อยากให้ครูสอนแบบสนุกสนาน ไม่เครียดกับนักเรียนมากเกินไป (Want the teacher to teach us with enjoyable atmosphere. Don't serious too much with students.)

(S5): จะทำให้อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ถ้าบรรยากาศการเรียนมันสนุก ไม่เครียด (We will like to study English if the learning climate is relax not stress.)

(S3): ไม่อยากให้ครูเครียดกับนักเรียน เวลาไม่เข้าใจ มันทำให้นักเรียนก็เครียดด้วย (Don't want the teacher so stress when students did not understand because students will stress as well.)

(S2): ไม่อยากให้ครูโมโห เพราะเวลาที่ครูโมโห ทำให้ไม่อยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ (Don't want the teacher to get angry because when you get angry it will make students wouldn't like to learn English.)

(S4): เวล่านักเรียนอ่านไม่ออก ครูเครียด นักเรียนก็เครียด (When students can not read and the teacher feel stress, we feel stress as well.)

Q 11, (T): นักเรียนคิดว่าอะไรเป็นอุปสรรคสำคัญที่ทำให้นักเรียนเรียนภาษาอังกฤษไม่ได้ดี?

(What are the important factors obstructing you to learn English well?)

(S3): ชอบเล่นในห้อง ไม่ตั้งใจฟัง แล้วบางเรื่องก็ยากไม่ค่อยเข้าใจ (like to play in the classroom, do not listen to the teacher carefully and it's difficult on some topics.)

(T): แล้วทำไมจึงไม่ตั้งใจเรียน? (why don't you pay attention to learn?)

(S3): ชอบคุย...เพื่อนชวนคุย แล้วเราก็นั่งคุยด้วย (Like talking with friends. We always talk while the teacher is teaching.)

(T): คนอื่นล่ะ! อะไรที่เป็นตัวขวางกั้นทำให้เราเรียนอังกฤษไม่ได้เกรด 4 ซะที? อะไรนะ!

(S4): อ่านไม่ออก ไม่รู้เรื่อง แล้วหนูก็แบบว่า เดี๋ยวนี้ก็ไม่ค่อยสนใจเรียนอังกฤษเท่าไร (Can not read, do not understand and do not pay attention to learn.)

(T): S5 ว่าอะไรเป็นอุปสรรคที่ทำให้เราเรียนภาษาอังกฤษไม่ค่อยดี? (S5!, what obstructed you to learn English well?)

(S5): เวลาเรียนไม่ค่อยตั้งใจเรียน เอาแต่เล่น เพราะบรรยากาศไม่ค่อยน่าเรียน (Like teasing, joking with friends and do not pay attention to learn because the learning climate and activities did not motivate our eagerness to learn.)

(T): S2 ว่าไง! อะไรเป็นอุปสรรคของ S2? (And you S2, what obstructed you from learning English well?)

(S2): เวลาเรียนก็ไม่ค่อยตั้งใจ เงียะ เล่น ๆ คอย ๆ เรียนแบบเดิม ผู้เรียนแบบนี้ไม่ได้ แบบนี้ได้ฝึกพูด (Do not pay attention to learn and like to play and talk with friends. Learning in the former was not useful as at present, now we can practise speaking)

(T): แล้ว S1 ล่ะ? (And you S1?)

(S1): ก็คุย เล่นกับเพื่อนตลอดเวลา (Always talk and play with friends.)

Q 12, (T): อะ! คำถามข้อต่อไปนะครับ นักเรียนอยากเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหัวข้อใดบ้าง?

(What topics do you want to learn in English?)

(S5): การสนทนาทั่ว ๆ ไป อยากเรียนแบบสนุก ๆ ไม่เครียด (A common conversation. Like to learn in an enjoyable atmosphere.)

(S3): สนทนา เล่นเกม ร้องเพลง ไม่อยากเรียนแกรมม่า (Conversation, playing games and singing songs. Don't want to learn grammar.)

(S2): เรียนแบบไม่เครียด สนุก ๆ (To learn without stress and enjoyable.)

(S4): ฝึกพูด (To learn by practising conversation.)

(S1): ฝึกพูด เล่นเกม ร้องเพลง (Practise speaking, playing game and singing songs.)

Q 13, (T): อะ! นักเรียนมีโอกาสใช้ภาษาอังกฤษที่บ้านบ้างรึเปล่า?

(Do you have an opportunity to speak English at your house/home?)

(S1): ไม่ได้ใช้ (No.)

(T) : แล้ว S2 ละ (turn to S2 and ask: “and how about you S2?”)

(S2): ไม่ได้ใช้เลย ที่บ้าน (If at home!... not at all.)

(T) : แล้วเราละ S3? (And you, S3?)

(S3): ไม่ได้ใช้ ไม่มีคนต่างชาติมาแถว ๆ บ้านอะ (No, I don’t have a chance to use English because there are no foreigners come around my home.) (T): อ้อ...(Umm...)

(T) : แล้ว S4 ละ อยู่บ้านได้มีโอกาสใช้ภาษาอังกฤษบ้างหรือเปล่า? (and you S4, “do you have a chance to speak English at home?)

(S4): ไม่ได้ใช้ ที่บ้านใช้ภาษาไทย ไม่มีคนต่างชาติ แต่ถ้าเจอก็จะทักทายเขาเหมือนกัน (No. We speak Thai at home. There are not any foreigners around my home) (T): อ้อ... (Umm...)

(T) : S5 กลับบ้านได้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษไหม? (S5 Do you have a chance to speak English at home?)

(S5): ไม่ได้ใช้ (No.)

Q 14, (T): คำถามต่อไปนะครับ นักเรียนมีโอกาสฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษที่ไหนบ้าง นอกจากที่โรงเรียน? (**Outside the school, Where can you practise speaking English?**)

(S5): ไม่ค่อยมี ส่วนใหญ่พูดที่โรงเรียน (Rarely have a chance outside school. Mostly at school.)

(T) : ที่โรงเรียน! พูดกับใคร? (At school! Whom do you speak with?)

(S5): ในชั้นเรียน ชั่วโมงครูนี้แหละ (In the classroom, your subject!.)

(S3): เวลาไปเที่ยว (when to travel.)

(T): อ้อ...เที่ยวที่ไหนที่ได้พูดภาษาอังกฤษ? (Umm...which place do you think you will have a chance to practise speaking English?)

(S3): ตามที่ท่องเที่ยว ที่ฝรั่งชอบไปเที่ยว พวกทะเล (At any places that the foreigners like to go such as the sea.)

(T): แล้วเคยหรือยัง? (then “Have you ever spoken with foreigners yet?”)

(T3): ยัง (No.)

(T): นอกจากที่โรงเรียนเรา มีที่ไหนอีกหรือเปล่า? ลองนึกดูซิ! คนอื่น (Other students! Try to think, please. “Besides at the school, where can you use English?”)

(S2): ไม่มี (None)

(S1): มีแต่ที่โรงเรียน (Only at school.)

(S4): ไม่มี (None)

Q 15, (T): นักเรียนคิดว่าการรู้ภาษาอังกฤษจะช่วยให้การทำงานง่ายขึ้นหรือหน้าที่การงาน

ก้าวหน้าเร็วขึ้นไหม?

(Does English help you to find/look for the job easily or to promote your progress in a career?)

(S3): ช่วย บางครั้งทำงานก็ต้องการคนเก่งภาษา (Yes, it does because some works need a person who are good in English.)

(T): ช่วยมะ ... ภาษาอังกฤษมีส่วนช่วยมะ? (turn to other students and ask “Does English help or not? In your opinion ”)

(S5): ช่วย... เวลาไปสมัครงาน ถ้าภาษาดี เขาก็จะรับ (Yes, if my English is good when I apply for a job, the company will recruit you.)

(T): S4 ว่ายังไง? (How about you S4?)

(S4): มีส่วน! ... งานสมัยนี้ อยากทำงานบริษัทต้องสามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้ เขียนได้ (Yes, at present, if I want to work in a company, I should be able to speak and write English well.)

(S2): ช่วย... แล้วก็ก้าวหน้าด้วย (Yes, and also progress in a job.)

(T): แล้ว S1 ละ! ในความคิดเห็นของ S1 ภาษาอังกฤษช่วยไหม? (and you S1, how about your opinion?)

(S1): ก็ช่วยครับ (Yes, it can help.)

Q 16, (T): คำถามข้อสุดท้ายนะครับ อะไรคือกิจกรรมที่นักเรียนชอบมากที่สุด? ในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ (Last question, what is your favorite activity in learning English?)

(S2): ชอบเล่นเกม (Like playing game.) (T): อ้อ... (Umm...)

(T): คนอื่นว่าไง! พวกเราชอบกิจกรรมอะไรมากที่สุด? (Other students!, what activity do you like the most?)

(S4): เล่นเกมคำศัพท์....จะได้รู้คำมันสะกด มันเขียนอย่างไร (Playing vocabulary game as to know how to spell and write the words.)

(S3): ร้องเพลง เล่นเกม (Both playing games and singing songs)

(T) : เพลงอะไรที่เราชอบ? (What song do you like?)

(S3): เพลงอะไรอะ...ที่ร้อง Head shoulder knees and toes แล้วต้องทำท่าประกอบไปด้วย (The song that we sing “Head shoulder knees and toes and must act while singing”)

(T): S1 กิจกรรมที่เราชอบมากที่สุด คืออะไร? (What is your favourite activity?)

(S1): เล่นเกม ร้องเพลง แล้วก็สนทนา ก้อด้วย (playing games, singing songs and also practise speaking.) (T): อ้อ... (Umm...)

(T): แล้ว S5 ละ? (and you S5?)

(S5): ชอบร้องเพลง กับสนทนา ก็ชอบหมดนั่นแหละ! (Like singing songs and conversation ...,but actually, I like all activities.)

(T) : O.K. หมดแล้ว! ชอบใจมากนะครับ สำหรับทุก ๆ คน ที่สละเวลามาให้ครูสัมภาษณ์ในวันนี้ (O.K. finish! I would like to thank all of you very much as to give good cooperation for this interview, thank you very much.)

APPENDIX 5

The Teacher's Journal of Research Cycle Two

Learning Topic: '*On the phone*': Week 1 (period 1-5)

Noted: All students' names appearing in the journal below are pseudonyms.

Period 1 '*On the phone*'

After finishing the research activities and students interview in research cycle one I could summarise, especially from the interview and journal, that students were satisfied and preferred the teaching arrangements in this term to the former time that I taught them by focusing mostly on reading, writing and grammar competence. Moreover, from the interviewing session, students expressed their eagerness and requirement to practise much more speaking as well as other animated language activities.

In this first period, after greeted with the students, before getting start the new learning topic, I had all of them review the basic conversations and vocabularies they had learned in research cycle one. I always must have the students review the conversations they had learned and practised previously because of their low learning competency and also students' completely lack of chances to use English outside the classroom in our living context. After a reviewing activity, I randomly called students in pair to perform role-play of any situations I determined for them. From my observation, most of the girls performed fair depend on each individual's English background whereas the boys' performances were rather unsatisfied. However, the learning atmosphere was good and lively I noticed most students hurriedly took out the conversation sheet (handouts) to review with their couples actively.

When stepping into the learning topic, firstly in a controlled-speaking session, I had all students learn the new vocabularies and simple sentences as well as its meaning from the handouts I gave them by repeating after me. I had students practise reading repeatedly because there were quite a few students (Big, Boy, Berm, Dum, Det, Dew, Flook, Tom, Toon, Toey, Oil, Nid, Nong, Noy) could not even read simple words or sentences in handouts and always made mistakes when I had them rehearse speaking in pair or read aloud which I had to correct this point all the time.

After a controlled-practise session, shortly before the time was up, students were told to practise speaking freely in a couple. Most students got in pair and did

their job well. However, I noticed many less able couple students (Big, Boy, Berm, Dum, Det, Dew, Flook, Tom, Toon, Toey, Oil, Nid, Nong, Noy) faced the problems of utterances, so I had to help them as normal.

Period 2: 'On the phone'

Learning activities in the second period still arranged for students to practise with controlled-speaking sentences and dialogues of the current topic. After greeted with students, I randomly called a few of them to review speaking English of both the previous and common topics they had learned in research cycle one. In this period, Pan, Tan and Satit were called. From my observation, Pan and Tan showed more confident and were able to speak English better than formerly without afraid of making mistakes while Satit's speaking still was at the same pace.

After a random teacher-students conversation, I had the students altogether review the vocabularies and former conversations they had learned and practised in period one. In general from my observation, most students gave a good collaboration to review actively.

After a reviewing session, I told students to get in pair to practise and rehearse speaking from all sample dialogues in the handout I had provided them. At first, as a common practice, I had all students repeat after me to make sure that they can utter and speak out accurately by themselves during their freely practice and rehearsing session.

I walked around the classroom while each student-couple was practising conversation together from the sample dialogues. The classroom, thus, was loudly with rehearsing students. I also provided helps for any couples who faced the problems of utterance. From my observation, most students, especially the girls, kept concentrate on the practice and worked well together actively. The other good thing I could perceive was that students dared to ask me for helps when they didn't understand in some points.

However, for some of the boy couples: Berm and Dum, Fluke and Dew, Tom and Toon I had to tell and warn them to keep focus on the practice because they always teased each other during the rehearsing time.

About twenty minutes before the time's up, I started to have each pair-student show their conversation by randomly called from a whole class. From my observation, most of the girls performed fairly up to their English language backgrounds while just a few boy couples were acceptable. Quite a few boys still needed to be developed further.

In conclusion, most students gave a good collaboration in all activities I had them learn, practise and rehearse speaking English within an animated learning atmosphere. This was clearly different from the past that they learned English as passive learners.

Period 3: 'On the phone'

Today, before getting into the learning activities I had students play the vocabulary game (Hang man) and sing a song (Lord we touch you today) about twenty minutes. Before singing a song I had students read and learn the lyrics meaning, then we all sang a song together. It's just an easy song so students could sing shortly afterwards. I noticed that students enjoyed both playing and singing song. During the funny time, they were trying to think and guess the words or vocabularies I had quizzed and determined on the blackboard. The classroom was loudly with enjoyable students.

After a joyful time, I had students shortly review the former vocabularies. Then, I assigned the students a role-play task by having them get in pair to create their own thematic situation and dialogue which related to the learning topic ('On the phone'). At the beginning, many students expressed difficulties to finish the work due to their limited English background and common manner of illiterate students. So, I had to encourage and cheer them up to do the best to finish the work. I told students to feel free to ask me if they faced any problems while they were working. My purpose was just wanted students to be able to apply and change the content from the sample dialogues I had them practise in handouts.

After I had made them clear about my expectation, the classroom atmosphere was animated with the noisy students who were discussing and rehearsing conversation with their buddies. I walked around the classroom to observe and provide helps for the required-less able couples. In general, I saw many couples, mostly were the girls, concentrated and worked well together to try to create and

rehearse their conversation actively. However, at the same time, I also saw some of the boy couples and a couple-girl showed desperately to keep on working to finish the work even though I tried my best to help and suggest them. Lastly, I accepted and allowed these student-groups to rehearse with the sample dialogues in handouts. At this moment, I did not want to make a stress on these less able students from my assignment. I hoped they might be able to do it later.

I was pleased that most of the students tried to finish the work, but due to their restricted English background, there were quite a few couples could not finish and rehearse their conversation in time. Therefore, lastly, I assigned them as homework to complete and rehearse role-play for the presentation in the next period.

Period 4: 'On the phone'

I had told students in advance that in this period I will have every couple show their role-playing in front of the classroom. So while I was getting into the classroom I noticed that many couples were rehearsing conversation actively and seriously.

After greeted with the students, before stepping into the lesson, I randomly called Narudee, Soraya, Ananya, Panit, Thanakiat, and Piya for having them review all previous conversations they have already learned and practised by making communications with them within a scope of the learning topics they had already learned and practised, then lastly I had them take turns to interact with each other.

An issue which I found on most students was that even though I tried to challenge and encourage them to create and use their own words and sentences for speaking, most students still relied much on the sample dialogues in handouts I had provided them for practice in a controlled- speaking session.

After finished a reviewing session, I told the students to start to perform their role-play but all of them asked me for more extended time for rehearsing. They said that they still could not remember their conversation dialogues because they did not have much time to work and rehearse with their buddies. I agreed and gave them five to ten minutes for further rehearsing.

When was a presentation time, firstly, I asked the students for a voluntary couple to be the first performer to act out their role play for the other friends in the class. Pantip and Pensri still dared to be the beginners to show their role-playing and

could perform fairly well according to their outgoing characters. After that the other couples stepped out to show their work respectively.

I was impressed that most of the students had more confidence to speak English even though their performance still relied much on rote and also made a lot of mistakes. The reluctant manners to speak English of quite a few students were gradually reduced. At this moment, it's good for me, as a teacher and researcher, that there were a few students (Pantip, Pensri, Panit) who dared speak English and showed an attempt to make their own sentences, though just a little bit, for speaking with friends.

This period was set for the students to make a presentation, thus a whole classroom climate was filled with pictures and sound of couple-students who were rehearsing conversations together. It was the new experience both for me and students in English classroom.

Period 5: 'On the phone'

In the last period, after I got in the classroom and had students review the previous vocabularies and basic speaking sentences as normal, I randomly called some students to take turns interacting together for about ten to fifteen minutes. I noticed that all students speak English by rote. They spoke together by copying all words and sentences from the handouts. In fact, I understood that this also reflect the fact of our living environment that students completely lacked chances outside the classroom to use English. However, at present, I was pleased that most students started to have more confidence to speak English even though many of them made a lot of mistakes. I was also satisfied about the learning atmosphere that was better than previously. The former picture of passive learners has gone.

About thirty minutes before the time's up I had students work in group of five to do the writing exercise of the current topic 'on the phone'. The exercise was 'Fill in the blank with a missing word'. To complete the exercise, at least, students need to have basic literacy skills to make understanding while they were reading the passage. I noticed that many students in each group tried to help each other to finish the work. They, especially the girls, discussed actively together. A good thing was that many students dared come to ask me to explain more detail when they didn't understand in some points which was different from the past which I taught them mostly by

grammar-translation method that students would sit still in silence after I had explained them the knowledge content without sharing ideas or asking any questions.

In case of most of the boy groups I still had to encourage them to keep concentrate on the work as well as to help and describe them slowly for more details through the period. This made me, for sometimes, feel worry as well as unhappy that most students had restricted literacy skills to take a test effectively according to the school evaluating system. However, an overall learning climate was good and almost every group could finish their work within a determined time even though the boys' works, especially their hand writing and neat, needed to be improved later.

Appendix 6



Information to Participants (Parents)

My name is Itthinan Kimhachandra and I am an English teacher in grade 7 at Bamrung Wittaya School. I am undertaking the research study of the title 'An action research study of English teaching in Grade 7 at Bamrung Wittaya School, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand' as part of my Doctor of Education degree at Victoria University, Australia. The aim of the research is to develop the students' learning efficiency and also their communicative skill by applying the student centred learning (Communicative Language Teaching: CLT) approach.

I would like to invite your child to be a part of my research project being conducted at the school in this semester. The project will be implemented in four cycles. All the four cycles will be undertaken by variety of animated language activities to promote students' interaction in English. It is lastly expected to enhance their communicative performances. As a researcher, I will observe students' improvement continually and adjust my teaching arrangements appropriate with their learning needs and styles. Each cycle will be conducted in five weeks. Data will be collected by the teacher's journal, observation, interview, students' works in portfolio and the pretest-posttest examination and will be analysed and reflected for further development in the latter cycle.

Data gathered from the students will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary and students will be able to withdraw from the project at any time and unprocessed information provided will not be used. Your child's participation will not interfere with their credit score or normal subjects in any way.

Itthinan Kimhachandra

Any queries about your child's participation in this project may be directed to the researcher: Itthinan Kimhachandra Tel. (sch.) 66-3424-1477, (mobile phone) 66 1757 6832 or e-mail: mr_itthinank@hotmail.com or Prof. David Maunders Tel. 61-3-9718 2506. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MC, Melbourne, 8001 (Telephone no: 03-9688 4710).

Consent Form for Participants Involved in Research

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT (Parents)

I,
Of

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent for my child to participate in the research project entitled:

An action research study of English teaching in Grade 7 at
Bamrung Wittaya School, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

Being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by:
Itthinan Kimhachandra and Professor David Maunders.

I certify that the objectives of the research, together with any risks to my associated with it, have been fully explained to me by:
Itthinan Kimhachandra.

and that I freely consent to take part in the research project throughout the semester.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this project at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.
I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date.....

Witness other than the researcher:

.....

Date

Any queries about your child's participation in this project may be directed to the researcher: Itthinan Kimhachandra Tel. (sch.) 66-3424-1477, (mobile phone) 66 1757 6832 or e-mail: mr_itthinank@hotmail.com or Prof. David Maunders Tel. 61-3-9718 2506. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MC, Melbourne, 8001 (Telephone no: 03-9688 4710).

(*Please note: where the participant/s is aged under 18, separate parental consent is required; where the participant is unable to answer for themselves due to mental illness or disability, parent or guardian consent may be required.



หนังสือยินยอมการเข้าร่วมการวิจัย
สำหรับผู้ปกครองนักเรียนกลุ่มตัวอย่าง

การแสดงความยินยอมโดยผู้ปกครองนักเรียนผู้ร่วมเป็นกลุ่มตัวอย่างเพื่อการวิจัย

ข้าพเจ้าชื่อ

ที่อยู่

เป็นผู้ปกครองของนักเรียน ชื่ออายุ

ขอให้คำรับรองว่า ข้าพเจ้ามีอายุไม่น้อยกว่า 18 ปี เป็นผู้ปกครองที่ถูกต้องตามกฎหมายของ
นักเรียนที่ปรากฏชื่อข้างต้น และข้าพเจ้ายินดี/ยินยอมให้บุตรหลานของข้าพเจ้าเข้าร่วมเป็นกลุ่ม
ตัวอย่างในงานวิจัย ชื่อ An action research study of English teaching in Grade 7 at
Bamrung Wittaya School, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand. (การวิจัยในชั้นเรียนเพื่อพัฒนาการ
เรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารสำหรับนักเรียนระดับชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1 โรงเรียน
บำรุงวิทยา นครปฐม) โดยการวิจัยนี้ กระทำในนามของมหาวิทยาลัยวิกตอเรีย ประเทศออสเตรเลีย
(Victoria University of Technology, Australia) โดย นายอิทธินันท์ คิมพะจันทร์ และ
ศาสตราจารย์ David Maunders

ข้าพเจ้าให้คำรับรองว่า ข้าพเจ้าได้รับทราบถึงรายละเอียด และจุดประสงค์ของการวิจัย ความเสี่ยงที่
อาจเกิดขึ้นกับบุตรหลานของข้าพเจ้าจากกระบวนการวิจัย ดังรายละเอียดที่ปรากฏด้านล่าง จาก
อาจารย์อิทธินันท์ คิมพะจันทร์ (ผู้วิจัย) แล้ว และยินยอมให้บุตรหลานของข้าพเจ้าเข้าร่วมเป็น
กลุ่มตัวอย่างด้วยความสมัครใจ

กระบวนการวิจัย: การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสาร โดยยึดผู้เรียนเป็นสำคัญ และเก็บข้อมูลจาก
 เพิ่มพัฒนางานของนักเรียน, บันทึกหลังการสอนของครู, การสังเกต, การสัมภาษณ์ และการ
 ทดสอบด้วยแบบทดสอบ

ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจกระบวนการวิจัยครั้งนี้ และได้รับทราบแล้วว่า ข้าพเจ้าสามารถถอนตัวจากการเป็น
 กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้ทุกเมื่อ โดยการถอนตัวของข้าพเจ้าจะไม่มีผลกระทบใด ๆ ทั้งสิ้นต่อบุตรหลานของ
 ข้าพเจ้า

ข้าพเจ้าได้รับทราบว่าข้อมูลที่ได้จากข้าพเจ้าจะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับ

ลงนาม

.....

พยาน (มิใช่ผู้วิจัย)

.....

วันที่

.....

หากมีข้อสงสัยประการใดเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ กรุณาสอบถามที่ผู้วิจัย อาจารย์อิทธิพนธ์ คุ้มะจันทร์ โทรศัพท์
 (โรงเรียน) 66 3424 1477, (มือถือ) 66 1757 6832 หรือ อี-เมล mr_itthinank@hotmail.com หรือ Professor
 David Maunders, 61 3 9718 2506. หากมีข้อสงสัยเพิ่มเติม สามารถติดต่อได้ที่ the Secretary, University
 Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MC,
 Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710).

Appendix 7

The students' language performance ranks (at the researcher's school context)

=====

Level 3 Poor : present/show the difficulties in all four language skills especially reading, writing and speaking the target language in most of the words and sentences they are to read, write and speak by misspelling the words as well as using so long time to think and must get helps from the teacher to fulfill the work.

Level 2 Fair : be able to read, write or speak out the English words or sentences with mistakes, and still need help from the teacher to correct and fulfill the work.

Level 1 Good : be able to read, write or speak out in English with a few mistakes, and sometimes need help or advice from the teacher to fulfill the work.

APPENDIX 8

Samples of the conversation sheet distributed in the project

GREETING

(การทักทาย)

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Good morning / afternoon / evening.

Hello. Hi.

How are you? How is thing? How is everything with you?

How have you been? What is new?

I'm fine / very well. (Quite) all right. Not (too) bad.

Not (too) well. Too bad. Not much / Nothing much / It's nothing.

So so. Can't complain.

Dialogues

A : Good morning, Mr. Smith, how are you?

B : I'm fine, thank you, Mr. Vichai. And how are you?

A : Very well, thank you.

.....

A : Good morning, Mr. Peter.

B : Good morning, Mr. Somsak. How are you?

A : I'm very well, thank you. And are you?

B : Quite all right, thank you.

.....

A : Hi, John, how are you?

B : Fine, thanks, and you?

A : Very well, thanks.

.....

A : Hello, Malee, how are you today?

B : I'm not well. I've caught a cold.

A : Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Have you taken anything for it?

B : Yes, I have. Thank you.

.....

A : Hello, Vichai. I haven't seen you for a long time. How have you been?

B : I'm all right, thanks. And how about you?

A : Not too bad, thanks.

.....

A : Hi, Tom. Haven't seen you for months. What's new?

B : Not much. I've been busy with my work. What about you?

A : So so.

EXERCISES

A. Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : Good afternoon,

B :

A :, thank you.

2. A : Hi,

B :

A : Sorry to hear that,

B :

3. A : I haven't seen you for weeks.

B :And what about you?

A :

B : Make dialogues about the following :

Greeting friends daily Greeting colleagues at the office

Greeting the boss Greeting someone formally

Greeting someone informally

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PERSONAL INFORMATION

(ข้อมูลส่วนตัว)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Name : **What's your name? Is your name (Somsak)?**

Who are you?

Are you (Vichai)?

Age : **How old are you?**

What's your age?

When were you born?

What's your date of birth?

Family : **How many people are there in your family?**

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Are you married?

How many children have you got?

Address : **Where do you live?**

Where's your house?

What's your address?

Job : **What do you do?**

What's your job?

What's your occupation? What are you?

Income : **How much is your salary?**

How much is your income per month?

How much is your wage per day?

How much (salary / wage) do you get?

Dialogues

A : Is your name Somphong Meechai?

B : Yes, that's right.

A : How old are you, Somphong?

B : Twenty-six.

A : What do you do?

B : I'm a teacher. I teach at a government school in Bangkok.

A : Where do you live?

B : I live at 108 / 219 Ram-Intra road, Bangkapi, with my sister.

A : Excuse me. Are you married?

B : No, I'm single.

A : Why do you want to join our club?

B : I want to help the public.

A : That's good.

.....

A : I'd like to have some information about you.

B : All right.

A : Thank you. Firstly, when were you born, Vichai?

B : I was born on July 18, 1968.

A : How many people are there in your family?

B : There are six: my parents, one brother, two sisters, and myself.

A : Where's your family?

B : They are in Lampang.

A : What do you do in Bangkok?

B : I'm a student at Ramkamhaeng University and also I work at a restaurant at night.

A : Oh, I see. How much do you get per week?

B : About 800 baht.

A : What do you want to do after graduation?

B : I want to run my own business.

A : Oh, that's good.

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A :

B : Yes, I am.

A : What's your address, Pracha?

B :

A :?
 B : Yes, I have got one son.
 A :?
 B : He's only one year old.
 A : Thanks.

2. A : What's your name?
 B :
 A : How old are you?
 B :
 A : What do you do?
 B :
 A : Where do you live?
 B :
 A :?
 B : I get 8,000 baht a month.
 A : Thank you.

Make dialogues about the following.

With a friend in the class.

With a colleague in the office.

With a new member.

With a job applicant.

With a course applicant.

With a close friend after long absence.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

INTRODUCTIONS

(การแนะนำตัว)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I'd like to introduce/ to present May I introduce
I have the great pleasure to introduce Let me to introduce
I'm greatly honoured to present It's my greatest pleasure to
introduce...
I'd like you to meet This is
How do you do? I'm pleased to meet you. / I'm glad to meet you.
It's nice to meet you.

Dialogues

A : Mr. Smith, I would like you to meet Mr. Roberts. Mr. Roberts, this is Mr. Smith.

B : How do you do? Pleased to meet you.

C : How do you do? Pleased to meet you, too.

.....

A : Paul, this is Peter Smith. Peter, this is Paul Roberts.

B : Hello, Peter. Glad to meet you.

C : Hello, Paul. Nice to meet you.

.....

A : Teacher, may I introduce Vince Hall, a colleague of mine. Vince, this is my teacher.

B : How do you do? teacher.

C : How do you do?

.....

A : Mary. I'd like you to meet my classmate, Vichai, Sompong and Jiraphan.

B : How do you do? It's very nice to meet you.

C : How do you do? Glad to meet you.

.....

- I have the great pleasure to introduce Professor Dr.David Roberts of the English Department of Ramkamhaeng University in Bangkok, Thailand.
- May I introduce our chief guest, Mr. James Johnson from Canada.
- May I introduce myself. I'm Vichai Jaidee, a teacher at the Buddhist English Institute in Bangkok.
- Let me introduce myself. My name's Sawart Phanna from Thailand.

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A :, I'd like you to meet
 , this is
 B : How do you do?
 C :, too.

2. A : Father, may I introduce
 B :Nice to meet you.
 C :

3. - I'm greatly honoured to present
 - Allow me to introduce myself.

Make dialogues about the following.

Introducing two people formally.

Introducing two friends.

Introducing a friend to the boss.

Introducing a new teacher to the class.

Introducing oneself.



SHOPPING

(การซื้อของ)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

May / Can I help you?

What can I do for you?

What would you like (to)?

I'd like (to)

I want (to)

I'm looking for

I'm just looking.

May I see?

Do you have?

Examples :

What would you like to see?

Would you like to see some clothes?

I'd like a shirt.

I'd like to have a pen.

I want to buy a notebook.

I'm looking for a handkerchief.

May I see a watch?

Do you have a tooth brush?

Would you like a ring?

Dialogues

A : Can I help you?

B : Yes, I would like to have a pen.

A : This way, please. Which one would you like?

B : I'll take this one. How much is it?

A : 25 baht. Thank you.

.....

A : I want some toothpaste, please.

B : A large tube or a small one.

A : What is the price?

B : The large one is forty baht and the small one is twenty-five. Which one will you take?

A : Well, I'll have a large one.

B : Here you are. Thank you.

.....

A : What can I do for you, sir?
 B : I'm looking for a suitcase.
 A : This way, please. Which one would you like?
 B : May I see the blue one? How much is it?
 A : It's 350 baht.
 B : That's rather expensive. How about 250?
 A : I can let you have it for 320.
 B : Can you give it to me for 280?
 A : Well, 300. That's the last price. I can't reduce it any more.
 B : O.K. Here you are.
 A : Thank you.

.....

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A :?
 B : Yes, I'd like
 A : Here you are?
 B : I like this one.?
 A : 50 baht.
 B :I'll take it.
 A : Thank you.

2. A : I'd like to
 B : Here you are, sir.
 A : What's the price?
 B :
 A : Can I have it for?
 B : Oh, that's too low. How about?
 A :
 B : Thank you.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

ON THE TELEPHONE

(การพูดโทรศัพท์)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

This is

Is that?

Isthere?

I would like to speak to

May / Can / Could I speak to?

Who is that / speaking / calling?

Who shall I say is calling?

This is speaking.

I'm sorry he / she is out / not in / not present.

Just a moment.

Hold on, please.

Will you leave a message?

Can I take a message?

May I leave a message?

Will you call back later?

I'll call back later.

Dialogues

A : Hello, this is the P.S. Shop?

B : Can I speak to Mr. Suwit, please?

A : Speaking. Who's that?

B : Hello, Suwit. I'm John Smith. How are you?

A : Fine, thanks. I'm very glad to hear from you again, John. What can I do for you?

B : Nothing. Just call to talk to you.

.....

A : Hello, this is ABC Company. Can I help you?

B : Could I speak to the manager, please?

A : Yes, who shall I say is calling?

B : I'm Paul Robert from Australia.

A : Just a moment, Mr. Roberts.

B : Thank you.

.....

A : Hello, is that B.E.I. College?

B : Yes, that right.

A : May I speak to Dr. Sharda, please?

B : Just a moment, please. I'm sorry she isn't present right now.

A : Can I leave a message?

B : Of course.

A : I'm P.S. Phanna from Khon Khen. Please tell her I'll come to meet her tomorrow.

B : All right, I'll tell her.

A : Thank you.

.....

A : Hello, is Mr. Vichai there, please?

B : Sorry, there is no one by that name here, I think you have the wrong number.

A : Is this 5174683?

B : No, this is 5178463.

A : Oh, I'm sorry to have bothered you.

B : Not at all.

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : Hello, is that?

B :

A : Could I, please?

B : This is speaking?

A :

2. A : Hello, this is

B :?

A : Yes,calling, please?

B :

A : Just a moment I'm sorry

B : May I?

A : Certainly.

B : Please

A :

B : Thank you.

Make dialogues about the following.

Calling a friend at his office

Calling the manager of a company

Calling to ask someone to do something

Calling to ask about something

Leaving a message for someone

Dialing a long number

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

ASKING DIRECTIONS

(การถามทิศทาง)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Where is? Which way is?

Which / What (road / bus) goes to?

Which / What (road / bus) do I take to get to?

How can I get to? How far is?

How long does it take to get to?

Can you please tell me the way to?

Can you please tell me how to get to?

Can you please tell me where is?

Examples :

Where is the National Museum?

Which way is the railway station?

Which road goes to the zoo?

Which bus goes to the airport?

How can I get to the Marble temple?

How far is Siam Square from Lumpini Park?

How long does it take to get to the Grand Palace?

Can you tell me the way to the National library?

Can you tell me where the Emerald Buddha Temple is?

Dialogues

A : Where is the nearest post office?

B : It's over there next to the hospital.

A : Can you direct me there?

B : All right. Go straight and turn left at the corner. It's just ten minutes walk.

A : Thank you.

.....

A : Could you tell me where the Temple of the Emerald Buddha is?

B : Yes, of course. It's within the compound of the Grand Palace.

A : I'm sorry, but where is the Grand Palace? And how can I get there?

B : It's near Phramane Ground or Sanam Luang. You can take buses no. 3 or 9.

A : How long will it take to get there?

B : About thirty minutes.

A : How much if I take a taxi?

B : About 100 baht.

A : Thank you very much.

.....

A : Excuse me, do you know which bus go to the airport?

B : Yes, the buses No. 39 and 59 are direct. If you take No. 8 or 201, you change at Victory Monument to No. 29 and 59.

A : Are there air-conditions buses going there?

B : Yes, there is No. 13 from Hua Lampong and No. 34 from Sam-Rong.

A : Do you know how long it will take to get there?

B : About two hours by bus but only fifty minutes by taxi.

A : Thank you very much.

B : Not at all.

.....

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : Where is?

B : It's

A : How can I get there?

B :

A : How far is it from?

B :

2. A : Could you please tell me the way to?

B : All right.

A : How long will it take to get there?

B :

A : Thank you.

3. A : Which bus goes to?

B :

A : Can I take?

B :

Make the dialogues asking directions to the following:

A government office. A market A university

A temple Some interesting places.

Some places. Some parts of a building.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TIME & DATE

(วันเวลา)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

What time is it?

What's the time?

What time is / does? What day is it today?

What's the date today?

What day / date is / does?

When is / does? What time have you got? / Have you got the time?

Examples :

A : What time is it?

B : It's three-twenty.

A : And what time does the show start?

B : At four.

A : Oh, let's hurry up.

.....

A : When is your office open?

B : It's open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A : Is it open on Saturday?

B : Yes, in the morning from 9 till 12.30.

A : Thank you.

.....

A : When does your class start and finish?

B : It starts at two p.m. and finishes at five thirty.

A : Do you have class every day?

B : No, only on Saturdays and Sundays.

A : When is the midterm examination?

B : On December 23.

A : Thank you.

.....

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : What time is?
 B :
 A : And when does?
 B :

2. A :?
 B : It's begins at
 A : And what time does?
 B :

Make dialogues about the following.

The time of an appointment.	The time of a class.
The time of a show.	The time of a party.
The time of a flight / train / bus.	The hours an office open.
The date of a holiday.	The schedule for a fair / celebration.

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PRICES & CHARGES

(ราคา)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

How much is?

How much does cost?

What does cost?

How much does ... charge (you)?

What's the price / cost / charge of?

Examples :

How much is this pen?

How much do these books cost?

What does the fan cost?

How much does the taxi charge?

What's the price of this shirt? What is the plane fare to Chiang Mai?

How much is the admission fee?

Dialogues

A : How much is this book?

B : 82 baht.

A : And that one?

B : 55 baht.

A : Thank you.

.....

A : How much does the coffee cost?

B : It's 65 baht.

A : And what about the eggs?

B : 35.75 baht.

A : And the onion?

B : 14.50 baht.

A : How much is that altogether?

B : That'll be 115.25 baht.

.....

- A : What's the bus fare to Muang Phon?
 B : About 80 baht for a regular bus.
 A : How much is it for an air-conditioned bus?
 B : About 150 baht, I think.
 A : Thank you.

.....

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : How much does?
 B : It
 A : And what's the price of?
 B :

2. A : How much are?
 B : They
 A : And what about and?
 B :
 A : How much is that altogether?
 B :

Make dialogues about the following.

The price of something.

The cost of something.

The charge of something.

The fare for taking some vehicles.

The fee for something.

The charge for some services.

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TALKING TO THE FOREIGNERS

(การพูดคุยกับชาวต่างชาติ)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Where are you from?	Where do you come from?
What country are you from?	Where is your country?
How long have you been in?	How do you find?
How long are you going to be in?	
Have you (ever) been to / visited / seen?	
What do you think of?	What isof your country?

Examples :

How long have you been here?	Have you ever been to Pattaya?
How long are you going to be in Thailand?	
Have you ever seen Thai boxing?	How do you find the food here?
What do you think of Chinese food?	
What is the national language of your country?	
What is the population of your country?	
What is the main occupation of people in your country?	

Dialogues

A : Where are you from?

B : I'm from Canada.

A : How long have you been in Thailand?

B : Just four days.

A : And how long are you going to be here?

B : For one month.

.....

A : Have you visited the Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple?

B : Yes, I have. They are very nice.

A : How do you find the food and the weather here?

B : The food is rather spicy but delicious and the weather is rather hot.

A : After Thailand where are you going to visit?

B : I'll go to some European countries and then back to my country.

A : Thank you.

.....

A : Where is your country?

B : It's situated on an island in the Pacific Ocean.

A : How many people does it have?

B : Five hundred thousands. Fishing is the main occupation there.

A : What's the national language?

B : English. But we speak three languages; English, French and a dialect.

A : What's the ruling system of the country?

B : Democracy.

A : Thank you.

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A :?

B : I come from Australia.

A :?

B : For one week.

A : Have you ever been to?

B :

2. A : Where is your country?

B : It's

A : What's your national language?

B :

A : How is the weather there?

B :

Make dialogues about meeting the following people.

Someone from European country

Someone from America

Someone from Africa

Someone from an island country

Someone from Japan

Someone from a Middle East country

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REQUESTS

(การขอร้อง)

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Please /, please.

I'd like, please.

Can / Could you (please), please?

Will / Would you (please), please?

Could / Would you kindly? Would you be so kind as to?

Do / Would you mind?

I wonder if you'd (mind)

Accepting : Yes, of course / Certainly / All right / O.K. / sure / with pleasure /

I would be glad to / Not at all / Of course not / I wish I could, but

EXAMPLE

Please take a seat. / Come in, please. I'd like to have a drink, please.

I'd like you to get me a chair, please. Can you open the window, please.

Could you please tell me the way to the airport?

Would you kindly lend me the typewriter?

Would you mind posting these letters for me?

I wonder if you'd translate this sentence?

Would you be so kind as to translate this sentence?

Will you do me a favour?

Can you help me, please?

Dialogues

A : Turn of the light, please.

B : O.K.

A : And don't forget to close the door.

B : No, I won't.

.....

A : Can you help me with this exercise, please?

B : Certainly.

A : And would you kindly lend me the calculator for two days?

B : Yes, of course.

A : Thank you very much.

.....

A : John would you mind posting these letters for me?

B : No, of course not.

A : And could you get me a newspaper?

B : O.K.

.....

A : Excuse me, can you tell me the way to the museum?

B : I'm sorry, I don't know.

A : I see.

.....

A : I want some water, please.

B : O.K. Here you are.

A : Thank you. Could you boiled it for me?

B : I wish I could but I have to hurry back home.

A : Oh, I see. Never mind then.

EXERCISES

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : Can you, please?

B : Of course.

A : Thank you. And could you kindly

B : Certainly.

A : Thank you very much.

2. A :?
 B : Not at all.
 A : Could you please?
 B : I'm sorry
 A : Oh, never mind then.

Make dialogues about the followings:

Not to be late	Make a cup of coffee
Tell about something	Tell the way to somewhere
Clean something	Set something
Help do something	Repair something
Buy something	Call someone

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Greeting & Introducing

ใบความรู้ที่ 1 Greeting & Introducing

Common interrogative sentences.

- Q : What's your name? = คุณชื่ออะไร? A : My name is
- Q : Who are you? = คุณคือใคร? / คุณเป็นใคร A : I'm / My name is
- Q : When is your birthday? = คุณเกิดเมื่อไร? A : I was born on/ My birthday is...
- Q : How old are you? = คุณอายุเท่าไร? A : I'm years old.
- Q : Where do you live? = คุณอาศัยที่ไหน? A : I live in ... / at ...
- Q : What's your address? = ที่อยู่ของคุณคืออะไร? (ให้บอกที่อยู่ เช่น 78 ถ. 25 มกรา อ.เมือง จ.นครปฐม 73000)
- Q : How many people are there in your family? = ครอบครัวของคุณมีสมาชิกกี่ คน?
- A : There are people in my family.
- Q : What's your job? / What do you do? / What are you? = คุณมีอาชีพอะไร?
- A : I'm a / an
- Q : What's your telephone number? = เบอร์โทรศัพท์ของคุณคือเบอร์อะไร?
- A : My telephone is/ It's

Necessary vocabularies.

- | | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Good morning | = สวัสดี (ตอนเช้า) | Hello = สวัสดี |
| Good afternoon | = สวัสดี (ตอนบ่าย) | Hi! = สวัสดี (ใช้กับระดับเพื่อน) |
| Good evening | = สวัสดี (ตอนเย็น : ใช้พูดหลังหกโมงเย็น) | |
| How are you? | = สบายดีไหม? | |
| Good night | = ราตรีสวัสดิ์ | How do you do? = สวัสดี |
| Good bye | = ลา ก่อน | Nice to meet you = ยินดีที่ได้พบคุณ |

I'm fine, thank you.	= สบายดี, ขอบคุณ	father = พ่อ
I'm / My name's	= ผมชื่อ ...	mother = แม่
Family	= ครอบครัว	brother = พี่/น้องชาย
Parents	= พ่อแม่	sister = พี่/น้องสาว
Children	= ลูก, เด็ก ๆ	

ใบความรู้ที่ 2 Greeting & Introducing (Introducing someone)

การแนะนำให้รู้จักกับบุคคลอื่นมีทั้งแบบเป็นทางการ (formal introductions) ซึ่งใช้กับการแนะนำให้รู้จักกับผู้ที่มีวุฒิสูงกว่า และแบบไม่เป็นทางการ (informal introductions) ซึ่งใช้กันในกลุ่มเพื่อนฝูงหรือผู้ที่อยู่ในวัยเดียวกัน

ก่อนที่จะกล่าวถึงสำนวนภาษาพูดในการแนะนำให้รู้จักกัน ขอแนะนำและทำความเข้าใจเรื่องธรรมเนียมปฏิบัติ ดังนี้

- ก. ปกติควรแนะนำฝ่ายชายให้รู้จักกับฝ่ายหญิง แต่ถ้าฝ่ายชายมีอาวุโสหรือคุณวุฒิสูงกว่าก็ควรแนะนำฝ่ายหญิงให้รู้จักกับฝ่ายชาย
- ข. ควรแนะนำบุคคลที่มีอาวุโสน้อยกว่าให้รู้จักกับผู้ที่มีอาวุโสมากกว่า สำหรับสำนวนภาษาพูดที่ใช้เพื่อการแนะนำให้รู้จักกับบุคคลอื่น ได้แก่

This is (นี่คือคุณ.....)

I'd like to introduce you to (ขอแนะนำให้คุณรู้จักกับคุณ

Let me introduce you to (ขอแนะนำให้คุณรู้จักกับคุณ

I'd like you to meet (ขอแนะนำให้คุณรู้จักกับ

หลังจากที่บุคคลทั้งสอง ถูกแนะนำให้รู้จักกัน ฝ่ายที่ถูกแนะนำให้รู้จักกันพูด
ทักทายกันว่า

ฝ่ายแรก

ฝ่ายหลัง

Nice to meet you. ยินดีที่รู้จักคุณ
รู้จักคุณเช่นกัน

Pleased to meet you. ยินดีที่รู้จักคุณ

Glad to meet you. ยินดีที่รู้จักคุณ

How do you do? สวัสดี

Hello. สวัสดี

Nice to meet you too = ยินดีที่

Pleased to meet you, too. = "-----"

Glad to meet you, too. = "-----"

How do you do? = สวัสดี

Hello. = สวัสดี



Name

No.

Exercises

Greetings

Complete the following dialogues.

- Pattaya - Yes, I have - No, I haven't
- How long have you been in Thailand - Where do you come from

1. A :

B : I come from The United States.

A :

B : Just three days.

A : Have you been to

B :

- Thai people are very nice, they are friendly and the food is rather spicy but delicious.
- Thank you. - Yes, I have. They are very nice. - No, I haven't
- After Thailand where are you going to visit

2. A : Have you visited the National Museum and the Emerald Buddha Temple?

B :

A : What do you think of Thai people and the Thai food?

B :

A :

B : I'll go to China and Korea and then back to my country.

A :

Name

No.

Exercises

INTRODUCTIONS

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A :, I'd like you to meet, this is

B : How do you do?

C :, too.

2. A : Father, May I introduce

B :Nice to meet you.

C :

3. - I'm greatly honoured to present

- Allow me to introduce myself.....

Make dialogues about the following.

- Introducing two friends.

- Introducing two people formally.

- Introducing oneself.



Exercise

DIRECTIONS : Complete the sentences with these words.

read	swim	speak	fly	sleep
dance	play	cook	carry	ride

1. Martha can many languages.
2. A penguin is a bird that can not
3. John can not Very well because he is sick.
4. Thongchai can 3 books a day.
5. Look at those women in the sea. They can very well.
6. That beautiful lady likes listening to music but she does not want to
.....
7. I help my mother to the bags from supermarket.
8. Sam is 13 years old but he can't a bicycle.
9. We take a bath in the bathroom and we in the kitchen.
10. I like the guitar but I can't it.



Name

No.

Exercises

Talking to the Foreigners

Complete the following dialogues.

- Pattaya - Yes, I have - No, I haven't
- How long have you been in Thailand - Where do you come from

1. A :

B : I come from The United States.

A :

B : Just three days.

A : Have you been to?

B :

- Thai people are very nice, they are friendly and the food is rather spicy but delicious.
- Thank you. - Yes, I have. They are very nice. - No, I haven't
- After Thailand where are you going to visit

2. A : Have you visited the National Museum and the Emerald Buddha Temple?

B :

A : What do you think of Thai people and the Thai food?

B :

A :?

B : I'll go to China and Korea and then back to my country.

A :

On the Telephone

Complete the following dialogues.

1. A : Hello, is that.....?
 B :
 A : Could, please?
 B : This isspeaking.....?
 A :?

- CNN company - Yes, I have - No, I haven't
- Hello, Somsak. I'm Suwit. How are you - Somsak, Who's that

2. A : Hello, this is?
- B :?
- A : Yes,calling, please?
- B :?
- A : Just a moment.....I'm sorry
- B : May I?
- A : Certainly.
- B : Please.....
- A :
- B : Thank you.

- Could I speak to Mr.Somchai, please - leave a message
- I'm Somkid from BA Inc. - Who shall I say is - All right, I'll tell him
- CBA Company. Can I help you - Mr.Somkid, he is not present.
- Tell him I'll come to meet him tomorrow morning about nine.

APPENDIX 9

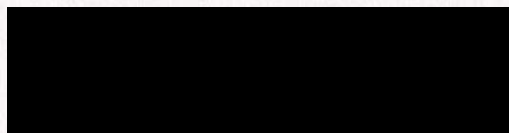
Certified letter from the third parties



I am Asst. Prof. Dr. Roongfa Kitiyanusan, a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Burapha University, Thailand. I was the third party **who had looked through a whole process of the doctoral thesis** entitled 'An Action Research of English Teaching for Grade 7th Students at Bamrung Wittaya, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand' undertaken by the researcher (Mr. Itthinan Kimhachandra).

I am to certify that the researcher had collected the research data authentically and systematically by the following methods: teacher's journals, semi-structured interviews, students' portfolios, and observations. Multiple data collection methods were used to assure the validation of the research reflection and outcomes.

The data then were analysed and interpreted carefully by open and axial procedures of the coding techniques.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Roongfa Kitiyanusan

Faculty of Education,

Burapha University, Bangsan, Chonburi, Thailand.



I am Dr. Wattana Klinchoo, an Education Supervisor, Chonburi Educational Service Area Office 3. I was the third person **who had contributed, given suggestions and looked through all processes** of a doctoral research thesis entitled ‘An Action Research of English Teaching for Grade 7th Students at Bamrung Wittaya, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand’ which was undertaken by Mr. Itthinan Kimhachandra.

I am willing to assure that Mr. Itthinan Kimhachandra had managed the data for this research authentically, academically, systematically and professionally. The data were collected using various methods: teacher’s journal, semi-structured interview, students’ portfolio, and observation to ensure the validation.

The open and axial coding techniques had been used respectively by the researcher to analyse and interpret the collected data. Firstly, an open coding was applied as to divide/ separate the data into category/ group then the axial was to make connections between a category and sub-categories.



Dr. Wattana Klinchoo
An Education Supervisor
Chonburi Educational service area Office 3
Chonburi. Thailand

