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**DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY  
INSTRUCTION FOR A TOURISM EDUCATION  
PROGRAMME IN THAILAND**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education  
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New Zealand**

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to develop communication strategy instruction for Thai tourism students to enhance their English oral communication performance. The research was conducted with 24 fourth-year tourism students, who participated in different aspects of the voluntary short course of communication strategy, at a public university located in the northern part of Thailand.

Classroom action research was the methodological approach selected to investigate students' needs, the key communication strategies to be taught, the ways to teach the communication strategies, and the effects of teaching the communication strategies. The process of data collection and analysis was undertaken in three phases. Phase One involved a pre-assessment to identify the students' need for communication strategy instruction. Phase Two involved the development and implementation of communication strategy instruction, along with data collection and analyses from students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. Phase Three involved a post-assessment, followed by a comparison of the students' pre- and post-assessment oral communication performance.

The findings revealed eight key communication strategies that could be taught for tourism students to enhance their English communication skills: circumlocution, approximation, literal translation, self-repair, self-rephrasing, lexicalised fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies. The study also revealed practical ways of teaching communication strategies, including teaching a wide range of communication strategies combined with language knowledge using a variety of communicative tasks. In addition, the findings showed the benefits of teaching communication strategies because these strategies contributed to raising students'

awareness of using communication strategies alongside linguistic knowledge, and also served to promote among students positive attitudes towards language learning and interaction. This study supports and highlights the significance of explicit teaching of communication strategies and suggests including this new and useful approach to English language teaching and learning for tourism students in Thailand.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis reports on a classroom action research study to develop communication strategy (CS) instruction for Thai tourism students with the aim of improving the students' oral communication performance, an important skill in the field of tourism. The nature of this study has led to the choice of classroom action research which I undertook as a teacher researcher. This study was based on the belief that the teacher researcher's involvement in the research context and in the ongoing action and reflection process of action research can contribute to insights into and positive changes in classroom practices as well as students' learning (Burns, 2010; Henning, Stone, & Kelly, 2009). This chapter provides the background of the study and local context. This is followed by the rationale for teaching CS in a tourism programme, the research questions, and the overview of the thesis.

### **1.2 The background of the study**

Tourism and hospitality are important industries for most countries in the world. Each year, there are a great number of tourists travelling across countries for different purposes, particularly for leisure, business, and study. This has increased revenue and the opportunities for development in the host countries. Tourism and hospitality are one of the most rapidly growing economic sectors. International tourists worldwide have increased from 675 million in 2000 to 940 million in a decade and are continuing to

grow (UNTWO, 2012). As international tourism is a major source of income for many countries, a number of new tourist destinations have emerged to serve different tourism purposes. Consequently, there is a great demand for human resources in tourism-related industries. To serve the requirements of the workforce market, a number of tourism education programmes have been organised throughout the world, aiming to produce qualified tourism-related graduates.

Key requirements for those working in the tourism and hospitality industries are good communication skills in intercultural contexts. In such contexts, the English language has become increasingly significant as it has been recognised as the global language which is commonly used by native and non-native English speakers around the world (González-Pastor, 2013). According to E. Cohen (2004), tourism personnel are required to communicate effectively in English because the majority of international tourists can speak English as it is widely taught across the world.

Also in Thailand, there have been great demands for graduates who have outstanding communication skills in the English language and other foreign languages for the tourism and hospitality industries. English, in particular, is the mean language for communication among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand (A. Kirkpatrick, 2008). These ten nations also aim to create the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 where skilled workers will be allowed to work in any of these nations. Skilled workers that are proficient in English will gain more benefits from this economic liberalisation (Saraihong & Chancharoenchai, 2012).

Among the language skill sets, oral communication, in particular, has a high priority in the tourism context. Tourism-related work deals mainly with on-site

communication between tourists and hosts, where intercultural contexts extensively occurs (Leclerc & Martin, 2004). When tourism personnel are interacting with tourists from different countries and cultures, they are required to speak clearly, deliver explicit messages, and deal with any problem-related intercultural communication (Blue & Harun, 2003). With a good command of English, they are able to communicate effectively with overseas organisations and will be able to effectively negotiate and extend business opportunities with their international business partners in the future (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2002). Improving oral communication skills is therefore very important and necessary for students in tourism-related fields (e.g., tour guiding, hotels, and airlines) to equip them to cope with the current competitive world economy (Sirikarn & Prapphal, 2011). However, in many cases, tourism graduates' English oral proficiency does not meet the requirements of the work force market. According to a study of workforce situations among tourism personnel by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in Thailand, many graduates in tourism and hospitality were unable to communicate and function effectively and efficiently in English (Chaisawat, 2006).

The oral communication deficiency of Thai students in tourism and other fields has encouraged critical discussion reflecting on English language teaching, leading to the improvement of the English language curriculum in Thai schools and tertiary education. According to Wongsothorn et al. (2002), the new and most current English curriculum is in line with the 1999 National Education Act. This curriculum promotes English as a compulsory subject of the 12-year basic education, from primary to secondary school (Grade 1-12). The curriculum has also increased the number of English language courses to be taken at the tertiary level, from at least six credits (two courses) to at least twelve credits (four courses). Wiriyachitra (2002) also added that all

English courses are designed to achieve three objectives: knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards English. Knowledge involves being able to use English language in communication, for study and career purposes, for obtaining new information and developing lifelong learning, and understanding the culture of English native speakers. Skills include communication strategies, thinking and learning skills, and knowledge seeking skill. Positive attitudes towards English involve appreciation of English language and its culture.

However, such a broad policy seems to be difficult to put into practice, particularly in the Thai context where English is a Foreign Language (EFL). Similar to Vietnam, China, and Japan, teaching and learning English in Thailand is conducted within an EFL context. In this EFL context, learning and using English is limited to the classroom where the language can be taught and learned, but seldom practised (Cook, 2011). The learners of EFL tend to have limited opportunities to practice English, compared to those in the English as a Second Language (ESL) learning context who have more chances to be exposed to authentic English language within and outside the classroom (Freed, 1995). Because of the limited opportunities to communicate in English outside the classroom in the Thai EFL learning context, it is very challenging for Thai students to master oral English communication (Khamkhien, 2010).

In tertiary settings, the focus of and the time allocated to general English courses and English for Specific Purpose courses are also unlikely to be sufficient for the practice of oral communication skills. Apart from taking an English major, students in other major subjects, including tourism, are required to study at least four courses, two general courses (focusing on integrated skills and study skills), and two courses of either English for Specific Purposes or English for Academic Purposes (Wiriyachitra, 2002). Each course, mostly focusing on the four integrated language skills, consists of

three hours a week for one semester. These classes do not seem to be sufficient for practising and improving oral communication skills (Khamkhien, 2011). In addition, according to the curriculum analysis by NESDB (Chaisawat, 2006), the majority of English for tourism courses offered by Thai educational institutes, focus more on grammar usage than the practice of English in real-life situations. Without being taught to use the language in a wide variety of real world contexts, the graduates struggle to apply linguistic-based knowledge learned in the classroom to the real world communication.

In this section, the significance of oral communication skills in tourism related careers as well as the challenges in the practice of teaching these skills in EFL courses and English for tourism courses is discussed. The discussion has led to my great concern, as a Thai EFL teacher, teaching English for Tourism courses, about the necessity of finding a way to improve the practice of teaching English for Tourism to help improve the students' oral communication performance.

### **1.3 Local setting**

The current research took place in an undergraduate programme in the tourism department at a public university located in the north of Thailand. The majority of students were from the northern part of Thailand, aged between 18-22 years old. Each of the four academic levels comprised approximately 55-65 students, and each level was divided into two classes (Class A and B). The students had similar educational backgrounds and the majority of tourism-related students were from high schools, with some of them from vocational colleges. They were selected through two systems. Twenty percent of them were selected directly from a "quota examination" organised by

the university. Others were selected from the entrance examinations, held by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Royal Thai Ministry of Education.

The undergraduate programme in tourism has provided both academic and practical courses to enable the students to develop their knowledge and skills in tourism-related fields. There were four academic years with two semesters a year. Tourism students were required to be trained in tourism-related industries and be involved in the field trips in the summer breaks. They were also required to attend the internship programme in the last semester of the fourth academic year. In terms of English language courses, they were required to study general English courses in each semester of their first year, followed by English for tourism and hospitality courses in each semester of their second year and English for tourism courses in each semester of their third year. No English language courses were included in the fourth year of the programme. All courses were taught by Thai teachers and each course was three hours a week for 15 weeks.

In the research setting, I had worked as an EFL teacher for five years prior to my leave to study for a PhD in New Zealand. I had taught English for Tourism courses to the tourism students and general EFL courses to students in other major subjects. Based on my experience of teaching English for Tourism courses, I found that the most challenging part was to enable students to apply language knowledge and skills learned from these courses to perform real-life tasks related to the tourism context. For example, students were required to be able to describe tourist attractions in English during a field trip in their summer breaks. This required both English communication skills and the knowledge of the particular tourist sites. However, it was noticeable that although students were equipped with essential language aspects and practice, the oral performance of many students did not meet the requirements of the programme.

Communicating in English to provide information about a particular tourist site is demanding work. Students are required to speak English clearly, fluently and accurately while delivering interesting and precise content. Unfortunately, many students tend to memorise the scripts, leading to unnatural speech, particularly when they were distracted and not able to continue their speech. They also used complex written words from the scripts, which are more difficult to pronounce and understand than common spoken words. Such use may create confusion and misunderstanding and lead to unpleasant or misunderstood interactions.

Judging from this experience, it is likely that the teaching and practice of language aspects in the tourism courses may not be sufficient to improve students' oral communication performance. Khamkhien (2011) suggests spending class hours to encourage learners to produce new utterances by themselves and use strategies to survive in real communication, in addition to teaching linguistic knowledge. These strategies include communication strategies (CSs) that are also a skill area focused on in the current English curriculum in Thailand (Wiriyachitra, 2002) and the focus for my research.

#### **1.4 Rationale for teaching communication strategies in a tourism programme**

Working in a tourism related field, these students are required to use English to communicate with both non-native speakers and native speakers of English. In such communication, there are many aspects of English which can affect the effectiveness of communication. For example, mispronunciation of some English sounds that do not exist in either speakers' and listeners' native language commonly cause

misunderstandings of messages delivered (Jenkins, 2012). Therefore, students who aim to work in tourism need to have CSs that clarify meaning in communication. Consequently, A. Kirkpatrick (2010) recommends teaching CSs in English courses to ensure intelligibility and to achieve communicative goals in communication.

Apart from useful linguistic features and expressions in tourism specific content, it is important for tourism students to learn to use CSs to improve their oral communication skills. Communication strategies are regarded as a means of solving problems in communication as well as enhancing communication. They are commonly employed as “first aid devices” (A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p. 179) when speakers deal with difficulties or breakdown in communication due to their linguistic deficits. They are also used to maintain open communicative channels, and to establish mutual understanding with interlocutors (A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). With these effective roles in communication, many researchers have recommended the need to teach CSs to learners of English (Dörnyei, 1995; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005). Many Thai researchers in CS studies also acknowledge the value of CSs as a means of improving communication ability and have also recommended teaching CSs to Thai EFL students (e.g., Kongsom, 2009; Somsai, 2011; Wannaruk, 2003). Fortunately, teaching CSs should be beneficial for those in tourism and hospitality because they are expected to be proficient in English oral communication performance.

However, no research involving teaching CSs has been conducted with Thai EFL learners of tourism. Also, neither textbooks nor teaching materials have been designed for the explicit teaching of CSs in English for tourism courses. Therefore, the aim of this research was to develop explicit instruction and investigate the practice of teaching CSs for fourth year undergraduate Thai EFL tourism students in a local setting.

To gain insights into such practice, this study was conducted by using classroom action research. By using this approach, I aimed to develop and adjust my teaching practice contextually and culturally to be appropriate and effective to the Thai EFL students in tourism.

## **1.5 Research questions**

This classroom action research was conducted to investigate how CS instruction can be taught to help improve tourism students' oral communication performance. To gain an in-depth understanding of learners' needs, the teaching process, and outcomes, this study was guided by the following four research questions:

1) What CSs do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?

2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?

3) How should CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

4) In what way does the implementation of CS instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

## **1.6 Overview of the thesis**

Chapter One provides the background of my action research study and the research setting. The rationale and significance of this study are also addressed, followed by the research questions. The overview of the thesis is outlined at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Two reviews the literature relevant to second language learning and CSs as well as the teaching of CSs. The research questions for this action research process are also addressed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Three introduces the theoretical basis of action research, followed by a section focusing on classroom action research as the selected approach for this study. The design of the research is also discussed, including the researcher positioning, individualistic approaches to classroom action research, and an overview of the research process. This is followed by the descriptions of the participants, the methods for data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents the action research process of Phase One: Needs Analysis. This phase involved the data collection and analysis processes of the pre-assessment. Following this, the results from the needs analysis and initial reflections on these results are addressed to propose the way to teach CSs in Phase Two.

Chapter Five presents the action research process of Phase Two: Development and Implementation of the CS Instruction. This phase involved teaching CSs along with collecting and analysing data from the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. The results from these processes are addressed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Six presents the action research process of Phase Three: Students' oral communication performances. This chapter includes the sections of data collection and analysis of the post-assessment and the comparison of the pre- and post-assessments, followed by the results from this phase.

Chapter Seven discusses the key findings from the three phases of action research in relation to the research questions. These discussions are also supported by the previous literature on second language learning, English for tourism, and CSs.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis, providing a summary of the research process, research contributions and implications. These sections are followed by the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews relevant literature to provide background information regarding communication strategies and teaching CSs. The chapter is organised into seven sections. Following the introduction, I review key areas in second language learning related to CS studies and address the role of CSs in such areas. The review of the literature involving CS definitions and classifications also highlights the value of CSs in second language communication. The significance of teaching CSs is then discussed, followed by a review of research related to teaching CSs in both the international and Thai contexts to justify the focus of this research project. Following this section, key considerations for teaching CSs are discussed. The research questions are addressed at the end of the chapter.

### **2.2 Second language learning and communication strategies**

This section reviews the four main areas of second language studies which highlight the roles of CSs in second language learning. These areas include interlanguage, language learner strategies, communicative competence, and communicative language teaching.

### 2.2.1 Interlanguage

Communication strategies are considered to be a key process in interlanguage development. In the process of learning the target language, second language learners are believed to develop *interlanguage*, a separate language system which is different from either the learners' first language or target language, but influenced by both languages (Tarone, 2006). According to Selinker (1972), interlanguage involves five psycholinguistic processes, including first language transfer, overgeneralisation of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of communication, and strategies of learning. Strategies of communication are employed to solve problems in communication while strategies of learning are employed to master the target language (Tarone, 2006). However, Larsen-Freeman (2014) noted that interlanguage development is on the continuum of learners' first language and the target language but the reality is that the "endpoint" (p. 204) of this continuum may not exist. Perhaps, perfect native-speaker syntax can be viewed as this final state but not for speaking or CSs.

Many researchers into CS studies agree that CSs are considered as strategies for solving problems in interlanguage communication (Bialystok, 1983; Corder, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1983). Nevertheless, there is no consensus on CS definitions and taxonomies due to different perspectives and approaches. Some researchers view CSs as a purely psycholinguistic process (e.g., Bialystok, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Selinker, 1972). Others view CSs as both psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes (e.g., Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1983). Exemplars of CS definitions and taxonomies on the basis of these two perspectives will be further discussed in Section 2.3.

### **2.2.2 Second language learner strategies**

Communication strategies are included explicitly and implicitly in many frameworks of second language learner strategies which are relatively broad and wide-ranging. For example, A. D. Cohen (1998) classified second language learner strategies into language learning strategies and language use strategies. The former involves learning new knowledge of a target language while the latter involves applying their existing knowledge of language to their current interlanguage. Communication strategies are explicitly included in language use strategies, employed to solve problems and avoid breakdown in communication, for example, by expressing the intended meaning in a different way (A. D. Cohen, 2011).

Communication strategies, like other learning strategies, draw on learners' metacognition. According to Goh (2012), metacognition is a higher level of cognitive process that controls cognitive, social, and affective strategies and an important process for learners to manage their use of CSs by planning, monitoring, and evaluating CS use. According to Schunk (2012), metacognition involves learners' strategic application of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge to successfully perform and complete the tasks. Declarative knowledge includes understanding what strategies are required to perform the tasks; procedural knowledge includes their knowledge of how to use those strategies; and, conditional knowledge involves their knowledge of when and why to use such strategies to successfully complete the tasks.

The importantly close relationship between metacognition and strategies also leads to the expanding framework of second language learning strategies. For example, in the framework proposed by Oxford (1990), both language learning and language use strategies are combined and regrouped into six categories. These categories are memory

strategies (e.g., using acronyms and flashcards), cognitive strategies (e.g., analysis, note-taking and summarising), compensatory strategies (e.g., paraphrasing, using synonyms, pause fillers, and gestures), affective strategies (e.g., reducing anxiety and encouraging learners to use the language), social strategies (e.g., asking for clarification and help from the interlocutor), and metacognitive (e.g., planning, monitoring, and evaluating language learning and use). The majority of communication strategies fall into the category of compensatory strategies, particularly those which are used for speaking and writing (A. D. Cohen, 1998).

### **2.2.3 Communicative competence**

More specifically, CSs are viewed as part of strategic competence in Canale and Swain's (1980) framework for communicative competence. Their framework consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence, which involves linguistic knowledge such as the sound system, the order of words, and word meaning, is important for second language learners, to accurately express the meaning of utterances. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the discourse rules of language use, enabling second language learners to use language appropriately in communicative events and functions. Strategic competence involves the knowledge of how to use either verbal or nonverbal communication strategies that enable learners to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to the lack of either grammatical or sociolinguistic competences. These components of communicative competence (i.e., grammar, sociolinguistic and discourse rules, and communication strategies) are believed to contribute to successful communication and therefore should be applied to second language pedagogy (Canale & Swain, 1980).

According to Faucette (2001), the appropriate use of CSs is believed to contribute to developing strategic competence and communicative competence.

#### **2.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching**

In second language pedagogy, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a key approach to developing second language learners' communicative competence (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). According to CLT principles, a language is learned through authentic and meaningful communication which is fluency-orientated and involves trial and error (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These principles distinguish CLT from earlier methods. For example, while the grammar translation method focuses on teaching grammar rules deductively, in CLT learners are encouraged to discover grammar rules that are usable in real communication (J. C. Richards, 2006). Communicative language teaching also focuses on developing sociolinguistic competence by, emphasising the meaningful use of the second language in contexts with regards to purposes (e.g., business and study), settings (e.g., in airplanes and stores), roles of speakers and interlocutors (e.g., a sale person talking to the customer), communicative events (e.g., making a phone call), functions of language (e.g., giving directions), and notions (e.g., history, leisure, finance). Further, by focusing more on the fluency and meaning of communication than the accuracy of language forms, CLT is recognised as a means to develop strategic competence. As J. C. Richards (2006) points out, errors of language forms may not impede meaning in conversations but are an indicator of learners' developing communicative competence. In CLT, learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning and use communication strategies to avoid communication breakdown rather than the repetitive practice and memorisation of accurate language forms (J. C. Richards, 2006).

Communicative language teaching has been widely used since the 1990s and remains influential in contemporary second language teaching (J. C. Richards, 2006). With its flexible and comprehensive principles, CLT can be adapted to fit any level of students' communicative competence (R. Kirkpatrick & Ghaemi, 2011). Such principles can also be applied to accommodate new teaching practices over time because they are normally interpreted in many different ways of teaching language practice (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, the earlier practice of teaching and learning a second language tended to focus more on meaningful communicative activities and language teaching than explicit teaching strategies in second language classrooms (Goh, 2012). As Canale and Swain (1980) point out, communication strategies are thought to be acquired through second language learners' experience in real-life communication, "but not through classroom practice that involves no meaningful communication" (p. 31).

Communicative language teaching has been evolving constantly on the basis of changing paradigms (Littlewood, 2011) and shifting to focus more on learner-centeredness, diversity, process-based instruction, and lifelong learning (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). Regarding the notion of diversity in second language classrooms and individual learners, one current trend of CLT application focuses on learners' strategies, in particular, learning strategies and communication strategies. As Jacobs and Farrell (2003) suggest, raising learners' awareness of learning strategies enables them to become better lifelong learners. Also, second language educators need to be aware that second language learners inevitably encounter difficulties in communicating in a new language; communication strategies can help learners cope with such difficulties. These strategies are considered as a means to learn a second language and communicate in a second language effectively (Goh, 2012).

### **2.2.5 Summary of second language learning and communication strategies**

Communication strategies are viewed as a strategy in interlanguage communication, a strategy used by second language (L2) learners, and a strategic competence. The use of these strategies is managed by metacognition. Communicative language teaching, with its aim of developing learners' communicative competence, has been the most influential communicative approach to date (J. C. Richards, 2006). The greater role of strategy use and learning that has emerged from the approach has led to this increased interest in communication strategies. While they are seen to be a key component of communicative competence in the learning of second language, the value of teaching communication strategies is still debated. The concept of communication strategies and the value of using CSs and teaching CSs are reviewed in the following sections.

### **2.3 Definitions and classifications of communication strategies**

Communication strategies have been defined and classified in various ways. This section reviews CS frameworks on the basis of traditional and extended views. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) highlighted two major trends of the studies related to CS concepts and classification. Traditional views reflect the initial frameworks of CSs which mutually focus on CS roles as problem solving devices. Extended views developed the more contemporary frameworks which expand the role of CSs for both solving problems and enhancing communication. Examples of these views are compared and discussed as follows.

### **2.3.1 Traditional views**

Traditionally, CSs are viewed as strategies for solving problems in interlanguage communication. In general, CS concepts and classifications have been based on two major perspectives: interactional and psycholinguistic (Færch & Kasper, 1984). The interactional perspective involves CSs with interpersonal communication of either speakers or interlocutors (e.g., Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1977). According to Tarone (1981), who is the main proponent of this view, CSs are regarded as problem solving tools to achieve mutual understanding between speakers and interlocutors. From a psycholinguistic perspective, cognitive processes are said to underlie language performance and CSs are considered to involve an individual speaker's speech production (e.g., Bialystok, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983).

Examples of earlier CS studies which represent traditional views include Tarone's interactional view, Færch and Kasper's psycholinguistic view, and Bialystok's psycholinguistic view. Based on these views, CSs are mutually regarded as a means of solving communication problems. However, each view has a different focus and approach to define and classify CSs.

#### ***Tarone's interactional view***

Tarone (1977, 1980) was one of the earliest and most influential researchers who viewed CSs based on interactional perspectives, and provided two definitions of CSs. Her first definition was individuals' conscious communication strategies used to overcome problems caused by their inadequate knowledge of language structure (Tarone, 1977). This concept focused solely on the role of speakers. In her later work, based on an interactional perspective, she broadened her CS definition by emphasising the roles of both speakers and listeners as "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to

agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structure do not seem to be shared” (Tarone, 1981, p. 288). Tarone also distinguished CSs from learning strategies (LSs) and production strategies (PSs). Learning strategies are techniques to develop language competence while both CSs and PSs are strategies of language use. However, CSs are used in a problem-solving context while PSs are employed to enhance efficiency of communication (Tarone, 1981).

Although her two definitions of CSs have a different focus, Tarone (1981) used the same framework for conceptualising CSs. This framework described her view of a communication problem as a gap between the linguistic or sociolinguistic knowledge of the speaker and the interlocutor so CSs are the attempts to bridge this gap. Her three major types of CSs are characterised based on two behaviours to overcome communication problems. Firstly, avoidance strategies (i.e., topic avoidance and message abandonment) occur when the speaker does not attempt to communicate the meaning of a particular topic. Secondly, the speaker tries an alternative means to convey meaning including paraphrasing (i.e., approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution) and transferring (i.e., literal translation, language switching, appeal for help, and mime). However, this classification does not fit her proposed interactional definition of CSs. While she views CSs as tools for negotiation of meaning between the two interlocutors, she excludes interactional strategies (e.g., asking for clarification and confirmation check) which are found to be important for negotiating the meaning with the interlocutor at times of difficulties in the extended views of Dörnyei and Scott (1997).

### *Færch and Kasper's psycholinguistic view*

Another traditional CS definition that has been widely accepted was developed by Færch and Kasper (1983), two of the earliest researchers of CS studies with psycholinguistic perspectives. Based on their psycholinguistic view, CSs are part of a verbal plan, involving cognitive processes (1984). They define CSs as “potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (1984, p. 63). They proposed two key criteria used to characterise CSs: “problem-oriented” and “conscious”. Therefore, CSs are different from other verbal plans because they are consciously employed for solving communication problems.

Færch and Kasper (1983) also identified two types of speakers' behaviours in dealing with communication problems: avoidance behaviour (i.e., changing the communication goal) and achievement behaviour (i.e., attempting to set an alternative plan for problem solving). These types of behaviours contribute to two major types of CSs: reduction strategies and achievement strategies.

Reduction strategies include formal and functional approaches. The former occurs when the speaker avoids making errors and/or producing non-fluent speech by reducing language systems (phonology, morphology, syntax, or lexis) while the latter occurs when the speaker avoids problematic messages by reducing communication goals (e.g., topic avoidance and message abandonment). Achievement strategies are employed by means of expanding communicative resources. They are classified into compensatory strategies and retrieval strategies. Compensatory strategies, such as cooperative strategies, code switching, and interlanguage-based strategies, aim to deal

with inadequate linguistic resources. Retrieval strategies aim to deal with problems in retrieving the target utterance.

### ***Bialystok's psycholinguistic view***

Bialystok (1983) is another CS researcher with a psycholinguistic view. Unlike Færch and Kasper (1983), Bialystok focuses only on CSs which help solve linguistic deficits and defines CSs as “all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication” (p. 102). Bialystok's (1983) classifications also differ from Tarone's (1977) and Færch's and Kasper's (1983) because they exclude reduction strategies and appeals for help. Initially, she classified CSs based on the source of information where they are produced. First language-based strategies, from the learners' source of language, include language switch, foreignising, and transliteration. Second language-based strategies, from the target language, include semantic contiguity, description, and word coinage. Non-linguistic strategies involve using non-linguistic information such as mime and gesture.

In her later work, Bialystok (1990) restructured and renamed her CS classification system to include cognitive processes that underlie speech production: analysis-based strategies and control-based strategies. The former involves using the linguistic system to define features and structures of the concept, such as circumlocution, paraphrasing, and word coinage. The latter involves using other symbolic reference systems in place of the linguistic system, such as first language (L1) and gesture. Bialystok's approach is relatively limited and focuses on compensatory strategies. However, Bialystok's frameworks has support from Poulisse (1993) and Kellerman (1991) who investigated the use of compensatory strategies by Dutch learners.

### **2.3.2 Extended views**

More recent studies of CSs have extended CS concepts by combining various possible roles of CSs in communication. Some researchers view CSs as language use strategies which are employed to not only solve communication problems, but also enhance communication (e.g., A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) while some others expand the concept of CSs to cover the notion of language learning strategies (Nakatani, 2006). The CS framework proposed by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) and Nakatani (2006) are reviewed in this section because these frameworks are comprehensive and recent representatives of more extended views.

#### ***Dörnyei's and Scott's extended view***

Among the extended views, the CS framework proposed by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) is considered the most comprehensive one (Ellis, 2008). They view CSs as language devices for solving communication and establishing mutual understanding. Based on a review of various CS definitions and taxonomies from previous studies, they proposed that the classification of CSs consist of direct strategies, interactional strategies, and indirect strategies. These CSs were also sorted into four types of problems: a) resource deficits (e.g., linguistic gaps), b) own-performance problems (e.g., awareness of one's own incorrect messages), c) other-performance problems (e.g., incomprehension of interlocutor's messages), and d) processing time pressures (e.g., retrieval problems).

Direct strategies involve an alternative choice of language to get the meaning across. The majority of direct strategies are employed to solve resource deficits (e.g., message replacement, circumlocution and code switching) while some are used to resolve problems caused by own-performances (e.g., self-repair and self-rephrasing) and

problems caused by other performances (e.g., other-repair). Secondly, interactional CSs involve cooperative exchanges between two interlocutors to establish mutual understanding. The majority of interactional strategies are used to deal with problems caused by perceived other performances (e.g., asking for repetition, clarification, and confirmation) while some are employed to deal with resource deficits and own-performance problem (e.g., appeals for help and comprehension checks respectively). Thirdly, indirect CSs include facilitating techniques for conveying meaning. These CSs are mainly used to cope with processing time pressure (i.e., use of fillers and repetition).

Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy is more comprehensive than other classification schemes. They included CSs proposed in previous studies, such as reduction strategies and achievement strategies (Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1977), as well as time-stalling strategies (Dörnyei, 1995). Dörnyei and Scott (1997) also introduced a new range of strategies, for example, similar sounding words, self-repair and other-repair are included in direct strategies while comprehension checks, asking for confirmation, and guessing are included in interactional strategies. Feigning understanding and repetition are also introduced as indirect strategies.

### *Nakatani's extended view*

More recently, Nakatani (2006) developed an oral communication strategy inventory for collecting perceptions of CS used by EFL speakers. This framework includes cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies for coping with listening and speaking problems. Strategies for coping with problems of both skills include fluency-oriented, negotiation for meaning and non-verbal strategies. Social affective, accuracy-oriented, message reduction and alteration, message abandonment, and attempts to think in English are specific CSs for coping with speaking whereas

scanning, getting the gist, and word orientated strategies are specific strategies for coping with listening.

Nakatani's (2006) taxonomy is comprehensive and useful for exploring learners' perceptions on their use of CSs to cope with problems when performing oral communication tasks. Nakatani (2006) expands the concept of CSs to cover metacognitive processes which are designed to raise learners' self-awareness of the use of CSs.

### **2.3.3 Summary of communication strategies definitions and classifications**

To summarise, although there are varying definitions and taxonomies based on different perspectives, CSs are generally recognised as problem-solving strategies employed to achieve communication goals. Based on traditional views (Bialystok, 1990; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1983), CSs are problem-solving techniques used to deal with communication problems, particularly those related to linguistic gaps. These strategies include reduction/avoidance strategies and achievement/compensatory strategies. More contemporary perspectives appear to provide broader concepts of CSs as techniques for solving and managing problems (Kormos, 2006). Communication strategies are employed not only for coping with linguistic problems, but also for enhancing communication and for negotiating the meaning with the interlocutor's interactional strategies (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Communication strategies also involve learners' cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective processes (Nakatani, 2006).

Tarone's (1983) definition of CS is more consistent with the realities of communication, which always require cooperation between two interlocutors. Gaps in linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge between these interlocutors may cause

problems in communication. However, to compensate for those gaps in achieving mutual understanding, the CSs proposed in Tarone's (1977) framework are limited to achievement and avoidance strategies. Communication strategies listed in the more recent framework provided by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) are more comprehensive, ranging from strategies for compensating for linguistic gaps (e.g., circumlocution and approximation) and reduction strategies (e.g., message abandonment) to time-gaining strategies (e.g., fillers) and interactional strategies (e.g., appeals for help). Many observable CSs listed in this framework, are, therefore, selected and adapted for use in the current research.

To gain an understanding of the CSs that are the focus of my research, this section reviewed the definitions and classifications on the basis of different perspectives, held by key scholars in CS studies. While there is no consensus on either the definition or the classification of CSs, their explicit roles in solving communication problems have been acknowledged, ranging from those for coping with speakers' linguistic deficits and processing time pressure, as well as sociolinguistic gaps between the speakers and the interlocutors. Such significant roles of CSs will now lead into the discussion about the feasibility of teaching CSs to second language learners to increase their communicative competence.

## **2.4 Significance of teaching communication strategies**

While there is debate about the necessity for teaching CSs, many researchers support the view that providing instruction on CSs is advantageous for ESL and EFL learners (e.g., Chen, 1990; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2010; Wongsawang, 2001). On the other hand, some researchers, such as Bialystok (1990) and Kellerman

(1991) have argued against teaching CSs, particularly in relation to strategy transfer. According to their psycholinguistic views, Bialystok (1990) and Kellerman (1991) see CSs as implicit knowledge and abilities that individuals already have in their first language. They consider that such knowledge and abilities are transferred from their first language to the solving of communication problems that arise during second language learning and therefore do not need to be taught. Thus, Kellerman's (1991) position is that only the language should be taught: "let the strategies look after themselves" (p. 158). Furthermore, according to Canale and Swain (1980), strategies are acquired through experiencing genuine communication, not classroom learning where little real-life communication occurs. Swan (2001) also provides cautions that teaching strategies may hinder language development if learners are encouraged to overuse strategies by focusing on using a limited range of language to solve specific problems rather than attempting to produce more sophisticated language. These concerns have led to the views that support teachers to spending precious class time teaching language knowledge instead of strategies.

However, many researchers support the value of teaching CSs. Teaching only the knowledge of the language, as Bialystok (1990) suggests, may not be enough to help learners achieve all their goals of communication. As Færch and Kasper (1983) point out, a key component for learning language is not only language knowledge, but also an ability to use the language. This viewpoint is supported by an example from Faucette (2001) discussing vocabulary learning, who feels both declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge of language are crucial for learning and using vocabulary. The declarative knowledge of vocabulary involves knowledge of the word meaning while the procedural vocabulary involves the ability of how to use vocabulary appropriately in achieving a communication goal. Some learners may encounter difficulties in

expressing the meaning of unfamiliar words due to the lack of declarative knowledge of the word meaning. They may need to use procedural vocabulary (e.g., paraphrasing and approximation) to convey the intended meaning instead. The teaching of procedural vocabulary is therefore useful for learners to prevent breakdowns in communication (Faucette, 2001).

In addition, while Bialystok (1990) considers that CSs are a part of the implicit knowledge that emerges as students increase their experience with the second language, others have questioned whether students are aware of this implicit knowledge. If learners are not aware of their nature and usage, how can such strategies be employed appropriately and effectively to enhance their oral communication skills. As Færch and Kasper (1983) argue, individuals are believed to have their own implicit knowledge of CSs, but may not use those strategies extensively, appropriately, and effectively. Learning how to use CSs is even more essential, particularly in the contexts where linguistic and sociolinguistic differences between first and second languages exist and also within the EFL learning context, such as my Thai context, where second language learners have few opportunities for exposure to authentic communication. Teaching CSs also helps develop learners' metacognition to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own use of CSs so that they are able to manage their use of CSs (Goh, 2012).

Furthermore, in the context of the differences in linguistic features between a learner of first language and English, the likelihood of encountering difficulties in oral communication is inevitable. Western European learners of English are advantaged by the familiarity of linguistic features as both their first language and English are grounded in the same Latin and Germanic roots. These learners are less likely to encounter communication problems as they can draw on some familiarity to deal with problems by guessing vocabulary and transferring their first language knowledge

(Smyth, 2001). However, due to the great differences between Asian languages and English, Asian learners may find communication in English very challenging, leading to misunderstanding and miscommunication at times. A. Kirkpatrick (2008, 2012) examines the variety of English language used in Southeast Asia. He found common mispronunciations due to mismatches between first language and English phonological features can lead to problems in communication.

In Thailand, which is the research context for the current study, English is considered a foreign language and its linguistic features (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure) are relatively different from the Thai language (Wongsawang, 2001). According to Smyth (2001), Thai learners are less likely to be aware of the need to pronounce the final sounds (e.g., *pump* as *pum*). They also have difficulty with pronouncing unfamiliar English sounds and try to fit them into the Thai phonology system, for example, the initial sound /θ/ as /t/ (e.g., *three* as *tree*) and /ð/ as /d/ (e.g., *this* as *dis*), pronouncing the CH (/tʃ/) and SH (/ʃ/), V (/v/) and F (/f/) as homophones (e.g., *cheap* and *sheep*, *van* and *fan*), and confusing short vowels and long vowels (e.g., *ship* and *sheep*). Apart from this, it is challenging for Thais to guess English vocabulary because they have no familiarity with the roots of English language. In addition, Thais have some difficulties with English language structure because many structural features do not exist in the Thai language, such as articles, plurals and tense forms. These differences may result in communication problems (McKay, 2005). Further, with this disjunction between Thai and English, CSs implicitly used in the Thai language by native Thai speakers may not be transferable and/or transferred to their communication in English. Thus, it can be challenging for Thai speakers to apply their strategies for communicating in Thai to solve problems when communicating in English.

Apart from the differences in linguistic features of the first language and English, cultural differences in language use also challenge learners to use CSs appropriately. According to Dörnyei (1995) and Faucette (2001), cultural differences in language use may lead to differences in verbalising a particular CS, which might be seen as inappropriate in some cultures. One example given by Faucette related to differences in interactional strategies where expressions appealing for help in Japanese *eh?* (in English *huh?*) may not be appropriate in second language communication. Another example was given in Thailand by Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) in relation to time-stalling strategies. When Thai students were communicating with English speakers, they frequently used the filler *Or* to show realisation, but this is inappropriate and incorrect usage of CSs for English. Teaching them the appropriate English expressions for employing particular strategies enables EFL learners to use CSs more appropriately (Faucette, 2001; Kongsom, 2009). Therefore it is important particularly for Thai EFL students in my action research context to learn appropriate English expressions for employing CSs.

Further, regarding Canale and Swain's (1980) suggestion that learners can only acquire strategies through real-life communication, not in the classroom, EFL learners seem to have none of these advantages. Unlike some second language learning contexts, the only chance to practice communication is in the formal EFL classroom (Kitikanan, 2010). Like other EFL learning contexts, Thai students rarely communicate with English speakers outside the classroom (Kongsom, 2009). Thus, learning what CSs are used by English speakers based on their inherent knowledge is unlikely to occur in a natural setting. Teaching these students CSs explicitly will allow them to deepen their English language knowledge. Students can be made aware of CSs by raising their consciousness about the strategies they use in their first language communications. This

approach will help them to understand that such CSs can also be used for effective English communication. Practice with using CSs in different communication tasks provided in the EFL class will also enable students to apply CSs appropriately to the particular situations (Faucette, 2001).

Teaching CSs is, therefore, necessary in the EFL learning context where linguistic and cultural differences in language use exist. One major advantage, according to Ellis (2008), is that learners have opportunities to use and transfer their existing language knowledge to create new linguistic resources when they employ a particular CS. They also have opportunities to develop spontaneous effective use of CSs that fit particular situations. Learners acquire more language input and develop their language ability, leading to the development of interlanguage as well as communicative competence (Ellis, 2008; Faucette, 2001; Konishi & Tarone, 2004).

## **2.5 Research into teaching communication strategies**

Notwithstanding the discussion as to whether or not CSs should be taught in language classes, research involving teaching CSs in the ESL and EFL contexts has been undertaken over the last few decades. Most of the studies on teaching CSs have examined the effectiveness of teaching CSs in relation to learners' awareness of using CSs and improvement in oral communication skills. Some of these studies also investigated learners' attitudes towards CS learning. These studies were conducted in different settings, focused on different CSs, and used different tasks and measures. Nevertheless, they have demonstrated the utility of teaching CSs in both ESL and EFL contexts. This research, both in the international and the Thai EFL contexts, is reviewed and summarised, followed by a discussion on the limitations of these studies.

## 2.5.1 Research into teaching communication strategies in an international context

Communication strategies have been studied for decades and earlier work has contributed to the concepts and typologies of CSs (Bialystok, 1990; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1983). More recent research has been focused on the use of CSs in many second language acquisition contexts (e.g., Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Littlemore, 2003; Nakatani, 2010; Rossiter, 2005). Also, many studies emphasise the use of CSs in relation to different factors, for example learning styles (e.g., Littlemore, 2001), levels of oral proficiency (e.g., Chen, 1990) and task types (e.g., Lee, 2004), as well as multi factors (Khan, 2010). In addition, according to A. D. Cohen’s (2011) review of second language learner strategies, research into strategies has also been undertaken in many skill areas such as listening, reading, and writing. Communication strategies in particular were most commonly investigated in relation to oral communication skills which focus mainly on speaking skills, as well as listening and pronunciation. As my research focuses on teaching CSs to improve students’ oral communication performance, this section reviews some examples of research studies relevant to teaching CSs in the area of oral communication, as summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

### *Examples of Previous Studies on Teaching CSs in an International Context*

<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Aims of studies</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Taught CSs</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>
Dörnyei (1995)	To study the effect of 6-week CS training on - <i>uses of CS and speech rate</i> - <i>students’ attitude towards the CS training</i>	109 EFL secondary school students in Hungary <i>1. Treatment group</i> <i>2. Control groups</i>	1. Topic avoidance and replacement 2. Circumlocution 3. Fillers and hesitation devices	1. Written tests - <i>TOEIC</i> - <i>The C test</i> 2. Pre- and post- oral tests - <i>topic description</i> - <i>cartoon description</i> - <i>definition formulation</i> 3. Student Questionnaires

Table 2.1 (continued)

*Examples of Previous Studies on Teaching CSs in an International Context*

<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Aims of studies</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Taught CSs</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>
Lam and Wong (2000)	To implement and examine the effect of CS training	58 ESL secondary school students in Hong Kong	Interaction strategies 1. Seeking clarification 2. Clarifying oneself 3. Checking others' comprehension	Pre- and post- tests - <i>discussion tasks</i>
Rossiter (2003)	To examine the effects of 12-hour CS training on L2 performance and use of CSs	30 ESL adult students in Canada <i>1. Treatment group</i> <i>2. Comparison group</i>	Paraphrases 1. Approximation 2. Superordination 3. Analogy 4. All-purpose words 5. Circumlocution	1. Pre-and post-tests - <i>picture story narrative</i> - <i>real-world object description</i> 2. A self-report
Nakatani (2005)	To study the effect of 12-week CS training on: - <i>speaking proficiency</i> - <i>speech rates and CS use</i> - <i>awareness of CS use</i>	62 Japanese learners studying EFL course - <i>Strategy training group</i> - <i>Control group</i>	1. Help-seeking 2. Modified interaction 3. Modified output 4. Time-gaining 5. Maintenance 6. Self-solving strategies	1. Pre- and post-test - <i>role plays</i> 2. Retrospective verbal protocol
Lam (2006)	To assess the effect of 16-hour of OCST on: - <i>task performance</i> - <i>use of taught CSs</i>	40 ESL students in a secondary level in Hong Kong - <i>Experiment group</i> - <i>Control group</i>	1. Resourcing 2. Paraphrasing 3. Self-repetition 4. Fillers 5. Self-correction 6. Asking for clarification 7. Asking for repetition 8. Asking for confirmation	1. Pre- and post-tests - <i>discussion tasks</i> 2. Self-report questionnaire 3. Stimulated recall interview 4. Observation of CS use
Maleki (2007)	To examine the effectiveness of a four- month CS instruction on: - <i>language learning</i> - <i>CS use</i>	60 Iranian tertiary students in humanities, social, and basic science - <i>CS training class</i> - <i>Control class</i>	1. Approximation 2. Circumlocution / Paraphrase 3. Word coinage 4. Appeal for assistance 5. Foreignising 6. Time-stalling devices	1. Cambridge ESOL speaking test 2. Achievement tests

As shown in Table 2.1, the majority of research into teaching CSs examined the effect of teaching CSs on both learners' awareness of using CSs and an improvement in speaking skills (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Lam, 2006; Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005; Rossiter, 2003). Dörnyei (1995) examined the effect of teaching topic avoidance and

replacement, circumlocution, and fillers and hesitation devices for EFL secondary school students in Hungary. The results revealed increases in the frequency of using fillers and speech rates. Students also had positive attitudes towards the CS instruction and found CSs useful. The finding from this study demonstrated that a frequent use of fillers leads to an improvement in the speech rate (Dörnyei, 1995). However, a decrease in the frequency of circumlocution could link to learners' limited linguistic knowledge. Young second language learners, as in Dörnyei's study, might not be confident in using circumlocution because it is a strategy that is more linguistically demanding. It may be more beneficial to teach other types of paraphrasing that are easier to access, such as approximation and super ordination, so that lower proficiency learners can use them to solve their communication problems instead of using circumlocution.

Four types of paraphrasing, namely circumlocution, approximation, superordination, and analogy, were introduced to the treatment group of ESL adult learners in Canada in the study by Rossiter (2003). She examined the effect of teaching these CSs on the use of CSs and English performance, in relation to communication success, speech rate, and decreased frequency of message abandonment. The findings showed that this group used all the taught CSs more frequently, supporting Dörnyei's (1995) view that teaching CSs could lead to the greater use of target CSs. However, as Rossiter (2003) concluded, teaching paraphrasing may have little impact on improvements in task performance, particularly speech rate. This result could be linked to the limitation of Rossiter's (2003) study that focused only on teaching paraphrasing. Although using paraphrasing positively affected the quality of the message, this strategy was not likely to improve the speech rate (Dörnyei, 1995). Teaching more types of CSs, such as fillers and interactional strategies, may help learners improve their speech rate.

Dörnyei (1995) and Rossiter (2003) confirmed that teaching CSs helps to raise learners' awareness of using CSs, leading to a greater use of taught CSs. Dörnyei's study also shows the positive relationship between fillers and speech rate, providing some evidence that an increase in using taught CSs leads to improvements in students' oral communication skills. However, Rossiter's study shows mixed results as teaching paraphrasing helped increase learners' awareness, but did not improve their task performance. Thus, more evidence is still needed to support the value of teaching CSs in relation to improvement in ESL and EFL learners' oral communication skills, which links to my research focus.

A study that shows the positive effects of teaching CSs on learners' oral communication skills was conducted by Lam (2006) who focused on more types of CSs. She examined the effectiveness of the eight two-hour sessions on oral communication strategy. The participants were 20 two-class ESL students in a secondary school in Hong Kong. The findings revealed that the treatment class performed oral tasks more effectively than the comparison class. However, while there was no significant increase in the use of CSs for either class, the resourcing strategy was used extensively by the treatment class. The reason is that the resourcing strategy is effortless because it involves adopting linguistic forms as suggested in the instructional tasks (Lam, 2006). This finding is consistent with that reported by Dörnyei (1995), with limited linguistic knowledge, young second language learners preferred to use specific CSs. These CSs are generally easier to access than other effective strategies, particularly paraphrasing, which requires more effort to create and modify linguistic choices. Lam's (2006) study was also conducted over a relatively short time period, and as Lam suggested, extending the period of time for the instruction and practice may be necessary for learners to develop confidence in the use of more effective strategies.

Further, additional task types, such as definitions (as in Dörnyei's (1995) study) and describing objects (as in Rossiter's (2003) study) may help foster a greater use of paraphrasing. Future research should consider using different tasks types to elicit different types of CSs, which seems applicable to my tourism research context.

Further evidence supporting the value of teaching CSs and the positive relationship between taught CSs and oral communication skills, was provided by Nakatani (2005) and Maleki (2007). These two researchers conducted longer periods for CS instruction with EFL undergraduates. Nakatani (2005) specifically designed a 12-week instruction module on developing Japanese students' metacognitive strategies for using achievement CSs. These CSs were help-seeking, modified interaction, modified output, time-gaining, maintenance, and self-solving strategies. Maleki (2007) utilised existing textbooks teaching Iranian EFL students to use specific CSs over four months. These CSs were approximation, circumlocution, word coinage, appeal for help, foreignising and time stalling devices. The findings from both studies, revealed that teaching CSs helped raise learners' awareness of using CSs, particularly interactional strategies. An increase in using such CSs also enhanced learners' language proficiencies.

In Nakatani's (2005) study, the students in the training class tended to improve their oral proficiency with increases in speech production rates and use of achievement strategies particularly modified interaction, modified output, time-gaining, and maintenance. They also became more aware of the value of using achievement strategies and avoided using reduction strategies, particularly message abandonment. Similarly, in Maleki's (2007) study, the class with the CS instruction gained higher scores on both the Cambridge ESOL speaking test and the achievement tests (written) than the class without specific CS instruction. They also used appeals for help

extensively and effectively. Maleki concluded that asking for clarification improves learners' comprehension while asking for help from an interlocutor leads to an improvement in their language acquisition (e.g., learning new words from the interlocutor). Based on these two studies, teaching CSs tends to increase the use of interactional strategies. Extensive use of these strategies also appears to help EFL learners improve their oral communication skills, particularly in terms of speech rate.

However, teaching CSs was not always successful in encouraging learners to use CSs effectively. In Lam and Wong's (2000) study, 58 students in Hong Kong were taught to use interactional strategies such as seeking clarification, clarifying oneself, and checking understanding. Compared with the pre-training discussions, students tended to use these CSs more frequently but ineffectively in the post-training discussions. The study suggests that language scaffolding should be included to develop interactional strategies more effectively.

### **2.5.2 Communication strategy research in the Thai EFL context**

Communication strategy research in the Thai EFL context has been conducted over the past decade. Most studies focused on the choice of CSs used by Thai EFL learners in relation to different factors, particularly levels of oral proficiency and task types. For example, Wannaruk (2003) investigated the CSs used by 75 Thai tertiary students majoring in Engineering, Agriculture and Information Technology who had different levels of oral proficiencies. Wongsawang (2001) investigated the use of CSs for describing Thai culture-specific notions in English with 30 students from the Faculty of Arts. At a secondary school, Malasit and Sarobol (2013) investigated CSs used in different task types by 30 students in a Grade 9 English programme who were classified

into high, middle, and low groups of English speaking proficiency. At the tertiary level, Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) examined the relationship between CS use and level of oral ability in 300 undergraduate students studying in the Faculty of Humanities. Further, other variables were also included in the study by Somsai (2011) who investigated CSs used by 811 tertiary students majoring in English for International Communication in relation to four variables: gender, exposure to oral communication in English, level of study, and location of institution. The majority of these studies demonstrated that CSs can help improve Thai EFL learners' communication performance and therefore suggested the inclusion of teaching CSs into EFL instruction, syllabus, and curriculum. Nevertheless, the number of studies actually on teaching CSs for Thai EFL learners is relatively small. Only two studies have been carried out in Thailand, by Kongsom (2009) and Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) as summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

*Examples of Previous Studies on Teaching CSs in Thai EFL Contexts*

<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Aims of studies</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Taught CSs</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>
Prinyajarn and Wannaruk, (2008)	To investigate the effects of 30-hour CS training on the use of CSs and improvement of oral communication skills	10 PhD Thai EFL students in Science and Technology	1. Back-channels 2. Pause fillers and hesitation devices 3. Request for clarification 4. Circumlocution	1. Pre- and post-tests 2. Informal interview 3. Audio-recordings 4. Questionnaires 5. Classroom observation
Kongsom (2009)	To investigate the effects of 12-week training on the use of CSs	62 tertiary Thai EFL students in Engineering	1. Topic avoidance 2. Circumlocution 3. Approximation 4. Appeal for help 5. Pause fillers and hesitation devices 6. Confirmation check 7. Comprehension check 8. Clarification request 9. Self-repair	1. Pre- and post-speaking tasks 2. Self-report strategy questionnaire 3. Attitudinal questionnaire 4. Retrospective protocols

Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) and Kongsom (2009) investigated the effective and appropriate use of strategies in achieving communicative goals, as shown in Table 2.2. Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) focused on teaching pause-fillers and hesitation devices, back-channels, clarification requests and circumlocution to 10 doctoral students in Science and Technology. Kongsom (2009) focused on teaching a wider choice of CSs to undergraduate students in engineering, including topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, fillers, clarification requests and appeals for help. Despite the slight difference in the type of CSs, they both compared the quantity and quality of taught CSs used before and after teaching CSs. They also used multiple data collection methods such as the pre- and post- speaking tasks, self-reports, and introspective interviews.

Their results were similar, revealing increases in students' awareness and actual use of the taught CSs after the CS instruction. Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) reported that students used taught CSs more frequently and effectively, particularly pause-fillers and hesitation devices, and back-channels. Kongsom (2009) reported that pause fillers and hesitation devices were the most commonly used CSs, followed by approximation, self-repair, and circumlocution. These CSs were also used more effectively after the instruction. Kongsom (2009) concluded that the greater use of taught CSs after the teaching programme showed that teaching CSs tended to increase students' awareness of using CSs. Students also had positive attitudes towards the CS instruction and found CSs useful. By using CSs, students were able to convey the meaning more effectively, expand their language knowledge, increase fluency of speech, and gain more confidence (Kongsom, 2009). Similar to Dörnyei's (1995) study, teaching CSs also helped develop learners' sense of security even when dealing with difficulties in English communication. These positive perceptions on CS learning and CS use should

contribute to positive motivation for learning and communicating in L2 (Manchón, 2000).

### **2.5.3 Limitation of research into teaching communication strategies**

Most research into teaching CSs have examined the effectiveness of teaching CSs in ESL and EFL contexts. The studies were different in terms of size and the educational level of participants. Groups were either secondary school (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Lam, 2006), tertiary (Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005), or postgraduate levels (Prinyajarn & Wannaruk, 2008). These studies also focused on teaching different types and numbers of CSs. For example, while Rossiter (2003) focused on teaching paraphrasing, Nakatani (2005) and Maleki (2007) also included interaction and time-stalling strategies. On the other hand, Dörnyei (1995) and Kongsom (2009) included reduction/avoidance strategies (e.g., topic avoidance) in the CS instruction. In addition, they also used different approaches to teaching CSs. While the majority of these studies focused on explicit and specially designed CS instruction (e.g., Kongsom, 2009; Lam, 2006), Nakatani (2005) utilised awareness raising tasks and Maleki (2007) used commercial text books to teach learners to use CSs. Further, these studies focused on different ways of collecting data on the effectiveness of the teaching of CSs. They used different task types and recording instruments to collect learners' task performance and to elicit CSs.

Nonetheless, the diverse findings from the studies related to teaching CSs have provided some insights into the efficacy of teaching CSs in ESL and EFL contexts. As Konishi and Tarone (2004) argue, teaching CSs is a “practical and effective pedagogical tool for overseas communicative language teaching” (p. 193). Teaching CSs helps raise

learners' awareness to use effective and appropriate CSs more frequently. Such effective use of CSs, enabling learners to solve their communication successfully and expand their linguistic resources through meaning negotiations, should help improve their oral communication skills. Teaching CSs also promotes learners' positive attitudes towards CS learning and CS use. Therefore, many researchers recommend teaching CSs to EFL learners (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Faucette, 2001; Konishi & Tarone, 2004; Nakatani, 2005).

In terms of research on teaching CSs in the Thai EFL context, research conducted by Prinyajarn and Wannaruk (2008) and Kongsom (2009) aimed to examine the effect of CS instruction in relation to the use of CSs by Thai EFL learners at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These studies are well-designed because they utilised multiple data collection methods, such as pre- and post- speaking tasks, retrospective interviews, self-reports and observations to ensure the reliability and validity. The findings from both studies also demonstrated that the CS instruction helped improve both quality and quantity of CS use. However, both studies did not link the improvement of CS use to learners' communication performance, although an improvement in students' oral communication skills is one ultimate aim of EFL teaching (Faucette, 2001). Therefore, the investigation of the relationship between increases in using taught CSs and learners' communication performance needs to be a part of the future research into teaching CSs in the Thai EFL context, and which is therefore included in the current research.

Furthermore, no research into teaching CSs has been conducted with Thai EFL learners majoring in tourism. Many Thai researchers carrying out CS studies acknowledge the value of CS as a means to improve communicative ability and have recommended teaching CSs for Thai EFL students (e.g., Kongsom, 2009; Somsai, 2011;

Wannaruk, 2003). Therefore, teaching CSs should be especially beneficial for those who study in tourism related fields because they are expected to be proficient in English oral communication performance for their future career (Zhao & Intraraprasert, 2013). However, neither English for Tourism textbooks nor explicit instruction has been specially designed for teaching CSs to EFL tourism students.

In addition, no research involving an in-depth investigation of both teaching outcomes and processes has been reported. The majority of the studies involving teaching CSs emphasised investigating the outcomes of providing the CS instruction often using quantitative approaches. Particularly, a quasi-experiment design by comparing groups of students, with and without intervention, has been commonly used in international studies to examine the effectiveness of teaching CSs. In addition, the CS interventions were planned in advance and the target CSs were prescribed and taught in these experimental classrooms. While these research studies provided valid and reliable findings, studies that are highly controlled and prescriptive do not always take into account the complexity of a real-world classroom. The language classroom generally includes learners with different language knowledge backgrounds, as well as ability and style in learning. Different approaches to teaching CSs, in particular, should be constantly adjusted to meet the ongoing needs of these individual differences.

A more in-depth investigation on changes in such teaching processes should also be examined, in addition to the outcome of teaching CSs because both process and outcomes of teaching are equally important and interrelated. As reported by Lam and Wong (2000), the limitation of the teaching process in their study involved the exclusion of teaching language scaffolding for using interactional strategies. Such a limitation led to more incidents of ineffective use of such taught strategies. Perhaps, as Goh (2012) suggested, action research into teaching CSs may help teachers as

researchers develop CS interventions that are “contextually and culturally effective for their learners” (p. 75). This links closely with my research focus and approach.

#### **2.5.4 Summary of research into teaching communication strategies**

Research into teaching CSs for Thai EFL learners is limited, leading to a need for more evidence to support the value of teaching CSs. The lack of research on the process and outcomes of the teaching of CSs has led to the current focus of this research which aims to investigate developing CS instruction for Thai EFL students majoring in tourism. The primary aim of this CS instruction is enhancing their use of effective CSs to communicate with tourists effectively.

From the research literature, it is clear that the effectiveness of teaching CSs links to many factors, particularly the types and complexity of communicative tasks used to elicit CSs and learners’ levels of language proficiency. Focused CSs to be taught and the teaching process are also important factors affecting teaching CSs. These factors should be taken into account when implementing CS instruction in my research.

#### **2.6 Key considerations for teaching communication strategies**

The purpose of teaching CSs is to raise learners’ awareness of the value of CSs and to also encourage learners to use CSs effectively and appropriately when communicating in English (Færch & Kasper, 1983). To accomplish these aims, four key considerations have been focused on in the literature and research studies about delivering effective CS instruction: 1) communicative tasks; 2) learners’ language proficiency; 3) the selection of CSs for instruction; and, 4) how to teach CSs.

### **2.6.1 Communicative tasks**

Communicative tasks are commonly used as tools for eliciting CSs and stimulating CS use (A. D. Cohen, 1998). Most tasks employed to elicit CSs are reciprocal and oral as they require immediate responses (Little, 1996). Yule (1997) has reviewed the way communicative tasks have been classified by different criteria. For example, based on the information flow, tasks can be characterised as a one-way task (requires a one-way flow from the speaker to the interlocutor) or a two-way task (requires a two-way flow from both interlocutors). Using the outcome of communication as the basis, tasks can also be classified as convergent (requires one mutual agreement) or divergent (constitute various end products). In addition, tasks can be divided according to both information flow and outcomes of communication. A closed task requires neither information exchange nor a defined solution, while an open task requires information exchange and an agreed solution (Yule, 1997). With a belief that different forms of task elicit the use of different types of CSs, many researchers have investigated the relationship between task formats and the use of CSs (e.g., Khan, 2010; Lee, 2004; Rossiter, 2005; Wongsawang, 2001).

One example of a CS study that used one-way tasks to elicit specific CSs was conducted by Wongsawang (2001). She explored the use of CSs by 30 Thai undergraduate students through concept identification and storytelling tasks. These two tasks required the students to describe and/or tell a story using 14 concepts related to Thai culture. The results showed that the most common CSs were circumlocution and approximation. Another finding was that three CSs – approximation, code switching and all-purpose words – were frequently combined with circumlocution by the students in their task responses, showing the students' ability to improve their explanation. According to Wongsawang (2001), describing and explaining Thai culture-specific

notions was a useful task to elicit compensatory strategies (e.g., circumlocution and approximation) from Thai EFL students because these notions have no equivalent translation and are therefore difficult to explain in English. Students were required to use alternative vocabulary to describe and explain these concrete and abstract words. However, in Wongsawang's (2001) work, these tasks were set as a closed one-way communication task and individual students performed the task without a listening partner. Although this may have reduced some anxiety, a more natural and authentic task using two-way communication may help elicit more types of CSs.

A study supporting the use of a two-way task to elicit more types of CSs was conducted by Khan (2010). She investigated the use of CSs by Spanish EFL learners in three different tasks with different levels of difficulty. An art description, the most difficult task, required learners to describe art work in the gallery and answer their conversation partners' questions. An information gap, which was less difficult, was designed as a closed two-way, split information task requiring information exchange. A picture story was the least difficult task, requiring learners to take turns describing the event shown in each picture. The results revealed that the art description task elicited more types of CSs, including compensatory strategies, interactional strategies and time-stalling strategies while the information gap task elicited a greater number of interactional strategies. Based on Khan's (2010) study, the more difficult task created more problematic situations in interaction and fostered learners' use of CSs. This finding suggests that the complexity of the task also affect learner's choice of CSs. As Wongsawang (2001) pointed out, the value of a complex task in eliciting CSs, such as describing Thai cultural specific concepts in English, is that it challenges learners to use more CSs to compensate for gaps related to language and cultural differences.

The relationship between task complexity and CS use was also investigated by Lee (2004) with Chinese business students in Hong Kong. Lee compared the use of 13 CSs in two business-related, problem solving tasks. A convergent task required learners, working in pairs, to agree on three pieces of advice given for solving the problem of over-spending in a fashion company. The divergent task involved discussions in which individual students were required to give their opinion about the director's inappropriate instructions. The findings revealed that the convergent task was more challenging and provided more extensive interactional contexts because learners needed to negotiate mutual answers. Accordingly, comprehension checks, clarification requests, confirmation checks and appeals for help were often employed in this task.

In summary, different types of communicative tasks encourage learners to use different types of CSs. One way tasks, such as picture description tasks, novel abstract figure reference tasks, concept-identification tasks, and story-telling tasks are neither natural nor authentic but they are commonly employed to elicit compensatory strategies (Littlemore, 2001). Two-way tasks, such as direction-giving tasks, information-transfer tasks, oral interviews and conversations are more authentic, natural and practical. They are chosen to elicit broader typologies of CSs, including linguistic, non-linguistic, and interactional strategies (Malasit & Sarobol, 2013). Both forms of tasks can, however, assist students in developing a greater awareness of CSs that can be applied as they work to improve their English communication skills. In addition to the format of the task, the levels of task complexity also affect CS usage. More challenging tasks are likely to foster learners' use of more types of CSs (Khan, 2010).

Consideration of task types and their complexity are useful in designing measures for eliciting CSs or planning CS instruction in my research. Wongsawang's (2001) description tasks of Thai culture-specific concepts, in particular, appears to be

sufficiently challenging to elicit CSs from Thai EFL learners. This type of task will be adapted for use in the current study. Also, in designing the CS instruction, a variety of two-way tasks will be adapted as a means to practise using different types of CSs. Apart from communicative tasks, learners' language proficiency is also an important factor affecting students' ability to use CSs and the choice of CSs. As relevance to this discussion, reviews of studies of learners' language proficiency will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.6.2 Learners' language proficiencies**

The proficiency level of the learners is a common factor affecting CS choice in CS studies. According to Dörnyei (2005), individual learners are believed to have different ways and abilities in learning and developing proficiency in a foreign language. These differences may also affect the choice of CS use and CS effectiveness (A. D. Cohen, 2011). Generally, learners with different levels of language proficiency prefer to use different types of CSs, leading to different outcomes in communication.

Several researchers have investigated the usage of CSs in relation to learners' levels of English language proficiency. These studies reported similar findings about the use of CSs and learners with higher proficiency were less likely to use a CS than those with lower proficiency (e.g., Chen, 1990; Rossiter, 2005). The high proficiency learners also tended to use CSs more effectively (e.g., Nakatani, 2010; Wannaruk, 2003). Further, these findings provided insights into the specific types of CSs which were most likely to contribute to successful communication (e.g., Chen, 1990; Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Nakatani, 2010).

The relationship between learners' language proficiency and overall frequency of CS use is reported by Chen (1990) and Rossiter (2005). Although they focus on different target strategies and used different communicative tasks to elicit CSs, their findings are relatively similar. Chen (1990) compared frequencies, types, and effectiveness of CSs used by 12 EFL Chinese learners with high and low proficiencies of English competence and found that high proficiency learners tended to use fewer CSs. Similarly, Rossiter (2005) investigated changes in using CSs and found that the learners whose oral scores improved used progressively fewer CSs over the 15 weeks of an ESL class. These findings indicate that learners with a high proficiency had built sufficient linguistic knowledge so they were less likely to encounter problems in communication and therefore used fewer CSs to prevent a breakdown in communication.

Chen (1990) and Rossiter (2005) also observed a positive relationship between levels of oral proficiency and specific types of CSs. They found that high proficiency learners used effective CSs more frequently, particularly circumlocution and approximation. This relationship was also confirmed by Wannaruk (2003), who compared the frequencies and types of CSs used by 75 Thai EFL learners with different levels of oral proficiency. Second language-based strategies, particularly circumlocution and approximation, were more commonly used by the medium- and high-level groups while modification devices, paralinguistic strategies, first language-based strategies, and avoidance strategies were common CSs from the low-level group. Therefore, circumlocution and approximation could be useful CSs to improve students' oral communication performance in my research context.

A positive relationship with other types of CSs and levels of proficiency was revealed in Nakatani's (2010) and Chuanchaisit and Prapphal's (2009) studies

conducted with EFL Japanese and Thai undergraduates, respectively. Specific CSs, particularly social affective, fluency-oriented, negotiation of meaning, and help seeking strategies were frequently used by learners with high oral proficiencies. According to Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009), students with a higher level of oral proficiency and degree of cognitive flexibility preferred to use these CSs as a means to convey meaningful and clear messages, therefore contributing to successful oral communication. The findings of both studies suggested a significant role for these strategies in the improvement of EFL learners' oral communication performance which will be investigated in the current study.

Further, Nakatani's (2010) and Chuanchaisit and Prapphal's (2009) studies suggested specific types of CSs which were most likely to contribute to successful communication. Circumlocution and approximation were the most common CSs contributing to improvements in task performance, and therefore considered the most effective CSs. These CSs enabled learners to deliver informative and comprehensible messages to the English speakers and therefore reduced miscommunication (Chen, 1990). Frequent use of these strategies can therefore enhance learners' communicative competence (Rossiter, 2005). For this reason, teaching these two strategies should lead to the development of greater communicative competence and language proficiency (Chen, 1990; Rossiter, 2005). However, apart from this group of CSs, Wannaruk (2003) also recommended that other CSs such as topic avoidance and modification devices (e.g., interactional strategies, pausing, and self-repair) should also be introduced to learners because these strategies keep the conversation flowing smoothly and effectively. The usefulness of teaching interactional strategies and time stalling strategies was confirmed by Nakatani (2010). He stated that teaching interactional strategies would help EFL learners successfully negotiate the meaning with the

interlocutors while fluency-oriented strategies assist the flow of conversations, thereby improving their communicative competence. Including these CSs in the CS instruction for the current research would be useful to improve students' oral communication.

In summary, with regards to differences in language proficiencies, learners require different strategies to communicate effectively. The more learners have sufficient knowledge of the target language, the less they need to use CSs. However, when they encounter problems in communication, proficient learners tend to use CS more effectively and successfully (Bialystok, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2010). A wide range of CSs can also provide key solutions for ESL and EFL learners when coping with communication breakdown. Through the adoption of paraphrasing (circumlocution and approximation), learners can modify their existing language knowledge to create alternative language items to express their intended meaning. They can also extend their existing linguistic knowledge with new linguistic resources through the adoption of interactional strategies. Further, using time gaining strategies allows them more time to think about what to say and to stay active in the conversation. For these reasons, CSs have been shown to help improve oral communication skills and therefore should be taught to ESL and EFL learners (Chen, 1990; Nakatani, 2010). Considering individual learners' different levels of language proficiencies will help me select CSs to teach to meet their needs to improve their oral communication performance.

### **2.6.3 Selection of communication strategies for instruction**

In considering effective CS instruction, it is important to select key strategies to teach. Færch and Kasper (1983) suggested students should learn to use strategies

appropriately by considering the potential effects of learning each type of strategy. With the different features and roles of each strategy, contributing to different outcomes of communication, it is not recommended that all strategies should be taught. As suggested in the literature, the CS instruction should include those CSs that are effective and teachable (Dörnyei, 1995; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Faucette, 2001; Nakatani, 2005).

Communication strategies are effective if they have positive effects on second language communication and learning (Littlemore, 2003; Macaro, 2006; Rossiter, 2005). That is to say, they should enable learners to solve communication problems successfully and should lead to improvements in oral communication performance. In considering these features of CSs, achievement strategies appear to be beneficial to learners and should be included in ESL and EFL classrooms (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Achievement strategies, particularly circumlocution and approximation, were commonly used by proficient learners and are considered the most effective CSs because they help compensate linguistic gaps in communication and increase English vocabulary acquisition (Chen, 1990; Rossiter, 2005; Wannaruk, 2003). This claim is supported by Tarone (2005) who argues that teaching these CSs will promote the development of vocabulary and language structures that are required to achieve effective communication. Further, as shown in Wongsawang's (2001) study, circumlocution was commonly combined with other strategies (e.g., approximation, all purpose words, and code switching) and enabled learners to deliver clearer messages. The use of such strategy clusters (using two or more CSs to describe the target items) appears to promote learning and improve performance (Macaro, 2006). A combination with the distinctive nature of each CS may help solve problems better than using a single effective CS. This view is supported by Goh (2012) who noted that different strategies, when combined together to perform tasks, can "interact effectively with one

another” (p. 70) to enhance communication performance and achieve the goal of communication.

The teachability of achievement strategies (CSs for compensating for linguistic gaps), can be analysed from the most common strategies presented explicitly and implicitly in language textbooks as well as in the CS instruction designed by previous researchers. Again, circumlocution (or paraphrasing) and approximation were the most common CSs taught in the CS studies. For example, these CSs can be taught, using the task of describing objects (Rossiter, 2005) and giving definitions (Dörnyei, 1995). This is in line with Faucette (2001), who analysed types of CSs recommended in ESL textbooks and teachers’ resource books, showing that circumlocution, approximation, and word coinage are CSs recommended for teaching in many ESL teachers’ resource book (e.g., *Interchange*, *Nice Talking with You*, and *Functions of American English*). These CSs, according to Faucette (2001), are taught with a list of useful expressions in the sections about describing objects, giving definitions, and academic vocabulary. These task types seem to also be useful to foster the use of CSs and will be included in the CS instruction of the current research.

The other useful strategies for achieving communication goals include interactional strategies such as help-seeking, modified interaction and modified output, time gaining, and maintenance strategies. According to Nakatani (2005) and Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009), these CSs reflect learners’ attempts to stay active in and maintain a conversation. Increasing the use of these CSs has also been shown to help learners improve their oral communication skills (Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005). Interactional and time stalling strategies were also commonly taught in ESL textbooks (Faucette, 2001). According to Faucette (2001), appeals for help are introduced by using

appropriate English phrases and expressions for asking for repetition and clarification, together with model dialogues and practice activities. Time stalling strategies are introduced by a list of example phrases and activities such as discussion of unfamiliar topics. Therefore, the language expressions for these CSs should also be included in the CS instruction of the current research.

While many studies focused on teaching the above achievement strategies, there is still some debate about whether to teach reduction/avoidance strategies. It is recommended by some studies that some types of reduction strategies should be taught. For example, Dörnyei (1995) and Kongsom (2009) argue for the necessity of teaching topic avoidance because this CS helps keep the conversation going and establishes a feeling of security when facing difficulties in communication. This is in line with Faucette's (2001) study that found reduction strategies in the last units of two ESL textbooks (*Nice Talking with You* and *Functions of American English*), together with other conversational gambits that help learners keep the conversation going. However, Faucette's (2001) study shows that message abandonment is not recommended for teaching in ESL teachers' resource books. Rossiter (2005) also points out that it is not necessary to teach reduction/avoidance strategies such as message abandonment, because such strategies come naturally when learners encounter a breakdown in communication. This argument supports Færch and Kasper (1983) who argue that these strategies are not a useful way to help learners learn. For this reason, reduction strategies are excluded from the current research because students should spend their limited time focusing on the practice of using effective strategies.

#### **2.6.4 How to teach communication strategies**

Many studies related to teaching CSs have focused on delivering effective instruction in the knowledge and use of CSs and have suggested three common phases for teaching CSs: instruction, practice, and assessment (Maleki, 2007; Manchón, 2000; Nakatani, 2005). The instruction phase involves raising learners' awareness of the value and the benefit of CSs. Two types of knowledge should be taught at this stage, namely declarative (e.g., what CS is to be used) and procedural knowledge (e.g., how and when to use it) of CSs (Manchón, 2000). Learner's awareness and knowledge of CSs can be developed through deductive and inductive approaches. Communication strategies can be taught deductively by explaining the nature and usefulness of each strategy, giving related examples, and providing language models for using the particular strategies (Dörnyei, 1995; Faucette, 2001; Konishi & Tarone, 2004; Manchón, 2000). Communication strategies can also be taught inductively by asking learners to perform their task, identify problems they encountered and assess the CS they used to deal with such problems (Manchón, 2000; Nakatani, 2005). This instruction phase is essential to promote learners' recognition and awareness of the nature and the distinctive feature of each strategy so that learners are able to choose proper strategies for dealing with particular communication circumstances. However, giving only explicit instruction of CSs may not meet the requirements of learners in real-world contexts. This should be combined with a practice phase to promote the actual use of CSs in authentic communication.

The practice phase involves providing opportunities for learners to use CSs through activities and tasks. This phase can be undertaken by creating natural interaction situations and providing practice by means of a variety of task types and classroom activities. Rossiter (2005) recommended many useful tasks in practising

strategy use, such as the description of abstract figures, inkblots, unfamiliar objects, abstract concepts, word definitions, information gap conversations, crossword puzzles, riddles, picture narrations, find the difference, and map tracing. Each task can be designed with different levels of difficulty to promote the application of learners' knowledge of CSs in dealing with different communicative circumstances (Khan, 2010). Therefore, utilising a variety of task types with different levels of difficulty will enable learners to deal with difficulties in various contexts so that they can apply their knowledge of CS to cope with unforeseen problems in communication (Rossiter, 2003).

Learners' knowledge and use of CSs in the instruction and practice phases should be assessed for developing effective instruction and relates to the current research study. This assessment phase can be undertaken either before or after the two phases of instruction and practice. According to Manchón (2000), assessing learners' use of CSs and evaluating how well they use them prior to the instruction is useful to the designing of the CS instruction to fit learners' needs. Also, learners can be encouraged to review and reflect on their own use of CSs so they would be able to develop strategy use at their own pace (Nakatani, 2005).

In developing effective strategy instruction, a combination of these phases is required as together they encourage learners to bridge the gaps between formal and informal learning situations, from classroom to a real-world context. As Færch and Kasper (1983) state, strategy instruction should encourage learners to apply knowledge about strategies learned from formal learning situations to effectively and appropriately use them in informal learning situations. Communication strategies can be developed through formal and informal learning situations. Learners should gain enough knowledge and guidelines to use specific strategies properly in the instruction phase and then be able to apply such knowledge to deal with communicative circumstances in the

practice phase. Although this will take longer for some students, it is essential to promote independent learning so that learners can develop the use of CSs for themselves by reflecting on their own learning process and performance.

While the literature has provided useful suggestions regarding which CSs can be taught and how, these suggestions are general from various contexts and might not always suit some specific contexts. Therefore, it is important to select target CSs and tasks that are considered useful in the particular context. The selection of CSs to be taught and the development of the CS instruction exclusively in the current research context, for tourism students who are learning English as a foreign language, will be discussed in detail in the next Chapter: Research Methodology.

## **2.7 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the literature related to CSs is reviewed to provide a theoretical background to my research project. Various definitions and typologies of CSs based on psycholinguistic, interactional, and extended perspectives have provided baseline data to select target CSs for the current research project. The review of previous studies related to CS use and instruction has also provided a rationale and a justification, as well as guidelines for teaching CSs in my Thai EFL context. In the Thai EFL context, research in teaching CSs is still rare and no-one has reported an in-depth investigation on teaching CSs for students in Tourism. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to investigate how CS instruction can be taught to help improve tourism students' oral communication performance. To gain insights into learners' needs, the teaching process, and outcomes, this research will be guided by the four research questions.

1) What CSs do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?

2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?

3) How should CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

4) In what way does the implementation of CS instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

Based on the nature of this study and these research questions, classroom action research was selected as an approach for use in this study. The theoretical background of action research, the rationale, and framework for my classroom action research into teaching CSs will be discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Action research was the approach selected for use in this study. This approach was the most appropriate for answering the research questions, to gain understandings, and to improve the processes of teaching and learning CSs for Thai students in the tourism education program. This chapter introduces the theoretical basis of action research, followed by classroom action research as the selected approach for use in this study. Then, the design of the current research is discussed in relation to the researcher's beliefs and positioning, her individualistic approach to classroom action research is explained, and an overview of the research process is described. Following this, there is a description of the participants and the data collection methods are presented as key elements of the data collection process. Considerations about research ethics are discussed in the last section of the chapter.

### 3.2 Research approach: Action research

Action research involves two concepts: *action* (activities) and *research* (systematic ways to create knowledge), and aims to improve practice of both action and research practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). According to Burns (2009), action research is “a form of self-reflective inquiry” (p. 129) conducted to change and improve situations in social and educational contexts. In educational settings, action research encourages teachers and other individuals to improve their learning in order to improve

their educational practice. One common aim of action research in education is to improve students' learning by introducing more effective teaching strategies based on the results as they emerge in the study (Henning et al., 2009). As the purpose of the current study is to develop CS instruction specifically for tourism students, to help them improve their oral communication performance, action research was considered to be most appropriate approach to gaining insights and improvement of the processes of teaching and learning CSs for Thai students in the tourism education programme.

This section begins with the concepts that underpin action research, followed by the action research process. Then, examples of action research in education are presented, including classroom action research, the selected approach in this study.

### **3.2.1 Paradigms underpinning action research**

According to Lincoln and Guba (2003) a research paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that determines how reality is viewed (ontology), how knowledge is defined and formed (epistemology), and how research is approached to obtain such knowledge (methodology). Based on the existing literature, action research is seen as multiparadigmatic because it has embraced a variety of perspectives in relation to constructing knowledge (Pine, 2009). According to Pine (2009), some action researchers would align their work with constructivist-interpretivist-qualitative paradigms, whereas others are in line with the critical theory-postmodern-praxis or eclectic-mixed methods-pragmatic paradigms. Constructivist-interpretivist-qualitative paradigms involve the belief that knowledge is seen as multiple and holistic and constructed based on researchers' interpretation within the particular context. In the view of critical theory-postmodern-praxis paradigms, knowledge is produced within the

context based on historical, cultural, and political perspectives. Action research shaped by this set of paradigms is dialectical-based which greatly relies on communication and cultural power. Action researchers can either select or combine the key elements from these various paradigms that they believe can accommodate their research context because “there is no common set of beliefs, values or techniques that is shared by the action research community” (Piggot-Irvine, 2009, p. 25).

Action research shares some similarities with other approaches to qualitative research (e.g., case study, narrative inquiry, ethnography, and mixed-methods). One common characteristic action research shares with other qualitative approaches influenced by interpretivism and constructivism is the value of the involvement of the researcher’s action within the research context. As Lincoln and Guba (2000) point out, interpretivists consider that a researcher’s action in their research contributes to the meaningful results of the inquiry process, rather than contaminating the research results as positivists believe. Social constructivists, in particular, believe that action is shaped and reshaped by meaning-making activities among individuals and groups in the research context. Based on constructivists’ ontological and epistemological beliefs, reality is non-absolute and knowledge is transactional and subjective, “derived from community consensus regarding what is real, what is useful, and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps)” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 167).

Another common feature of action research and some forms of qualitative research is that they are context-specific. Qualitative research which is influenced by critical theory and post-modern paradigms views reality as “relative, conditional, and situational” (Mills, 2014, p. 21). Knowledge is non-absolute, constructed, and open to change within the local context by the individuals who participate in it (Pine, 2009). Triangulation is another shared feature of action research and other forms of qualitative

research, particularly case studies. Underpinned by the pragmatism view on qualitative research, data can be gathered from different sources, methods, and time. Case studies and action research commonly utilise two or more different methods and may collect both qualitative and quantitative data (Ivankova & Cresswell, 2009).

### **3.2.2 Action research process**

Action research involves a cyclical and continued process of action and reflection. According to Mertler (2012), reflection is an integral part of action research where action researchers critically explore what they are doing, why they decided to do it, and what its effect has been. There are different approaches to action research. For example, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) introduce the model of “the action research spiral” (p. 11) which includes plan (planning for improvement), act and observe (enacting the plan and observing how it works), and reflect (analysis, synthesis, interpretation, explanation, and evaluation), as shown in Figure 3.1. These successive processes have been widely used but criticised as impractical and unrealistic because the direction of the action research process is not always in sequence (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). McNiff and Whitehead (2002), propose the more unfolding spiral of action research, called a “generative transformational process”, as shown in Figure 3.2. They believe that the action research process should be flexible and adaptable according to the action researchers’ creativity and spontaneous ideas as well as developing theories.

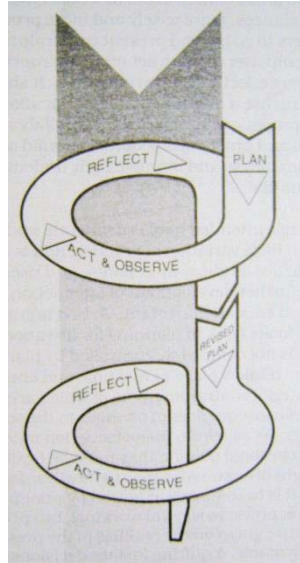


Figure 3.1. Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) Action Research Spiral.

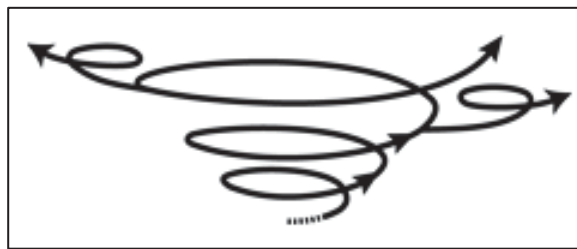


Figure 3.2. McNiff and Whitehead's (2002) Generative Transformational Process.

Another example of the action research process is illustrated in Piggot-Irvine's (2009) model of Problem Resolving Action Research (PRAR). As shown in Figure 3.3, this model comprises the action process of plan, act, observe, and reflect (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) but includes spinning off cycles that allow for alternative and better ways for resolving underlying issues to emerge during the process. In addition, Mills' (2007) model of dialectic action research, as shown in Figure 3.4, illustrates unfolding and non-successive steps; data can be collected, analysed, and interpreted time after time, before any refining of the areas of focus and developing of action plans.

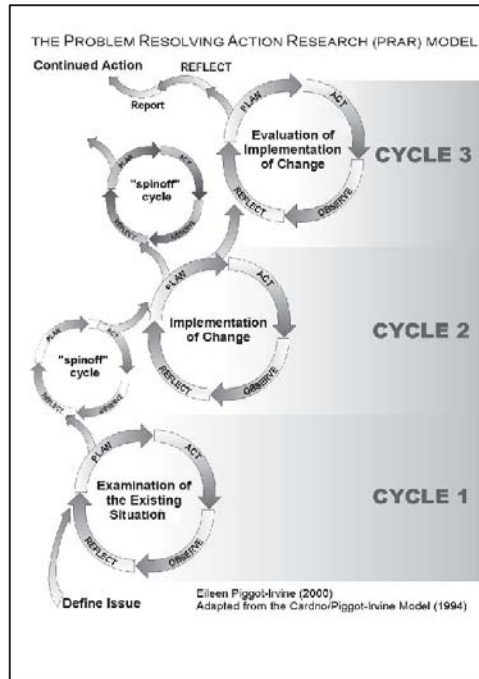


Figure 3.3. Piggot-Irvine's (2009) PRAR Model.

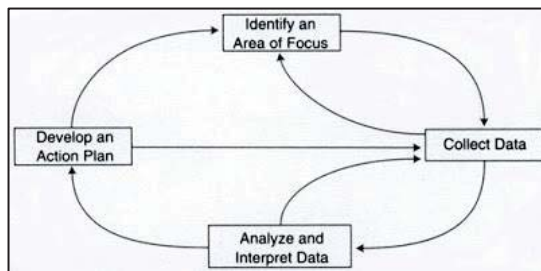


Figure 3.4. Mills' (2007) Dialectic Action Research.

Although conducted in varying ways, the action and reflection process helps action researchers clarify the findings, deepen their insights, and guide the directions for the next cycle (Herr & Anderson, 2005). To expand my experience as an action researcher, Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model appears to be useful to start with because this classic model is comprehensible and appropriate for my research questions and seems more applicable to my research context and the time available. The action research process is commonly presented as iterative and ongoing steps of planning,

action, observation, and reflection (Burns, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Piggot-Irvine, 2009). According to Burns (2010), action research starts from the planning step, identifying a focused issue and developing a plan to improve the situation. Then, in the action and observation steps, action researchers are involved in the research context, taking action, collecting and analysing data. These steps are followed by reflection (e.g., reflecting on, evaluating, and describing the effect of the action). A new cycle begins and continues, based on the reflection from the previous cycle.

### **3.2.3 Examples of action research in an educational setting**

In the field of educational research, action research is considered as a means for school improvement, professional development, curriculum development, and students' learning enhancement (Berg, 2007). According to Hendricks (2009), action research commonly conducted in educational settings includes collaborative action research, critical action research, participatory action research, and classroom action research.

Firstly, collaborative action research usually involves a mixed group of educational researchers (e.g., teachers, university researchers, teacher educators, and school administrators) working together. The aim of this type of action research is to utilise their expertise to investigate problems in school and university settings (Hendricks, 2009).

Secondly, critical action research involves the collaboration of teachers, university researchers, school administrators, and people in the community. This type of action research reflects the critical theory paradigms as it aims to improve and empower individuals in organisations by understanding problems in connection with political, social, and economic concerns (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2008).

Thirdly, participatory action research can also be called *emancipatory action research* (Mills, 2007). This type of action research involves “a social, collaborative process of action research” (Hendricks, 2009, p. 10) where researchers and participants are working together to promote changes in schools’ and universities’ organisation, activities, social relationships, language, and discourse (Harnett, 2007).

Lastly, classroom action research is conducted by individuals or groups of teacher researchers who want to improve their own teaching practice on the basis of reflections on data collected from students (Hendricks, 2013; Mills, 2007). According to Mills (2007), they have the authority to make decisions on areas of focus, data collection methods, analysis and interpretation, as well as action plans based on their findings. Classroom action research can be viewed as *practical action research* (e.g., Burns, 2005b; Holly et al., 2008; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2014) because the focus on “how to” improve teaching practice is based on practical experiences in a specific classroom situation (Mills, 2014). Further, the results of conducting classroom action research places an emphasis more on practice in the specific context (e.g., what works and what does not) than on statistical or theoretical significance (Mettetal, 2001).

Classroom action research can also be linked to the broader term *teacher research* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Stenhouse, 1975) where the teachers as researchers play the major role in the research context. Both classroom action research and teacher research are self-initiated studies on pedagogical issues conducted in a classroom setting (Klein, 2012). Nevertheless, teacher research does not necessarily comprise a cyclical process and require specific action or improvement as an outcome; whereas classroom action research does (Check & Schutt, 2012). The term *classroom action research* is used as the current research approach in the research context of a Thai EFL classroom, and with aim of specifically developing teaching interventions to

improve students' learning.

In summary, action research in education can be conducted in many different ways, depending on the action researcher's decisions. Such decisions, according to Pine (2009), are based on the researcher's beliefs (e.g., ontology, epistemology, and methodology) and relationship in the research context. Classroom action research appears to be appropriate for my research context where I, as a teacher researcher, research my own classroom practice in order to improve the quality of instruction and accommodate students' learning (Gass & Mackey, 2007).

### **3.3 The researcher's beliefs and classroom action research**

Research is commonly based on researchers' philosophical beliefs on how reality is viewed (ontology), how knowledge is defined and formed (epistemology), and how research is approached to obtain such knowledge (methodology) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These beliefs influence the researcher's choice of research approach and design. This section discusses my ontological and epistemological beliefs that influenced my choice for classroom action research.

I place my ontological and epistemological perspectives in the constructivist and pragmatism paradigms. Based on the constructivism paradigms, realities are specific and locally constructed from the researcher's interpretation of "what is real, what is useful, and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps)" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 167). The pragmatism paradigm focuses on seeking what is appropriate with respect to the specific research problems rather than seeking "some true condition of the real world" (Mertens, 2010, p. 36).

Classroom action research appears to accommodate my constructivism view that reality is specific and local and cannot be separated from my knowledge. I believe that my involvement would enable me to develop a deeper understanding of my own teaching context, which could lead to positive changes in my teaching practice, and therefore students' learning. A key feature of classroom action research is the dominant role of teacher as insider researcher. Engaging and taking actions as an insider within the specific research context enables teachers as researchers to develop a deeper understanding of their own teaching context, contributing to a meaningful outcome in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Classroom action research also accommodates my constructivism and pragmatism views that focus on meaning-making activities which contribute to shaping and reshaping action and inaction (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Classroom action research allows for teachers' practical decisions about "what works and what does not work in the given situation" (Senior, 2012, p. 39), rather than following particular teaching methods. Classroom action research also involves reflective practice. Teachers as researchers are encouraged to be involved in self-reflective teaching processes. As Mertler (2012) points out, teacher researchers develop lessons, assess students' learning, collect data systematically, and analyse effects of the lesson, based on their thoughtful "considerations of educational theory, existing research, and practical experience" (p. 14). The reflection process can be described as reflection in action and reflection on action, according to Schön (1983). Reflection 'in action' is instant and ongoing thinking, undertaken during the moment of action and steering to the next action, for example observing and evaluating students' reaction in the classroom activities. Reflection 'on action' is conclusive, undertaken after the completion of a series of action and reflection processes, such as an evaluation of the lesson (Burns, 2010). These

action and reflection processes are recursive and open-ended which allows teachers as researchers to capture emerging issues in naturally occurring contexts, and shape and reshape their understandings, which then contributes to improving a classroom situation.

The current research seeks to develop the CS instruction for Thai EFL undergraduate students in the fourth year of a tourism programme. Classroom action research is appropriate in this research context which is undertaken in a specific EFL classroom setting. According to Senior (2012), the language teaching and learning processes in each classroom are unique, dynamic, and complex, involving various variables related to learners, the teacher, and the environment. By conducting classroom action research, this CS instruction should be context-specific, unique, and practical to help improve the variety of students' oral communication performance. As Goh (2012) points out, action research helps in bridging "the gap of strategy instruction between theory and practice" (p. 74). By conducting action research, the teacher as researcher gains insights into the concept of learner strategies and develops their teaching practice that is contextually and culturally useful for their students (Goh, 2012).

### **3.4 Design of my classroom action research**

Methodological considerations are generally influenced by the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 2008). This section addresses the design of the current research which was influenced by my constructivism and pragmatism beliefs. The researcher's positioning and individualistic approaches to the classroom action research are discussed, followed by an overview of the research process.

### **3.4.1 The researcher's positioning**

Classroom action research is oriented towards practice and is consistent with my philosophical beliefs regarding constructivism and pragmatism. For the current research, I placed myself within the research context being studied. An insider-researcher was a major role for conducting my research project. I engaged in a classroom context and researched my own teaching. Being an insider, I would be able to gain insights into the knowledge production process that others as outsider researchers could not provide (Burns, 2005a). As a researcher, I would be able to analyse, interpret, and reflect on the data to gain understanding about, and find ways to improve the teaching of the CSs for Thai students in the tourism programme. As Mills (2014) points out, teacher researchers studying their own teaching practices do not act only as the researchers, but also as “the change agents who have the power and authority to bring about change in their classrooms” (p. 37).

My position as a teacher was significant as an integral part of my classroom action research. I considered my teaching practice as part of the situation being investigated, as discussed by McNiff and Whitehead (2006). My role as a teacher was grounded by my endeavour to improve students' learning. My five years' experience teaching the English for Tourism courses enabled me to identify key issues and needs that required improvement within the courses. By adapting the course to include the teaching of CSs, the goals were to increase spoken English competence and trial different teaching techniques. The insights into this teaching context and experience would facilitate my learning to improve my teaching practice as well as students' learning outcomes. According to Mills (2014), “teachers are active participant observers of their classroom, continually monitoring and adjusting their teaching based on formal and informal observations of their students” (p. 37). As a teacher, I can develop and

implement the CS instruction alongside reflecting on my teaching practice.

I considered myself as a teacher researcher who practiced teaching the CS instruction and researched my own teaching practice. However, the involvement in the research context of a dual role of a teacher as a researcher may cause role conflict, leading to ethical issues in relation to participants' welfare and freewill, as well as validity and accuracy of the collected data and the quality of the research findings (Nolen & Putten, 2007). For example, teacher researchers' position of power over the participants may affect the process of data collection, particularly when a set of data are collected overtly (e.g., participants are known to the teacher-researcher). This unintentional influence shows low control of the research environment and can constitute a critique of teacher research as a legitimate form of educational enquiry (Burns, 2005a). Therefore, researchers should be aware of their positioning and roles as a researcher and as a teacher throughout the research process. However, since starting my PhD, I am no longer teaching students in the research context, so these issues are minimised.

### **3.4.2 Individualistic approaches to my classroom action research**

Classroom action research can be conducted by either individuals or a collective of teachers as researchers. Conducting classroom action research individually is often seen as more flexible and manageable (Wallace, 1998). However, individual self-reflective practice can be criticised as subjective. Focusing on an individual's perspectives and disregarding others' voices may not be adequate for the development of insights into the improvement of practice (Kemmis, 2007). On the other hand, conducting classroom research by many teachers as researchers provides more in-depth

data (Wallace, 1998). Nevertheless, this collective form can lead to difficulties in time and task management. For example, the topic may continue to expand and workloads may increase and overlap (K. Richards, 2003). Also the organisational culture of a school or university, including hierarchical and status concerns among a team of teacher researchers, may make it problematic for collective teams to research effectively (Wallace, 1998).

I chose to conduct the current classroom action research as an individual for a number of reasons. Regarding my position in the research context, I was a junior EFL teacher in the Thai university. Like other colleagues, I was required to teach as well as to research into my teaching areas. Using my knowledge of the research context and conducting classroom action research will enable me to link my teaching experience to the development of my research skills. It was difficult to fully involve other EFL teachers in the current research project due to their unavailability and preference not to be involved in such a research project. Most of them were committed to a heavy workload of teaching, which therefore became their priority. Some were in the process of conducting their own research. Although collaboration is a means to avoid limited self-reflection, it is not an essential element of action research (Piggot-Irvine, 2009). The quality of action research conducted individually can be promoted by involving others in reflections on practice.

Involving others to help conduct research, provide feedback, and validate understanding is one concept of action research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). Assistance from peers or colleagues enables action researchers to see things that they overlook and develop new insights into the study (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). In this research, my colleagues were neither participants nor stakeholders from whom I collected data. Instead, I sought their feedback as professional teachers in helping me to

reflect, improve, and refine the CS instruction. Four colleagues volunteered to be my critical friends for the whole data collection and analysis:

### ***An English speaking teacher for evaluating students' performance***

It is important to have English speaking teachers as interlocutors because the majority of international tourists can speak English and tourism students are required to communicate with them effectively in English. An English speaking teacher took part in assessing students' oral performance as an interlocutor and an evaluator. As an interlocutor, he acted as a tourist to communicate with the students and asked some questions. As an evaluator, with experience in training students for the IELTS speaking test, he worked with an EFL teacher in evaluating students' oral performance. He was also asked to help me in checking the language accuracy of the lessons and coding utterances representing CSs.

### ***An EFL teacher for evaluating students' performance***

Interraters help increase the reliability of test results (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). The EFL teacher took part as an evaluator, working with the English speaking teacher in evaluating students' oral performance. She had experience in teaching several English courses and assessing students' speaking skills. She also helped me to translate students' responses in English in the students' self-report questionnaires.

### ***An English speaking teacher as an interlocutor in classroom tasks***

An English speaker is an authentic source of language that promotes learners' exposure to real-world communication. Another English speaking teacher was invited to be an interlocutor when students performed classroom activities. His feedback on

students' oral performance was useful for improving subsequent lessons to maximise the improvement of their oral performance.

### ***A teacher in the tourism subject areas for shaping the course content***

In teaching English for Specific Purposes, a subject specialist is another resource providing content of the instruction and feedback on students' work (Basturkmen, 2006). The teacher of the tourism subject area was asked for some feedback through informal discussions in the development and the refinement of the instruction. Based on her experience in tourism-related areas, she had provided useful views about key tasks, language focus, and subject content that were commonly required in the tourism industry.

### **3.4.3 Process of classroom action research for this research**

Based on the epistemological assumptions of pragmatism, researchers can either choose methods and/or combine methods that work best to answer their research questions (Mertens, 2010). Triangulation is emphasised in the design of this research. Data were gathered from different sources, using different techniques, and at different times. According to Stringer (2007), triangulation of data sources brings about insight gained through different perspectives and helps avoid obtaining subjective information, and therefore increase validity and reliability. Using different methods in investigating one particular aspect is also advantageous. The weaknesses of one technique can be compensated by the strengths of another technique. Data can also be collected at different times and sequences because reflection on data derived from the first method will be used to plan for the techniques for collecting subsequent data.

The current classroom action research aimed to develop the CS instruction to help improve students' oral communication performance. It was guided by four research questions:

- 1) What communication strategies do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?
- 2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?
- 3) How should these CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?
- 4) In what ways does the implementation of the communication strategy instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

To answer these research questions, I adapted the action research process from Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) plan, act and observe, and reflection. These processes would enable me to identify students' needs and develop a plan for the CS instruction in the planning state. Then, I would be able to implement the CS lesson, alongside collecting and analysing data, and making reflections in order to plan the next lessons. I also added the pre- and post-assessments before and after the cycle of action research process to examine the outcomes of my teaching practice and students' learning, regarding improvement in their oral communication performance which is the ultimate aim of teaching the CS instruction. An overview of the process undertaken in the classroom action research is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

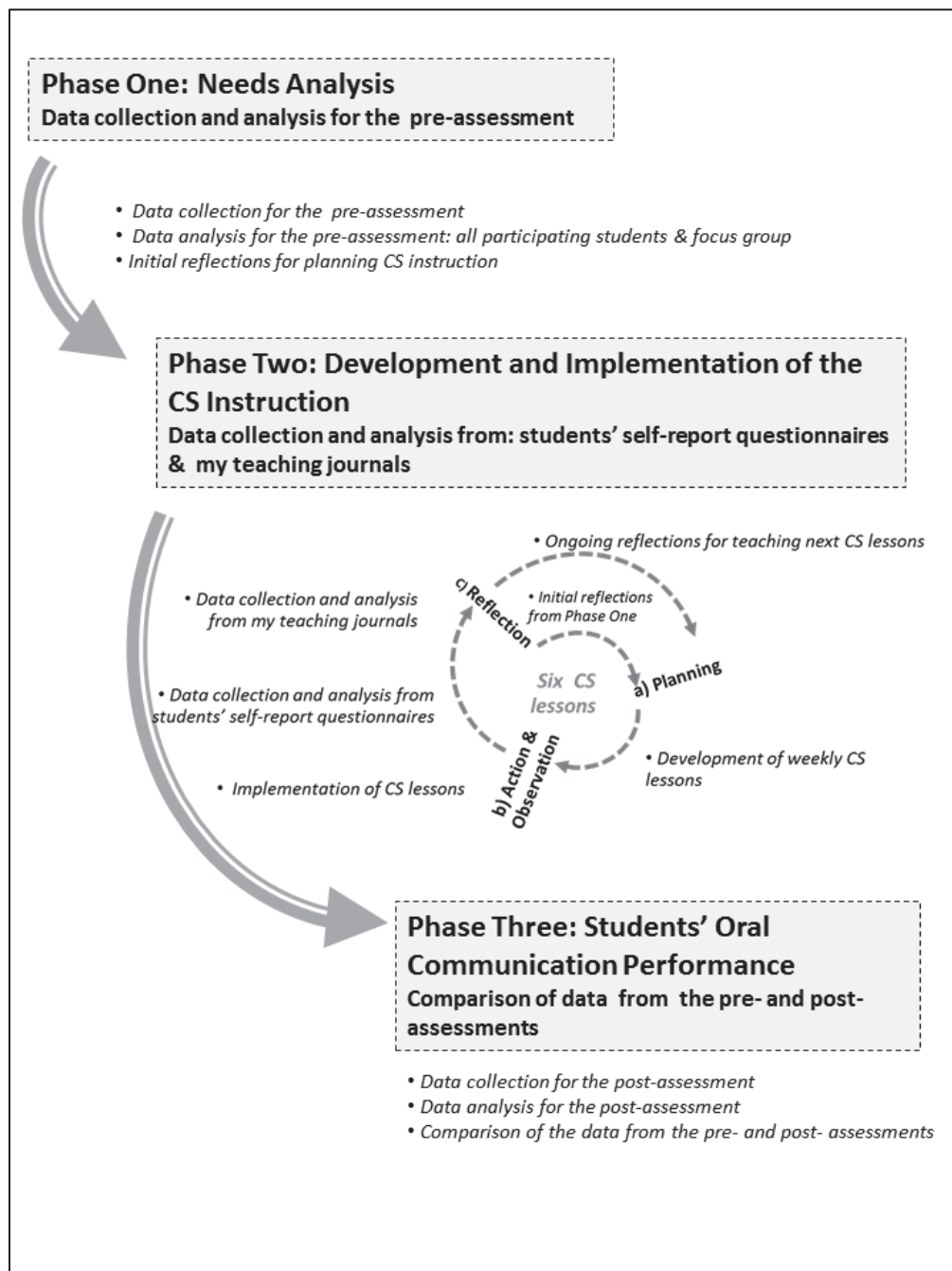


Figure 3.5. Classroom Action Research Process for the Current Study.

As shown in Figure 3.5, the process comprises three phases, each of which involved a cycle of action-reflection where data were collected, analysed, and reflected on as precursors to further action in the next phase. Phase One aimed to identify needs

for the CS instruction by collecting, analysing, and reflecting on data from the pre-assessment. Phase Two aimed to develop and implement the CS instruction based on data collection and analysis from, as well as reflections on, students' self-report and from my teaching journals. Phase Three aimed to re-evaluate students' oral performance after the CS instruction by collecting and analysing the post-assessment results, which were then compared with the pre-assessment.

### ***Phase One: Needs Analysis***

This phase was conducted one week before the CS instruction began to explore participants' use of CSs. It aimed to gain an initial understanding of the fourth year tourism students' specific needs to acquire CSs to improve their oral communication. This process was also intended to guide planning for the CS instruction to meet the students' needs. It was guided by the first research question:

- 1) What communication strategies do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?

As shown in Figure 3.5 (page 75), the Needs Analysis was conducted by collecting speaking band scores from pre-assessment tasks and oral samples of students' oral communication performance. These data were then analysed, by ranking speaking band scores and grouping the levels of oral communication performance of all participating students. This process was followed by analysing the oral samples of the students selected for the focus group. Finally, reflections were made by myself as the researcher and teaching guidelines were addressed for planning the CS instruction in the next phase. As this was an action research process, it is noted that the reasons for

learning CSs were also investigated as an ongoing process during the development and implementation of the CS instruction in the following phase.

### ***Phase Two: Development and Implementation of the CS Instruction***

The common aim of action research in education is to improve student learning by introducing more effective teaching strategies (Henning et al., 2009). This phase aimed to gain understanding of the teaching of CSs and ways to improve it to help students learn and improve their oral communication performance. The focus was on my teaching practice of the CS instruction and collecting data on this teaching. This phase was guided by the research questions:

- 2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?
- 3) How should these CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

The CS instruction, comprising six CS lessons, was developed and implemented once a week, based on the ongoing process of planning, action and observation, and reflection. As shown in Figure 3.5 (page 75), each lesson was developed in the planning stage based on the reflections of the previous lesson. Then, in the action and observation stage, this lesson was implemented along with collecting and analysing data from the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journal entries. Reflections on these data were made in the reflection stage for planning the next lesson. These recursive cycles continued for seven weeks because Lesson 4 required one additional week for implementation.

### ***Phase Three: Students' Oral Communication Performance***

This phase involved the comparison of students' oral communication performance before and after the CS instruction. It is a crucial means for determining the extent to which my CS instructional practices could help improve students' oral communication performances. To develop my understanding about the influence of such teaching practice of the improvement on students' oral performances, this phase was guided by the fourth research question:

- 4) In what ways does the implementation of the communication strategy instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

As shown in Figure 3.5 (page 75), the Phase Three post-assessment was implemented by collecting speaking band scores and oral samples of students' oral communication performance in the post-assessment tasks. These data were initially analysed by ranking speaking band scores and grouping levels of the oral communication performance of all participating students, followed by the analysis of their oral samples. The findings from these processes were then compared with those in the pre-assessment.

In summary, the current classroom action research was conducted in three phases of ongoing action and reflection. The process started from Phase One, collecting and analysing data from the pre-assessment to gain understandings on specific needs to learn CSs and initially plan the CS instruction. Then, in Phase Two, each of the six weekly CS lessons was further developed and implemented on a weekly basis, along with data collection, analysis, and reflection from students' self-report questionnaires and teaching journal entries. After the development and implementation of the six weekly CS lessons, in Phase Three, students' oral communication performances were

re-evaluated by analysing and comparing data from the pre- and post-assessments. It is noted that, as a teacher researcher, I was not involved in these assessments. The three phases of data collection and analysis as well as the findings from each phase are presented in detail in Chapters Four to Six.

### **3.5 Research participants**

Fourth year students in a university tourism programme were the focus of my research project. They were the stakeholders whose learning is affected by the quality of teaching. This section presents the participating students' background and learning needs in relation to my justification in choosing them as the research participants.

#### **3.5.1 Students' background**

Twenty-four fourth year students voluntarily participated in the current research. These students did not have any other English language courses in their fourth-year study plan so being involved in my research was the only English language learning. Initial recruitment was undertaken after gaining permission from the university by the faculty secretary in my research setting who sent out an e-mail to all fourth year students and asked for volunteers. This email briefly explained my research and their roles and rights during participation. They were also assured that their non-participation would not affect their study in the programme. Then, I sent information sheets and informed consents by post to those who accepted to participate in my research. These participating students comprised 14 of 28 students from Class A (10 female and four male students) and 10 of 24 female students from Class B.

Overall, there were four male and 20 female Thai EFL learners, aged between 20-22 years. They had learned English as a foreign language for nine and 12 years in primary and secondary schools. The average level of their English language proficiency ranged from lower intermediate to intermediate (equivalent to IELTS bands score of 4.0-4.5). During the four-year programme, these students were required to study for four academic years, two semesters a year with on-the-job training during the summer breaks. In addition, in the second semester of the fourth year, they were required to participate in an internship programme which offers students, mostly in the last academic year, opportunities to work in the workplace related to their fields of study.

### **3.5.2 Justification for choosing research participants**

I chose the particular group for two main reasons: their background knowledge and their primary learning needs. Firstly, I focused on the fourth year students to ensure they shared sufficient knowledge of tourism and essential English communication skills in tourism-related fields. As shown in Table 3.1, throughout the programme, they were required to study six English courses, two general English courses in the first year of the programme and four English for tourism courses in the second and the third years of the programme. These English for tourism courses were taught by Thai EFL teachers, including two courses on *English for Tourism and Hospitality*, *English for Tourism*, and *English Public Speaking*.

The students also had sufficient knowledge in tourism-related areas as they were required to study several major subjects, for examples, in the *Guides 1-4* (four courses for tour guiding), *History of Arts*, *Historical Tourist Attractions in Thailand*, and *Thai Festivals and Traditions*. Most often, learning activities in these courses encouraged the

students to use English language in the tourism subject area. For example, they had conducted many oral presentations both in Thai and English as part of the *Guide* courses and English for tourism courses. With such prior knowledge in tourism and English language skills, the participants should be able to deal with the content and be confident to communicate with native English speakers.

Table 3.1

*The Study Plan of English for Tourism Courses and Major Subjects in the Tourism Programme*

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>English language courses</b>	<b>Examples of major subjects</b>
One	One	English 1	Orientation to Tourism Industry
	Two	English 2	Ecotourism
	Summer	Field trips	
Two	One	English for Tourism and Hospitality 1	Guide 1 Tourism Geography
	Two	English for Tourism and Hospitality 2	Guide 2 History of Arts
	Summer	On-the-Job Training	
Three	One	English for Tourism	Guide 3 Historical tourist attractions in Thailand
	Two	English Public Speaking	Guide 4 Tourism Business Management
	Summer	On-the-Job Training	
Four	One	none	Tourism Research
	Two	none	Internship programme

Secondly, the fourth year students were attending the internship programme. In this programme, students had the opportunity to work in areas of personal interest in many workplaces. Travel agencies, hotels, airlines, and the Thai Immigration Bureau, in particular, required students who were proficient in English oral communication to communicate with the international customers, clients, and tourists. However, while these students needed to be equipped with good English oral proficiency to work in

such workplaces, no English for Tourism courses were included in the study plan for the fourth year of the tourism programme. Therefore, these students may have volunteered to take part in the current research because they found this participation as a way to improve their oral communication without being part of a formal class and assessments.

In this section, participating students' background information and their learning needs are discussed to justify why they were chosen for the research. Students participated in each phase of the research based on their willingness and availability. The number of participants and their roles vary in each phase, as discussed further in the three phases of data collection and the analysis processes (Chapters Four to Six).

### **3.6 Data collection methods**

This section addresses the development of data collection methods for the current classroom action research. These methods were pre- and post-assessments, students' self-report questionnaires, and my teaching journals. The CS framework was also established to elicit CSs from students' oral samples in the pre- and post-assessments. The aim and development process of these data collection methods, together with the CS framework, are discussed in this section.

#### **3.6.1 Pre- and post- assessments**

##### *Aims of the pre- and post-assessments*

The pre- and post-assessments are common methods in classroom action research to compare changes before and after the instruction. According to Henning et al. (2009), the pre-assessment provides useful data for diagnosing students' strengths

and weaknesses while the post- assessment can provide insights into student learning. The comparison of the outcome of the pre- and post-assessments is useful to measure improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

In this research, the pre-assessment was utilised in Phase One to explore students' existing knowledge and use of CSs and therefore to identify needs to learn CSs and make decisions in planning the CS instruction. The post-assessment was utilised in Phase Three to explore and compare students' knowledge and use of CSs in association with changes in oral communication performance.

#### ***Development of the pre- and post-assessment tasks and criteria***

I devised two parallel sets of speaking tasks to avoid familiarity with the task content that might affect speaking band scores in the post-assessment (Nakatani, 2005). They were adapted from Wongsawang's (2001) description tasks of Thai culture-specific situations and terminology. These tasks required students to describe and explain situations and terminology related specifically to Thai culture. According to Wongsawang (2001), Thai culture-specific situations and terminology are difficult to explain in English and often there is no equivalent translation into English. Culture-specific situations and terminology are also commonly used in the tourism-related contexts (González-Pastor, 2013). The tasks were also designed as two-way communication that simulated interaction between the students as the tourism personnel and the English speaking interlocutor as the tourist. Describing these situations and terminology in English to the English speaking interlocutor, who had a different cultural background and knowledge, should have been sufficiently challenging to foster students' use of CSs (A. Kirkpatrick, 2010).

Each set of assessment tasks comprised three Thai culture-specific situations and terminology. As shown in Appendix 1 and 2, the pre-speaking tasks included *San praphum* (spirit house), *Wai* (Thai manner to pay respect to others), and the *Loy krathong* festival (a festival for worship of the river goddess). The post-speaking tasks contained *Poung malai* (Garland), *Tak bat* (Alms giving, food offering to monks), and the *Songkran* festival (Traditional Thai New Year). Each of these were facilitated by an image of related objects (e.g., garland and spirit house), action (e.g., wai), activities (e.g., alms giving and Songkran festival), and prompt questions (e.g., what is it?, what is it for?, when does it take place?).

These selected terms were suggested by three professional tour guides who were asked individually and informally to brainstorm Thai culture-specific situations and terminology that they commonly addressed and described to tourists. Then, from 15 terms, I selected six situations and terminology on the basis of students' general and course specific knowledge, as well as the complexity of language demands required for each situation and terminology. For example, abstract notions require more linguistics knowledge (Wongsawang, 2001).

The pre-assessment was undertaken in the first week prior to the CS instruction and the post-assessment was conducted in the week following the CS instruction. In each assessment, each individual student was required to perform the three tasks in 10 minutes with the English speaking teacher. In each task, approximately one minute was allocated for preparation, one minute for describing a given situation or terminology, and one minute for interacting with the English speaking teacher who then evaluated each student after he or she completed the three speaking assessment tasks.

The criteria for ranking students' levels of oral communication performance were adapted from the IELTS speaking band descriptors (see [http://www.ielts.org/pdf/UOBDS\\_SpeakingFinal.pdf](http://www.ielts.org/pdf/UOBDS_SpeakingFinal.pdf)). These criteria were suitable for the designated speaking tests because of the similar functions of language use. For example, the IELTS speaking test requires a test taker to perform two kinds of oral performance; informing (e.g., describing objects and telling a story) and interacting (e.g., answering questions from the interlocutor). However, I particularly focused on the speaking scale between Band 3 and Band 7 because this reflected the students' proficiency levels (equivalent to Band 4-4.5). Those students whose scores fell within the lower speaking Band 3, 3.5 and 4 were classified as a low level group. A medium level group were ranked at Band 4.5, 5, and 5.5, while a high level group were ranked at Band 6, 6.5, and 7.

The pre- and post-assessments and the speaking assessment criteria were piloted, using four volunteer graduates in tourism. Students' performances were ranked and recorded by the English speaking teacher who was the interlocutor in the assessment. These graduates were also asked to give feedback on the complexity of the task and language, as well as the appropriateness of the time allocated to the tasks. Feedback from the English speaking teacher who acted as the interlocutor was also used to adjust and simplify the speaking assessment tasks and criteria. Samples of the pre- and post-assessments and criteria of speaking assessments are included in Appendices 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

### **3.6.2 Students' self-report questionnaires**

#### *Aims of students' self-report questionnaires*

There are many methods to obtain information on learners' self-perceptions of their learning performances. Questionnaires, interviews, stimulated recalls, and personal learning histories (e.g., diaries) can be used to elicit retrospective reports while immediate recall and think aloud tasks can be used to elicit concurrent reports (Ellis, 2008). Ellis (2008) defines students' self-report questionnaires as a written form of self-report to investigate learners' cognitive and affective conditions during their learning based on their own perspectives. In the current research, the students' self-report questionnaire was used in Phase Two to collect all participating students' feedback on the lessons and their self-assessment of their oral communication performance. After each CS lesson, participating students were asked to complete the students' self-report questionnaires which were distributed and collected by the secretary of the department. Students' feedback was an important data source of my classroom action research to explore students' learning progress and their opinions about how to improve my teaching practice.

#### *Development of students' self-report questionnaires*

I designed the learner's self-report as a written questionnaire because it was a practical form of collecting a lot of data over a short period of time (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Using a written questionnaire did not disrupt my tight schedule of planning and implementing the CS lesson, as well as collecting and analysing the data from the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals on a weekly

basis. Data were also anonymous by using codes instead of students' names so that they were more likely to provide honest responses (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007) .

The students' self-report questionnaire for this research comprised two parts: students' self-assessment on their own oral performance in assigned tasks and their feedback on the weekly CS lessons. I designed the students' self-report questionnaire specifically for my own research context where I could capture the data related to their problems and CS uses, and their opinions of the lesson.

The first part included ranking questions of the students' main problem areas, problematic situations and CSs used to solve such problems, adapted from previous studies of CSs (e.g., Nakatani, 2006; Wongsawang, 2001). Question 1, What were the major areas of your communication problems?, required each student to rank major problem areas, including speaking, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and other related problematic areas (e.g., grammar). Question 2, What situations were likely to occur when you communicated with others in English?, elicited students' most frequently occurring problematic situations such as those related to pauses, word recognition, interlocutor's speech, making sentences, and other related problematic situations (e.g., time pressure). Question 3, What did you do to ease the difficulties in your oral communication?, required the student to rank the most employed CSs to solve problems including fillers, simplifying words, giving examples, producing clear and loud speech, repetitions, changing words, and other CSs (e.g., asking for repetition and clarification).

The second part contained five open-ended questions which allowed students to give more detail, either in English or Thai (see Appendix 5). This part, in which I usually asked students to evaluate the lessons, was designed based mainly on my

teaching experience with Thai EFL students. Question 1, What have you learned from this lesson?, was about knowledge they had obtained from the current lesson. Question 2, What do you like and/or dislike about this lesson?, asked about their feelings about the current lesson. Question 3, Do you think this lesson is useful for improving your English oral performance?, involves the usefulness of the current lesson. Question 4, What would you like to learn in the next lesson?, asked for their preference for upcoming lesson. Question 5, Other comments, requested any additional comments about the lesson.

The self-report questionnaire was piloted with the four volunteer graduates who participated in the pilot pre- and post-assessments. The aim of the pilot was to check their understanding of the instructions, questions and ranking items which were in English.

### **3.6.3 My teaching journals**

#### *Aims for my teaching journals*

The teaching journal is an ongoing report of ideas, thoughts, reflections, insights, feelings, and reactions to lessons or teaching events (Burns, 2009; J. C. Richards & Farrell, 2005). According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), the teaching journal can provide information to chart the progress of action research and to show where changes are made through the recursive action and reflection cycles. The teaching journal for this research was used to document my plans, actions and observations, as well as my reflections as a teacher researcher throughout the development and implementation of the CS instruction. It recorded information for investigating my own teaching practice. As a teacher researcher, I wrote my teaching

journal entries on a daily basis to document my teaching practice for the six CS lessons during Phase Two: Developing and Implementing the CS Instruction.

### ***Development of outlines of teaching journal***

According to J. C. Richards and Farrell (2005), specific goals, focuses, and a time frame of a journal should be set prior to its implementation. This approach is considered because keeping journals is time-consuming. Time is required for writing, reviewing, analysing, and interpreting data on a regular basis to track changes. Thus, I selected four main topics to include in all my journal entries, as outlined by Richard and Farrell (2005). They were: a) rationale and description of the lesson, b) my observation of classroom events and students' learning, c) critical feedback from my colleagues and students on the lesson (e.g., focusing on what works and what does not), and d) changes made in the lessons (see Appendix 6).

### **3.6.4 The communication strategy framework**

#### ***Aims of the communication strategy framework***

A descriptive framework of CSs is a common tool for verifying the identification of the CSs being elicited (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). In this research project, the CS framework developed was used for eliciting CSs from the transcription of students' oral samples in the pre- and post- assessments in Phase One and Phase Three. Using the same framework to elicit CSs before and after the instruction meant I was able to compare this over time and track the changes in CS use.

### *Development of the communication strategy framework*

As Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) point out, the CS framework should be economical, excluding categories unrelated to the research problem. Therefore, it is important to select specific CSs that accommodate the research aims, questions, and context to include in the CS framework. The current research context focused on CSs which are useful for improving students' oral communication performance.

I selected specific CSs and adapted the terms and classifications from several studies which focused on both the wider and Thai EFL contexts. Various CS frameworks are suggested in the literature, with different categories and types of CSs. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) suggest that making use of these existing frameworks enables researchers to compare the findings against previous studies.

Primarily, I examined specific CSs based on the extended perspective provided by Dörnyei and Scott (1997). The CSs listed by this framework are based on a collection of frameworks from previous studies that are comprehensive, well-researched, and well-documented (Ellis, 2008). The next step was to select some of the CSs that were recommended to be taught from previous CS studies (see Chapter Two: Literature Review). The CSs selected had also been commonly used in previous studies involving the Thai EFL context (e.g., Kongsom, 2009; Malasit & Sarobol, 2013; Wannaruk, 2003; Wongsawang, 2001). I also chose CSs that were observable in the transcription data of the oral samples from the pilot study of the pre- and post-assessments.

Table 3.2 shows the 12 CSs I chose and grouped into three categories: achievement strategies, time-stalling strategies, and interactional strategies. Each CS also has a description which is adapted from Dörnyei and Scott (1997) and Cohen and

Dörnyei (2002). The first category is achievement strategies which were considered useful as they help to compensate for gaps in the conversation (Nakatani, 2005; Rossiter, 2003; Wongsawang, 2001). Within this category, there are eight CSs: circumlocution, approximation, all-purpose words, similar sounding words, code switching, and literal translation. Self-correction such as self-repair and self-rephrasing were also included in achievement strategies in the CS framework because they help deliver clearer messages (Kongsom, 2009).

Time-stalling strategies made up the second category of the framework. These strategies are called indirect strategies in Dörnyei and Scott (1997) which include lexicalised and non-lexicalised fillers and repetitions. These CSs are important when speakers need time to retrieve information or vocabulary from memory and plan what to say. For this category, as shown in Table 3.2, only lexicalised fillers and repetitions were selected for inclusion in the CS framework because non-lexicalised fillers were not considered useful as they cause delays in an utterance (Kongsom, 2009) and therefore they were excluded from the CS framework.

Interactional strategies were also included in the CS framework as they are seen as useful for maintaining a conversation channel (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005). According to Dörnyei and Scott (1997), interactional strategies include asking for repetition, clarification requests, appeals for help, and comprehension and confirmation checks. In this study, as shown in Table 3.2, asking for repetition, help with linguistic knowledge, and asking for clarification were grouped into direct appeals for help. Comprehension and confirmation checks are grouped into modified interaction strategies. Also, none of the CSs from reduction strategies, such as topic avoidance, message abandonment, were included in the CS framework. These CSs were not considered useful for improving students' oral communication performance

(Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2005) and are not recommended to be taught (Rossiter, 2005).

Table 3.2

*Descriptions of 12 CSs for the Present Study*

CSs	Descriptions
A) Achievement strategies	Using alternative linguistic items for compensating linguistic gaps
1) Circumlocution	Exemplifying, illustrating, or describing the property of the target object or action
2) Approximation	Using alternative lexical items, such as superordinates or related terms, that share semantic features with the target word or structure
3) All-purpose words	Extending a general “empty” lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., make, do, thing, and something)
4) Similar sounding words	Using alternative lexical item which sounds more or less like the target word
5) Literal translation	Translating word for word a lexical item, an idiom, or a compound word or structure from Thai to English.
6) Code switching	Including Thai words with Thai pronunciation in English sentences
7) Self-rephrasing	Rephrasing a term already uttered by adding something or using paraphrase
8) Self-repair	Making self-initiated corrections in one’s own speech
B) Time-stalling strategies	Filling pauses and repeating linguistic items for stalling and gaining time
9) Lexicalised fillers	Using gambits such as <i>well</i> , <i>actually</i> , and <i>you know</i> to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time
10) Repetition	Repeating words immediately after they were said
C) Interactional strategies	Using linguistic signals to negotiate meanings with the interlocutors
11) Direct appeals for help	Using English expressions for asking the interlocutor for repetition and clarification as well as help with linguistic knowledge
12) Modified interaction strategies	Using English expressions for comprehension and confirmation check

### *A pilot of the communication strategy framework*

The pilot of the CS framework was undertaken to ensure that this framework is applicable to the research context and to establish initial mutual understanding of the procedure for coding CSs between the English speaking teacher and me as the coders. The recordings of two graduates' oral communication performances of the pilot of the pre- and post-assessments were transcribed. One represented highest speaking band scores (5.5) while another represented the lowest speaking band score (3).

To analyse the oral samples, I utilised an *interactional analysis* approach introduced by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 165). As they note, it is commonly undertaken to describe the discourse of interaction by analysing individuals' utterances to understand their meanings in the "contexts of use" (p. 165). Particularly, it is suitable for analysing problem solving interactions in which CSs and the negotiation of meaning are involved. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) proposed a general procedure for interaction analysis, including a) defining the particular aspect of interaction to be studied, b) identifying stances of these aspects in the data, c) establishing descriptive framework or utilising existing framework, and d) quantify and qualify instances of the categories. I adapted these procedures for eliciting CSs from the transcriptions of oral samples. They involved transcribing the oral samples, selecting and defining CSs, coding utterances into the CS framework, and quantifying and qualifying the utterances representing the particular CSs. The examples of the 12 CSs are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Examples of 12 CSs for the Present Study*

CSs	Examples
1) Circumlocution	Describing fire work as <i>something that ...ahh... when we put the fire and it burst</i> or describing the a spirit house as <i>a small house</i>
2) Approximation	Using <i>climate</i> for <i>weather</i> or describing Songkran festival as <i>a holiday</i>
3) All-purpose words	<i>Thai people have to use the banana leaf, flower, and incense stick, and candle and do something...that's called 'Loy krathong'.</i>
4) Similar sounding words	Uttering <i>condition</i> instead of <i>tradition</i> .
5) Literal translation	Using <i>the monk day</i> for <i>Buddhist day</i>
6) Code switching	<i>Food...fruit and <u>Mali</u> ( Thai words for jasmine)</i>
7) Self-rephrasing	<i>Mae Kongka is the spirit...<u>holy spirit</u> that protect the river.</i>
8) Self-repair	<i>We have a monk that is a...the symbol of <u>Buddhist</u>...<u>Buddhism</u>.</i>
9) Lexicalised fillers	<i>For the...I'm not sure...the...something that...something...<u>Let me think about it.</u></i>
10) Repetition	<i>November...ah...<u>the moon</u>...<u>the moon</u>...lunar moon</i>
11) Direct appeals for help	Asking the interlocutor to repeat his questions by saying <i>again please</i> .
12) Modified interaction strategies	Checking the interlocutor is understanding by saying <i>right?or OK?</i>

**3.6.5 Summary of data collection methods**

To summarise, the aims and development of the data collection methods have been described in detail in this section. The pre- and post- assessments and the CS framework were utilised in Phase One and Phase Three respectively to examine changes in the students' oral communication performance and to compare the use of CSs before and after the CS instruction. The students' self-report questionnaires and the teaching journals with their outlined focuses were utilised in Phase Two to collect data, along with the development and implementation of the CS instruction. The implementation of

these data collection methods and the CS framework are discussed in the three phases of data collection and analysis process (Chapter Four to Chapter Six).

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

It is important for action researchers to conduct research morally and responsibly (Burns, 2010). Research ethics are “an integral part of research planning and implementation process” (Mertens, 2010, p. 12). According to Somekh (2008), conducting action research by insiders of the research context, especially where their relationship with the research participants is close, requires high levels of ethical conduct. Action research also involves others in the research process (e.g., critical friends and co researchers) and results are made available to a public audience (Zeni, 1998). These features may cause harm to research participants. Therefore, action researchers are required to ensure that participants are not at risk of either physical or psychological harm (Henning et al., 2009).

The ethical procedures for this classroom action research were reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC:#09/69). There were four main ethical considerations discussed in relation to the research: 1) informed and voluntary consent, 2) avoidance of conflict of role/interest, 3) respect for privacy and confidentiality, and 4) minimisation of risk of harm.

#### **3.7.1 Informed and voluntary consent**

Informed and voluntary consent requires that the research participants agree to be involved in the research of their free will and with a full understanding of the research (Mills, 2014). According to Burns (2010), providing participants with

sufficient information about the research will facilitate their decision to participate in the research willingly. Informed consent should also recognise participants' rights to protect their identities and to withdraw from the research at any time.

Achieving informed consent for this research involved several steps. After gaining the permission from the President of the university (See Appendix 7), the secretary of the department was asked to send out an e-mail to all fourth year students to ask for volunteers. This e-mail briefly explained my research and what their participation would involve. The secretary then sent information sheets and informed consent sheets to the volunteer students by post. The participants who decided to participate in the project returned the consent forms directly to her by post, using the provided addressed and stamped envelope. The information sheet and consent documents were translated into Thai to ensure the participants fully understood the research aims, scope, data collection methods and timeline, their roles and rights (e.g., to withdraw from the research, ask questions about the research and have access to the research findings). The information sheet and a consent form are presented in Appendices 8 and 9. In addition, informed consent was undertaken orally to my colleagues as critical friends to ensure they fully understood the research goals and process, as well as their roles and rights.

### **3.7.2 Avoidance of conflict of role/interest**

Conflict of interest and/or role can occur when the relationship between researchers and their research participants is affected by the multiple roles of the researchers, particularly when teachers are the insider researchers (Israel & May, 2008). The relationship between a teacher researcher and the research participants, mostly

students in their classroom, is close and dependent (Mills, 2014). The power relationship with students can affect their decisions about participation in the research, and data collection, which could impact on data analysis and interpretation.

Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) suggests that to resolve conflict of interest and role, researchers should avoid recruiting research participants who may perceive that they have a dependent relationship with the teacher researcher; otherwise participants' anonymity should be sustained. If the participants are previously known or had a dependent relationship with the researchers, they might decide to participate in the research because they want to please the researcher and conceal their true feelings (Henning et al., 2009). To ensure that the conflict of the roles of the researcher and the interests of the participants were minimised, I was not involved directly in the recruitment. The research participants were also unknown to me prior to my research and so had no prior relationship with me. The CS instruction was also planned as a short voluntary course, after other courses in their programme. In addition, participants were told in the information sheet that the course would not be assessed or graded, and that non-participation would not affect students' grades and assessment in the tourism programme in any way.

Massey University Human Ethics Committee also requires that participants' anonymity should be maintained throughout data collection processes. A set of data which was collected overtly or directly (e.g., participants are known to the teacher-researcher) may contribute to gathering biased or distorted information rather than truth. Therefore, I was not involved in collecting data directly in the pre- and post-assessments, or the students' self-report questionnaire. To sustain students' anonymity, I asked an English speaking teacher, who was unknown to the participants and had no previous relationship with them, to conduct the oral evaluations in the pre- and post-

assessments for me and to set new codes for the students, in place of their students' codes. I also asked the secretary of the department to distribute and collect the self-report questionnaire for me, using the codes created in the pre-assessment.

### **3.7.3 Minimisation of risk of harm**

Avoidance or minimisation of unnecessary harm, either physically or psychologically, is a key ethic code of conduct (MUHEC). Sustaining participants' anonymity and protecting their confidentiality and privacy is one means of minimising harm, inconvenience, and discomfort to participants (Mills, 2014). The current study was undertaken in the classroom context, and with my goodwill as a teacher researcher to improve participants' oral performance. There was no potential harm in this safe and constructive environment. However, students' discomfort could occur due to unfamiliar learning contexts and activities provided in the research.

To minimise participants' discomfort, the design of the pre- and post-assessments and the CS instruction were aligned with tourism students' familiar learning contexts. For example, oral presentations and audio recordings were common activities in many of their major subjects (e.g., Guide and English for Tourism courses). With such familiar learning contexts, the CS instruction would not affect students' comfort, but support students' learning performance. In addition, to ensure fairness for the students in the oral evaluation of the pre- and post-assessments, I had an experienced English speaking teacher and a Thai EFL teacher who did not know them moderating the evaluation of students' oral performance. Roles of my colleagues as evaluators and interlocutors were also clarified with their consent to ensure fairness and minimising the risk of harm that may occur with students.

### **3.7.4 Respect for privacy and confidentiality**

Confidentiality and privacy involves protecting participants' identities and research locations, concealing their personal data, and making these data public only anonymously (Christians, 2003). According to Mills (2014), to safeguard participants from stress, embarrassment, and unwanted circumstances arising from publicity, all data and information collected should be strictly confidential and access to these data should be limited to the specific people directly in charge of the research.

To protect the institution's and participants' privacy and confidentiality, their identities were kept confidential and pseudonyms were used in data collection, analysis, discussions, reports, and the final thesis. In addition, data have been stored in a safe place. The consent forms have been in a locked filing cabinet in my work office in Thailand to which only I have access. Audiotapes and paper copies of raw data have been stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office in New Zealand to which only my supervisors and I have access. While in Thailand, they were stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office.

## **3.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview and justification of classroom action research as the selected approach to understand and improve teaching, as well as improve students' learning outcomes. Based on the researcher's philosophical beliefs, the research was designed, using a constructivist and pragmatic approach and focusing on triangulation. The research process comprised three phases of data collection and analysis process. Phase One aimed to identify needs to learn CSs, Phase Two aimed to develop and implement the CS instruction, and Phase Three aimed to re-evaluate

students' oral performance after the CS instruction. Each phase involved an ongoing process of action and reflection.

Research participants were selected based on their willingness and availability, and their need to improve their oral communication performance. Four methods of data collection, including the pre- and post-assessments, the student's self-report questionnaire, the outlines of teaching journals, as well as the CS framework were developed for collecting the data in the three phases. Ethical issues, the researcher's positioning, and assistance from my colleagues were also addressed in terms of the action research process.

The process of the classroom action research is evolutionary and ongoing. Data were collected, analysed, and reflected on time after time, from the beginning of the research. The findings of the previous phase also affected the planning and implementation of the next phase. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and reflection, are presented as a dynamic process in each of the following chapters of the three phases (Chapter Four to Chapter Six).

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **PHASE ONE**

### **NEEDS ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the data collection and analysis processes for the pre-assessment undertaken in Phase One of the action research process to identify needs for the CS instruction. My research project involved developing and teaching CS instruction to enable tourism students to solve problems in their oral communication performance effectively. Prior to developing and implementing the CS instruction, it was important to understand the undergraduate tourism students' learning needs in regards to their oral communication performance. This understanding then enabled me to select CSs to develop in the CS instruction phase of the process. Therefore, the first phase of the action research process investigated students' existing abilities in oral communication and CSs that they were already using to cope with problems in communication. This phase was guided by Research Question 1: What CSs do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?

The processes of data collection and analysis for the pre-assessment are illustrated in Figure 4.1. The pre-assessment was conducted in the first week of the project, involving collecting speaking band scores and oral samples from the 22 participating students. Then, these data were analysed. Firstly, the speaking band scores from the pre-assessment tasks of all participating students were ranked and grouped to provide an overview of students' levels of oral communication performance. Based on

these band scores, seven participants with different levels of oral communication performance were selected as the focus group. Their oral samples were then transcribed and analysed to provide more details about the CSs used by these students. The findings from these analyses were reflected on when planning the CS instruction in Phase Two.

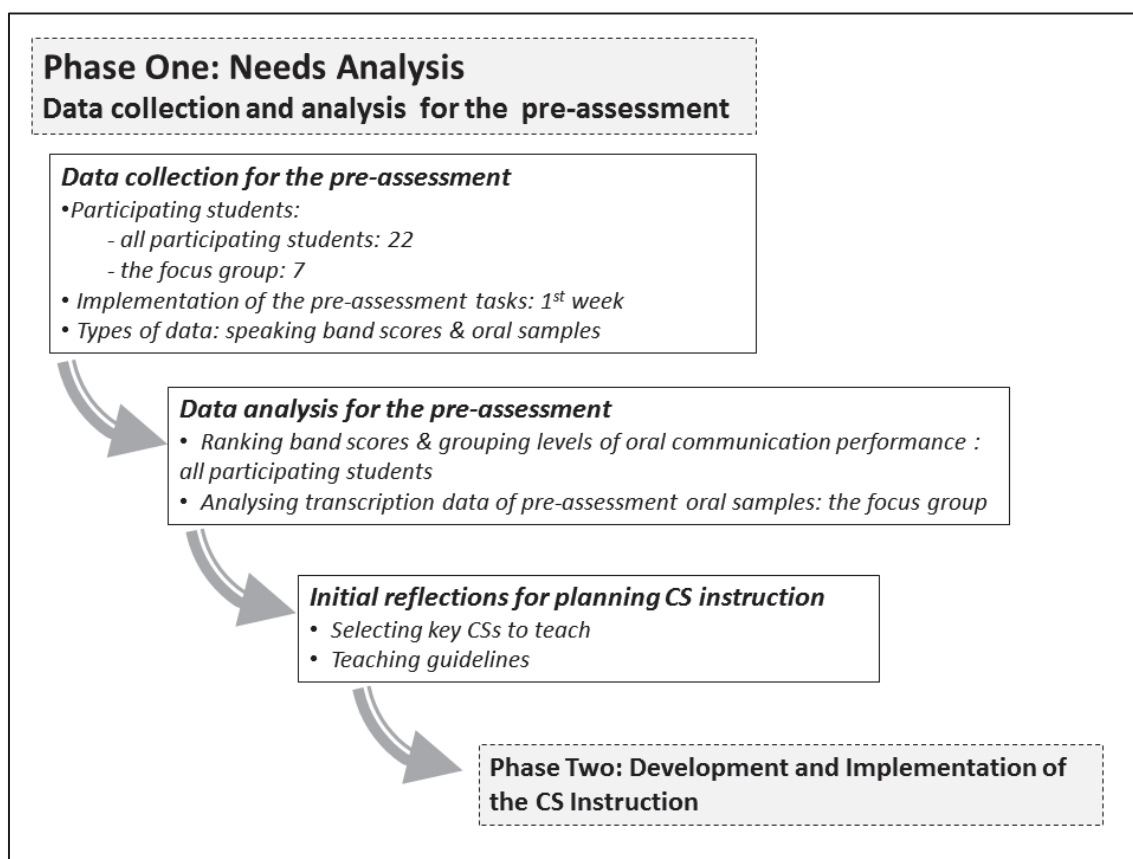


Figure 4.1. Data Collection and Analysis Process in Phase One.

The rest of this chapter is organised into three sections, covering data collection, analysis, and reflection. In the first section, addressing the pre-assessment data collection process, I describe all participating students and the focus group, implementation of the pre-assessment, and types of data collected. Then, I explain the first data analysis process which included ranking speaking band scores and grouping levels of oral communication performance of all participating students. This is followed

by the second data analysis process which involved selecting the focus group and the detailed analysis of oral samples from the focus group. Finally, my initial reflections on the findings from these processes are discussed in order to select CSs to teach and to plan the CS instruction in Phase Two.

## **4.2 Data collection for the pre-assessment: All participating students**

The pre-assessment was undertaken to explore and identify students' existing oral communication ability prior to the CS instruction. Such assessment should provide useful data for diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses (Henning et al., 2009). As discussed in detail in Chapter Three Research Methodology, the pre-assessment included three description tasks of Thai culture-specific situations and terminology: *San praphum* (spirit house), *Wai* (Thai manner to pay respect to others), and the *Loy krathong* festival (a festival for worship of the river goddess). The pre-assessment speaking criteria were adapted from the speaking bands descriptors of the International English Language Test System (IELTS).

### **4.2.1 Participating students**

Twenty-two students volunteered to participate in the pre-assessment. It is noted that initially there were 24 students in total who agreed and signed the consent documents for participating in the research. However, two of these students were not available for the pre-assessment because of personal reasons. Therefore, the total participating students for the pre-assessment was 22.

All 22 participating students were asked to perform three speaking tasks with the English speaking teacher. Their performances were then recorded and ranked into

different band scores, and grouped into levels of oral performance. Representatives of each band score were then selected to be in the focus group.

Selected from all 22 participating students, the focus group comprised seven students whose oral samples were analysed to elicit CS use. Focusing on a smaller number of participants enabled me to gain a more in-depth understanding of the students' oral communication performance in relation to the use of CSs within a limited time. The selection process of the focus group was undertaken after ranking and grouping all students' scores which is discussed in Section 4.3.2.

#### **4.2.2 Implementation of the pre-assessment tasks**

The pre-assessment was undertaken in the first week of the research project. As this research also involved examining changes in students' oral communication performance in relation to my own teaching practice, therefore to avoid any possible bias of the initial assessment data, I, as a teacher researcher, did not take part in this pre-assessment. Two colleagues, the English speaking teacher, and the Thai EFL teacher, worked together as co-raters. This process was also planned to increase the reliability of the results of the assessment (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Their roles as evaluators are addressed below.

The English speaking teacher played two roles: interlocutor and evaluator. As an interlocutor, he was part of the pre-assessment and he acted as a tourist to communicate with the students and asked various questions about three Thai culture-specific situations and terminologies. It is important to have a native speaker of English as an interlocutor because the majority of international tourists can speak English and tourism students are required to communicate with them effectively in English so this was an

authentic situation. He also took part as an evaluator in assessing students' oral performance, with his experience in tutoring Thai students for the IELTS speaking test.

The Thai EFL teacher evaluated the recordings of the students' oral performance, after the pre-assessment. She had years of experience in teaching several English courses and assessing students' speaking skills.

The pre-assessment procedure started with all participants gathering in the classroom where I provided an orientation, in Thai, as to the regulations, components and task types, as well as the requirement of the pre-assessment. Then, the secretary of the department called each student in sequence of their student identification number to perform the speaking tasks in the assessment room.

In the assessment room, the English speaking teacher set the number code for each student on the recorder and research list. The student performed the three speaking tasks in 10 minutes with the English speaking teacher, who also audio recorded their oral communication performance. Each task allowed approximately one minute for preparation, one minute for describing a given culture-specific situation and terminology, and one minute for interacting with the English speaking teacher. The English speaking teacher immediately evaluated each student's oral communication performance after the three speaking tasks were complete. Students who had completed this assessment were not allowed to go back to see others in the classroom.

On the day following the pre-assessment, recordings of the students' oral performances were played for evaluation by the Thai EFL teacher, using the same IELTS adapted speaking band scores. This process was followed by discussions between the two evaluators, the English speaking teacher and the Thai EFL teacher, to achieve mutual agreement of each speaking band score for each student.

### **4.2.3 Types of data collected from the pre-assessment**

There were two types of data collected from the pre-assessment. Firstly, all 22 students' band scores of their oral communication performance in the pre-assessment were used to classify students' levels of oral communication performance and select representatives of each band scores for the focus group. Secondly, the recorded oral samples of the focus group were transcribed for coding utterances representing different CSs. This type of data was used to investigate how individual CSs were used by students with different oral proficiencies and the effectiveness of these uses (e.g., contributing to successful communication).

## **4.3 Data analysis for the pre-assessment**

This section presents the data analysis for the pre-assessment. The process involved: 1) ranking speaking band scores and grouping levels of oral performance of all participating students, and 2) analysing transcription data of the pre-assessment oral samples of the focus group.

### **4.3.1 Ranking speaking band scores and grouping levels of oral performance: All participating students**

The process of analysing the pre-assessment involved ranking the 22 participating students' speaking band scores using criteria adapted from the IELTS speaking bands descriptors. They were then grouped according to the levels of their oral communication performance. This analysis was conducted to provide an overview of all students' ability to communicate in English and it was later considered for selecting the focus group for further in-depth analysis of the oral samples.

All 22 students' performances in the speaking assessment were audio-recorded and ranked by the two evaluators in terms of their speaking band scores, ranging from Band 3 to Band 7 according to the IELTS speaking bands descriptors (see Appendix 3). The four areas which were measured were (a) fluency and coherence, (b) lexical resource, (c) grammatical range and accuracy, and (d) pronunciation.

After all individual students were ranked, they were categorised into two groups of levels of oral communication performance. Students who fell into the lower speaking Bands 3, 3.5 and 4 were classified as the low level group. The medium level group was ranked at Bands 4.5, 5, and 5.5.

The result from ranking and grouping the levels of oral communication of all participating students is illustrated in Table 4.1. Of 22 students, 11 were ranked at a medium level: seven with a band score of 5 and four with a band score of 4.5. The others were ranked at a lower level: one with a band score of 4, four with a band score of 3.5, and six with a band score of 3. No student was able to be ranked at the higher level of proficiency, so there were only two groups in the research: medium and low.

Table 4.1

*The Number of All Participating Students at Different Levels of Proficiency*

Levels of proficiency	Band scores	No of participants		Total
		Male	Female	
Medium	5.0	2	5	7
	4.5	-	4	4
Low	4.0	1	-	1
	3.5	-	4	4
	3	-	6	6
Total				22

### **4.3.2 Analysing transcription data of pre-assessment oral samples: The focus group**

The analysis of seven oral samples was undertaken to provide in-depth information on how the CSs were employed by the two different groups to solve their oral communication problems. The selection of the focus group, coding the CSs from the transcription data of the pre-assessment oral samples and the findings are described below.

#### ***The selection of the focus group***

On the basis of the findings in Section 4.3.1, seven students were selected to form the focus group using a purposive sampling technique. This technique involves selecting participants who represent diverse perspectives and experiences across all kinds of participants (Stringer, 2007). For this research on CSs, the focus group had to represent the diversity of all participants in terms of gender and linguistic background. This consideration is due to the assumptions that levels of oral proficiency affect the choice of CS use, leading to different levels of achievement in communication (Nakatani, 2010; Rossiter, 2005) and that male and female students may use different CSs (Somsai, 2011). The selection of these representatives would provide a comprehensive data set reflecting all students' prior knowledge of CSs and ability in oral communication.

The purposive selection process comprised many steps. First, I specifically tried to select both male and female students from each band score at the two levels. Where there was a choice of potential representatives in a band, I worked with the English speaking teacher involved in the pre-assessment to make a selection. We replayed the recording of the pre-assessment oral samples to explore the students' use of CSs, and

selected the students that represented a wide range of CS use. The reason was that I wanted as much data as possible on the CSs students used and the ways they applied them in various interactional contexts.

The number of students selected for the focus group and their band scores are illustrated in Table 4.2. For a speaking band score of 5, of the two male students, one student (Noom) was selected and of the five female students, one student (Kwan) was selected. From the four female students with a speaking band score of 4.5, one student was chosen (Pu). Four oral samples were selected from the lower level group. One male student represented the speaking band score of 4 (Ton). One of the four female students was selected from the speaking band score of 3.5 (Daw) because she tended to use a wider range CSs than the others from this band score. For the band score of 3, one student (May) was selected by her use of CSs as for the other band scores. However, as one of the aims of Phase One was identifying needs to improve oral communication performance, a second student with the band score of 3 who hardly used CSs at all was also selected. Students with the lowest scores might be the ones who could provide insights into their specific needs to which I could respond by finding ways to improve their oral performance in Phase Two of the action research process. In addition, selecting two students from the lowest scores also maintained the balance of sampling representativeness from the highest and the lowest band scores, two of seven were selected from a band score 5, and two of six from a band score of 3.

Table 4.2

*The Number of Students in the Focus Group*

Levels of proficiency	Band scores	No of participants		No. of selected participants		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Medium	5.0	2	5	1 (Noom)	1 (Kwan)	3
	4.5	-	4	-	1 (Pu)	
Low	4.0	1	-	1 (Ton)	-	4
	3.5	-	4	-	1 (Daw)	
	3	-	6	-	2 (May, Nai)	

*Coding CSs from the transcription data of pre-assessment oral samples*

To analyse the seven oral samples, I utilised an interactional analysis process as introduced by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). The key focus of this type of interactional analysis in my research process was establishing a descriptive framework for coding by utilising an existing framework and adapting the framework to fit the actual use of CSs (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Firstly, I transcribed each of the seven oral samples which were then moderated by the English speaking teacher who was the interlocutor in the pre-assessment to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Then, I reviewed and coded the utterances representing each CS from each of the seven oral samples, using the CS framework developed from the pilot study of the pre- and post- assessments, as outlined in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

*Twelve CSs Framework for Eliciting CSs in Phase One*

<i>Categories of CSs</i>	<i>Corresponding CSs</i>
1) Achievement strategies	1.1 Circumlocution 1.2 Approximation 1.3 Similar sounding words 1.4 Literal translation 1.5 Code switching 1.6 All purpose words 1.7 Self-repair 1.8 Self-rephrasing
2) Time-stalling strategies	2.1 Repetition 2.2 Use of fillers
3) Interactional strategies	3.1 Direct appeals for help 3.2 Modified interaction strategies

As shown in Table 4.3, and as discussed in Chapter Three: Research Methodology, the framework comprised 12 CSs which were classified into three categories. The first category comprised eight achievement strategies, which included circumlocution, approximation, similar sounding words, literal translation, code switching, all purpose words, self-repair, and self-rephrasing. The second category included two time-stalling strategies, namely repetitions and use of fillers. The third category constituted two types of interactional strategies: direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies.

The coded utterances of all seven oral samples were then checked by myself as a researcher and the English speaking teacher to achieve mutual agreement of the final coding. To avoid over-lapping coding and confusion between each CS, examples of

utterances representing each CS from the pilot study were used to compare and distinguish each CS from the others.

The results from coding the CSs from the transcription data of the seven oral samples from the focus group revealed two key findings. Firstly, the frequency of CSs used by the focus group was found by counting the number of occurrences of the utterances representing each CS used by each level group, as shown in Finding 1. Secondly, examples of utterances representing each CS were compared within and across the medium and lower level groups, as shown in Finding 2.

***Finding 1: The frequency of CSs used by the focus group***

The frequencies of the 12 CSs used by the medium-level and lower-level groups are illustrated in Table 4.4. These CSs were classified into achievement strategies, time stalling strategies, and interactional strategies. There was evidence of different choices of these CSs at the two levels.

The medium level group tended to use achievement strategies more extensively than the lower group (62.6% and 49.5% respectively). Circumlocution and approximation were most commonly used by the medium level group (19.3% and 13.3% respectively). Circumlocution was also a common CS in the lower-level group, followed by code switching (12.6% and 11.5% respectively).

On the other hand, the lower level group used time-gaining strategies more often than the medium level group (42.5% and 36.2% respectively). Repetitions were more common CSs in the lower level group (31.0%), while fillers were more common CSs in the medium level group (22.9%). The lower level group also employed interactional

strategies more frequently than the medium level group (8.0% and 1.2% respectively).

The majority of this category was direct appeals for help (6.9%).

Table 4.4

*The Frequency of CSs Used by the Focus Group with Different Levels of Oral Proficiency*

Categories & types of CSs	Medium level group		Lower level group		Total	
	No. of occurrences	Frequency (%)	No. of occurrence	Frequency (%)	No. of occurrence	Frequency (%)
<b>Category 1: Achievement strategies</b>						
a) Circumlocution	16	19.3%	11	12.6%	27	15.9%
b) Approximation	11	13.3%	6	6.9%	17	10.0%
c) Similar sounding words	3	3.6%	3	3.5%	6	3.5%
d) Literal translation	3	3.6%	4	4.6%	7	4.1%
e) Code switching	6	7.2%	10	11.5%	16	9.4%
f) All-purpose words	7	8.4%	1	1.1%	8	4.7%
g) Self-repair	3	3.6%	5	5.8%	8	4.7%
h) Self-rephrasing	3	3.6%	3	3.5%	6	3.5%
Subtotal (Category 1)	52	62.6%	43	49.5%	95	55.8%
<b>Category 2: Time-stalling strategies</b>						
i) Repetition	11	13.3%	27	31.0%	38	22.4%
j) Lexicalised fillers	19	22.9%	10	11.5%	29	17.1%
Subtotal (Category 2)	30	36.2%	37	42.5%	67	39.5%
<b>Category 3: Interactional strategies</b>						
k) Direct appeals for help	1	1.2%	6	6.9%	7	4.1%
l) Modified interaction strategies	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	1	0.6%
Subtotal (Category 3)	1	1.2%	7	8.0%	8	4.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100%</b>

Finding 1 showed the frequencies of CSs used by the two groups of students to solve the communication problems they encountered. To gain more in-depth data, examples of utterances representing each CS were reviewed and compared to inform how each CS was employed by these students, as shown in Finding 2.

### ***Finding 2: Examples of CSs used by the focus group***

I observed and compared utterances representing the actual use of each CS to examine how individual CSs were used by the medium and lower level group. Each CS is discussed, using examples of utterances and dialogues from the seven oral samples in the pre-assessment, supported by the quantitative data in Finding 1: The frequency of CSs used by the focus group.

#### ***Category 1: Achievement strategies***

Achievement strategies involved using alternative linguistic items to compensate for linguistic gaps when students were unable to verbalise messages because of insufficient knowledge of lexical, grammatical, and phonological forms. This category included circumlocution, approximation, similar sounding words, literal translations, code switching, all-purpose words, self-repair and self-rephrasing. Overall, these strategies were employed extensively, 62.6% by the medium level group and moderately, 49.5% by the lower level group.

##### ***a) Circumlocution***

Circumlocution was employed by using alternative word choices and expressions to describe the target words when students were unable to use, recognise, or pronounce the right words. This CS included describing properties (e.g., size, shape, and colour) and functions, and providing examples of the target words. Based on the quantitative data in Finding 1, circumlocutions were more commonly employed by the medium level group than those by the lower level group (19.3% and 12.6% respectively).

The analysis of utterances representing circumlocution revealed that this CS was commonly used to compensate for their linguistic gaps as well as describing Thai culture-specific situations and terminology to the English speaking interlocutor. Table 4.5 shows some examples of these uses by the two groups.

Table 4.5

*Examples of Circumlocution Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<p><b>Example 1: Noom: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p>Noom            <i>So in Chiang Mai we have more activity we can do... like a parade.</i></p> <p>Interlocutor   <i>Right...ok.</i></p> <p>Noom            <i>Parade ...a girl for... in the stage or..</i></p> <p>Interlocutor   <i>Fashion?</i></p> <p>Noom            <i><u>Beauty show.</u></i></p>
	<p><b>Example 2: Kwan: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p><i>“Krathong is mean <u>banana lea(f) cup</u>”.</i></p>
Lower level group	<p><b>Example 3: May: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p><i>“I don’t know we call in English because in Thai we call “Ket tawai”... is a <u>white flower and smell..good smell</u>”.</i></p>
	<p><b>Example 4: Daw: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p>Daw            <i>Krathong...um...made from ...made from or made of...by lotus bud...lotus...and <u>body of banana tree</u></i></p> <p>Interlocutor   <i>Yeah...that’s a good description. Body of the banana tree or the trunk.</i></p>

Regarding the medium level group, Example 1 shows Noom’s use of circumlocution to deal with his language difficulties. He was unable to use the right words for *beauty contest* so he described it as *a girl for...in the stage* and *beauty show*. Example 2 also shows the use of circumlocution for describing Thai culture-specific situations and terminology. In Task 3, Kwan described the characteristics of *krathong* (a decorated basket with banana leaves and flowers) as *banana leaf cup*.

The lower level group also used circumlocution for similar purposes. For describing Thai culture-specific situations and terminology, as shown in Example 3, May described the properties of one type of local flower *Ket tawai*. Also, Example 4 shows Daw's use of circumlocution to deal with linguistic difficulties. She attempted to describe a krathong to the interlocutor by naming its materials such as lotus and a piece of banana trunk. Unfortunately, she did not recognise the word *banana trunk* so she described it as *body of banana tree*.

These examples show that the students from both groups used clear descriptions and a variety of language expressions for circumlocution. These uses appeared to enable students to compensate for linguistic gaps, as well as to describe Thai culture-specific situations and terminology successfully and were therefore considered effective.

#### *b) Approximation*

Approximation was employed when students used alternative word choice to represent the target words. This CS included using related and super-ordinate terms to describe the target words. The quantitative data in Finding 1 revealed that approximation was frequently employed by the medium level group, twice as often as those by the lower level group (13.3% and 6.9% respectively).

The observation of utterances representing approximation revealed that both groups of students used this CS to describe Thai cultural-specific situations and terminology and target English words, as shown in Table 4.6. With regards to the medium level group, Example 1 shows that Noom described the Loy krathong festival (a festival for worship of the river goddess) by using a broad description as *a festival for the river*. Also shown in Example 2, Pu used the related word *mother* for the word *goddess*. Similarly, in the lower level group, as shown in Examples 3, Ton described a

Thai culture-specific terminology *Wai* (Thai manner for paying respect to others) by using the superordinate term *greeting*.

Table 4.6

*Examples of Approximation Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Noom: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b> “ <i>Loy krathong is a <u>festival for the river</u></i> ”
	<b>Example 2: Pu: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b> “ <i>Loy krathong festival is made for apologize god mother, the mother of the river.</i> ”
Lower level group	<b>Example 3: Ton: Task 2: Wai</b> “ <i>Wai is... Thai word for Thai people <u>greeting</u></i> ”.

As illustrated in the above examples, the students from both groups tended to use appropriate words for approximation to describe the target words, including related words and superordinate terms. Similar to circumlocution, approximation is considered one of the effective CSs. Students’ uses of approximation to cope with their linguistic problems, as well as to describe Thai cultural-specific situations and terminologies were successful.

*c) Similar sounding words*

Similar sounding words appeared to help students solve their linguistic difficulties by pronouncing words that have similar forms as target items. According to the quantitative data from Finding 1, a few of similar sounding words were employed by the two groups, 3.6% in the medium level group and 3.5% in the lower level group.

By analysing utterances representing similar sounding words, it can be seen that this CS helped cope with linguistic deficits, particularly when combined with other

linguistic clues that helped the interlocutor guess the words the students intended to say. Table 4.7 shows some examples of using similar sounding words. In Example 1, Pu, from the medium level group, attempted to describe things put in a krathong and she pronounced *instick* instead of *incense stick*. With surrounding words such as *candle*, *hair*, and *nail*, the interlocutor was able to guess what she intended to say.

Table 4.7

*Examples of Similar Sounding Words Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Pu: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Pu <i>In the banana leave basket, it has...ah my hair, nail...yes... we will cut it and put it in the basket...and has a candle,.. and...instick.</i>
	Interlocutor <i>In English called incense stick</i>
	Pu <i>Ah ha..incense stick for...uh...apologise the god of river</i>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: Daw: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Daw <i>Loy krathong is a...important festival of Thailand... we... ah...invite...</i>
	Interlocutor <i>Invite?</i>
	Daw <i>Ah...invite...ah krathong...krathong is...ahhhh...we make it for respect the goddess of water...we call Mae Kong Ka.</i>

Also shown in Example 2, a student from the lower level group, Daw intended to say something like *invent a krathong* but she pronounced it as *invite* instead of *invent*. She finally changed the word to *make* for a clearer message. These examples demonstrate that similar sounding words, particularly with context clues such as surrounding words and additional information, helped the students to cope with their linguistic difficulties to some extent.

d) *Literal translation*

Literal translation involves translating a lexical item, an idiom, or a compound word or structure from Thai to English word for word. The quantitative data from Finding 1 revealed that both medium and lower level groups used literal translation slightly (3.6% and 4.6% respectively).

The observation of utterances representing literal translation showed that the students from both groups were likely to use this CS to describe Thai culture-specific situations and terminology as well as to compensate for their lexical gaps, as shown in Table 4.8. Example 1 shows that Kwan, from the medium level group, cannot find the right word for *bad karma* so she translated directly from Thai words *sing mai dee* as *bad thing*. The Thai word *sing* can be translated as *thing* and *mai dee* as *bad*. However, translating word by word was not always meaningful. As shown in Example 2 from the lower level group, instead of using *banana leaf*, Nai translated its Thai words *bai tong* by using the Thai structure of the compound noun to *leaf banana*.

Table 4.8

*Examples of Literal Translation Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Kwan: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Interlocutor <i>What is a symbol behind? Why are you floating it on the river? What does it mean?</i> Kwan <i>Ah...float for worship..grodde (goddess) mother...is Mae Kong Ka and...float unfortune..unfortune and <u>bad thing</u>.</i>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: Nai: Task 3:Loy krathong festival</b>
	Nai <i>Krathong make...make...make for <u>a leaf banana</u>...yes. Thai people make from a banana and some flower</i> Interlocutor <i>Ok some flowers...banana leaf and flowers.</i>

Literal translation helped clarify the concept of Thai cultural specific situations and terminology to the English speaking interlocutor. However, this CS might not help to compensate for linguistic gaps because it involved word by word translation into English by keeping the structure of the Thai language, which may lead to confusion and misunderstanding if the interlocutor does not know Thai words or language.

*e) Code switching*

Code switching occurred by using and pronouncing Thai words and phrases, without translating them into English. A number of examples of code switching were employed by the lower level group (11.5%) while some of these CSs were found in the medium level group (7.2%), according to the quantitative data from Finding 1.

The analysis of utterances representing code switching showed the different uses of code switching, with and without English descriptions, as exemplified in Table 4.9. Some uses of code switching were with English descriptions. As shown in Examples 1, the student from the medium level group, Pu was able to give a clearer description of the Thai word *Thevada* (or angel in English) by adding other English words related to the target word (i.e., god).

However, many students used code switching without any English descriptions. Example 2, Daw, a student from the lower group, used the Thai word *tian* for candle when describing things to put in a krathong. Also shown in Example 3, May used the Thai word *koum kow rop* for expressing the way of paying respect. Without any English descriptions, the interlocutor may not understand what they were intending to say.

Table 4.9

*Examples of Code Switching Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Pu: Task 1: Spirit house</b>
	Pu <i>We give the food to spirit hou(se) for...um...for...sou(l)...the soul.</i> Interlocutor <i>Oh "soul".</i> Pu <i>...for the soul in spirit house...soul is not ghost...it like <u>Thevada</u>... <u>Thevada</u> is ...is a...god.</i>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: Daw: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Interlocutor <i>When you make a krathong, you start with the body of banana tree. What do you put in?</i>
	Daw <i>Ah...flowers, um...incense stick,...and coins.</i>
	Interlocutor <i>Coins...Yeah.</i>
Daw <i>And...<u>tian</u>...<u>ahh</u>...</i>	
	<b>Example 3: May: Task 2: Wai</b>
	<i>"I thing(k) is the..wai is the...Thai "<u>Koum kow rop</u>" or wai is a...wai Buddhid (st)...wai teacher, wai paren(t)...wai parent".</i>

The above examples compare the use of code switching with and without English transcriptions. It is noticeable that the medium level used code switching with English descriptions which helped compensate for their linguistic gaps to clarify the message.

*f) All-purpose words*

All-purpose words involved overusing empty lexical items such as *thing*, *do*, and *make*. Based on the quantitative data from Finding 1, the medium level group used all purpose words more frequently than the lower level group (8.4% and 1.1% respectively).

The analysis of utterances representing all purpose words showed that the uses of this CS from both groups of students somewhat helped them deliver comprehensible message. Table 4.10 shows a variety of all-purpose words used by the two levels.

Table 4.10

*Examples of All-Purpose Words Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
<p>Medium level group</p>	<p><b>Example 1: Pu: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p>Interlocutor <i>When you say you put food there, what kind of food and drink?</i>            Pu <i>Umm...food and drink...it is...um...rice...and food for Thai people.            It is a...boiled egg.</i>            Interlocutor <i>Boiled egg?</i>            Pu <i>Yeahs...and <u>everything...everything to eat...we can eat.</u></i></p>
<p>Lower level group</p>	<p><b>Example 2: May: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p>Interlocutor <i>Where do you have your spirit house? Is it inside your house or in your garden?</i>            May <i>Uh...inside your hou(se) ...I thing(k) every hout(se) have a ...spirit hou(se)...in a...ah...on house...on house...and...put in..on..head or... I don't know.</i>            Interlocutor <i>You put spirit house on your head?</i>            May <i><u>Anything</u>...spirit house..ghost... put spirit house ...ah...opposite... and...umm...sorry..</i></p>

Example 1 shows Pu's use of all purpose words with additional expressions. Instead of addressing the food offering to the spirit house, she used *everything* and added *to eat* to provide a more specific context. On the other hand, in Example 2, May used *anything* to answer the interlocutor's question but it was irrelevant to the target context, leading to an unclear message. These two examples show that using all purpose words contributed to success for the medium group and failure for the lower group in communication. However, all purpose words with additional information appeared to help deliver a clearer message.

g) *Self-repair*

Self-repair was observed when students made self-initiated corrections in their own speech. The quantitative data from Finding 1 revealed that both medium and lower level groups used self-repair slightly (3.6% and 5.8% respectively).

The analysis of utterances representing self-repair revealed that the use of this CS contributed to language accuracy. As shown in Table 4.11, in Example 1, Kwan, from the medium level group, corrected her own grammatical mistake, using a possessive pronoun *their* in place of *your*. Also shown in Example 2, Daw, from the lower level group, was able to correct her pronunciation of the word *fruit* accurately.

Table 4.11

*Examples of Self-repair by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Kwan: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b> <i>“People place candle, flower, incense sticks in your krathong...<u>in their krathong</u>”</i>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: Daw: Task 1: Spirit house</b> Interlocutor <i>Do you make offering? Do you put thing on...at this spirit house?</i> Nai <i>Put food... /fru:d/...fruit...</i> Interlocutor <i>Fruit ah ha.</i>

h) *Self-rephrasing*

Self-rephrasing involved repeating and adding some words or paraphrases to what was said, while self-repair focuses on replacing verb forms and words with the correct ones. The quantitative data from Finding 1 revealed that both groups used little self-rephrasing, 3.6% in the medium level group and 3.5% in the lower level group.

The analysis of utterances representing self-rephrasing showed that both groups used this CS to help them deliver a clearer message, as shown in Table 4.12. In Example 1 from the medium level group, Pu was talking about the purpose of the Loy krathong festival which was established to apologise to the river goddess for having used and sometimes polluted the river. She first delivered an unclear message *use the river*. Once aware of her own mistake, she rephrased it to *the water in the river* which was clearer. Similarly, in Example 2 from the lower level group, after mispronouncing the word *goddess*, and to make the interlocutor understand what she intended to say, May corrected her pronunciation and rephrased this word with *river goddess*.

Table 4.12

*Examples of Self-rephrasing by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Pu: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Interlocutor <i>Why are you apologising...what for?</i> Nai <i>Because Thai people use the river...uh...<u>the water in the river</u>...is ah ...wash the cloth...for drink...for everything.</i>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: May: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	Interlocutor <i>Hah? I can't recall what you say</i>
	May <i>Godded...godded...</i>
	Interlocutor <i>Um...tell me more.</i>
	May <i>Um...river goddess</i>
Interlocutor <i>River goddess...ah uh...ok...ok.</i>	

*Category 2: Time-stalling strategies*

Time-stalling strategies were commonly employed when students required more time to process and plan their utterances. Apart from an extensive use of non-lexicalised filler pauses such as *um*, *ur* and *ah*, repetitions and fillers were also used to overcome

this problem, 42.5% by the lower group and 36.2% by the medium group. The uses of these CSs by the two groups of students are discussed below.

*i) Repetitions*

Repetition occurred when students repeated their own speech as they required more time to produce speech and sometimes to avoid embarrassment. The quantitative data from Finding 1 revealed that repetition was the most common CS in the lower level group (31.0%), occurring more than twice as often as those in the medium level group (13.3%).

The analysis of utterances representing repetition showed that students used this CS to plan to think what to say because they were attempting to complete their messages. However, these attempts were not always successful. Table 4.13 compared these uses of repetitions. Examples 1 and 3 show successful attempts to complete the message by using repetition to gain time. Noom, from the medium level group, was talking about the function of the spirit house. He repeated the word *for* and *every* to gain time in planning what to say. After the repetitions, he continued his talk and finally completed his message. Similarly, when talking about the Loy krathong festival, Ton, from the lower level group, repeated some words to continue his talk and finally finished his message.

On the other hand, as shown in Examples 2 and 4, some students' attempts were not successful and their uses of repetitions were often finally followed by message abandonment (i.e., leaving messages unfinished). Pu, from the medium level group, attempted to answer the interlocutor's question about the dates for the Loy krathong festival. She repeated the word *lunar* to think about the right words (i.e., *the twelfth lunar month*) to complete her message but finally gave up and left her message

unfinished. Similarly, from the lower level group, Nai repeated some words to think about things that she offered to the spirit house. She finally gave up and ended up with leaving the message unfinished. Table 4.13 shows that repetitions helped students stall for time to plan speech as well as correct their language mistakes and errors. This CS reflected students' attempts to continue their speech; however, these attempts were not always successful.

Table 4.13

*Examples of Repetitions Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<p><b>Example 1: Noom: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p><i>“Spirit hou(se) is...it’s look like a little <u>for...for...uh...respect...Thai people do...every...every...festival...every ceremony for Bhudda”.</u></i></p>
	<p><b>Example 2: Pu: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p>Interlocutor    <i>When is Loy krathong?</i>            Pu                    <i>November.</i>            Interlocutor    <i>Is it always the same date or how you decide what date?</i>            Pu                    <i>The lunar... lunar....</i></p>
Lower level group	<p><b>Example 3: Ton: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p><i>“Loy krathong is a festival...<u>is the festival...is famous in Thailand. And Loy krathong is hold on twelfth month in Thailand. And it used for...uh...thank you <u>goddress...goddress mother water</u>”.</u></i></p>
	<p><b>Example 4: Nai: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p>Interlocutor    <i>What kind of food, fruit, or dessert or what?</i>            May                <i>Frud..and many...many food and dessert...yes...and... and...</i></p>

*j) Lexicalised fillers*

Lexicalised fillers were commonly used to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty. The quantitative data from Finding 1 revealed that the medium level group

used fillers twice as frequently as the lower level group (22.9% and 11.5% respectively).

The analysis of utterances representing lexicalised fillers showed individuals' preferences for using this type of CS. As shown in Table 4.14, both groups of students appeared to use a narrow range of lexicalised fillers, particularly simple and short fillers such as *I think* and *yes*. Examples 1 to 3 show lexicalised fillers used by the medium group. To fill pauses, Noom used *something like that* while Kwan use *yes* and Pu used *I think*. Examples 4 and 5 show a similar use of lexicalised fillers by the lower level group. May used *I think* while Daw filled the pause by using *yes*.

Table 4.14

*Examples of Lexicalised Fillers Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<p><b>Example 1: Noom: Task 2: Wai</b></p> <p><i>"We wai for greeting...sorry...something like that...and ...because we believe wai is the action for respect...for who we see"</i></p>
	<p><b>Example 2: Kwan: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b></p> <p><i>"..and some people bring coin...yes...in kathong and float in uh... /pra:n/ (pond) or river"</i></p>
	<p><b>Example 3: Pu: Task 2: Wai</b></p> <p><i>"Wai...it is a...ah...I think Wai is a...um...symbol of Thailand"</i></p>
Lower level group	<p><b>Example 4: May: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p><i>"Spirit hou(se)...I think...it is a replica house and many people believe that...um...spirit hou(se)...I think Budhhid(st) people...people believe and have at the hou(se)"</i></p>
	<p><b>Example 5: Daw: Task 1: Spirit house</b></p> <p>Interlocutor    <i>Where do people keep spirit house? Where do you put it? Inside your house or in the garden?</i></p> <p>Nai                <i>Um..we put spirit house outside..outside the house...yes... someday people ตวาย เค้าเรียกว่า..people ah..in..ahhhh...</i></p>

These examples show that both groups of students used a narrow range of simple lexicalised fillers. However, compared to repetition and non-lexicalised fillers, lexicalised fillers seemed to help increase the fluency of the speech by different language expressions (e.g., *I think, something like that, and yes*), and therefore played effective roles to cope with time-pressure.

### *Category 3: Interactional strategies*

Interactional strategies involved using linguistic signals to negotiate meaning with the interlocutor. The interlocutor's performance was sometimes perceived as problematic when students did not understand, misunderstood, or partly understood the interlocutor's speech. When the intended meaning did not seem to be shared, interactional strategies, including direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies, were employed to develop mutual understanding. The lower level group appeared to employ these CSs more frequently than the medium level (8.0% and 1.2% respectively), according to the quantitative data from Finding 1.

#### *k) Direct appeals for help*

Direct appeals for help involved using English expressions for asking the interlocutor for repetition, clarification, and help. Based on the quantitative data from Finding 1, the lower level group used direct appeals for help more than five times as frequently as the medium level group (6.9% and 1.2% respectively).

The analysis of utterances representing direct appeals for help revealed that both groups asked the interlocutor for repetition and help, as shown in Table 4.15. Examples 1 and 2 compare the use of asking for repetitions. Kwan, from the medium level group, used the expression *again please* to ask the interlocutor to repeat his questions while

Nai used *What?* for asking for repetition. Examples 3 show more uses of direct appeals for help by the lower level group. Ton asked the interlocutor for help when he encountered lexical difficulties, using *what is it?* followed by the similar sounding word of *incense stick* as *stick*

Table 4.15

*Examples of Direct Appeals for Help Used by Each Group*

Groups	Examples
Medium level group	<b>Example 1: Kwan: Task 2: Wai</b>
	<p>Interlocutor <i>Is it different when you meet monk or go to the temple for the Buddha image ?</i></p> <p>Nai <i>Uh...<u>again please?</u></i></p> <p>Interlocutor <i>Like if you see monk or go to the temple and see the Buddha, where do you wai then? At here or here?</i></p>
Lower level group	<b>Example 2: Nai: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	<p>Interlocutor <i>What is it made of? Is it wood, is it cement?</i></p> <p>May <i><u>What?</u></i></p> <p>Interlocutor <i>What is it made of? Do you know the spirit house...you know...is it wood or cement...like a wall?</i></p>
	<b>Example 3: Ton: Task 3: Loy krathong festival</b>
	<p>Ton <i>Loy krathong made from banana leaf, banana tree...and you put some flower...and...just...<u>what is it...stick?</u></i></p> <p>Interlocutor <i>In English...incense stick.</i></p>

1) *Modified interaction strategies*

Students employed modified interaction strategies to check whether or not the interlocutor understood their messages or to confirm their understanding of the interlocutor's messages. According to the quantitative data in Finding 1, only a few of the confirmation and comprehension checks were made by the lower level group (1.1%). For example in Table 4.16, Daw pronounced the Thai word *thevada* together with checking comprehension from the interlocutor before adding more information.

Table 4.16

*An Example of Modified Interaction Strategy Used by Lower Group*

Groups	Example
Lower level group	<b>Example 1: Daw: Task 1: Spirit house</b>
	Daw <i>Spirit house is a ...a...used for...um...in...ahhh...<u>thevada in Thai, you know?</u></i>
	Interlocutor <i>Umm, ...ok...what's that in English?</i>
	Daw <i>Ahh...Thevada in Thai people...ahh... like an <u>angle</u>.</i>

These examples of the use of interactional strategies demonstrated that students used interactional strategies successfully to establish mutual understanding with the interlocutor. Nevertheless, these CSs were employed, using a narrow range and/or inappropriate expressions.

***Summary of the findings***

The results from analysing the linguistic patterns of the utterances, supported by the frequencies representing each CS revealed how an individual CS was used to solve communication problems. Firstly, achievement strategies were commonly used by the medium level group. In particular, circumlocution and approximation helped students solve their communication by using appropriate word choices and expressions to describe the target words.

The use of other types of achievement strategies varied by the two groups. For example, code switching was a common CS in the lower level group while all-purpose words were more common in the medium level group. It is noticeable that the use of these CSs can help compensate for linguistic gaps and the delivery of clearer messages when they were accompanied by additional English descriptions. Further, similar sounding words, literal translation, self-repair and self-rephrasing were seldom used by

the two groups. The use of the latter two CSs appeared to contribute to clearer and more accurate utterances.

Time-stalling strategies were commonly employed by the lower group to gain time to plan their next utterance. This group used repetitions extensively but were not always successful as they often left their message unfinished. The medium group tended to use lexicalised fillers more frequently to fill a pause which appeared to help them keep the conversation going, and increase their fluency.

A few interactional strategies were employed by both groups but were more common in the lower group. However, it was likely that both direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies helped these students establish mutual understandings between interlocutors by asking for repetition and help with linguistic support.

#### **4.4 Initial reflections for planning the communication strategy instruction**

In this first phase, data collection and analysis for the pre-assessment resulted in the first set of data related to students' oral communication performance and their use of CSs. At this stage, I reflected on this set of data for planning the CS instruction in the next phase. As action research unfolds, reflections made in the middle of the project are as important as reflections after the project is complete (Burns, 2010). Such reflection enables action researchers to gain initial understandings of the data set as it happens so that they can make real-time changes (Curtis, Webb-Dempsey, & Shambaugh, 2010).

When carrying out my initial reflections, I also compared and incorporated the results with findings from previous literature to enhance my understandings of the data.

Previous literature is an important source of data to extend understanding on the data which emerges in the action research process (Stringer, 2007). As a result of my reflections, considerations for planning the CS instruction in Phase Two are discussed in terms of 1) selecting key CSs to teach, and 2) teaching guidelines.

#### **4.4.1 Selecting key communication strategies to teach**

Five key CSs were primarily selected on the basis of their effective roles as problem solving devices suggested by the findings from the pre-assessment. Firstly, of the achievement strategies, circumlocution and approximation appeared to help students compensate for linguistic gaps. It seemed important to train students to use a wide range of language expressions for circumlocution and approximation. It is also important to teach them lexical knowledge so that they would be able to use circumlocution and approximation appropriately and effectively. These two CSs are also explicitly presented in the language textbooks analysed by Faucette (2001) and the CS instruction of many studies (Kongsom, 2009; Maleki, 2007; Rossiter, 2003).

The findings also suggested that lexicalised fillers were useful devices to help stall for time, keep conversations going, and increase fluency, and were recommended strategies to teach by other studies (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Dörnyei, 1995; Maleki, 2007). Lexicalised fillers were extensively used by the medium level group, albeit with a narrow range of expression for fillers (e.g., *I think* and *yes*). Students should practise using a variety of words or phrases to stall for time and fill pauses instead of repetitions and using inappropriate non-lexicalised fillers such as *uh*, and *um* extensively (Kongsom, 2009).

Similarly to time-gaining strategies, interactional strategies were alternative CSs for the lower level group who had insufficient linguistic knowledge to use other effective CSs such as circumlocution and approximation. Both direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies appeared to be useful for students to seek help and establish mutual understanding with the interlocutor (Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005). However, it was likely that these students used a narrow range of expressions for interactional strategies, and sometimes in an inappropriate way. Tourism students needed to be trained to use more appropriate expressions and a variety of ways of asking for help from an English speaking interlocutor.

The five key CSs selected as an initial plan were circumlocution, approximation, lexicalised fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies. Additional CSs to be taught were also investigated during the development and implementation of the CS instruction in Phase Two to ensure that students' needs are on track and in keeping with the action research process of reflection and action.

#### **4.4.2 Teaching guidelines**

##### ***Including linguistic knowledge in the communication strategy instruction***

There were mixed levels of oral communication performance in the research setting, ranging from medium to low levels. One of the reasons for teaching linguistic knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar that play roles in oral communication) in the CS instruction was that the lower level group seemed to use CSs ineffectively because of their limited linguistic knowledge. For example, without a wide range of lexical knowledge, they were not able to use circumlocution and approximation appropriately. Linguistic knowledge is also important to support students to use a wide

range of appropriate expressions and phrases to fill pauses, to ask the interlocutors for repetition, and to seek help from them (Lam, 2006).

Based on the findings from the pre-assessment, some achievement strategies such as all-purpose words, code switching, similar sounding words, and literal translation could contribute to successful communication when accompanied by other context clues such as English descriptions and additional information. Therefore, it seemed vital to teach students linguistic knowledge to support the use of these CSs. Teaching students linguistic knowledge would also help raise their awareness of their own language mistakes and errors and therefore feel confident to correct and rephrase their messages properly and effectively (Kongsom, 2009).

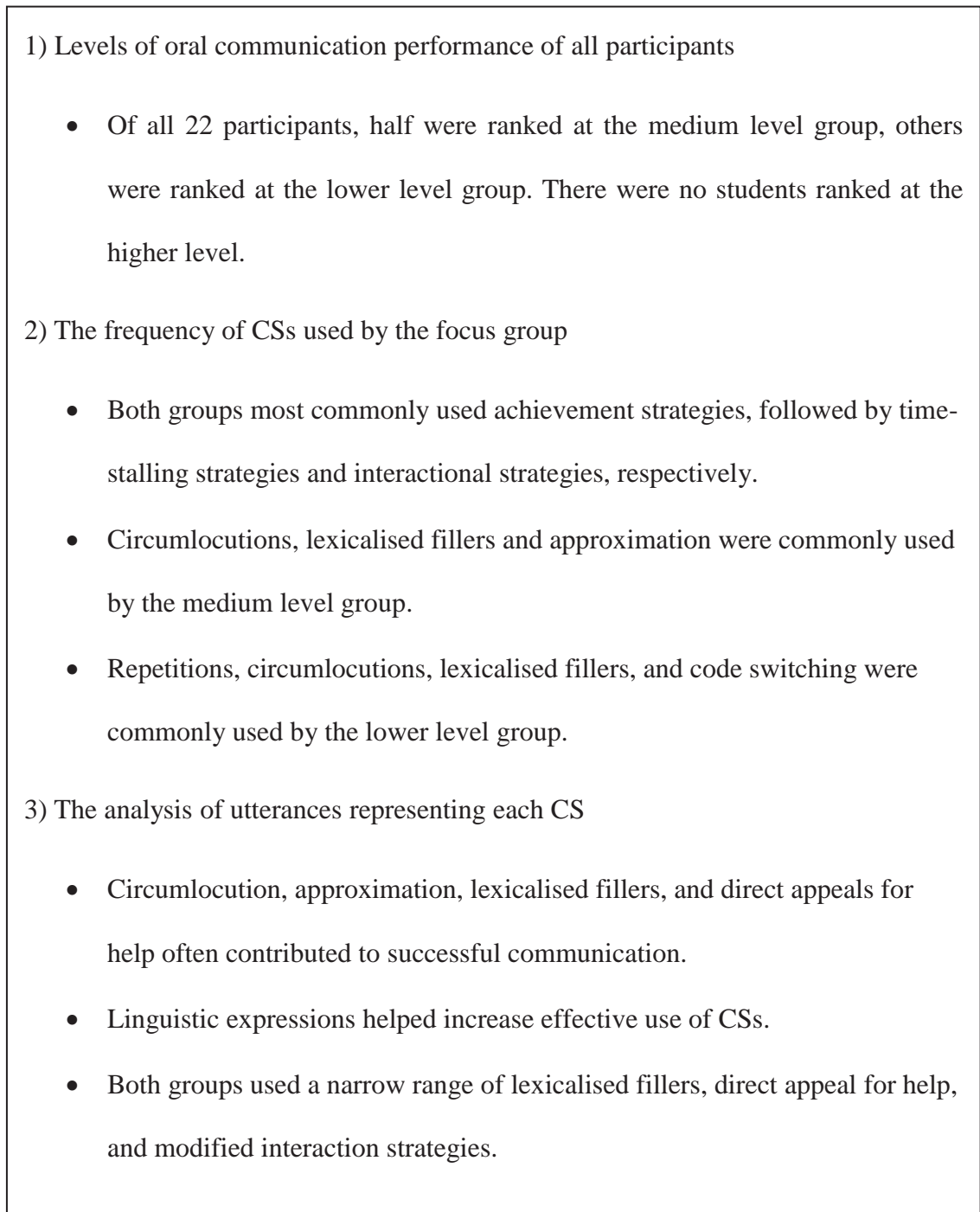
#### *Utilising diverse communicative tasks to promote the use of communication strategies*

Based on the findings in the pre-assessment, achievement strategies were employed extensively by both groups of students. This finding suggested that describing Thai culture-specific situations and terminology was a useful task to stimulate the use of this category of CSs (Wongsawang, 2001). More task types, requiring two way communication and relevant to the tourism context in Thailand, should be included in the instruction phase of the action research process. These additional tasks should encourage students to use other categories of CSs, particularly interactional strategies which were found to be seldom used by either group. These tasks should also promote practising CS use in an authentic tourism context so that they are found to be useful for tourism students. Therefore, it is important to include a variety of communicative tasks in the CS instruction to promote the use of a variety of CSs (Rossiter, 2003).

## 4.5 Chapter summary

Data collection and analysis of Phase One was undertaken to explore the needs of students in order to plan the CS instruction. Focusing on students' oral communication performances from the pre-assessment, data were analysed in two ways. Firstly, to explore students' existing oral proficiencies, all participating students' speaking band scores were ranked and grouped into medium and lower levels of oral communication performance. Secondly, for in-depth investigation of the use of individual CSs, seven oral samples of the focus group selected from the previous process were analysed for CS use. The results from these processes, summarised in Figure 4.2, were used to plan the CS instruction in Phase Two of this action research project.

Based on the findings, initial reflection was made for planning the CS instruction. Key CSs were selected for the initial plan of the CS instruction. They were circumlocution, approximation, lexicalised fillers, direct appeal for help, and modified interaction strategies. These have different features and distinctive roles in communication. Circumlocution and approximation would be useful to compensate linguistic gaps and lexicalised fillers would help keep a communication channel open. Direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies would assist establish mutual understanding. Teaching undergraduate tourism students to use these strategies could accommodate them to communicate in English effectively with any tourists who have different linguistic, cultural, and educational background. To teach these CSs effectively, linguistic features (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar for oral communication) and diverse communicative tasks were recommended to be included in the CS instruction. Details of the development and implementation of the CS instruction will be discussed in the next chapter.



*Figure 4.2. Key Findings of Data Collection and Analysis in Phase One.*

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **PHASE TWO**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

A common aim of action research in education is to improve student learning by introducing more effective teaching strategies based on the results as they emerge in the study (Henning et al., 2009). In Phase One, data from the pre-assessment were collected and analysed to identify students' needs to learn CSs and this was then used to plan the CS instruction. Phase Two comprised the cyclical and ongoing process of planning, action, observation, and reflection. This process aimed to gain insights into introducing the CS instruction and ways to develop the instruction to help students learn and improve their oral communication performance. Phase Two was guided by Research Question 2: What CSs should be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?, and Research Question 3: How should CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

As shown in Figure 5.1, the development and implementation of the CS instruction was undertaken alongside data collection and analyses of students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. Firstly, in a) the planning stage, I developed each weekly lesson based primarily on initial reflections from Phase One and also reflections on the previous lessons for planning the next lessons. Secondly, in b) the action and observation stage, I taught the CS lesson, alongside collecting and

analysing data from students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. From these many processes, in c) the reflection stage, I reflected on the data from each lesson and made decisions on which CSs, tasks, and activities would be taught in the next lesson.

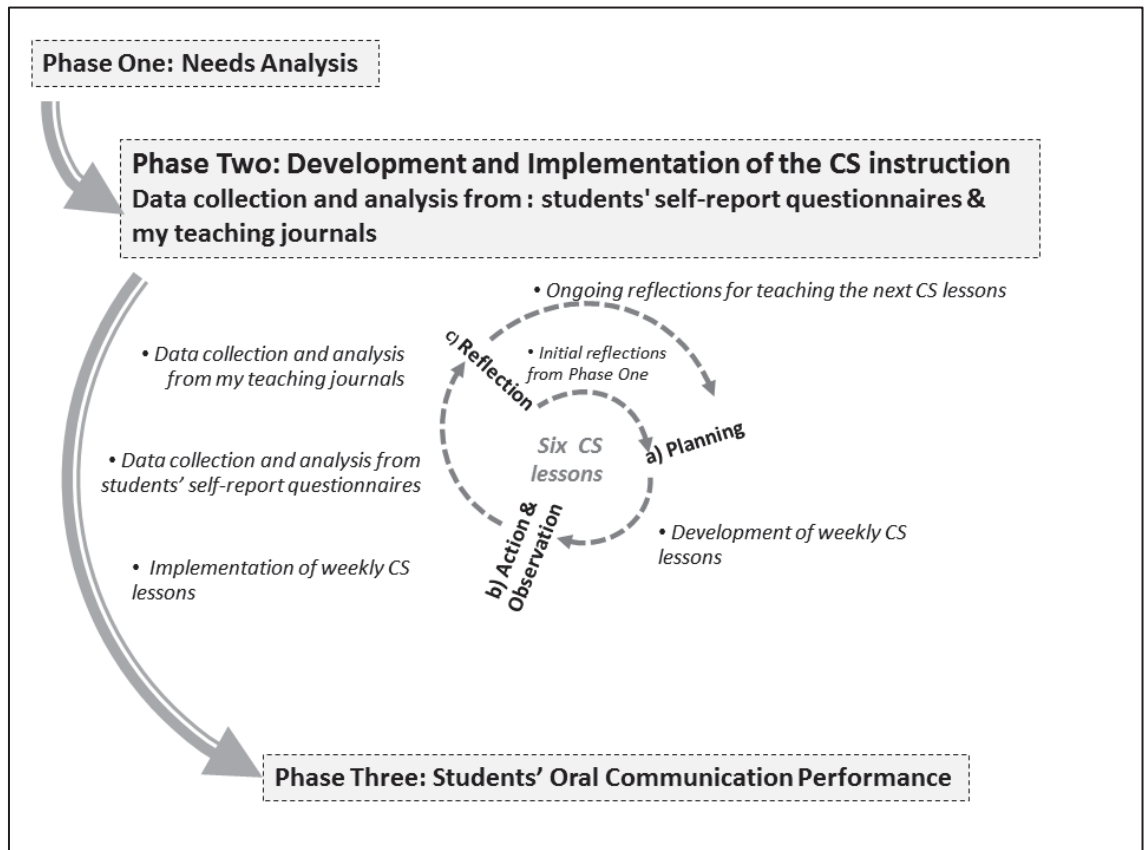


Figure 5.1. Data Collection and Analysis Process in Phase Two.

The chapter is structured into four sections. The overview of the development and implementation of the CS instruction is firstly described. This section includes teacher as researcher roles, the process of the development and implementation of the CS lessons, and the outline of the six CS lessons. Then, I address data collection from the students' self-report questionnaires, followed by data analysis and the findings from

the two parts of the self-report questionnaires. Next, I describe the process of data collection from my teaching journals, followed by data analysis. My reflections from my teaching journals are discussed and summarised in the last section.

## **5.2 Development and implementation of the CS lessons**

This section describes how I developed and implemented the CS lessons, which is part of a) Planning, and b) Action and observation cycles in the action research process. I start by discussing my roles as a teacher researcher. Then, the action research process of planning, action, observation, and reflection is used to describe the process of development and implementation of the CS lesson. Finally, the six CS lessons are outlined at the end of this section.

### **5.2.1 My roles as a teacher researcher**

In developing and implementing the CS instruction, I played a teacher role teaching the CS lesson, alongside a researcher role investigating the outcome of such teaching practice. I was also the course developer who designed, tried out and evaluated each CS lesson. Another major role in the course development process was decision maker, to select CSs to teach and to choose the corresponding tasks, as well as pre-task activities to meet students' ongoing needs to improve their oral communication performance.

Taking the roles of a teacher, a researcher, a course developer, and a decision maker, I drew primarily on my background knowledge and experiences in teaching and learning EFL. I decided to teach the CS instruction by myself because I was familiar with the context of learning English for Tourism at the research setting. Also, through

my five years' experience in teaching the tourism student groups, I had learned about problems related to students' oral communication performance. The familiarity and deep understanding of the target learning context and problems was an important basis for developing culturally and contextually useful practices for teaching CSs (Goh, 2012).

My background knowledge and experience in EFL and English for Tourism was also an important basis for bringing about some ideas in and facilitating my decisions on designing learning activities for students. Instead of designing prescribed lessons in CSs at the outset, I decided to design and teach the CS lesson weekly and learn from each teaching experience in order to plan the subsequent lessons. This dynamic and ongoing process for the course design accommodated the students' emerging needs (Graves, 2000) and was part of the action research process.

Feedback from my colleagues, which I recorded in my teaching journals, was also considered to decide what and how CSs should be taught. Critical feedback from their professional teacher perspectives enabled me to gain more insights into my teaching practice. Four colleagues were invited to assist me in developing and implementing the CS lessons, two English speaking teachers, a Thai EFL teacher, and the tourism subject lecturer. One of the English speaking teachers was asked to help me in checking the language accuracy of the lessons. The other was invited to be an interlocutor when students performed classroom activities. His feedback on students' oral performance was useful for improving the lessons. Also, the teacher of the tourism subject area was asked for feedback through informal discussions on the development and the refinement of the instruction. Based on her experience in her tourism-related area, she could provide useful views about key tasks and subject content that were commonly required in the tourism industry. In addition, the Thai EFL teacher was asked

for checking the accuracy of the translation of students' feedback in the self-report questionnaires.

In addition, to gain more confidence to deal with week to week teaching practice and to ensure that I was on the right track, I regularly and continually reviewed literature related to CSs as part of the action research process, and noted some ideas in my teaching journals. According to Stringer (2007), literature is another useful source of data which commonly incorporates other sets of perspectives in the action research process to extend action researchers' understanding on the issue investigated.

The course content of each lesson was not prescribed but drew heavily on my ongoing reflections and reflections from my reading and discussions with my critical friends, and my teaching journals, made after teaching each CS lesson to shape the next lessons. Such reflections can be described as reflection in action and on action (Schön, 1983). Reflections in action were made by ongoing observation of students' reaction to in the classroom activities. Reflections on action were also made by incorporating students' and my critical friends' perspectives on the students' learning and the lesson, to evaluate the overall implementation of each lesson. The ongoing reflections made at the beginning and throughout the action research process enabled me to gain insights into what I "have been doing and finding" (Burns, 2010, p. 141) from my teaching practice, leading to further ideas for improving such practice.

### **5.2.2 The process of development and implementation of the CS lessons**

Each of the six CS lessons was developed as part of an ongoing action research process of planning, action and observation, and reflection. This process was adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) reflective research cycle. Their model illustrated

the complex and ongoing process of action research, composed of simple and easy to follow stages of planning, action and observation, and reflection. I combined action and observation as one stage because these interrelated two stages comprised overlapping and recurring implementation, data collection, and data analysis before making reflections. The adapted process of action research is described below (also see Figure 5.1).

### *Initial reflections from Phase One*

The needs analysis in Phase One of my action research (See Chapter Four) suggested what CSs should be taught and how they should be taught to maximise students' oral communication performance. The results from phase one revealed that there were groups of students with mixed levels of oral communication performance in this classroom action research. Therefore, to plan "what to teach", I primarily selected five core CSs which the data showed would be useful to both the medium and lower level students. These CSs were circumlocution, approximation, use of fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction. The literature also supported the choice as these CSs all play effective roles as problem solving devices and are teachable (e.g., Faucette, 2001; Lam, 2006; Nakatani, 2005; Rossiter, 2005).

Circumlocution and approximation were considered the most effective achievement strategies which could help students to compensate for their linguistic gaps with alternative linguistic items, contributing to the delivery of clear and elaborate messages. Although the medium level students already used these CSs frequently, it seemed useful for them to learn a greater variety of expressions for circumlocution and more appropriate words for approximation. The lower level students also needed to be introduced to and encouraged to use a variety of language expressions for these CSs.

Lexicalised fillers were also selected because they were useful for stalling for time to think about what to say, rather than remaining silent, repeating the same words, or using non-lexicalised fillers (e.g., *um*, *ah*, and *er*). The findings showed that only a narrow range of fillers was employed in the pre-assessment. Therefore, useful expressions for fillers would be introduced to the medium and lower groups of students so that they would be able to apply these expressions to fill pauses in their conversation.

In addition, two types of interactional strategies (direct appeals for help, and modified interaction) were chosen because they helped students to negotiate meaning with the interlocutor. Appropriate and useful expressions needed to be introduced to both groups of students, particularly the lower level who often asked the interlocutor for help and repetition.

Apart from these five CSs, I also incorporated additional CSs during the instructional periods to ensure that students' needs were met. These additional CSs could be either selected from the CS framework for the current action research project or suggested from the literature. The major consideration for selecting additional CSs to teach was their usefulness for helping students in solving an oral communication problem that emerged within a lesson's context and content.

To plan "how to teach" these CSs, I intended to utilise diverse communicative tasks which were relevant to the tourism context in Thailand as the use of CSs varied according to the task type (Khan, 2010; Rossiter, 2005). The task of describing Thai culture-specific situations and terminology in Phase One was useful to elicit circumlocution and approximation, but more open two-way tasks had to be considered for fostering the use of interactional strategies. These tasks also had to be sufficiently challenging to encourage students to use more CSs.

I also planned to include linguistic knowledge in the CS lesson to maximise the effective use of CSs. Based on the findings from Phase One, the lower level students were unable to use CSs effectively because of their limited linguistic knowledge. A range of lexical knowledge would help them to produce appropriate expressions and lexical items for circumlocution, approximation, fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies. Linguistic knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) and language scaffolding for target CSs equips students to more confidently perform the target tasks and take risks when using CSs.

The development and implementation of each lesson followed the same cycle of a) Planning, b) Action and observation, and c) Reflection. These processes are described in the following pages.

### ***Planning: Development of the weekly CS lesson***

The first CS lesson was designed, based on reflections from Phase One and Lesson 2 onwards were on the basis of the previous lessons and other reflections as mentioned earlier. Each lesson comprised key CSs to be taught, pre-task activities, and target tasks. Then, each lesson was piloted with two volunteer graduates in tourism and changes were made prior to its implementation.

### ***Action and observation (1): Implementation of the communication strategy lesson***

As a teacher researcher in this action research project, I taught each lesson mainly in the English language, which was one three-hour session each week. I started each lesson with two hours of pre-task activities. These activities included reviewing previous CSs used, introducing key CSs, and practicing language scaffolding for using CSs, and essential linguistic knowledge for performing target tasks. In the last hour of

the CS lesson, the students were asked to perform the target task with the English speaking teacher who was asked to audio record and provide feedback on the task as well as the students' performance.

***Action and observation stage (2): Data collection and analysis from students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals***

After each lesson, students were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire. The English speaking teacher's feedback and students' feedback from the students' self-report questionnaire were included in my teaching journals. I also described the development and implementation of the CS lesson, noted the English speaking teacher's feedback on the task and students' performance, and provided my own feedback on the lessons and students' performance. Data collection and analysis from students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals are discussed in detail in the following Sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6.

***Reflection: Ongoing reflections for planning next lesson***

The data from students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals were used for making reflections for planning the next lesson. The focus was on identifying key issues in communication and ideas for selecting the CSs to be taught next, as well as for designing tasks and pre-task activities. Reflections for planning each lesson are discussed in detail in my teaching journals (See Section 5.7).

**5.2.3 Outline of the six weekly lessons**

Based on the action research process of planning, action and observation, and reflection, key CSs were selected and a target task and corresponding pre-task activities

were designed for each of the six lessons. In this section, there is an outline of each lesson including the date and time of implementation, the number of participating students, key CSs, the target task and its aim, and the pre-task activities. An example of the CS lesson is included in Appendix 4.

***Lesson 1: Having a conversation with tourists***

***Date and time:*** 10 June 2010, 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 16

***Key CSs:*** Circumlocution, approximation, direct appeals of help, modified interaction strategies, lexicalised fillers, self-repair and self-rephrasing

***Aims of the task:*** This conversation task aimed to develop students' familiarity with different accents of English speaking tourists and elicit their use of CSs for coping with problems caused by their pronunciation deficits.

***Pre-task activities:***

- Listening comprehension of tourists' talking about a Thai travel attraction (group work)
- Pronunciation of problematic sounds (individual work)
- A short lesson on the key CSs (class work)

***Lesson 2: Describing objects to tourists***

***Date and time:*** 17 June 2010, 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 24

***Key CSs:*** Circumlocution and approximation

***Aims of the task:*** The task of describing objects aimed to encourage the students to use their linguistic knowledge to describe unique and interesting objects in Thailand,

including local fruit (e.g., Durian and Longan), mythical animals (e.g., Garuda and Kinaree), and local products (e.g., Water scoop and Lanna banner). It was also used as a tool to elicit and stimulate the use of circumlocution and approximation to cope with communication problems caused by their resource deficits.

***Pre-task activities:***

- Revision of CSs used in the previous lessons (class work)
- Introduction to key CSs (class work)
- Language scaffolding for describing objects (class work)
- Describing objects to class (individual work)
- Retrospective interviews (individual work)

***Lesson 3: Explaining Thai proverbs to tourist***

***Date and time:*** 24 June 2010 at 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 16

***Key CSs:*** Circumlocution, approximation, and literal translation

***Aims of the task:*** The task of explaining Thai proverbs was intended to elicit and stimulate more use of circumlocution and approximation by asking students, in pairs, to use their linguistic knowledge to explain Thai proverbs to the English speaking teacher who would match them to the equivalent English proverb.

***Pre-task activities***

- Revision of CSs used in the previous lessons (class work)
- Language scaffolding for explaining a proverb (individual work)
- Explaining Thai proverbs to class (pair work)

#### ***Lesson 4: Oral presentation of a Thai temple***

***Date and time:*** 1 July 2010, 9.00-12.00, and 8 July 2010, 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 12

***Key CSs:*** Direct appeals for help, modified interaction strategies, and lexicalised fillers

***Aims of the task:*** An oral presentation of a Thai temple attempted to create a more interactive situation with the English speaking teacher to particularly stimulate the use of fillers and interactional strategies. Working in groups, the students were asked to present information about a temple in Chiang Mai using their tourism-related knowledge and English communication skills. They had to answer the questions from an English speaking teacher who acted as a tourist.

***Pre-task activities:***

- Revision of CSs used in the previous lessons (class work)
- Revision of language scaffolding for describing temples (class work)
- Preparation of information about the temple (group work)

#### ***Lesson 5: Analysing one's own speech***

***Date and time:*** 15 July 2010, 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 12

***Key CSs:*** Direct appeals for help, modified interaction strategies, and social affective strategies

***Aims of the task:*** The aim of this task was to raise the students' self-awareness of using CSs and assess their own performance by acting as a language analyst.

***Pre-task activities:***

- Revision of CSs used in the previous lessons (class work)
- Introduction to new CSs: Social affective strategies (class work)

- Transcribing speech and analysing one's own talks (individual work)

### ***Lesson 6: Performing a job interview***

***Date and time:*** 22 July 2010, 9.00-12.00

***Number of participants:*** 12

***Key CSs:*** All taught CSs

***Aims of the task:*** This task was intended to develop students' familiarity with a job interview which would be required prior to their participation in the internship programme in semester two. It was also used as a tool to practise using all taught CSs.

### ***Pre-task activities***

- Revision of the use of all CSs taught (class work)
- Preparation of curriculum vitae (individual work)
- Practice answering common interview questions (individual work)

In summary, the development and implementation of the CS lesson was undertaken as an ongoing process of action research. This process involved my decisions based on my background knowledge and experience of teaching EFL and English for Tourism courses, incorporated with an ongoing review of the literature. Ongoing reflections from implementing each of the six lessons as well as data collection and analysis of the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals were also key drivers for developing the CS lesson. The process of the data collection and analysis from these data sources is described in the following sections.

### **5.3 Data collection from students' self-report questionnaires**

A students' self-report questionnaire was designed to explore students' perceptions of their own learning as well as of the lessons. According to Ellis (2008), self-report is a tool to investigate learners' cognitive and affective conditions during their learning based on their own perspectives. The students' self-report questionnaire used in the research was divided into two parts. The first part involved the students' self-assessment on their task performance. The second part of the questionnaire included students' responses to five open-ended questions providing feedback on the weekly CS lesson. The discussion below addresses participating students, the implementation, and types of data collected from the students' self-report questionnaires.

#### **5.3.1 Participating students**

Twenty-four students participated in the current action research project. However, based on their availability and willingness, the actual numbers of students participating in each CS lesson was inconsistent. There were 16 students in Lesson 1, 24 students in Lesson 2, 16 students in Lesson 3, and 12 students in Lessons 4, 5, and 6.

#### **5.3.2 Implementation of students' self-report questionnaires**

The anonymity of the students' self-report questionnaire was assured by using codes instead of students' name so that they could provide honest responses (Gall et al., 2007). The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the secretary of the department after each CS class. Participating students were asked to complete the students' self-report questionnaires and it took approximately 10 minutes. They were

informed that the questionnaires would be used to explore their learning progress and their feedback to improve delivery, not for evaluating their English oral proficiency.

It is noted that the self-report questionnaire was used to collect students' feedback only for the first four lessons. I discontinued collecting data from the self-report questionnaires in Lessons 5 and 6 for many reasons. Firstly, the first part of each lesson had pre-task activities which were revision of CSs used from the previous lessons, and the first part of the self-report questionnaire repeating this. Secondly, the second part of the students' self-report questionnaire involved students' feedback on their current lesson which was used to plan the next lesson, however by Lesson 5, I already had sufficient feedback and activities planned for Lessons 5 and 6. These reasons led to my decision to discontinue collecting the data from the students' self-report questionnaires.

### **5.3.3 Types of data collected from students' self-report questionnaires**

Two types of data were collected from the students' self-report questionnaires. Firstly, students' self-assessment on their task performance, including communication problems, problematic situations, and CSs used were used to track their learning and identify key issues to select CSs to teach in the next lesson. Another set of data were students' feedback on the lessons, including knowledge obtained from, the usefulness of, and their preference in the current lesson, as well as their preference for the future lesson. These data were used to design task and pre-task activities for the next lessons.

## 5.4 Data analysis of the students' self-report questionnaires

The analysis of the students' self-report questionnaires was conducted to provide insights into students' perspectives on their own oral communication performance and the CS lessons. This section describes the analysis process of the first part of the questionnaire, which was conducted by ranking items from the students' self-assessment on their task performance, followed by the findings. Then, the analysis process of the second part of the questionnaire, which involved categorising, coding, and comparing students' feedback on the CS lessons, is described and the findings from this process are presented.

### 5.4.1 The analysis of students' self-report questionnaires: Part 1

#### *Analysis process: Ranking students' self-assessment on task performance*

The first part of the students' self-report questionnaire included three ranking questions, asking students to assess their own performance in the assigned tasks by choosing three items and ranking each of them that were *most likely* (1), *more likely* (2), and *likely* (3) to describe their problems, problematic situation, and CS used (see Appendix 5). Question 1, What were the major areas of your communication problems?, required each student to rank major problem areas, including speaking, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and other related problematic areas (e.g., grammar). Question 2, What situations were likely to occur when you communicated with others in English?, elicited students' most frequently occurring problematic situations such as those related to pauses, word recognition, interlocutor's speech, making sentences, and other related problematic situations (e.g., time pressure). Question 3, What did you do

to ease the difficulties in your oral communication?, required the student to rank the most employed CSs to solve problems including fillers, simplifying words, giving examples, producing clear and loud speech, repetitions, changing words, and other CSs (e.g., asking for repetition and clarification).

On a weekly basis, I counted the number of students who ranked each item as *most likely* representing their major communication problems and problematic situations, as well as CSs that were frequently employed. These items are presented as percentages. For example, in terms of major communication problems, 10 of 24 students ranked vocabulary as their biggest problem (41.7%) while six ranked pronunciation as the most problematic (25%). The results of ranking students' self-assessments on their task performance are shown in Table 5.1.

### ***Findings: Students' self-assessment on task performance***

Ranking students' self-assessment of their task performance from the first part of the self-report questionnaires reflected how they used CSs to solve problems they encountered. Table 5.1 shows the percentage of the students ranking of (a) major communication problems, (b) problematic situations, and (c) CSs used when they performed the assigned task. The highlighted figures represent the most frequent responses in each lesson.

Across the four lessons, the students ranked their major problems varyingly. In Lesson 1, the problems of speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and others were ranked highest by the students (21.4%). In Lessons 2 and 3, the students were aware that vocabulary was the major problem (41.7%, and 37.5% respectively). Word recognition was considered the main reason for the above difficulties in the first three lessons as highlighted in the problematic situation data (57.2%, 50%, and 43.8% respectively).

The students used circumlocution and approximation (e.g., simple words and giving examples) as their first choice to cope with such problems which diminished overtime. In Lesson 4, speaking difficulties were the major problem, followed by vocabulary (50% and 33.3% respectively). These problems were associated with making long pauses (41.7%) and making sentences (41.7%). In dealing with such problems, the use of fillers (41.7%) was more adopted but not circumlocution and approximation.

Table 5.1

*The Percentage of Students Ranking Their Most Frequent Communication Problems, Problematic Situations, and CSs Used over Four Lessons*

Categories/Items	Lesson 1 n=16	Lesson 2 n=24	Lesson 3 n=16	Lesson 4 n=12
<b>a) Communication problems</b>				
• speaking	<b>21.4%</b>	20.8%	18.7%	<b>50.0%</b>
• listening	14.4%	12.5%	25.0%	16.7%
• pronunciation	<b>21.4%</b>	25.0%	6.3%	0%
• vocabulary	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
• others (e.g. grammar)	<b>21.4%</b>	0%	12.5%	0%
<b>b) Problematic situations</b>				
• pauses	21.4%	29.2%	0%	<b>41.7%</b>
• word recognition	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>	8.3%
• interlocutor's speech	21.4%	0%	25.0%	8.3%
• making sentences	0%	20.8%	31.2%	<b>41.7%</b>
<b>c) CS used</b>				
• fillers	21.4%	8.3%	18.7%	<b>41.7%</b>
• simple words	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	0%
• giving examples	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	18.7%	0%
• clear and loud speech	21.4%	25.0%	18.7%	25.0%
• repetitions	0%	0%	18.7%	25.0%
• changing words	7.2%	4.2%	0%	8.3%

The findings indicate that the target tasks assigned in each lesson created a problematic situation to foster students' use of the target CSs. For example, in performing a conversation task (Lesson 1), describing objects (Lesson 2), and explaining proverbs (Lesson 3), students showed their awareness of their linguistic deficits so they employed two taught CSs, circumlocution and approximation, to solve such problems. The task of describing the Thai temple to the tourist (Lesson 4) tended to elicit using lexicalised fillers, the target CSs of Lesson 4. They used fillers to gain time to think about what to say to provide the answers to the interlocutor's questions. However, the majority of these students did not use direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies which were also the focus of this lesson. This issue led to a question on the usefulness of the task and pre-task activities for eliciting interactional strategies and a decision to introduce additional CSs to help them cope with problems in communication in the next lessons.

#### **5.4.2 The analysis of students' self-report questionnaires: Part 2**

##### *Analysis process: Categorising, coding, and comparing students' feedback on the communication strategy lessons*

The second part of the self-report questionnaire contained five open-ended questions which allowed students to give more detail, either in English or Thai, about the lesson. Question 1, What have you learned from this lesson?, required students to address knowledge obtained from the lesson. Question 2, What do you like and/or dislike about this lesson?, elicited students' preferences about the current lesson. Question 3, Do you think this lesson is useful for improving your English oral performance?, required students' opinions on the usefulness of the lesson. Question 4,

What would you like to learn in the next lesson?, elicited their preferences for the next lesson. Question 5 requested any additional comments about the lesson.

After teaching each lesson, I translated students' responses to each question into English which were later double-checked by the other EFL teacher to ensure accurate and reliable translation. All responses were coded, using abbreviations and numbers. For example, SRQ1:L4:S29 referred to self-report questionnaire Question 1 of Lesson 4 from the students' code number 29. Then I sorted the responses to each question into its category. Those for Question 1 were included in a category of knowledge obtained from the lesson, responses for Question 2 in a category of the usefulness of the current lesson, responses for Question 3 in a category of students' preference regarding the current lesson, and responses for Question 4 in a category of preference for further lessons. Any of additional comments about the lesson in Question 5 were categorised with the category which was most related.

All responses to each question were further categorised into subgroups. For example, in the category of knowledge obtained from the lessons, responses mentioning that they had learned about new vocabulary or words were grouped into vocabulary learning. Responses mentioning that they had learned to practice describing object were sorted into practice of communication via tasks and pre-task activities. Those mentioning that they had learned about the expressions used to ask for the interlocutor's repetition were sorted into practice of using CSs. The most frequent responses in each category within and across lessons are summarised below.

### ***Findings: Students' feedback on the CS lessons***

Categorising, coding, and comparing students' feedback from the second part of the self-report questionnaires across the four lessons resulted in the development of four

categories. Students reported on (a) knowledge obtained from the lesson, (b) their preference regarding the current lesson, (c) the usefulness of the current lesson, and (d) preference for further lesson. This section concludes students' feedback across the four lessons, supported by the examples of the most frequent responses from particular lessons.

*a) Knowledge obtained from the lesson*

The total responses to Question 1, What have you learned from this lesson?, across the four lessons was 60. The students reported that they had practiced communication via tasks in each lesson (22 responses), practiced using CSs (19 responses), and learned about linguistic knowledge, particularly vocabulary and pronunciation (19 responses).

The most frequent responses to what they had learned about in a particular lesson were also revealed. Pronunciation and CSs were the most mentioned knowledge obtained from Lesson 1, each of which comprised five of 15 responses. Examples of these responses included "I have learned about strategies and techniques for communication" (SRQ1:L1:S12), and "I have learned how to pronounce the English words" (SRQ1:L1:S13) while some students mentioned both as one student reported that "I have practised pronouncing English sounds and speaking strategies" (SRQ1:L1:S01).

Vocabulary was the most frequently mentioned knowledge students gained from Lesson 2 (11 of 20 responses). For example, one student reported that "I have learned new words and used them to described objects" (SRQ1:L2:S15). Most frequent responses regarding knowledge obtained in Lessons 3 and 4 related to practice of oral communication via the assigned task (11 of 15 responses and four of eight responses

respectively). Examples of these responses included “I have learned to compare similarities and differences between Thai and English proverbs” (SRQ1:L3:S24) and “practising giving information about the temple” (SRQ1:L4:S33).

*b) The preference regarding the current lesson*

For the total of 62 responses to Question 2, What do you like and/or dislike about this lesson?, the students mentioned that they liked the lessons, particularly in terms of performing a communication task and practice using CSs (each of which accounted for 16 responses). They also liked the practice of linguistic knowledge (15 responses). In addition, the rest of the students’ responses to this question involved their general positive comments as they described the lesson as fun, useful, unique, and new to them (15 responses).

The most frequent responses mentioned for a particular lesson included their preference for learning pronunciation in Lesson 1 (five of 15 responses). One student reported that “I like this lesson because it enabled me to correct some words that I unusually mispronounced” (SRQ2:L1:S13). Students’ preference in Lesson 2 varied, including learning vocabulary (six responses), practising CSs (five responses), and performing a communication task (five responses). Examples of these responses included “I like learning vocabulary I have never learned before” (SRQ2:L2:S10), “What I like about this lesson is it gains my confidence and improves my problem solving skills” (SRQ2:L2:S18), and “I like practising giving description” (SRQ2:L2:S17). Practicing CSs was also most mentioned for Lesson 3 (six of 16 responses) while performing a communication task were the most favoured part of Lesson 4 (five of 10 responses). Examples of these responses included “I like that there are many ways to describe unknown words such as giving examples to get the meaning

across” (SRQ2:L3:S11) and “I like practising speaking and answering the questions about the temple” (SRQ2:L4:S23).

***c) The usefulness of the lesson***

Students’ preferences for learning in the CS lessons were linked to their views about the usefulness of the lesson. According to the responses to Question 3, Do you think this lesson is useful for improving your English oral performance?, all students reported that they found the lesson useful. Of 61 responses across the four lessons, 37 responses also included the reasons. The major reason was that the CS instruction helped them improve their oral performance (24 responses), practice using CSs (eight responses), and expand their linguistic knowledge (five responses).

The usefulness of the CS instruction in terms of improving students’ oral communication performance was also frequently mentioned for each lesson. Examples of these responses included, “I am able to apply this knowledge for communication in my career” (SRQ3:L1:S14), “It is useful for practising giving description of objects” (SRQ3:L2:S18), “I can apply this knowledge to real life conversation” (SRQ3:L3:S09), and “useful for improving listening and speaking skills” (SRQ3:L4:S33).

***d) The preference for future lesson***

Students’ responses to Question 4, What would you like to learn in the next lesson?, informed students’ emerging needs to further improve their oral communication performance (27 of 54 responses). Some of them suggested the specific topics and tasks they wanted to learn (19 responses). The suggestions included job interview, telling a story, explaining Thai culture, describing tourist attractions, and English for entertainment such as songs and movies. Needs to learn about linguistic

knowledge particularly grammar and sentence structure were also addressed (eight responses).

The majority of responses to this question in each lesson were also related to students' need to further practise their oral communication performance. Examples of these responses included "more speaking activities" (SRQ4:L1:S19) for Lesson 1 and "more practice on giving description" (SRQ4:L2:S27) for Lesson 2. Apart from the need to improve their oral communication in general reported in Lessons 3 and 4, students also suggested topics and tasks they wanted to learn, particularly for job interviews.

To summarise, the findings from students' feedback on the lesson revealed their positive opinions of the lessons. This may be because the CS lessons were fun, new to them, and useful. Task and pre-task activities required students' full involvement and varied from individual, pair work, group work, and the whole class. In addition, the lesson encouraged them to have a conversation with the English speaking teacher who was considered an authentic source of English language. Further, the lesson met their emerging needs and interests. It was impossible to include all students' interests in the lesson so I selected only those responses that were related to tourism tasks (e.g., explaining Thai proverbs instead of singing English songs).

Data from students' self-report questionnaires provided students' opinions about their own oral communication performance and the CS lessons. It was useful to include students' perspectives for evaluating and improving the CS instruction as well as students' learning. Therefore, these data were also noted and reflected in my teaching journals.

## **5.5 Data collection from my teaching journals**

The aim of my teaching journal was to document and reflect on my teaching practice and the teaching outcomes. It demonstrated reflective teaching that is a key feature of action research and teacher-researchers. According to Burns (2009), teachers can use journals to explore their observations, reflections, and understanding of their own teaching. Writing and reviewing teaching journals regularly enables teachers to capture classroom events, enhance their awareness of teaching and learning, examine their own teaching practice, and develop new insights into teaching (J. C. Richards & Farrell, 2005). Journal writing can be time consuming without a focus so I specifically chose four main areas related to my teaching practice, suggested by Richards and Farrell (2005). These areas were a) rationale and description of the lesson, b) my observation of classroom implementation and students' learning, c) feedback from critical friends and students on the lesson and students' learning, and d) ideas for planning the next lessons.

As a teacher-researcher, on a weekly basis, I investigated my own teaching practice as an ongoing cycle of action research: planning, action and observation, and reflection. I recorded these activities daily in English, by making a quick note forming three to four pages of a weekly teaching journal, to describe teaching experiences and outcomes of the weekly lesson (See Appendix 6). In the planning stage where I developed each lesson based on my reflection from the previous lessons, the rationale and description of the lesson was noted, including key CSs, target tasks, and pre-task activities.

In the action and observation stage, I taught and observed classroom events as well as students' learning and noted my reflections in the teaching journals. I also used recordings of students' task performance as supplementary evidence to observe

problems and the CSs used. Apart from the first lesson, students' task performance both with (Lessons 3, 4, and 6) and without the English speaking teacher (Lessons 2 and 5) were recorded and discussed in the teaching journals.

I also included the data from the students' self-report questionnaires in my journal entries to capture students' feedback on each lesson and their own learning. Further, I sought feedback on each lesson and students' oral performance from the English speaking teacher, one of my critical friends, who played the interlocutor roles when performing the target task with the students. In the reflection stage, I recorded my reflections and decisions which led to ideas for planning the next lessons.

## **5.6 Data analysis of my teaching journals**

The six teaching journal entries were analysed after completing the CS instruction, utilising the inductive approach to identify categories and patterns. This strategy is a common means to analyse qualitative narrative data such as journal and diary entries (Burns, 2010). The data in my teaching journals were reviewed and compared, looking for emerging themes and patterns that were likely to help answer the research questions.

Data analysis in this Phase Two of my action research process was guided by two of the research questions, focusing on what and how CSs should be taught to maximise students' oral communication performance. To gain understanding about which and how CSs should be taught, I sorted the data in my teaching journals into four main categories, as shown in Figure 5.2.

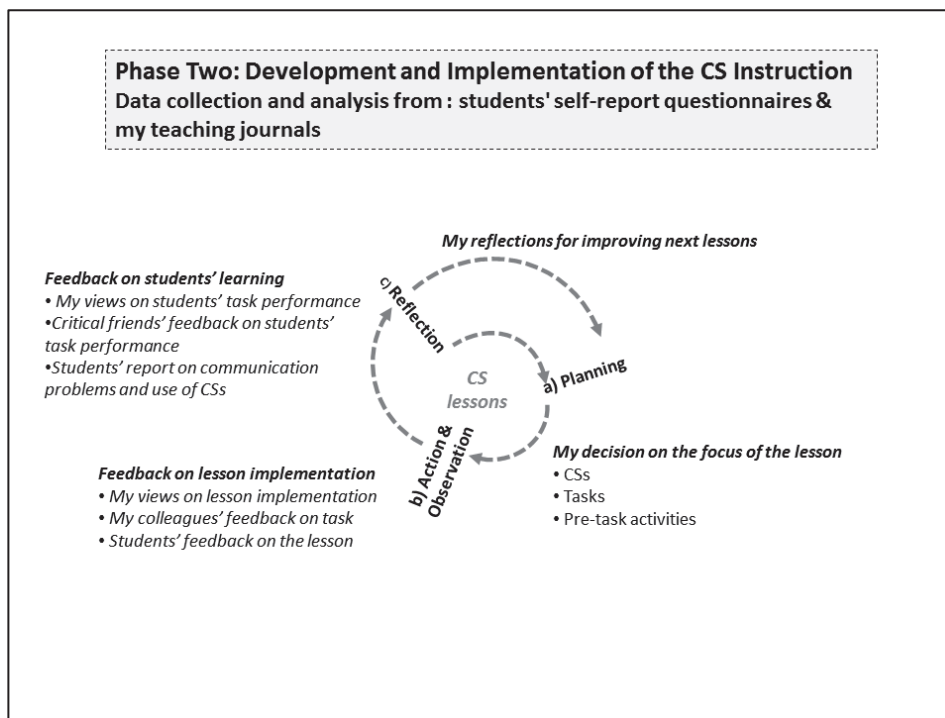


Figure 5.2. Data Organisation from the Teaching Journals.

Firstly, the data from the planning stage, including the rationale and descriptions of key CSs, target tasks, and pre-task activities, were sorted into the category of “My decision on the focus of the lesson”. These data informed which CSs were the focus and why and how I taught them.

Secondly, the data from the action and observation stage, particularly my views on classroom implementation, my critical friend’s feedback on the usefulness of tasks and activities, and students’ self-reports on the usefulness of and their preference for the target task and activities were sorted into a category of “Feedback on lesson implementation”. These data informed the outcomes of teaching the CS lessons (e.g., what works and what does not).

Thirdly, the data from the action and observation stage, relating to my feedback and critical friend's feedback on students' target task performance, as well as students' assessment on their task performance from the students' self-report questionnaires were sorted into a category of "Feedback on students' learning". These data informed the outcomes of teaching the CS lessons in relation to students' learning.

Finally, the data from the reflection stage, particularly key issues in oral communication and ideas for tasks and activities were sorted into a category of "My reflections for teaching the next lesson". The results of the analysis of the teaching journals are discussed in the following section.

## **5.7 Reflections from my teaching journals**

This section reports on the analysis of each of the six teaching journal entries, using the four categories of reflections. The data were compared across and within each category as changes were implemented. Supported by excerpts from my teaching journal entries, the reflections from my particular lesson are presented and discussed, followed by a summary of reflections on the CS lessons.

### **5.7.1 Reflections from the particular lessons**

#### ***Lesson 1: Having a conversation with tourists***

##### ***a) My decision on the focus of the lesson***

I decided to introduce a set of CSs to cope with pronunciation deficits in the first lesson. These CSs were circumlocution, approximation, direct appeals for help,

modified interaction strategies, lexicalised fillers, self-repair and self-rephrasing. This is because, based on the needs analysis in Phase One of the action research process, pronunciation was a common problem for these students. I also designed a conversation task as a target task to develop students' familiarity with having an English conversation with native and non-native speakers of English and elicit their use of CSs for coping with problems caused by their pronunciation deficits. In this lesson, two interlocutors, the English speaking teacher and the Chinese EFL teacher, were invited to converse in English about their home country with a group of students.

***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

The lesson was implemented with 16 participating students. I felt Lesson 1 provided a simple and interesting target task and activities because the explicit teaching of English pronunciation and introducing CSs was new to them. As I noted in my teaching journal: "Students pay much attention on the lesson because it's new for them to seriously practice pronouncing problematic words which they had not opportunities to learn from normal classroom" (TJ1:I:10/6/10). In my opinion, the students paid full attention to the session of introducing CSs to cope with problems caused by their own and misunderstanding of the tourists' utterances (e.g., circumlocution, approximation, self-correction, and interactional strategies). As I noted: "It is also new for them to know these strategies explicitly. They have used these strategies before but just not aware that these strategies are useful and that help them cope with communication problems" (TJ1:I:10/6/10). The conversation task was also practical as the English speaking teacher, my critical friend who was also the interlocutor of this task, found the lesson to be a good start with general and easy tasks. The students themselves reported

that they liked the lesson because it was new to them and found it useful because it helped raise awareness of pronunciation, vocabulary, and use of CSs.

***c) Feedback on students' learning***

Feedback from the interlocutors revealed students' attempts to use CSs as well as cooperative learning among students with different levels of speaking ability when performing a conversation task. Students themselves reported that they used a variety of CSs, such as approximation, circumlocution, fillers, speaking clearly and projecting their voice to cope with communication problems. However, they reported that word recognitions remained problematic and they felt nervous when performing the conversation task. I noted their lack of confidence communicating with the interlocutor, as shown in the excerpt below.

After talking with the English speaking teacher and the Chinese teacher, the students came back to class and shared their experience with me including strategies they used (e.g., approximation, circumlocution, speaking clearly and projecting their voice) and their understanding of the talk. Many of them confessed that they were nervous interacting with the interlocutors and they concentrated on what to say rather than being aware of their own pronunciation. (TJ1:I:10/6/10)

***d) My reflections for teaching the next lesson***

Word recognition as a major problem led to my decision to focus on CSs to cope with linguistic deficits in the next lesson. Further, I decided to record their oral performance to complement students' self-assessment of their oral performance in the self-report questionnaires. My reflection on additional tools to observe students' task performance is shown in the following excerpt.

Unfortunately, I didn't prepare to record their task performance. I think recordings of students' task performance would be an additional useful evidence to see what is going on in their conversation. This will support data from their self-assessment in the students' self-report questionnaires which focus on only students' perspectives. (TJ1:R:11/6/10)

## ***Lesson 2: Describing objects to the tourists***

### ***a) My decision on the focus of the lesson***

On the basis of reflections from Lesson 1, linguistic deficits, particularly vocabulary seemed to be the key issue. Therefore in Lesson 2, I decided to focus on two CSs: circumlocution and approximation. In performing the main task, each student described an object and let the class guess what was being described. Their oral performances were recorded and replayed for retrospective interviews. In the retrospective interview, I asked individual students to listen to their recordings and recall their reasons why they used CSs, regarding communication problems they encountered while performing the description task.

### ***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

Twenty-four students participated in this lesson. Compared to Lesson 1, Lesson 2 was more relevant to a tourism-related context because the description objects such as local fruit, local products, and souvenirs related to many Thai-culture specific situations and terminology. One of my critical friends, the English speaking teacher, found the target task useful and practical for tourism-related careers. Its usefulness was also perceived by students as they reported that this lesson was fun and useful for daily life. They learned new vocabulary and practised using the taught CSs when describing objects to the class. I also noted that the classroom activities promoted active learning

and involvement of the whole class. However, the task of describing objects was not sufficiently challenging to foster the use of CSs because of the shared cultural understandings among Thai students. This reflection on implementing Lesson 2 is shown in the excerpt below.

In performing the task, each student described an object to the class and let them guess what was being described. While the atmosphere was satisfying and students paid full attention to the task, they easily guessed what was being described. Even though the CSs were being practised, this activity was not likely to promote extensive use of language as well as CSs. (TJ2:I:17/6/10)

***c) Feedback on students' learning***

Communication problems caused by lexical deficits remained unsolved. Based on the students' self-report questionnaires, the majority used circumlocution and approximation to solve communication problems, but vocabulary remained a problem for most students. As I noted in my reflection on students' task performance in Lesson 2, "My observation on students' performance and their retrospective interviews indicated that their word choice was limited as they could not recognise words they knew they had learned" (TJ2:I:17/6/10).

***d) My reflections for teaching the next lesson***

The reflection on students' learning led to my decision to further focus on circumlocution and approximation in the next lesson because vocabulary related to word recognition remained a major problem. The reflection on lesson implementation brought about the idea to invite the English speaking teacher to be the interlocutor of the next task, hoping that his different cultural background would stimulate more language use. As I noted after discussing my ideas with the English speaking teacher, one of my

critical friends, “I agree with the English speaking teacher that it would be great to describe objects to the English speaking interlocutor who has a different cultural background so that this task would stimulate more language use” (TJ2:R:18/6/10).

### ***Lesson 3: Explaining Thai proverbs to the tourist***

#### ***a) My decision on the focus of the lesson***

With the needs to further practise circumlocution and approximation for coping with vocabulary problems related to word recognition, I designed the task of explaining Thai proverbs to the English speaking teacher. Literal translation as a strategy was included with the purpose of facilitating students to explain Thai proverbs successfully. The reason for choosing Thai and English proverbs as the main part of the lesson was based on my own experience of having a casual conversation with an English speaking teacher, as explained in the following excerpt.

This idea came up from my daily conversation with the English speaking teacher last week about Thai and English proverb equivalence. While talking about many Thai proverbs, I found myself using a lot of CSs and conversation style (e.g., giving examples, literal meaning, explanation, comparison and contrast). Proverbs in each country are related to cultural and social background of the home country. This is challenging especially when talking with people from different country who has different cultural and social background. (TJ3:P:21/6/10)

#### ***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

The lesson was implemented with 16 participating students. Like Lesson 2, Lesson 3 was relevant to tourism-related contexts. Based on my perspective, students cooperated well in this lesson which appeared to promote active involvement and fun

with more challenging tasks and activities. I described the learning atmosphere as follows: “After warming up with examples and linguistic tools, they were enthusiastic in explaining a proverb to the class. Although challenging, this lesson allowed students to use language more extensively than the previous task, describing objects to each other” (TJ3:I:24/6/10).

Students’ feedback on the lesson and the English speaking teacher’s feedback on the usefulness of the task also revealed that the task of explaining Thai proverbs in Lesson 3 was relevant to the tourism profession. The task was also useful for promoting linguistic knowledge, the use of CSs, and real-life interactions to the English speaking teacher who provided support on the use of English where the students’ explanations were unclear. These reflections on the usefulness of explaining Thai proverbs in Lesson 3 are shown in the following excerpt.

Students used a variety of strategies to cope with communication problems when they interacted with the interlocutor. I think this was because the nature of the task that stimulated them to use CSs particularly circumlocution and approximation. The interlocutor also encouraged them to describe and explain more. He said that this task was unique and promoted language use in the tourism field. (TJ3:R:25/6/10)

***c) Feedback on students’ learning***

To solve problems related to vocabulary and word recognition, the taught CSs as well as fillers were often used. The majority of students reported that they encountered vocabulary and word recognition difficulties. They used a variety of CSs to cope with these problems, such as approximation, circumlocution, fillers, and repetitions, as well as speaking clearer and projecting their voice. However, interactional strategies (e.g., direct appeals for help and modified interaction) were rarely used as I noted in my

teaching journal: “In the conversation with the interlocutor, some students did not seem to ask the interlocutor for help and repetition, as well as checking and confirming his understandings (TJ3: R: 25/6/10).

*d) My reflections for teaching the next lesson*

A concern regarding interactive skills became obvious when the students explained Thai proverbs to the English speaking teacher. Further, while essential when interacting with the English speaker, interactional strategies were not often used to perform this task. These led to my decision to focus more on interactional strategies and fillers in the next lesson because these CSs can play significant roles in interactions when meaning or understanding is not clear.

*Lesson 4: Oral presentation about a Thai temple*

*a) My decision on the focus of the lesson*

Concern about the students’ interactive skills led to my decision to focus on CSs to cope with interactive problems, particularly fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies in Lesson 4. I chose the task of an oral presentation about a Thai temple and created a more interactive situation by including the session of answering the English speaking teacher’s questions about the temple. Thai temples are a familiar topic because the students have learned about them in both Thai and English. The information about the temple also included many topics students wanted to learn (e.g., the temple’s history, compounds, Buddhist’ beliefs, ritual and tradition). In addition, this task allowed them to use their tourism-related knowledge and English communication skills.

### ***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

Twelve students participated in the lesson. Based on my views, Lesson 4 provided useful and tourism-related tasks and activities. Compared with the target tasks from previous lessons, it was more challenging and thus demanding work. This lesson met students' needs because it covered many topics students wanted to learn (e.g., storytelling, describing a tourist attraction, history and culture). My critical friend, the English speaking teacher who was the 'tourist', also found this lesson meaningful for the students' future career. The students themselves enjoyed practising the vocabulary and language scaffolding for describing temples. They also found it useful because the lesson simulated a real-life interaction with tourists and enhanced problem solving skills. However, while I found that previous lessons had been allocated appropriate time for the task load, Lesson 4 was demanding and time-consuming. The task of an oral presentation about a Thai temple required students to apply their previous knowledge in tourism as well as English language skills to the presentation. The lesson took one week for learning the pre-task activities and another week for the oral presentations.

### ***c) Feedback on students' learning***

The presentations overall were informative but not interactive. Interactional strategies were still not often used in performing the task, and interactive and interpersonal skills remained problematic. While I expected them to use interactional strategies when answering the questions from the audience, many students tended to seek help from their friends instead. The following excerpt expresses my concerns about students' random use of the taught interactional strategies.

When interacting with the interlocutor, the students still needed to use more strategies for negotiations to gain mutual understanding between them. Although I provided and taught these strategies, students seldom used them. They were also limited in the expressions they used to get help. They should use more when they don't understand the interlocutor's question. (TJ3: I: 8/7/10)

This reflection is supported by my critical friends' feedback on their task performance. While some students presented and answered the questions well, others' presentations showed a lack of the cooperative and interpersonal skills which are important for presentations. I noted my critical friends' feedback on the oral presentations in Lesson 4: "The interlocutor suggested that the presentation should be more interactive (e.g., small talk, eye contact, sense of humour, and clarification check) while remaining informative. These interpersonal skills are very important for oral presentations by a tour guide" (TJ4: I: 8/7/10).

According to the students' self-report questionnaires, apart from vocabulary problems, the students were more aware of their speaking difficulties associated with word recognition and sentence formation. As the task required the students to answer questions from the English speaking interlocutor, they used fillers to provide time for thinking about the answers and how to make the appropriate sentences.

***d) My reflections for teaching the next lesson***

Some students had difficulty answering unforeseen questions from the interlocutor. This issue led to my decision to add more CSs, social affective strategies, to help students manage their feelings during communication so that they would be able to confidently interact with the English speakers. According to Nakatani (2006), social affective strategies included controlling anxiety and enjoying the conversation, encouraging themselves to speak English, willing to take risks, and giving a good

impression during the interaction. Also, I was surprised that so few CSs were elicited by this task. My questions of students' knowledge about each CS led me to use the recording of their oral presentation in this lesson as a tool for students' self-reflection, as I noted: "Taking charge of their own language used and being aware of their strengths and weaknesses would enable them to solve the problems effectively". (TJ4:R:9/7/10).

In addition, after reviewing and comparing students' self-assessment across four weeks, I found it provided insufficient data and thus discontinued collecting data from the students' self-report questionnaires. The ranking questions in the first part of the self-report questionnaire provided a narrow range of responses. It did not cover either problems and taught CSs that emerged (e.g., direct appeals for help, modified interaction, self-repair, self-rephrasing, and literal translation) within the lesson. Although there was a space for adding other responses at the end of each set of ranking questions, none of the students completed additional problems and CSs. Such limitations led to some difficulties in forming conclusions on students' progress over the time.

### ***Lesson 5: Analysing one's own speech***

#### ***a) My decision on the focus of the lesson***

In addition to a further focus on interactional strategies, social affective strategies were introduced to improve interpersonal skills. I also wanted to examine students' knowledge about the nature of key CSs that were taught in the four previous lessons. Focusing on the recording of students' oral presentation about Thai temples in Lesson 4, the task of analysing one's own speech aimed to raise the students' self-

awareness of using CSs and assess their own performance by acting as a language analyst.

***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

Twelve students participated in the implementation of this lesson. Lesson 5 was different from the previous lessons as it focused more on class discussion about individuals' experiences and self-reflection on their use of CSs. Based on my feedback, analysing their own speech promoted students' awareness of their problems and CSs used in their oral performance. While focusing on individual experience and choice of CS used, peer and class discussion helped them to broaden their insights by learning from others' experience and feedback.

***c) Feedback on students' learning***

The students were aware of their own problems and attempts to use CSs to cope with them varyingly. They showed their knowledge about all taught CSs and were able to give suggestions to other students. From my reflections on the students' task performance in Lesson 5, analysing their own speech, I found that the students used their knowledge about the taught CSs to identify their use of CSs and proposed alternative CSs to solve problematic situations. The following excerpt shows my reflection on students' performance of analysing their own talk in Lesson 5.

In the discussion, the students showed their knowledge about the taught CSs by addressing their problems and CSs use particularly fillers. They also suggested some useful CSs with mostly circumlocution and more appropriate expressions for direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies and lexicalised fillers. (TJ5: I: 15/7/10)

***d) My Reflections for teaching the next lesson***

Students' knowledge about the taught CSs was apparent in this lesson. These CSs were intended to be reviewed and used via a meaningful task in the next lesson as the last lesson. Based on students' feedback from Lessons 3 and 4 on their preference for the future lessons, I chose a job interview as the last lesson to practice all taught strategies. As I noted: "As the students are going to apply for a job in the internship programme next semester, it would be useful for them to learn about preparing for a job application, including resume, application letter, and an interview"(TJ5: R: 16/7/10).

***Lesson 6: Performing a job interview***

***a) My decision on the focus of the lesson***

All taught CSs were the focus in this lesson because this was the last lesson. A role play task of a job interview was designed to develop students' familiarity with a job interview which would be required prior to their participation in the internship programme in semester two. It was also used as a tool to practice using all taught CSs. After the revision of all taught CSs, the students were required to prepare a curriculum vitae and practice answering interview questions. They then individually participated in the job interview with the English speaking teacher.

***b) Feedback on lesson implementation***

Twelve students participated in the lesson. Like Lesson 4, Lesson 6 provided a target task and pre-task activities that met students' needs but was challenging and time-consuming. Two hours of preparation practice was not enough so some students were

not ready for the interview. Only five of them volunteered to attend a job interview sessions.

*c) Feedback on students' learning*

The students appeared to use a greater variety of CSs and were more confident in performing a job interview with the English speaking teacher. Both the English speaking teacher and I agreed that the students were more confident. As I noted, "It was likely that the students felt more comfortable interacting with the English speaking teacher who interviewed them. They had eye contact, paid attention to the questions" (TJ6: I: 23/7/10). They also used many CSs, including interactional strategies, fillers, self-repair, and gestures. It is noticeable that linguistic CSs (circumlocution and approximation) were not often used because of the nature of the task, which required more negotiation strategies.

*d) My reflections for teaching the next lesson*

The CS lessons could be extended to outside the classroom to provide real-world context and more extensive practice with volunteer tourists at the tourist attractions. The CS lesson could also be incorporated with other tourism-related courses and activities such as tour guiding and field trips.

### **5.7.2 Summary of reflections from my teaching journals**

Data analysed from each teaching journal revealed decisions on the focus of the lesson, feedback on lesson implementation and students' learning, as well as reflections

for improving the next lesson. The comparison of these reflections across the six weekly journals revealed the changes in my teaching practice overtime as concluded below.

Firstly, the data related to my decisions on the focus of the CS lesson revealed that reflections on the previous lesson were key drivers to decide what and how to teach each CS lesson. The focus of the CSs to be taught shifted from those recommended in Phase One (i.e., circumlocution, approximation, lexicalised fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction) to additional type of CSs to meet the students' needs to improve their oral communication performance (e.g., self-repair, self-rephrasing, literal translation, and social affective strategies).

The first lesson started with a set of CSs for coping with students' pronunciation deficits based on the needs analysis. Then, circumlocution and approximation were the focus of Lessons 2 and 3 because lexical deficits were key issues. Lesson 4 and 6 focused more on the use of fillers and interactional strategies because of the needs to improve students' interactive skills. In addition, social affective strategies were introduced in Lessons 5 and 6 because they were believed to help improve students' interpersonal skills. I also added other CSs such as self-repair, and self-rephrasing, in Lesson 1 and literal translation in Lesson 3, as alternatives CSs to solve their communication problem.

Six different tasks were chosen to stimulate the use of English language and taught CSs: 1) a conversation task, 2) describing objects, 3) explaining Thai proverbs, 4) oral presentation of Thai temples, 5) analysing one's own speech, and 6) a job interview. Each task comprised pre-task activities that were intended to help equip students with linguistic knowledge as well as knowledge of the particular CSs before performing the main tasks.

Secondly, the data related to feedback on lesson implementation gave information on the outcomes of teaching the CS lesson, regarding the usefulness of the lesson. The CS lessons tended to provide useful and meaningful learning tasks and activities, starting from those simpler to more challenging ones that required more allocated time and workload. The six diverse tasks, by focusing on tourism related topics and activities, as well as interaction with English native speakers, helped expose students to different contexts of language use and therefore corresponding CSs. Pre-task activities provided the students with appropriate language tools and practice in listening and speaking skills to facilitate the effective use of CSs in the target tasks. However, the small numbers of participating students in the last three lessons was of concern.

Thirdly, the data related to feedback on students' learning gave the information on the outcomes of teaching the CS lesson in relation to the success of students' learning of CSs. Overall, it was noticeable that the students were more aware of CSs used and felt more confident communicating with the English speaker. Their use of the taught CSs varied according to task types and problems encountered. For example, the majority of students were aware that vocabulary was the major problem, particularly word recognition and limited word choice when performing the tasks of describing an object and explaining Thai proverbs. They used circumlocution and approximation as their first choice to cope with such problems. To cope with interactive problems when performing the oral presentation about a Thai temple, fillers were more preferable to using other CSs but there were fewer uses of interactional strategies. In the task of analysing their own speech, the students showed their knowledge and awareness of CSs used and in the task of a job interview felt more confident communicating with the English speaker.

Lastly, the data related to my reflections for improving the next lesson revealed my considerations of students' key issues in oral communication, leading to my decisions on selecting CSs to be taught in the next lessons. These data also showed my emerging ideas to adjust tasks and pre-task activities to meet the need to improve students' oral communication performance.

## **5.8 Chapter summary**

This classroom action research comprised three phases: Phase One involved needs analysis, Phase Two involved the development and implementation of the CS instruction, and Phase Three involved students' oral communication performance before and after the CS instruction. This chapter presented data collection and analysis in Phase Two which was undertaken as a dynamic and reflective process to improve teaching situations through intervention. The analysis of students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals were undertaken on a weekly basis and after the instructional period to develop my understanding as I sought ways to improve the CS instruction as well as students' learning. The results are summarised in Figure 5.3.

Nine types of CSs were selected to be included in the CS instruction, including five CSs suggested from Phase one (circumlocution, approximation, lexicalised fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies), and four additional CSs which emerged within the lessons (literal translation, self-repair, self-rephrasing, and social affective strategies). These CSs were taught by using tasks and pre-task activities.

Finding 1: Nine CSs were included in the CS instruction

- From Phase One: circumlocution, approximation, fillers, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies
- Emerged within the lessons: literal translation, self-repair, self-rephrasing, and social affective strategies

Finding 2 Usefulness of communication tasks in eliciting CSs

- Having a conversation with a tourist, describing objects, explaining proverbs: circumlocution and approximation
- Presentation of the Thai temple: fillers
- Analysing their own task performance: students' thought, knowledge and awareness of CSs.
- A job interview: interactional strategies and fillers

Finding 3: The overall CS lessons

- The CS lessons provided useful task and pre-task activities and created active learning environment.

Finding 4: Students' learning progress

- They were more aware of CSs used and felt more confident communicating with the English speaker across the six lessons.

*Figure 5.3. Key Findings of Data Collection and Analysis in Phase Two.*

There were mixed results as to what worked and what did not in implementing the particular task types. The first three tasks (a conversation with a tourist, describing objects, explaining proverbs) appeared to help foster students' use of circumlocution and approximation. The task of a presentation about the Thai temple in Lesson 4 was useful to elicit fillers but failed to foster the use of interactional strategies. The task of analysing their own task performance and CSs used in Lesson 5 was useful to elicit students' thoughts, as well as their knowledge and awareness of CSs. A job interview in

Lesson 6 tended to elicit interactional strategies and fillers, rather than circumlocution and approximation.

Also, the results from implementing the CS lessons revealed the usefulness of these tasks and corresponding pre-task activities in the CS lessons and a positive learning environment. The students' learning progress also demonstrated the increasing awareness of using CSs and confidence after the instructional period.

This phase of the current action research provided insights into my teaching practice of the CS instruction and brought about many ideas to find ways to further improve students' oral communication performance, using CSs. According to Burns (2010), action research is never-ending unless there are practical reasons. However, I decided to end the short course of CS instruction after seven weeks. There were a number of practical reasons, one was the timeline allocated for data collection in the research setting was nearly at an end, secondly a decrease in the number of students participating in the CS lesson was also my concern. They were busy with assignments for other subjects and studying for the mid-term examination. Therefore, the week after this CS instruction, I implemented the post-assessment tasks to examine any improvements in students' oral communication performance in relation to the use of CSs. This process is discussed in Phase Three: Students' oral communication performance.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PHASE THREE**

#### **STUDENTS' ORAL COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE**

##### **6.1 Introduction**

Based on the results of Phase One, the Phase Two CS instruction was developed, implemented, and evaluated as an ongoing process to help students learn and to improve their oral communication performance. In Phase Three, I sought to understand how the CS instruction helped improve students' oral communication. This phase was guided by Research Question 4: In what way does the implementation of the CS instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

The various action research processes of data collection and analysis undertaken in this phase are shown in Figure 6.1. First, the post-assessment was implemented in the last week of the research project to collect speaking band scores and oral samples from participating students. These data were then analysed by ranking their band scores and grouping them according to levels of oral communication performance, followed by the analysis of transcription data from their oral samples of CS use. The speaking band scores were then compared with those from their pre-assessment to classify the students into groups of improved, unchanged, and lowered speaking band scores. Their uses of CSs in both assessments were also compared to track any changes of using taught and non-taught CSs within and across these groups. The comparison of the CSs used by these students helped gain insights into the outcomes of the implementation of the CS

instruction and its connection to students' changes in their use of CSs and improvements in their oral communication performance.

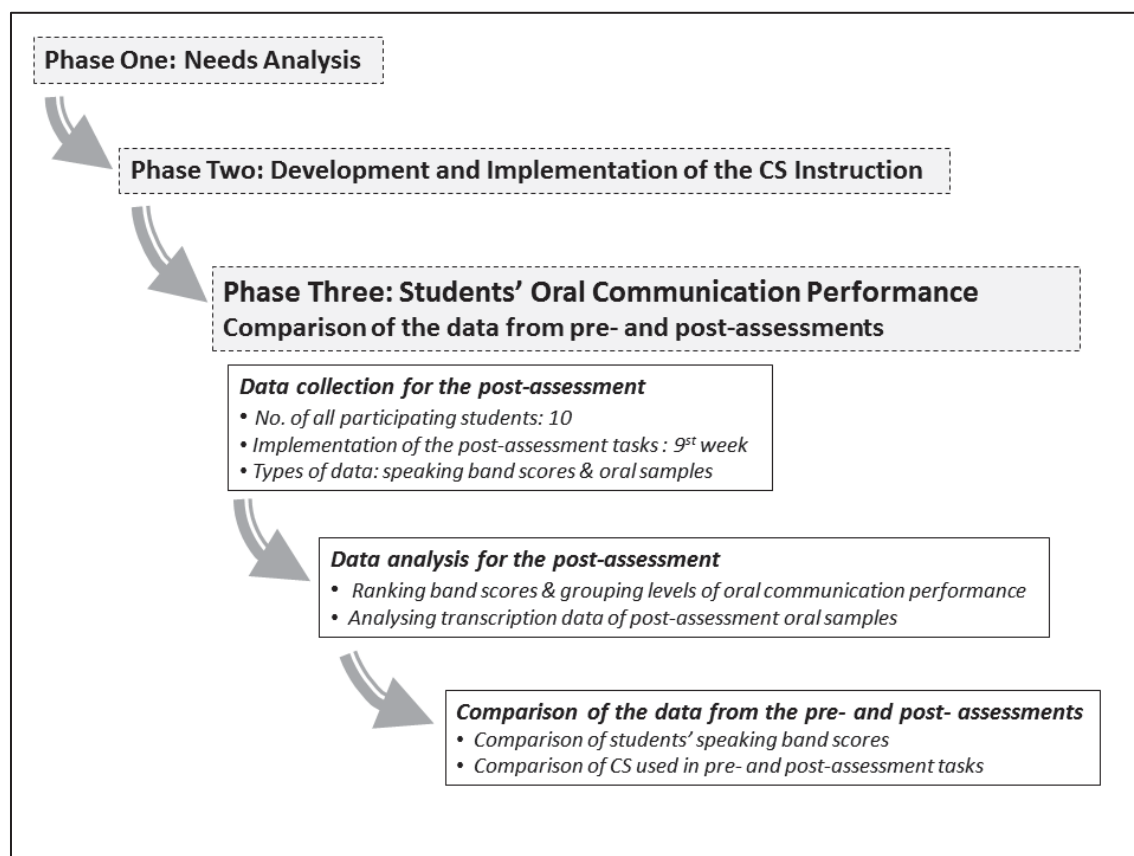


Figure 6.1. Data Collection and Analysis Processes in Phase Three.

The rest of this chapter is structured into three main sections, including the data collection, and the analysis for the post-assessment, as well as the comparison of the pre- and post-assessments. The first section describes the data collection processes, including the participating students, the implementation, and types of data collected from the post-assessment. The next section explains the two processes of data analysis, ranking and grouping band scores and analysing the transcription data from the post-assessment oral samples, followed by the key findings from the post-assessment.

The following section describes the comparison of students' band scores and their use of CSs in the pre- and post- assessments.

## **6.2 Data collection for the post-assessment**

This section describes the data collection process for the post-assessment and presents the information about the participating students, together with a description of the post-assessment implementation and the types of data that were collected. The post-assessment was conducted to examine the students' oral communication performance after teaching the CS lessons. This method can provide insights into student learning improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching strategies after the teaching intervention (Henning, et al.,2009). In this study, the post-assessment aimed to assess students' level of oral communication performance as well as CSs used after the CS instruction, using the same speaking criteria as the pre-assessment. The post-assessment included three description tasks of Thai culture-specific situations and terminology: *Poung malai* (Garland), *Tak bat* (Alms giving, food offering to monks), and the *Songkran* festival (Traditional Thai New Year). The development of the post-assessment tasks and criteria was discussed in detail in Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

### **6.2.1 Participating students**

While 22 students participated in the pre-assessment, only 10 students volunteered to participate in the post-assessment. This lower number was the result of the post-assessment being a week before the mid-term examination. During that week, tourism students were completing assignments as well as preparing for exams in a

number of subjects. The post-assessment was neither compulsory nor part of the students' core university work, and therefore not their priority.

### **6.2.2 Implementation of the post-assessment tasks**

The post-assessment was given after the development and implementation of the six CS lessons, using a parallel speaking test, the same criteria, and the same evaluating process as in the pre-assessment. In line with the pre-assessment, the process started with all students gathering in the classroom where I reviewed, in Thai, the regulations, component and task types, as well as the requirements of the post-assessment. Then, each student was called individually to perform the speaking tasks in the assessment room. Students who had completed the speaking assessment were not allowed to go back to see others in the classroom.

In the assessment room, the student performed three tasks in 10 minutes. As with the pre-assessment, each task allowed approximately one minute for preparation, one minute for describing a notion, and one minute for interacting with the English speaking teacher. While performing the post-assessment tasks, each student's oral performance was audio recorded and once the assessment was completed, the English speaking teacher immediately evaluated each student's oral communication performance. On the day following the post-assessment, the recordings of their oral communication performance were also played for evaluation by the Thai EFL teacher, using the same criteria. This process was followed by discussions between the English speaking teacher and the Thai EFL teacher to achieve mutual agreement of each speaking band score for each student.

### **6.2.3 Types of data collected from the post-assessment**

Data collected from the post-assessment included students' speaking band scores of their oral performance and the recorded oral samples. The band scores of individual students were compared with those from the pre-assessment to determine the improvement in their oral communication performance. The recorded oral samples of all ten students were transcribed for coding utterances representing different CSs, which were then compared with those of the same students in their pre-assessment to explain the improvement of oral communication performance in relation to the use of CSs.

## **6.3 Data analysis for the post-assessment**

This section presents two processes of data analysis and the findings. The first process involved ranking band scores and grouping levels of oral communication performance. The second process involved analysing transcription data from the post-assessment oral samples.

### **6.3.1 Ranking speaking band scores and grouping levels of oral communication performance**

Students' band scores were ranked, using the criteria adapted from the IELTS speaking band descriptors from the pre-assessment (see Appendix 3). Then, they were grouped according to levels of oral communication performance: a lower level group with speaking bands of 3, 3.5 and 4, and a medium level group with speaking bands 4.5, 5, and 5.5.

The results from ranking and grouping the levels of oral communication in the post-assessment are included in Table 6.1. Of the 10 students, eight were ranked at a medium level: three with band scores of 5.5, three with a band score of 5 and two with a band score of 4.5. Two students were ranked at a lower level: one with a band score of 4 and the other with a band score of 3.5. To gain in-depth information about how these students used CSs, their oral samples were transcribed and analysed through interactional analysis.

Table 6.1

*The Number of Students at Different Levels of Proficiency*

Groups of level of proficiency	Band scores	No of participants		Total
		Male	Female	
Medium	5.5	1	2	8
	5	1	2	
	4.5	1	1	
Low	4.0	-	1	2
	3.5	-	1	
Total				10

### 6.3.2 Analysing transcription data of post-assessment oral samples

An analysis of the 10 students' oral samples was undertaken, using the 12-CSs framework from Phase One: Needs Analysis (see Chapter Four, Table 4.3). In this phase, the 12 CSs were grouped into: a) the taught CSs; and, b) the non-taught CSs. Grouping and comparing the use of eight taught and four non-taught CSs would help reflect on the impact of the CS instruction on students' choice of CSs. The taught CSs included circumlocution, approximation, literal translation, lexicalised fillers, self-repair, self-rephrasing, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction strategies.

The non-taught CSs comprised similar sounding words, code switching, all purpose words, and repetitions.

Each of the 10 oral samples was transcribed and utterances representing each CS were coded and compared across each oral sample. An individual's use of CSs was quantified by counting the number of occurrences of each CS which was then collated according to the two groups. The total number of occurrences of each CS used by each group was finally calculated as a percentage. For example, the total number of occurrences of all CSs (taught and non-taught) used by the medium level group was 290. Circumlocution was employed 46 times which was equivalent to 15.9% of the total CS occurrences. The results from these analyses are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

*The Frequency of Taught and Non-taught CSs Used in the Post-assessment by the Medium and Lower Level Groups*

Groups & types of CSs	Medium group		Lower group		Total	
	No. of occurrences	Frequency (%)	No. of occurrence	Frequency (%)	No. of occurrence	Frequency (%)
<b>Group 1: Taught CSs</b>						
a) <i>Circumlocution</i>	<b>46</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>14.9%</b>
b) Approximation	24	8.3%	4	5.0%	28	7.6%
c) Literal translation	11	3.8%	3	3.7%	14	3.8%
d) <i>Lexicalised fillers</i>	<b>41</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>14.1%</b>
e) <i>Self-repair</i>	<b>35</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>12.1%</b>
f) Self-rephrasing	23	7.9%	3	3.7%	26	7.0%
g) Direct appeals for help	7	2.4%	1	1.3%	8	2.2%
h) Modified interaction	11	3.8%	2	2.5%	13	3.5%
Subtotal (taught CSs)	198	68.3%	43	53.7%	241	65.1%
<b>Group 2: Non-taught CSs</b>						
i) Similar sounding words	5	1.7%	1	1.3%	6	1.6%
j) Code switching	18	6.2%	4	5.0%	22	6.0%
k) All purpose words	12	4.1%	3	3.7%	15	4.1%
l) <i>Repetition</i>	<b>57</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
Subtotal (non-taught CSs)	92	31.7%	37	46.3%	129	34.9%
<b>Total use of CSs</b>	<b>290</b>		<b>80</b>		<b>370</b>	

Table 6.2 shows the frequency of each CS which was calculated as a percentage of the total CSs used in the medium and lower level groups. The results revealed that similar CSs were used among the two groups, but with a different frequency. Regarding the taught CSs, circumlocutions, lexicalised fillers, and self-repair were the most common CSs across both groups, whereas direct appeals for help were the least common. The medium level group used circumlocution most frequently, followed by lexicalised fillers and self-repair (15.9%, 14.1%, and 12.1% respectively) while using fewer direct appeals for help (2.4%). The lower level group used lexicalised fillers and self-repair most frequently, followed by circumlocution (13.7%, 12.5%, and 11.3% respectively) while using fewer direct appeals for help. Regarding the non-taught strategies, repetition was employed extensively, 19.7% by the medium level group and 36.3% by the lower level group.

To summarise, the analysis of the post-assessment provided data related to students' use of CSs in their oral communication performance after the CS instruction. The speaking band scores of eight students were ranked in the medium level group while those of two students were ranked in the lower level group. These students from both groups shared the use of common CSs. The great deal of time-stalling strategies, lexicalised fillers and repetitions, employed by both groups indicated their attempt to keep the conversation going. The frequent use of circumlocution, self-repairs and the minor use of direct appeals for help demonstrated that they were likely to rely on themselves to solve communication problems (e.g., compensating for linguistic gaps and correcting their own language mistakes), rather than seeking help from the interlocutor. These findings provided the overall outcome of the post-assessment task performance.

The aim of the third phase of the action research process was to examine the impact of the CS instruction on the improvement in students' oral communication performance. As part of the action research process, the data in the post-assessment were also compared with those in the pre-assessment. The aim was to find out whether or not the improvement of students' oral communication related to CS uses and the CS instruction, and in what way. The comparison of the data in the pre- and post-assessments is described in the following section.

## **6.4 The comparison of the data from the pre- and post-assessments**

This section describes the two processes of the pre- and post-assessment comparisons: 1) the comparison of the pre- and post-speaking band scores, and 2) the comparison of students' uses of CSs in the pre- and post-assessment tasks.

### **6.4.1 The comparison of students' pre- and post-speaking band scores**

Individual students' speaking band scores were compared with those in the pre-assessment to examine the improvement in students' oral communication performance after the CS instruction. Ten students' speaking band scores from the post-assessment were compared with their band scores from the pre-assessment. These scores were then grouped into three groups based on the improvements in oral communication performance: the improved group (e.g., from 4 to 4.5, 4.5 to 5, and 5 to 5.5), the unchanged group (e.g., from 4.5 to 4.5), and the lowered group (e.g., from 5 to 4).

The results of the comparison of students' scores in the pre- and post-assessments are shown in Table 6.3 with pseudonyms for individuals. Six out of 10 improved their scores. Am was a the lower level student whose speaking band scores in

the pre- and post-assessment improved from 3 to 3.5. Ton was a male student whose speaking band scores improved from 4 in the lower level to 4.5 in the medium level. The other four were ranked in the medium level of oral communication performance in both assessments. Ja was a female student whose band scores improved from 4.5 to 5. The other three students whose band scores improved from 5 to 5.5, were Keng, a male student, Nok and Kwan, female students. These students were included in the improved group.

Three out of 10 had unchanged scores. Maew's and Noom's oral performances were ranked at 5.0 and Aoy's were ranked at 4.5 in both assessments. Only one student had a lower score; Ning was ranked at 5.0 in the pre-assessment and 4.0 in the post-assessment. These four students were included in the unchanged and lowered group.

It is noted that while eight of these ten students had attended and completed all six lessons, Keng from the improved group and Noom from the unchanged group had attended and completed only the first four lessons.

Table 6.3

*Students' Speaking Band Scores in the Pre- and Post-assessments*

Groups	IELTS Band scores		Participants		Total (Group)
	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment	Male	Female	
Improved	3	3.5	-	1 (Am)	6
	4	4.5	1 (Ton)	-	
	4.5	5	-	1 (Ja)	
	5	5.5	1 (Keng)	2 (Nok & Kwan)	
Unchanged	4.5	4.5	-	1 (Maew)	3
	5	5	1 (Noom)	1 (Aoy)	
Lowered	5	4	-	1 (Ning)	1

Over half of the students improved their speaking band scores after the CS instruction. This finding indicated that the CS instruction may help the majority of the students improve their oral communication performance. Interestingly, improvement in the band scores of the two students in the lower level (Ton and Am) suggested that they were likely to benefit from the CS instruction. However, the mixed results of those in the medium level indicated that not all students in the medium level gained benefit from the CS instruction. To gain more insights into how the CS instruction affected these students' learning outcome, the individual's uses of CSs were also compared across and within the groups of improved, unchanged, and lowered band scores.

#### **6.4.2 The comparison of CSs used in the pre- and post-assessments**

The comparison of CSs used in the pre- and post-assessments was undertaken to see the changes (if any) in using CSs after the CS instruction. The comparison comprised many steps. The first step was to prepare and analyse all ten students' transcription data from the pre- and post-assessments. All ten oral samples from the post-assessment had already been transcribed and analysed (see Section 6.3.2). Three oral samples from the pre-assessment of Kwan, Noom, and Ton, which were previously selected as the focus group in Phase One, had also been transcribed and analysed (see Chapter Four, Section 4.4). The seven oral samples from the pre-assessment from Keng, Nok, Ja, Am, Maew, Aoy and Ning had not been transcribed and analysed because they were not selected in the focus group in Phase One. Therefore, using the same process, I transcribed and analysed these additional seven pre-assessment oral samples.

As a result of the analysis of the transcription data from the individuals' oral samples, the number of occurrences of each CS were counted, the language used in each

utterances representing each CS were observed, and examples of the individuals' pre- and post-assessment task performance were quoted. The findings from this process include: 1) the trend in use of CSs by the improved group, 2) the use of CSs by the lower level students with improved scores, 3) the use of CSs by the medium level students with improved scores, 4) the trend in use of CSs by the unchanged and lowered group, 5) the use of CSs by the students with unchanged scores, and 6) the use of CSs by the students with lowered scores.

***Finding 1: The trend in use of CSs by the improved group***

Of the six students with improved scores, four students were included in the medium level while the other two were in the lower level. The results from the comparison of the number of CS used by individual students with improved scores are shown in Table 6.4.

Overall, the majority of these students appeared to use all 12 CSs more frequently in the post-assessment, with increases in using both taught and non-taught CSs. Of the taught CSs, circumlocution and lexicalised fillers were employed more frequently by all of the students with improved scores in the post-assessment. Self-repair and self-rephrasing were also used more often by the majority of these students. However, these students were likely to use other taught CSs (e.g., approximation, literal translation, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction) to some extent in various ways in both assessments. Similarly, it was noticeable that they also occasionally employed similar sounding words, code switching, and all-purpose words in both assessments and some of these students employed repetition extensively.

Table 6.4

*The Number of Occurrences of CSs Used by Individual Students with Improved Scores*

Students (pre- and post- speaking band scores)	Frequency of CSs between Pre- and Post- assessments														
	Taught CSs									Non-taught CSs					Total
	Circumlocution	Approximation	Literal translation	lexicalised fillers	Self-repair	Self-rephrasing	Direct appeals for help	Modified interaction	Subtotal (frequency)	Similar sounding words	Code-switching	All-purpose words	Repetition	Subtotal (frequency)	
<b>Am</b> (3-3.5)	2-6	0-2	1-2	0-7	1-7	0-2	0-1	0-2	<b>4-29</b>	1-0	3-2	0-2	4-24	<b>8-28</b>	<b>12-57</b>
<b>Ton</b> (4-4.5)	3-7	1-1	1-2	0-5	0-5	1-5	2-3	0-4	<b>8-32</b>	2-2	1-2	0-3	12-11	<b>15-17</b>	<b>23-50</b>
<b>Ja</b> (4.5-5)	5-6	2-2	1-2	3-6	2-2	2-2	0-1	0-0	<b>15-21</b>	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2	<b>2-2</b>	<b>17-23</b>
<b>Kwan</b> (5-5.5)	3-7	2-6	2-3	2-3	1-4	0-1	1-1	0-1	<b>11-26</b>	2-1	2-3	1-0	1-3	<b>6-7</b>	<b>17-33</b>
<b>Nok</b> (5-5.5)	4-6	3-3	1-1	3-7	4-8	4-2	0-0	1-0	<b>20-27</b>	0-1	1-1	2-0	14-12	<b>17-14</b>	<b>37-41</b>
<b>Keng</b> (5-5.5)	4-6	6-4	5-2	3-5	6-5	5-6	3-1	5-4	<b>37-33</b>	1-0	2-4	2-2	12-15	<b>17-21</b>	<b>54-54</b>
<b>Total</b> (CS)	<b>21-38</b>	<b>14-18</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>11-33</b>	<b>14-31</b>	<b>12-18</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>6-11</b>	<b>95-168</b>	<b>6-4</b>	<b>9-12</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>45-67</b>	<b>65-90</b>	<b>160-258</b>

Changes in the number of all CSs used by the students with improved scores were apparent, particularly for the two students in the lower level of oral communication performance. Am's and Ton's total uses of CSs increased considerably. In the post-assessment Am's use of all CSs increased five times more than in the pre-assessment, with a dramatic increase of using both taught and non-taught CSs. Ton used a variety of CSs, more than twice as often as those in the pre-assessment. His use of taught CSs, in particular, increased four times over the CSs that were shown in the pre-assessment.

Also, the majority of the medium level students tended to use all CSs more frequently in the post-assessment, particularly for the taught CSs. Nok used taught CSs extensively in both assessments, increasing from 20 to 27 times. Kwan's use of CSs in

the post-assessment doubled from the pre-assessment (from 11 to 26 times) while Ja's use of CSs increased from 15 to 21 times. Keng was the only student in this group who already used CSs extensively and his use did not change; 54 times in both assessments. Interestingly, his use of taught CSs decreased while those of non-taught CSs increased in the post-assessment.

Based on the overall trends of CSs used by the students with improved scores, the increase in their use of taught CSs demonstrated that these students seemed to be able to apply taught CSs after the CS instruction. In particular, the two lower level students were able to apply more types of taught CSs while participating in the post-assessment tasks. However, the medium level students seemed to rely more on some specific CSs than others. These general findings reflected students' increasing awareness of using taught CSs which was the aim of the CS instruction.

***Finding 2: The use of CSs by the lower level students with improved scores***

Am and Ton were the students with improved scores in the lower level ranks. According to Finding 1, both Am and Ton showed a similar trend in using CSs. Their use of CSs in the post-assessment was extensive, more than double the number in the pre-assessment. They also employed each of the taught CSs more often in the post-assessment.

Compared with Ton, Am was the lower level student who had the lowest speaking band scores in the pre-assessment. After the CS instruction, her use of taught CSs was noticeably changed and also improved her oral communication performance. The examples of Am's oral performances in both assessments are discussed here to show how a lower level student can improve her oral communication performance in relation to her use of CSs.

The comparison of examples of Am's performance in the pre- and post-assessments revealed her noticeable change in using CSs to deal with linguistic difficulties. In the pre-assessment, she appeared to lack confidence in talking about the topic assigned in the task, as she talked with many pauses and left her messages incomplete. In the post-assessment, she more confidently attempted to answer the questions and to solve her communication problems, as she talked, using a number of CSs and more vocabulary. These changes are evident in Examples 1(a) and 1(b).

**Example 1(a): Am's Pre-assessment task 1: San-Pra-Phoom (Spirit house)**

Interlocutor *What can you tell me about a spirit house?*  
 Am *Um...Spirit hou(se)...spirit house is a small house in a house (CIRCUMLOCUTION)... ah...it's a protect...*  
 Interlocutor *Who does it protect?*  
 Am *Um...made for enshrine...enshrine...*  
 Interlocutor *Ok...protect from who or from what?*  
 Am *From...from... (REPETITION)*  
 Interlocutor *Like...it's there to protect from what?*  
 Am *Oh protect from...from... (REPETITION)*  
 Interlocutor *That's ok. Where do you have a spirit house? Like at your house, you have spirit house? [Yeah] Is it inside your house or in the garden? Where do you have spirit house?*  
 Am *Um...look...[that's ok]...spirit hou(se) is a...*  
 Interlocutor *That's ok. Do you put...people put things there...What do you put? What kind of thing do you put in at the spirit house?*  
 Am *Ah...do you want is...*  
 Interlocutor *OK. Like what kind of food or fruit...what do you put there?*  
 Am *Fruit and rice*  
 Interlocutor *Any water or drink or anything?*  
 Am *Yeah water*  
 Interlocutor *Do you do that every day or just...[everyday] everyday... when? Morning...or?*  
 Am *In the morning.*

Example 1(a) shows Am's use of CSs when she described a spirit house in the pre-assessment. Although she started with using circumlocution, describing the size of the spirit house, she was not able to cope with her language difficulties. She was only able to provide short answers to the interlocutor's questions. After repeating the words to gain time to think about how to describe these target words, she gave up and left her

message unfinished because she could not compensate for her linguistic gaps and produce alternative words or phrases.

### **Example 1(b): Am's Post-assessment task 1: Pong Ma Lai (Garland)**

- Interlocutor *What you can tell me about a garland.*
- Am *Garland in Thai we call Pong Ma Lai. And...it's...it is (REPETITION) the ..um.. we use for... the...ah...many thing in the first time when we...when we (REPETITION) meets some somebody ... and we use for mother day...uh...ah... we because ...we use for mother day because (SELF REPHRASING) they use from jasmine. [uh ha] The jasmine is the flower ah of mother day in Thailand. And we will use for some ...ah...let me see (FILLER) ... some...ah...well (FILLER) ...ah..and it's..the...the garland its have a shape... circle shape ..and they have the ah line (CIRCUMLOCUTION)... and it made from jas... jasmine (CIRCUMLOCUTION)... and sometime we don't ...we don't (REPETITION) only use jasmine.*
- Interlocutor *What else can you use beside jasmine?*
- Am *Sorry? (DIRECT APPEAL FOR HELP)*
- Interlocutor *What other flowers do you use?*
- Am *Rose and I don't know what it is. It's look like jasmine but it don't smell...[yeah...yeah] and it's smaller jasmine. (CIRCUMLOCUTION).*

Example 1(b) shows that Am was able to provide more information about a garland in the post-assessment, using a variety of CSs. Apart from her use of the filler (*let me see*), she repeated her utterances many times while thinking about words and phrases to describe a garland. She was then able to give some description such as the shape and material for making a garland by using circumlocution. Circumlocution was also employed when she could not think of the right English word for the particular kind of flower used to form a garland; she compared its size and features with jasmine. In addition, a direct appeal for help was used when she asked the interlocutor to repeat his question.

Similarly to Am, Ton used a variety of expressions for circumlocution (e.g., describing shape, substances, and function, and giving examples) and more types of fillers (e.g., *what do you say*, *let me think* and *I think*). Also, their use of other taught CSs increased, however, with a limited range of expressions. For example, their uses of

modified interaction strategies were not perfect but comprehensible. Am checked the interlocutor's understandings twice by asking *Are you understand me?* which was grammatically incorrect but easy to understand while Ton used a narrow range of short expressions (e.g., *right?*). Also, it is noticeable that little or no self-repair and self-rephrasing was employed in the pre-assessment, but appeared more frequently in their post-assessment tasks. However, such use had mixed results. For example, Ton's use of self-repair did not necessarily help him correct his language and deliver a clearer message, as he corrected his use of an all-purpose word *make* to another verb *do* instead of using the more specific verb *offer*. On the other hand, Am successfully rephrased the word *shop* to the more specific word *flower shop* when talking about the place to buy the garland in the post-assessment.

In addition, Am and Ton appeared to also use a majority of non-taught CSs more frequently in the post-assessment and there was only a slight difference in their use of repetition. Ton used repetition extensively but slightly less so in the post-assessment, possibly replacing this CS with the higher use of lexicalised fillers. Am seldom used repetition in the pre-assessment but much more so in the post-assessment. The use of repetition was likely to help them take time for thinking about what to say and then to finally complete their messages.

To summarise, the large increase in the use of taught CSs shows that the two students in the lower level seemed to be able to apply the taught CSs to deal with their communication limitations, and therefore improve their oral communication performance. They seemed more confident in using different types of CSs in the post-assessment, some of which were used effectively. The limitations of their language knowledge sometimes caused the production of incorrect forms of language. These results indicate that teaching CSs to students at this level appears to have enabled them

to deliver a clearer message. The strategies of circumlocution, fillers, repetitions, self-repair, direct appeals for help, and modified interaction all contributed to this improvement.

***Finding 3: The use of CSs by the medium level students with improved scores***

Ja, Kwan, Nok, and Keng had band scores that improved within the medium level of oral communication performance. While the students in the lower level tried many types of new CSs, these medium level students appeared to choose specific CSs they already knew and used them more frequently. They were also more confident as they relied more on themselves to solve problems without seeking help from the interlocutor. For the three female students, increases in their use of CSs, both taught and non-taught, in the post-assessment were apparent. On the other hand, Keng, the only male student in this group, used CSs extensively and consistently in both assessments.

Among the three female students, Nok showed the most noticeable changes in both the quantity and quality of her CS use, and her oral communication performance also apparently improved, when compared with the pre-assessment. The examples of her oral performances in both assessments are discussed here.

Nok appeared to successfully describe Thai culture-specific situations and terminology, using circumlocution and approximation but she was able to elaborate more independently in the post-assessment. She was also aware of her language mistakes and errors and used self-repair and self-rephrasing to deliver more accurate and clearer messages. In addition, lexicalised fillers and repetitions were used many times to fill pauses and stall for time, enabling her to complete her messages. Nok's uses of CSs are shown in Examples 2(a) and 2(b).

Example 2(a) demonstrates Nok's uses of CSs in describing a spirit house in Task 1 of the pre-assessment. She used circumlocution to describe the characteristics of the spirit house by comparing it with a palace. While talking about the function of the spirit house, she used self-rephrasing to clarify the word *Thai people*. She also used the approximation *the man* to describe something inside the spirit house. In addition, apart from using *something like that* to fill a pause, repetitions were used many times to gain time. Further, she rephrased the interlocutor's questions to check her understanding of the questions.

#### **Example 2(a): Nok's Pre-assessment task 1: San-Pra-Phoom (Spirit house)**

- Interlocutor *Think about for a minute and then tell me about a spirit house. What can you tell me about a spirit house?*
- Nok *Spirit hou(se) is a house like a palace, but the shape is small (CIRCUMLOCUTION)*
- Interlocutor *Small?*
- Nok *Yes, and Thai people...most of Thai people (SELF-REPHRASING), they have to worship this house because they believe that inside of spirit house...spirit house (REPETITION) there are...the man (APPROXIMATION) who protect ...protect (REPETITION) themselves or ah...protect themselves (REPETITION) and give for good luck for everybody.*
- Interlocutor *Good. When you say they worship the house, How do you worship it? What you do for the spirit house?*
- Nok *How to worship? (MODIFIED INTERACTION )*
- Interlocutor *Yeah.*
- Nok *They have three joss stick(s), and or candle, and or a flower something like that (FILLER) to worship... to worship it (REPETITION).*

Example 2(b) from the post-assessment shows that Nok could talk at length with fewer prompts or questions from the interlocutor. She used more circumlocution to give the description of a garland in Task 1 of the post-assessment. These uses included describing its shape and the material used to make a garland. She also used circumlocution to cope with her linguistic gaps. She did not find the right word for the holy objects so she gave an example (*spirit house*) instead. Apart from using repetitions to gain time to complete her message, she used fillers, particularly *yes*, many times to

fill pauses. Further, self-rephrasing was employed when she clarified her messages (i.e., *some...give to some people*) and self-repair was employed to correct her verb form (i.e., *in Thai...in Thailand* and *a represent to to represent*).

### Example 2(b): Nok's Post-assessment task 1: Pong Ma Lai (garland)

Interlocutor      *Ok. What can you tell me about a garland?*

Nok                    *This is garland. Thai people call Pong Ma Lai..ah...the shape is like some flower (CIRCUMLOCUTION)..in a...flowers yes (FILLER) and it's used for some ceremony... or some...give to some people (SELF-REPHRASING)...or to respect ... such as... ah...such as(REPETITION) for spirit house (CIRCUMLOCUTION). Now it's mother's day will coming soon. We, Thai people, usually use this garland to respect mother...for for (REPETITION) give thanks to mother...to mothers(SELF-REPAIR) because ah... because (REPETITION) garland made from jasmine (CIRCUMLOCUTION). So Jasmine is a...represent to...represent (SELF-REPAIR) mothers in Thai...in Thailand (SELF-REPAIR) ...yes. (FILLER)*

Interlocutor      *Where can I buy garlands?*

Nok                    *Some market, you can buy it. Yes (FILLER).*

Similarly to Nok, other students, Ja, Kwan, and Keng also used circumlocution and fillers more frequently in the post-assessment. They tended to use a variety of language expressions for circumlocution (e.g., describing shapes and substances, as well as giving examples). For example, in the pre-assessment, Kwan described a spirit house by giving the location. In the post-assessment, apart from describing a characteristic of a garland as *necklace of flower*, she further described its shape (i.e., circle) and function (i.e., it is used for worship). Keng also used circumlocutions with a wider range of language expressions (e.g., giving examples and describing shapes and substances).

However, their uses of fillers were slightly different. While Kwan used one particular filler by saying *yes* repeatedly, Nok and Ja appeared to use a wider range of fillers in both assessments. Nok used *something like that*, *like*, and *what to say* and repeatedly used the additional filler *yes* in the post-assessment whereas Ja used a variety of fillers including *I think*, *like*, and *yes*. However, while they also used appropriate

expressions for asking the interlocutor for repetition and clarification and checking the interlocutor's comprehension, these CSs were employed only occasionally. Also, while he used fillers, particularly *I think* to fill pauses many times in both assessments, Keng added a few different fillers in the post-assessment (e.g., *I'd like to say*).

Changes in the use of other CSs varied and they usually used these CSs properly and successfully. For example, Kwan, similar to Nok, used self-repair more frequently. In the pre-assessment, Kwan used self-repair to correct her grammatical mistake (i.e., possessive pronoun *their* for *your*). In the post-assessment, she corrected her preposition *at* to *in front of* the university when talking about the location of giving alms. Kwan also used many approximations. In the pre-assessment, when talking about the place to float a krathong, Kwan tended to use the word *pond*, a related term for the river. In the post-assessment, she continued to use the approximation *animal* to cover her vocabulary gap of *Zodiac*.

Another observation was that, besides circumlocutions and fillers, changes in Ja's use of other CSs were not apparent. She did not employ any modified interaction strategies, similar sounding words, code switching, or all-purpose words. On the other hand, it is noticeable that Keng seemed to use CSs extensively, appropriately, and consistently. Unlike other students with an improved medium band score, his overall use of taught CSs decreased slightly from 37 to 33, with an increase in circumlocution, lexicalised fillers, and self-rephrasing while approximation, literal translation, self-repair, and interactional strategies decreased slightly. With such differences, the examples of Keng's oral performances were chosen for discussion, as shown in Examples 3(a) and 3(b).

Example 3(a) from the pre-assessment shows Keng's attempt to describe *Lanna candles*, specially designed candles used for the Loy krathong festival. Direct appeals for help were employed to ask the interlocutor to repeat his questions (*Hah?*) and to help with English vocabulary (*What do you call in English?*). Apart from these interactional strategies, Keng used a Thai word *Lanna* twice for *northern* and repeated these words to gain time to think about the right word for a Lanna candle. Circumlocution was then employed as he described the physical appearance of this special candle. He continued to clarify this term by offering to draw a Lanna candle on the paper and approximation was employed as he used *write* for *draw*. He also used a related word *ladder* for *stairs* when he mentioned the parts of the house which are commonly decorated by Lanna candles. In addition, self-repair was employed as he changed *Thai* to a more specific words *Lanna*.

### Example 3(a): Keng's Pre-assessment task 3: Loy krathong festival

- Interlocutor     *So what goes in Krathong?*
- Keng                *Hah? (DIRECT APPEAL FOR HELP)*
- Interlocutor     *When you make a krathong [yeah] what goes in the incense stick?*
- Keng                *Incense stick, a candle but Lanna people (CODE SWITCHING) but Lanna people (REPETITION) will use a candle too...it is look like candle but it is not candle. Lanna candle. (CIRCUMLOCUTION) I can write (APPROXIMATION) it for you? This is candle, alright [yes], so but we use...*
- Interlocutor     *Oh that's just Lanna, that's not like Bangkok.*
- Keng                *What do you call in English? (DIRECT APPEAL FOR HELP)*
- Interlocutor     *Well, it's a candle. It's not really candle, it's wax. We don't really have a word for it... It's a different style of candle. People put that around a house on a beautiful night.*
- Keng                *Yes, and in this festival, Thai uh Lanna people (SELF-REPAIR) will catch a fire on this to decorate in a house too and...in a house...in a ladder (APPROXIMATION) to worship a Lord of Buddha too. Because every festival will connect, or will link or will be around to Lord Buddha because we are Buddhism.*
- Interlocutor     *OK.*

In Example 3(b) from the post-assessment, Keng used a more appropriate expression *Pardon?* when asking the interlocutor for repetition. He also repeated some of the interlocutor's questions, followed by an expression *right?* to clarify his understanding. In addition, he used a set of CSs including code switching, approximation, and circumlocution while attempting to describe a local dessert for the festival. He used its Thai name (*Khanom Jog*), super-ordinate (*local dessert*). He finally ended up with describing its ingredients, after using fillers (*I don't know how to make it*) and repetition to stall for time to think about the description of this local dessert.

### Example 3(b): Keng's Post-assessment task 3: Songkran festival

- Interlocutor      *What else do people do during the Songkran festival?*
- Keng                *Pardon? (DIRECT APPEAL FOR HELP)*
- Interlocutor      *What else do people do in Songkran? What are some other activities people do in the Songkran festival?*
- Keng                *Oh...another activity, right? (MODIFIED INTERACTION) [yeah] Um...we will go...we will go (REPETITION) to the temple to make merit and to the ...give a food for the monk. But in my hometown or in Lanna kingdom so we will make um a local...a local dessert (APPROXIMATION)...we call Khanom Jog. (CODE SWITCHING)*
- Interlocutor      *Oh Yeah. Uh ah. What is it made of?*
- Keng                *Kanom jog ...made of ...powder...powder (REPETITION) and...and (REPETITION) ah brown sugar...and.. I don't know how to make it (FILLER)...brown sugar...and a coconut.*

Examples 3(a) and 3(b) show that Keng appeared to deliver informative and interactive descriptions in both assessments, compared with the others with improved scores whose descriptions were informative mainly with little interaction with the interlocutor. His extensive and consistent use of CSs also indicated that he was able to apply his procedural knowledge of using CSs in the post-assessment. The increase in his use of circumlocution, fillers, and self-repair might be a key contributor to his improvement in oral communication.

### *Summary of the use of CSs by the students with improved scores*

A comparison of CSs used in the pre- and post-assessments from the individual transcripts of students with improved scores contributes insights into the connection between the CS instruction, their use of CSs, and improvements in their oral communication performance. The findings demonstrate that many students with improved scores were more aware of using taught CSs in the post-assessments. In particular, the common trend of an increased use of circumlocution, fillers, self-repair, and self-rephrasing shows that the taught CSs can be a key contributor to improving their oral communication performance for students at this level of competency.

The other finding indicating the benefit of the CSs instruction in terms of raising learners' awareness of using CSs is the dramatic increase in the overall use of taught CSs by the two lower level students. This increase in their use of each taught CS also boosted their ability to take risks by trying out new CSs to solve their communication problems. However, with the limitations of their language knowledge, their use of CSs did not always contribute to successful communication.

After the CS instruction, the medium level students were also more aware of using taught CSs but selected specific ones, and this use was much more likely to contribute to successful communication. This finding reflected their ability to choose CSs appropriate to particular problems and their sufficient language knowledge enabled them to produce appropriate utterances when using CSs effectively. Their greater language knowledge led to a clearer benefit of some CSs particularly circumlocutions, leading to a greater use of this CS and less use of other CSs. All in all, their appropriate use of CSs may be linked to the CS instruction and practice in several contexts in the lessons.

***Finding 4: The trend in use of CSs by the unchanged and lowered group***

The use of CSs by the students with unchanged and lowered scores was also taken into consideration to validate the findings. The comparison of the number of occurrences of each CS used by individual students in this group revealed some overall trends in their use of CSs.

Of the four students in the medium range bands, three students had unchanged speaking band scores (Maew, Aoy, and Noom). The speaking band score of the other student decreased from the medium level to the lower level (Ning). The frequency of occurrences of each CSs used by the four students with unchanged and lowered scores are illustrated in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5

*The Number of Occurrences of CSs Used by Individual Students with Unchanged and Lowered Scores*

Students (pre- and post- speaking band scores)	Frequency of CSs between Pre- and Post-assessments														Total
	Taught CSs									Non-taught CSs					
	Circumlocution	Approximation	Literal translation	Lexicalised fillers	Self-repair	Self-rephrasing	Direct appeals for help	Modified interaction	Subtotal (frequency)	Similar sounding words	Code-switching	All-purpose words	Repetition	Subtotal (frequency)	
<b>Maew (4.5-4.5)</b>	6-3	5-2	2-0	0-0	0-4	0-2	0-0	0-0	13-11	0-0	0-3	0-0	4-7	4-10	17-21
<b>Aoy (5-5)</b>	5-4	4-3	0-1	3-1	1-7	0-3	0-0	0-0	13-19	2-1	0-2	2-4	8-5	12-12	25-31
<b>Noom (5-5)</b>	7-7	5-3	0-0	10-14	1-0	0-2	0-1	0-2	23-29	0-0	2-3	3-3	2-2	7-8	30-37
<b>Ning (5-4)</b>	5-3	4-2	2-1	8-4	1-3	0-1	0-0	0-0	20-14	0-1	0-2	0-1	3-5	3-9	23-23
<b>Total (CS)</b>	23-17	18-10	4-2	21-19	3-14	1-8	0-1	0-2	70-73	2-2	2-10	5-8	16-19	25-39	95-112

The majority of these students appeared to use CSs more frequently in the post-assessment, with overall increases in using both taught and non-taught CSs. However, their total and subtotal use of CSs shows a variation in CS usage. Changes in their use of taught CSs included slight increases in self-rephrasing and decreased use of circumlocution and approximation, slight changes in the use of other taught CSs (e.g., lexicalised fillers and literal translation), and continued and increased employment of non-taught CSs.

However, the use of lexicalised fillers, self-repair, and repetitions varied across the individual students. For example, Noom used fillers extensively and more frequently, 10 times in the pre-assessment, and 14 times in the post-assessment. Ning also used fillers extensively in the pre-assessment but this use decreased by half in the post-assessment. Similarly, repetitions employed by Aoy decreased while those employed by Maew and Ning increased almost twofold in the post-assessment. These three students also used self-repair more frequently in the post-assessment.

***Finding 5: The use of CSs by the students with unchanged scores***

Maew, Aoy, and Noom had unchanged speaking band scores but their use of CSs varied across the individual students. Noom is an interesting case in this group because he appeared to use a greater variety of CSs than the others but there was no apparent change in his performance. He was able to provide informative descriptions of the topic in both assessments. He also used a similar pattern of CSs in both assessments, particularly with his extensive use of circumlocution and fillers. Although his use of fillers increased in the post-assessment, the consistent use of circumlocution seemed to maintain his scores at the same level. Examples 4(a) and 4(b) show the example of Ton's oral communication performance in the pre- and post-assessments.

Example 4(a) demonstrates Noom's use of CSs in describing the Loy Krathong festival in Task 3 of the pre-assessment. He used approximation to describe that it is a festival for the river. He also used circumlocution many times. He described a krathong by addressing materials to form a krathong. He also used *say thank you* for *to give thanks*, and explained the beauty pageant as *a girl in the state* and *beauty show*. In addition, two types of fillers were used to fill pauses while he attempted to correct his language mistakes. Moreover, the Thai word *Komeloy* was used for *lantern* and the all-purpose word *do* was used for the verb *float* or *live*.

#### Example 4(a): Noom's Pre-assessment task 3: Loy krathong festival

Noom	<i>Loy krathong is <u>a festival for the river</u> (APPROXIMATION)...we <u>cerebrate</u> ...yes... (FILLER) <u>we cerebrating</u> (SELF REPHRASING) ...and...we ...go to the river for...actually (FILLER)...first...before we go to Loy krathong...we will make a krathong. <u>that it have banana leave, flowers, candle, ...a little...a coin...</u> (CIRCUMLOCUTION) for...in a river...for respect and <u>say thank you</u> (CIRCUMLOCUTION) for the river mother. So in Chiang Mai we have more activity we can do...like a parade.</i>
Interlocutor	<i>Right... Ok.</i>
Noom	<i>Parade ...<u>a girl for... in the state or...</u> (CIRCUMLOCUTION).</i>
Interlocutor	<i>Fashion?</i>
Noom	<i><u>Beauty shows</u></i>
Interlocutor	<i>Beauty pageant</i>
Noom	<i>Beauty pageant ...and we have...ah...<u>Komeloy</u> (CODE SWITCHING)...that we <u>do</u> (ALL-PURPOSE WORD) every year. I'm sorry I don't know what it is in English.</i>

Example 4(b) shows his similar choice of CSs in the post-assessment. He used approximation as he described the festival as a holiday. He also used a verb *throw* to describe the way people play with water in this festival. Fillers were used many times to fill pauses, including *something like that* and *actually*. Circumlocution was employed when he was talking about visiting his respected seniors, a common activity in the festival. He could not think of the right word so he gave examples, such as parents,

teachers, and monks for his respected seniors. The all-purpose word *something* was also used in place of more specific words such as gift and garland.

#### **Example 4(b): Noom's Post-assessment task 3: Songkran festival**

- Noom *Song kran is a holiday (APPROXIMATION)...very famous festival in Thailand. We throw (APPROXIMATION) the water to everybody like us. And I like to go to ... Kard Suan Kaew department store ...for dance and meeting a friend, something like that. (FILLER). About purpose...festival...we...actually (FILLER ) it's a Thai new year.*
- Interlocutor *Good, OK.*
- Noom *We...in the morning we go to a paren(t) or somebody who rest... like a teacher, a monk (CIRCUMLOCUTION) ...for...uh...give something (ALL-PURPOSE WORD) to them. And afternoon, we meet a friends and throw (APPROXIMATION) water ... something like that yeah.(FILLER)*
- Interlocutor *Good.*

Similar to Noom, the common changes of Maew and Aoy included decreases in using circumlocution and approximation. The observation of utterances representing these CSs revealed that they used a variety of language expressions for circumlocution and appropriate words for approximation in the pre-assessment, however such uses decreased in the post-assessments. Other changes the majority of these students made also involved a slight increase in using self-rephrasing and self-repair. These uses usually contributed to more correct and clearer messages. For example, in the post-assessment, Aoy used *bowl* for unknown word *alms bowl*, the verb *respect* for *worship*, and used superordinate *ceremony* to describe alms giving. In terms of self-repair, she successfully corrected preposition (as *in* for *for* the bowl) and pronunciation (as *six* for *sik*). Maew used circumlocution to describe the shape and materials to form a garland. She was able to correct a verb from *made from* to *made of* when addressing materials to form a Krathong. She also corrected her pronunciation from stressing the second syllable of *fifteen* to stressing the first syllable of *fifty*.

To summarise, the findings from the students with unchanged scores indicate that they were able to apply their existing knowledge of CSs to perform post-assessment tasks. However, their unchanged scores seemed to indicate that they had benefitted less from the CS instruction. Some reasons for this outcome are discussed in Chapter Seven.

***Finding 6: The use of CSs by the student with lowered score***

Ning was the only one who had a lowered score, from a speaking band score of 5 to 4 from the pre- to post-assessments. Her overall use of CSs in the pre-assessment was the same as in the post-assessment. Like Maew, Ning's uses of taught CSs decreased in frequency (from 20 to 14) while her use of non-taught increased (from three to nine). The noticeable changes included a decreased use of fillers, circumlocution, and approximation and an increased use of repetition. Like Aoy's and Maew's uses of interactional strategies, no direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies were employed by Ning. Examples 5(a) and 5(b) show the example of Ning's oral communication performance in the pre- and post-assessments.

Example 5(a) of the pre-assessment shows Ning's attempt to describe a spirit house. She used circumlocution to describe the size of the spirit house, followed by repeating her utterances to gain time to think about its purpose. Self-repair was employed when she talked about the spirit house as she replaced *put* with the more appropriate word *build*. Approximation was also employed as she used the related word *respect* for *worship* the spirit house. In addition, the filler *yes* was employed twice to fill pauses.

### Example 5 (a): Ning's Pre-assessment task 1: San-Pra-Phoom (Spirit house)

- Interlocutor *First one you're going to talk about a spirit house. What can you tell us about it? What is a spirit house?*
- Ning *Yes. (FILLER) Ah...Spirit house is a small house (CIRCUMLOCUTION) for...ah...for... (REPETITION) for ah for a goddess...for...ah...Thai people believe it is a... protect...protect (REPETITION) your house ... uh... my house...and protect devil to don't entry in inside the house.*
- Interlocutor *On the ground?*
- Ning *No. Uh...put...built (SELF-REPAIR) it in front of home.*
- Interlocutor *So it's not on the ground?*
- Ning *No.*
- Interlocutor *It's higher up?*
- Ning *Yes.*
- Interlocutor *What do you do in a spirit house?*
- Ning *Ah...Only in the morning yes (FILLER) for respect (APPROXIMATION) to...ah...bring some food...some fruit...for ah respect.*
- Interlocutor *Do you do that every day or just on special days?*
- Ning *Every day and in special day.*
- Interlocutor *Good. Perfect.*

However, as shown in Example 5(b), Ning had more communication problems when describing alms giving in the post-assessment. Although she used some CSs, she often left her message unfinished. She used approximation to describe alms giving as *a role of the monk*. After using a filler *yes* to stall for time to add more information about alms activities, she used a similar sounding word *refer* for *offer*, followed by a list of offering items (e.g., food, rice, and flowers) and message abandonment. Then, she appeared to encounter difficulties, was unable to answer the interlocutor's questions and again left her message unfinished. After the interlocutor repeated his questions several times, she finally answered the question, using repetition and the filler *yes* while stalling for time.

### Example 5 (b): Ning: Post-assessment: Task 2: Tak bat (Alms giving)

- Interlocutor *Ok. That's good. What about this one "Tak bat"*
- Ning *It is a role of monks in the morning (APPROXIMATION)...yes (FILLER)...Thai...The Buddhid people for...refer (SIMILAR SOUNDING WORD) food, rice, and and (REPETITION)flower to monk...for blessing...and...*
- Interlocutor *Only in the morning or in the night time too?*
- Ning *Uh...in...in... Visakabucha (CODE SWITCHING)...in a Buddhid day...uh...in... Visakabucha...and...*
- Interlocutor *Where do you do that? Where do you go and give food to the monk?*
- Interlocutor *Where or...?*
- Interlocutor *Where...yeah. Where do you do it? If I want to give food to the monk how do I do it? How do I do?*
- Ning *How to...*
- Interlocutor *What if I want to give food to the monk? Where do I go to give food to the monk?*
- Ning *Yes...ah...yes...(FILLER) (REPETITION) In the morning, the monk walk on the street. [so they go by my house, they stand by my house] Yeah...but In the Buddhid day, Buddhid people go to the temple.*

Examples 5(a) and 5(b) shows some differences in Ning's performance in the pre- and post-assessments. In the pre-assessment, she appeared to provide informative descriptions of the topic being described and used CSs frequently. However, in the post-assessment, she was unable to either describe the topic or answer the interlocutor's questions, and she used fewer CSs to solve her problems in communication. This finding demonstrates a link between her lowered score and decrease in using taught CSs. Similar to the students with unchanged scores, she appeared to gain less benefit from the CS instruction.

#### *Summary of the use of CSs by the students with unchanged and lowered scores*

The comparison of the CSs used in the pre- and post-assessments from transcripts of the individual students with unchanged and lowered scores showed the link between changes in their use of CSs and their band scores. It was likely that the

decrease in using the particular CSs, circumlocution and approximation, affected their oral communication performance in the post-assessment. However, an increase in their use of self-repair and self-rephrasing indicated that this group of students appeared to be more aware of their language mistakes and therefore attempted to produce clearer and more accurate language. This finding suggests that this group of students tended to benefit from the CS instruction in terms of raising their awareness of their language production, rather than that of CSs.

#### **6.4.3 Summary of the comparison of CSs used in the pre- and post-assessments**

Comparing the number of CSs, utterances representing each CS, and examples of their task performance in the pre- and post-assessments, within and across the three groups of improvement seemed to reveal a connection between the CS instruction, changes in the use of CSs, and improvements in oral communication performance. The CS instruction appeared to be associated with more positive changes in using CSs by the lower level students than the medium level students. Both students with a lower level band used all types of taught CSs more often and this seemed to have helped to improve their oral communication performance.

The medium level students who seemingly had existing knowledge of CSs during the pre-assessment, showed mixed results of changes in their use of CSs and speaking band scores in the post-assessment. Those who continued utilising specific taught CSs, particularly circumlocution, improved their band scores. Those who also continued utilising specific taught CSs in the post-assessments, but to a lesser degree and frequency, appeared to have an unchanged score. It was also interesting that one medium level student had a lowered score. Although her use of CSs was identical to

those with unchanged scores, at times she was unable to continue and left her message unfinished.

Changes in the use of particular CSs and the oral communication performance of the students across groups also revealed interesting findings. The similarity between the three groups of students included their increasing use of self-rephrasing and self-repair. This finding seemed to indicate that after the CS instruction they were more aware of their language mistakes and the comprehensibility of their messages. They therefore tried to correct and rephrase their utterances to deliver comprehensible and meaningful messages. The increase in the use of these two strategies also suggests that the CS instruction increased learners' linguistic knowledge as the students more confidently resolved their own problems related to language production. However, increases in the use of these CSs alone did not help improve oral communication performance.

After the CS instruction, the students with improved scores used circumlocution, fillers, self-repair and self-rephrasing more often while the other groups used fewer circumlocutions but more self-repair and self-rephrases. This result indicates that circumlocution could be the key CS which contributes to improvement in oral communication performance. Interestingly, all ten students seemed to have an existing knowledge of circumlocution and most students in the medium level bands used this CS extensively before the CS instruction. Those who used this CS more often in the post-assessment had improved scores.

The last observation was that all three groups appeared to only occasionally employ two types of interactional strategies, direct appeals for help and modified interaction, particularly after the CS instruction. This finding reflects either students'

perception of using interactional strategies in assessments or possibly ineffective instruction in teaching these as CSs.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

Data collection and analysis in Phase Three: Students' Oral Communication Performances, was conducted to explain the extent to which the CS instruction improved students' oral communication, particularly in relation to the choice of taught and non-taught CSs. Focusing on students' improvement in oral communication performances, scores and oral samples of oral performances collected from 10 students in the pre- and post-assessments were analysed through two processes.

First, by ranking band scores and grouping levels of oral performance, the students were sorted into medium and lower level groups, followed by an analysis of the transcription data of their oral samples for the use of taught and non-taught CSs. Then, students' post-assessment band scores were compared with those in the pre-assessment and classified into improved, unchanged and lowered groups. Further, the analysed oral samples from the post-assessment were compared with those in the pre-assessment to reveal the frequency of CSs, and utterances representing each CS, with examples of their task performance for each group. The key findings are summarised in Figure 6.2.

### **1. Findings from the post-assessment**

- Eight students were ranked in the medium group and two were ranked in the lower level group.
- Both the medium-level and lower-level groups preferred to use circumlocution, fillers, and self-repair when performing the post-assessment tasks

### **2. Findings from the comparison of the pre- and post- assessments**

- Six students were ranked in the improved group, three students in the unchanged group, and one student in the lowered group.
- Similarities
  - The majority of these students tended to use self-repair and self-rephrasing more often.
- Differences in using CSs
  - Students with improved scores apparently used taught CSs more frequently, particularly circumlocution and fillers.
  - In the improved groups, lower level students appeared to use each of all taught CSs more often while the medium level students used specific taught CSs more frequently
  - The students with unchanged and lowered scores appeared to use taught CSs varyingly and used fewer circumlocutions and approximations.

*Figure 6.2. Key Findings of Data Collection and Analysis in Phase Three.*

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## DISCUSSION

### 7.1 Introduction

The main aim of my action research was to develop and teach CS instruction to help improve fourth-year undergraduate tourism students' oral communication performances. The action research processes comprised three phases of data collection and analysis. Phase One: Needs Analysis, involved data collection and analysis from the pre-assessment. Phase Two: Development and Implementation of the CS Instruction, involved data collection and analysis from the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. Phase Three: Students' Oral Communication Performance, involved data collection and analysis from the post-assessment and the comparison of the pre- and post-assessments. The findings from these phases were presented and described in detail in Chapters Four, Five, and Six respectively.

This chapter discusses the key aspects of the findings in relation to the following research questions. The first section in this chapter is a response to Research Question 1, about students' needs and Research Question 2, about what to teach. This section focuses on eight key CSs to help improve oral communication performance. The second section is a response to Research Question 3, and discusses how CS should be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance. The last section, in response to Research Question 4, reflects on improvements in students' oral communication performance through the chosen CS instruction.

## **7.2 Section 1: Key communication strategies to teach for tourism students**

First, classroom action research typically starts from the initial investigation of students' needs for the design of the initial research phase. Such investigation is not one-off but cyclical and ongoing over time to shape and reshape the instruction to meet emerging needs (Daroon, 2003). Similarly, the current classroom action research process with tourism students, involved recurring and continuing processes of analysing needs for the CS instruction and selecting the CSs to teach to improve students' oral communication performance. These processes were guided by the first two closely interrelated research questions:

- 1) What CSs do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?
- 2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?

Based on the finding of this research, CSs that students needed were also those recommended to be taught. To discuss this section, I have divided the CSs into three main categories: achievement strategies, time-stalling strategies, and interactional strategies (A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002).

Principally, it was found in this study that the Thai EFL tourism students appeared to encounter communication gaps caused by their linguistic deficits as well as those caused by the interlocutor's different linguistic and cultural background. They therefore needed to use achievement strategies to compensate for those gaps and to provide informative descriptions. They also required more time to plan what to say so

they needed time-stalling strategies to buy time to process their speech while keeping the flow of the conversation. In addition, they needed to provide interactive information and establish mutual understandings with the interlocutors by using interactional strategies.

On the basis of these needs, my research revealed eight CSs as the ones which could best help the students overcome their problems in communication and would support their oral communication performance and English language learning in general. These CSs were 1) circumlocution, 2) approximation, 3) literal translation, 4) self-repair, and 5) self-rephrasing which are all achievement strategies, 6) lexicalised fillers which are time-stalling strategies, and 7) direct appeals for help, and 8) modified interaction strategies which are interactional strategies.

Each CS is discussed in terms of its need and role in enhancing oral communication, and whether it helped improve students' oral communication performance and promoted their language learning development when it was taught during the CS instruction.

### **7.2.1 Achievement strategies**

Achievement strategies are generally regarded as strategies for compensating learners' linguistic gaps (A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2005). My study suggests that tourism students needed to acquire these CSs to help them solve problems caused by their linguistic deficits, particularly in vocabulary and pronunciation. This need was also highlighted in a Thai study by Prachanant (2012), who found that tourism employees most commonly encountered speaking problems related to using inappropriate words and expressions.

The current study also provides additional evidence of the need for achievement strategies to be taught for learners as they helped compensate gaps caused by different linguistic and cultural backgrounds between speakers and interlocutors. Tourism students inevitably deal with explaining a number of Thai culture-specific situations and terminology, many of which are difficult to find an equivalent English word and expression (Magablih, Abulhaiha, & Saleh, 2010). These situations and terminology are commonly difficult for people who have different language and cultural backgrounds to understand.

For this reason, my research showed that tourism students should learn to use some achievement strategies so that they can compensate for gaps caused by their linguistic deficits and also those brought about by interacting with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, such as the English speaking interlocutors. Five types of achievement strategies: circumlocution, approximation, literal translation, self-repair, and self-rephrasing were revealed to be the best fit and so selected and taught for the tourism students.

### ***Circumlocution***

Circumlocution involved exemplifying, illustrating, or describing the property of the target object or action (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). The students in this research used circumlocution when they described Thai culture-specific situations and terminology to the English speaking interlocutor and when they could not find or recognize the appropriate English words and expressions. For example, one described a fire work as *something that ...ahh... when we put the fire and it burst* or described the terminology spirit house as *a small house*. This study suggests that tourism students need to learn circumlocution because using this CS enabled students to successfully solve

communication problems and led to improvement in their oral communication performance.

Based on the finding from this study, the use of circumlocution commonly led to successful communication. This finding is supported in the Thai context by Wongsawang (2001) who pointed out that circumlocution, which demands more elaborate language, helped provide a clear picture of what has been described. This view is also supported by Littlemore (2003) who noted that that circumlocution helped prevent misunderstandings derived from cultural differences when it was employed to describe physical components. Rossiter's (2005) study also confirms that circumlocution was ranked as the most effective strategy for paraphrasing because it usually led to successful communication by ESL students. Therefore, this CS seems a good choice for students to use for compensating for linguistic gaps and is an important CS to be taught (Chen, 1990; Faucette, 2001; Rossiter, 2005).

In contrast to my research findings, other studies have found that the frequency of circumlocution use was low even after specific CS instruction (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005; Rossiter, 2003). One possible reason, suggested by Rossiter (2003), was because of the nature of the communicative tasks utilised in these studies that were less likely to help elicit this type of CSs, such as discussion tasks (Nakatani, 2005) and description tasks (Rossiter, 2003). Similarly, Dörnyei (1995) who utilised both description tasks and definition tasks, found that the use of circumlocution increased only with the definition tasks. The above mentioned studies have not provided adequate evidence to support the relationship between the use of circumlocution and improvement in students' oral proficiency following CS instruction.

However, this was not the case in this current study which showed that circumlocution was a key contributor to improvements in students' oral communication performance in the speaking assessment. Data from Phase Three showed that students with improved scores employed circumlocution more frequently and with a wider range of expressions such as, giving examples and functions of Thai culture-specific terminology. Such use helped students expand and elaborate the information and therefore make clearer messages. The increase in circumlocution reflected the students' use of a wider range of vocabulary, for describing shape and size (e.g., round and small), and substances (e.g., flowers, banana leaves, and cement). A wider vocabulary range also met the criteria of the speaking assessments, adapted from the IELTS speaking band descriptors. According to Hughes (2011), students' ability to circumlocute is an indicator of students' lexical resources, one of the four key elements of criteria for assessment in the IELTS speaking band scores. It appears that teaching circumlocution is not only useful for solving oral communication caused by linguistic gaps, but can enhance students' vocabulary range, promote their ability to elaborate descriptions, and contribute to overall improved oral communication.

### ***Approximation and literal translation***

Approximation and literal translation were also achievement strategies that tourism students needed to learn and therefore were included in the CS instruction of this action research project. Approximation generally involves using alternative lexical items, such as superordinates or related terms, which share semantic features with the target words or structures (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Examples of this CS in my research included using the related term *climate* for *weather* or using a broader explanation to describe the Thai festival *Songkran* as *a holiday*. This role of approximation is

supported by Wongsawang (2001) in the Thai context who found approximation helped provide a broad concept for the terms being described which complemented the use of circumlocution and the quality of a message. Rossiter (2005) also found approximation the second most effective strategy for paraphrasing and recommended its teaching. In fact, many studies have included approximation in the CS instruction (Kongsom, 2009; Maleki, 2007; Rossiter, 2003).

Literal translation involved translating a lexical item, an idiom, or a compound word or structure from Thai to English word for word. Two types of literal translation were employed to describe Thai culture-specific situations and terminology to the English speaking interlocutor and compensate students' linguistic gaps. Direct literal translation involved translating word by word and retaining the forms and structures of the Thai language, for example, one student used *leaf banana* for *bai tong* (or *kuay*) by translating *bai* as *leaf* and *tong* (or *kuay*) as *banana*. Modified literal translation involved translating Thai words, idioms, and phrases by slightly adjusting the word order and structure to enhance the sense-making meanings of those being translated, for example, one student uttered *the monk day* for *Buddhist day* which is called *Wan Pra* in Thai. *Wan* was translated as *day* in English and *Pra* was translated as *monk* in English.

Based on some previous literature, literal translation is not commonly recommended as a CS to be taught because this CS can result in false cognates and misunderstanding. Also, it has been seen that literal translation may not adequately provide the contextual and natural meaning to fully develop the English speaking interlocutor's understanding. In addition, this CS is often considered a first language transfer strategy and "if used wrongly, the transferred items might get fossilised which will be hard to eliminate later" (Maleki, 2010, p. 644). However, conversely in this research context, literal translation was considered useful by some students. As

confirmed by the increase in use of literal translation by lower level students whose scores improved. The meanings provided through literal translations were commonly understood by the English speaking interlocutor, particularly modified literal translations. Using literal translation enabled some students to provide the literal meanings of specific terms while preserving the original perspective related to Thai culture and therefore it could be considered a good way to promote cultural exchange (Liu, 2012).

Interestingly, in this study, although approximation and literal translation enabled some lower level students to compensate for their linguistic gaps and describe Thai culture-specific terms, these CSs did not appear to be key contributors to overall improvement in all the students' oral communication performance. The finding from Phase Three revealed inconsistent uses of approximation and literal translation in the group of students with improved scores. While the medium level group used these CSs more randomly, the lower level students used them more frequently after the CS instruction. The increase in use of these CSs by lower level students may be linked to the fact that these students may not yet be able to apply circumlocution which has more linguistic demands. They therefore resorted to these alternative CSs which were easier to access. This is supported by Lam's (2006) view that less proficient learners tend to resort to these kinds of strategies when their limited linguistic knowledge does not allow them to confidently use more complex strategies. My finding suggests that approximation and literal translation can be alternative CSs for tourism students who have a lower level of oral communication performance.

However, my research also showed that the use of these CSs may decrease when students' English improves as they are then more ready to use circumlocution, a more sophisticated CS. Circumlocution involves the use of more elaborate expressions

(Tarone & Yule, 1989) and therefore provides a clearer picture of what is being described than using approximation which only involves a simpler single word. Students may also find literal translation from Thai difficult to link and directly translate to English with full meaning because of the great distance between the linguistic and cultural features of Thai and English languages (Wongsawang, 2001). It is likely that using literal translations caused misunderstanding unless there was further explanation and therefore students switched to circumlocution and approximation as their vocabulary developed to more effectively describe Thai culture-specific terminology and proverbs.

This change in use of CSs is supported by the decrease in the medium level students' use of both approximation and literal translation after the CS instruction. For example in the pre- and post-assessments, Keng's use of approximation and literal translation decreased from 6 to 4 times and 5 to 2 times, respectively while his use of circumlocution increased from 4 to 6 times. This finding seemed to be associated with an increase in the use of circumlocution and the benefit of the CS instruction in terms of encouraging students to choose the most effective CSs. Based on their experience in using CSs in the pre-assessment and practice of using these CSs from each lesson, these students may have learned that circumlocution is more effective than approximation and literal translation. It appears that the medium level students make the shift themselves to the more sophisticated CSs when they are ready to try these CSs out.

### ***Self-correction strategies: Self-repair and self-rephrasing***

When students perceive that they have delivered inadequate or inappropriate messages, they use self-repairs to correct their language and self-rephrasing to clarify their language (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998). In my study, self-repair involved making

self-initiated corrections in their own speech, for example “*We have a monk that is a...the symbol of Buddhist...Buddhism*”. Self-rephrasing involved rephrasing a term already uttered by adding something or using a paraphrase, for example, “*Mae Kongka is the spirit...holy spirit that protect the river*”. In the current study, using self-correction strategies appeared to help students keep their language clear and reduce the occurrence of errors which affected comprehension.

The increase in self-correction strategies after the CS instruction by the majority of the students, was similar to that reported by Kongsom (2009), in a Thai context, which reflected students’ increasing awareness of the correctness and the clarity of their language as they attempted to deliver accurate and clear messages. These elements led to greater language accuracy, which was one of the criteria of speaking assessment in this study which were adapted from the IELTS speaking band descriptors. The positive relationship between self-correction and oral performance is confirmed in Brown’s (2007) study revealing positive comments from IELTS examiners on the candidate’s use of self-correction as a good strategy in speaking assessments. This view is also supported by Hughes (2011) who summarised perceived positive features in oral discourse in relation to the criteria of the IELTS speaking band scores. Self-correction is quite common in spontaneous interactive settings and conversations and such use reflects the language learners’ abilities to deal with a communication problem while keeping their ideas flowing without allowing any obstructions.

However, adding to the current literature in this field, my research also revealed in the group of students with improved scores, unchanged, or even lowered scores, that increasing self-repair and self-rephrasing alone was not sufficient for effective oral communication. As shown in the finding for Phase Three, those with improved scores appeared to use self-correction strategies along with other CSs, particularly

circumlocution and fillers. On the other hand, those whose use of self-correction strategies increased, but other effective CSs decreased appeared to have unchanged and even lowered scores from the pre- and post-assessments. These findings imply that the awareness of using appropriate CSs and using clear and correct language together enables students to deliver clearer messages and solve communication problems appropriately and effectively, leading to improvement in oral communication. This suggests that tourism students need to learn to use self-correction alongside other effective CSs, so that they are able to become proficient in their overall oral communication performance.

### **7.2.2 Time stalling strategies**

Another key type of CSs in my research was the use of time stalling strategies. According to A. D. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002), time-stalling strategies include lexicalised fillers (e.g., *well*, *I think*, and *let me see*), non-lexicalised fillers (e.g., *ur* and *um*), and repetitions. Extensive use of time stalling strategies in this study suggests that the students in this research context required time to process what they wanted to say. Extensive use of such time-stalling strategies after CS instruction were also found in Kongsom's (2009) and Prinyajarn and Wannaruk's (2008) studies which were undertaken in the Thai context. These findings reveal that Thai students, like many other second languages speakers, whose first language is very different to English (Wongsawang, 2001) need more time for processing utterances in English because, according to Kormos (2006), the encoding process is less automatized than in their first language.

In the current study, lexicalised fillers appeared to be the recommended time-stalling strategies to teach. The lexicalised fillers, such as using *well*, *actually*, and *you know* were commonly used when students encountered difficulties in answering the English speaking interlocutor's questions and/or explaining some difficult terminology in English. In these situations, using lexicalised fillers would allow students time to think and produce appropriate utterances without stopping their conversation, and losing the attention of the English speaking interlocutor. Such uses appeared to contribute to more successful communication than other time-stalling devices. While the overuse of repetition and non-lexicalised fillers does not help maintain continuity and fluency of speech (Kormos, 2006), lexicalised fillers helped students fill pauses in the conversation while processing utterances, enabling students to stay active in the conversation (Dörnyei, 1995; Kongsom, 2009).

Also in this study, lexicalised fillers were seen to be another key contributor to improve students' oral communication performance. The data from Phase Three revealed the increasing use of lexicalised fillers by all the students who had improved their speaking band scores, although a decrease in using fillers by the majority of the students who had unchanged and lowered scores. This finding seems to reveal that using lexicalised fillers helps maintain speech continuity and increases speech rate which are key indicators of fluency (Hughes, 2011). Using lexicalised fillers also reflects English native-like speech which is a good feature of oral performance (Brown, 2007). Accordingly, students who used lexicalised fillers more frequently were likely to speak more fluently. As fluency is one of the criteria for assessing students' oral communication performance in this research, these students improved their band scores in the post-assessment. The importance of fillers in relation to increasing students' fluency is confirmed by many researchers of CS studies (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Kongsom,

2009; Nakatani, 2005; Wannaruk, 2003) who also recommend teaching this type of CSs.

### **7.2.3 Interactional strategies**

Interactional strategies (A. D. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002) are the third category of CSs I will discuss in reference to Research questions 1 and 2. Two types of interactional strategies were seen to be needed and therefore should be taught to tourism students: direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies. Direct appeals for help, such as *Pardon?* and *What do you call that?*, involved asking the interlocutor for repetition and clarification as well as help with linguistic knowledge. Modified interaction strategies involved comprehension and confirmation check such as *right?* or *OK?*. These interactional strategies help keep the flow of the conversation and negotiate meaning in order to enhance mutual understanding (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Nakatani, 2006).

The need for the tourism students to learn to use interactional strategies was also confirmed in my teaching journal reflections related to feedback on students' learning. Lesson 4 was a good example, where based on my evaluation of students' learning, their oral presentations about the temple seemed to be informative but not interactive. When they had to answer the interlocutor's questions and did not understand those questions, the majority of the students did not use direct appeals for help or modified interaction. However, in the tourism contexts, students need to learn to use interactional strategies to establish mutual understanding with the tourists who have different cultural, educational, and linguistic background. It is easy for interactions with these tourists to cause misunderstanding or even breakdown in communication

(A. Kirkpatrick, 2010). For example, as reported in Prachanant's (2012) study, lack of understanding tourists' accents is a major cause of communication problems in Thai contexts. Tourism students may need to ask tourists for repetition and clarification, as well as confirming that they have actually understood what the tourist intended to say. In addition, when providing information related to difficult or important concepts, the tourism students may need to check the tourists' comprehension to ensure that the tourists have fully understood what is being said.

Using interactional strategies is also seen as useful as a fundamental means to developing student's communicative competence (Kongsom, 2009). By asking for help with linguistic knowledge from the interlocutor, students do not only get to comprehend the meaning being negotiated, but also stay active in the interaction, leading to more opportunity to use and expand their language knowledge (Maleki, 2007). In addition, once they have more language knowledge, they become more confident in solving problems by themselves by using more effective but challenging CSs, such as circumlocution and approximation. Therefore, tourism students should learn to use direct appeals for help and modified interactional strategies to keep the flow of the interaction, establish mutual understanding, expand linguistic knowledge, as well as being able to provide informative and interactive presentations about Thailand.

Many studies have included these CSs in their CS instruction and revealed the increase of such CSs after CS instruction in association with improvements in students' oral communication performance (e.g., Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005). It is worth nothing that this improvement was not the case in the current study, for medium level students. Both direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies were only occasionally employed by the majority of these medium students after the CS instruction. These findings could be explained by the fact that it seemed these students

tended to rely more on themselves to solve problems in communication by resorting to other CSs (e.g., circumlocution and approximation) at their first attempt and to interactional strategies only when their first attempt failed. On the other hand, the use of interactional strategies was common in lower level students. A possible explanation was that less proficient students, who presumably have insufficient language knowledge, tended to seek help from others rather than rely on self-solving strategies as the more proficient learners do. As Faucette (2001) notes, using direct appeals for help allows less proficient learners to promptly participate in the interaction. Also, these interactional strategies involve utilising expressions to ask for help, clarification and repetition as well as those for checking the interlocutor's confirmation and comprehension. Lower level students often memorise these expressions and use them rather than trying to modify what they are saying by circumlocution and approximation which are higher level skills (Kongsom, 2009). Therefore, it appeared that direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies were easy to access even with students who have limited language knowledge.

#### **7.2.4 Summary of key communication strategies to teach for tourism students**

The findings from this action research suggest that the tourism students in this study need to learn eight CSs to help improve their oral communication performance. Circumlocution, approximation, and literal translation were three achievement strategies that enabled students to compensate for their linguistic and cultural gaps and those of the tourists. These CSs also helped students elaborate the information and enhance their vocabulary range as the way to improve oral communication performance. Self-correction strategies, including self-repair and self-rephrasing, helped students to be more aware of delivery of clear messages with accurate language. Lexicalised fillers

were important time-stalling strategies that helped students stay active and maintain the fluency of communication. Two types of interactional strategies, direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies, enabled students to provide interactive information and expand their language knowledge through learning from the interlocutor.

In answering Research Questions 1 and 2, there was, in some cases, a difference between the students' needs for CSs to become more proficient and what CSs appeared to improve students' oral performance after the CS instruction. The medium level students used mostly effective CSs, circumlocution and lexicalised fillers, and they appeared to also need to use interactional strategies to further improve their oral communication performance. The lower level students needed to learn to use not only the effective CSs, but also some alternative CSs, such as approximation, literal translation, self-correction, and interactional strategies. These CSs seemed useful for lower level students when they were unable to either deliver intended meaning or have access to more sophisticated CSs. In addition, teaching these easier to access CSs provided the lower level students with a foundation from which they could develop their strategic competence.

### **7.3 Section 2: How communication strategies should be taught**

This section discusses the responses to the third research question of my action research study:

3) How should CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

In the current research, CSs were taught explicitly on the basis of an ongoing process of action research: planning, action and observation, and reflection. Each of the six CS lessons comprised key CSs to be taught, selected to meet students' needs from Phase One and adapted as needs changed throughout the instructional period in Phase Two. Each lesson also included the pre-task activities of teaching linguistic knowledge essential for performing tasks and expressions used in each CS, followed by exercises and communicative tasks for practising both the taught language and CSs. As a result, this study provides evidence to support the argument for teaching CSs explicitly as well as broadening understandings about how to teach students to use CSs effectively and appropriately.

### **7.3.1 Explicit teaching of communication strategies**

The present study suggests that CSs should be taught explicitly to raise students' awareness of CSs because language awareness alone is not likely to help improve students' oral communication performance. This finding challenges Kellerman's (1991) and Bialystok's (1990) arguments against teaching CSs explicitly and instead focusing only on teaching language knowledge. They believe that second language learners already have existing strategies from their first language which can be transferred to second language learning and interaction, and therefore it is unnecessary to teach CSs. However, their recommendation might be more useful for language teaching contexts where students have a high level of oral proficiency. As Lam (2010) pointed out, highly proficient learners may not necessarily need to learn about CSs because their language ability generally enables them to communicate effectively, with minimal communication problems. However, my research context comprised some EFL students with medium and lower levels of oral proficiency. Their linguistic knowledge alone was

inadequate for effective communication performance but can be considered sufficient as the basis from which to develop strategic competence.

In contrast to Kellerman (1991) and Bialystok (1990), there are also many studies which support explicit teaching of CSs because it can help raise learners' awareness of using CSs (Faucette, 2001; Lam, 2006; Maleki, 2010; Murphy, 2008). The effectiveness of explicit teaching of CSs has also been investigated by many researchers, such as Nakatani (2005), Maleki (2007), Lam (2006), and Kongsom (2009), who agree that directly teaching CSs helps raise awareness of using CSs. Many of these studies found that the benefit of the CS instruction was associated with the increase of use in taught CSs.

Interestingly, the current study revealed that explicit CS instruction may not necessarily help increase use of all taught CSs. For example, the medium level students with improved scores after the instruction tended to use circumlocution and lexicalised fillers more frequently than other CSs, followed by self-correction strategies, whereas less effective CSs (e.g., approximation, literal translation, and interactional strategies) were only occasionally used. This finding suggests that the improvement in students' oral communication performance may not necessarily depend on the increase in the frequency of each of all taught CSs, but rather the appropriate proportion of teaching these CSs, according to the levels and needs of different students. This view is supported by Macaro (2006) who noted that frequent use of CSs was no longer a key indicator of effective strategy users, but stemmed from the harmony of using the strategies available to the students. In Macaro's view, to successfully promote second language learners' learning and improve their performance, effective CS users tend to combine two or more CSs as a cluster, either concurrently or in sequence, appropriate to context and tasks. A combination of CSs may help solve problems better than using a

single effective CS. As noted by Goh (2012), different strategies, when combined together to perform tasks, can “interact effectively with one another” (p. 70) to enhance communication performance and achieve the goal of communication. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to combine explicit instruction of CSs in clusters, along with tasks or problems to which those CSs are best related.

The current study also showed some evidence against the overuse of some taught CSs, for example, the overuse of lexicalised fillers by some medium level students. Even though lexicalised fillers were considered a key contributor to improvement in oral communication performance, extensive use of these CSs with fewer uses of other taught CSs did not help the students improve their speaking band scores. This finding is supported by Brown’s (2007) report which indicates the overuse of lexicalised fillers is likely to reflect the students’ lack of linguistic knowledge as they require more time to think more frequently. In the same vein, overuse of direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies may reflect students’ lack of confidence and limited ability to deal with communication problems. As reported in Brown’s (2007) study, IELTS examiners viewed the use of interaction strategies positively (e.g., asking for clarification and confirmation check) when they reflected natural interaction and only if they were used a few times. Therefore, overuse of self-correction strategies can also be considered as a negative feature of oral communication performance (Brown, 2007). Too much focusing on correcting and clarifying a message may reduce the fluency, the flow of the conversation, and comprehension of the whole message. Therefore, according to my research, it is important to use one type of CSs in an appropriate proportion, and along with other effective CSs, so that students are able to become proficient in their overall oral communication performance.

These findings from my study bring about the suggestion to expand the aim of teaching CSs from focusing solely on the quantity of use (of a number) of CSs to the quality of using CSs. This is supported by Iwai's (2006) argument against using the frequency criterion to value teaching CSs and using more CSs is not necessarily better in communication. Instead, as Dörnyei (2005) points out, CSs are useful when they are employed appropriately to support the task at hand, fit individual students' differences, and effectively fit with other related CSs. Therefore, CS teaching should encourage students to use CSs adequately, appropriately, and effectively.

### **7.3.2 Introducing a wide range of communication strategies**

The results of my action research project suggest providing students' a range of alternatives CSs so that they would be able to select CSs appropriate to the communicative situations, and their language ability, for successfully solving problems and achieving the goal of communication. This study focused on a range of CSs rather than one particular CS in one lesson. For example, CSs selected to be taught in this study included those with different functions and degree of language demands. They ranged from those for compensating linguistic gaps (e.g., circumlocution, approximation, self-correction strategies) to those for maintaining the communication channel (e.g., lexicalised fillers) and establishing mutual understandings (e.g., interactional strategies). The importance of teaching a wide range of CSs is supported by the studies by Dörnyei (1995) and Rossiter (2003) who found that teaching a few types of CSs had little impact on students' improvement in task performance and recommended teaching more types of CSs.

In general, language classrooms normally comprise students with different levels of proficiencies and these students should have equal opportunities to develop their strategic competence. This was the case in the current study and teaching a set of CSs allowed each student to make a choice of CSs on the basis of their language ability and flexibility in trying to solve their communication problems. This is evident in the data from Phase Three, when two of the student groups tended to have different approaches to CS usage to improve their oral communication performance. The lower level students tended to try out all CSs they had learned, either more or less effectively. The medium level students tended to use fewer CSs and particular types of CSs, and mostly used more effective CSs. Teaching a set or cluster of CSs including those with different degrees of complexity (easier to access CSs compared to more challenging CSs) enabled students to select CSs as a means to developing and improving their strategic competence. This finding supports Lam's (2010) suggestion that flexibility of CS use helped less proficient students to confidently develop strategic competence and also strengthen CS use of more proficient learners.

### **7.3.3 Utilising a wide range of meaningful communicative tasks**

The current study supports Khan's (2009), Rossiter's (2003), and Lee's (2004) studies, suggesting that utilising different types of communicative task helped encourage students to use a wide range of CSs. The nature of each task contributed to the use of different types of CSs. For example, a conversation task with the English speaking interlocutor, describing objects, and explaining Thai proverbs helped elicit many types of achievement strategies, particularly circumlocution and approximation. The sessions and tasks of answering questions from the English speaking interlocutor in

oral presentations about Thai temples and a job interview helped foster the use of lexicalised fillers and interactional strategies.

This study also provides additional evidence that highlights two key elements of meaningful communication tasks fostering the use of CSs. These elements were using culture-specific situations and English speaking interlocutors. Many culture-specific situations do not normally have equivalent language and terminology in English, so students' insufficient knowledge of vocabulary can be problematic. Therefore, the students tended to get the closest meaning around these terms by using CSs such as approximation and circumlocution (Wongsawang, 2001) to describe Thai culture-specific situations and terminology.

It was also found in the study that describing and explaining culture-specific situations and terminology in a conversation between speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds was a more challenging situation and one that fosters the use of CSs. This conclusion is supported by González-Pastor (2013) who noted that the tourism-related context generally involved culture-specific terminology with no equivalence in English and this often led to problems in communication, due to differences between the cultures of the tourists and tourism professionals. Involving culture-specific terminology in communicative tasks enables students to develop intercultural competence and use CSs to “reconceptualise and define” (p. 124) culturally specific terms.

In addition, the findings confirmed that real-life communication with the English speaking interlocutor appeared to be highly useful but challenging for Thai EFL tourism students. The lack of opportunity to practice with English speaking interlocutors, together with the need for time to think about the answers in English, led to their use of

lexicalised fillers. Interactional strategies were also employed to ensure mutual understanding had been established. Further, the English speaking interlocutor was also seen as an important resource of authentic language from which students can learn and extend their linguistic resources. As evident in this study, the English speaking interlocutor helped students with linguistic knowledge, whether or not the students directly asking for help, such as providing more appropriate words and phrases, as well as correct English pronunciation, and rephrasing to clarify students' messages. This finding is supported by Tarone and Swierzbin (2009), who highlighted the supportive roles of the interlocutor as a provider of linguistic input that students lack, and opportunities for language acquisition. Therefore, it appears that Thai tourism students should be provided more opportunities to interact with these interlocutors either inside or outside the EFL classrooms.

However, it was found that only a few interactional strategies taught during the instruction phase were employed throughout the research project, even though the English speaking interlocutor was invited to communicate with the students in many tasks. This finding showed that students tended to focus more on themselves to deliver informative messages and solve communication problems, so they disregarded trying to negotiate the meaning with the interlocutor by using direct appeals for help and modified interaction strategies. Perhaps, other task types that promote meaning negotiation, particularly a problem solving task, would have been more useful to elicit more interactional strategies. For example, Lee (2004) reported that students used interactional strategies often when performing a problem solving task which required an agreed solution.

### **7.3.4 Teaching linguistic knowledge**

In answering research question 3, the current study also suggests that CSs should be taught along with linguistic knowledge to help raise students' language awareness and enhance the appropriate and effective use of CSs. It was found in this study that, although the students had different language backgrounds, they appeared to gain benefits from being equipped with essential linguistic knowledge, particularly vocabulary and pronunciation. After the CS instruction, they tended to be more aware of using clear and accurate language, as all students used self-correction strategies more frequently in the post-assessment tasks. They were also able to apply their linguistic knowledge to produce a wide range of utterances for circumlocution (e.g., using vocabulary for describing sizes, shape, and materials of a garland) and appropriate words for approximation (e.g., describing alms giving as the role of the monk). Such use reflected an increase in their vocabulary resources, a key indicator of improvement in their oral communication performance, even for the lower level students. This finding supports Lam's (2010) and Konishi and Tarone's (2004) argument for teaching appropriate and accurate linguistic models for less proficient learners to enable them to use CSs effectively. It can be said that teaching linguistic knowledge is not only useful to develop students' language awareness, but also for the use of CSs.

While Tarone and Yule (1989) expressed concern that teaching CSs may cause students to pay most attention to getting meaning across and so disregard the correct form of the language, this study shows that these students attempted to maintain a balance between the form and meaning of the message. When performing post-assessment tasks, many students showed their attempts to correct, rephrase, and clarify their messages, along with using some other CSs. For example, while a student was describing the shape, material, and function of the garland, she also rephrased some of

these descriptions to clarify her message and corrected some words and verb forms. In this research, teaching and increasing linguistic knowledge encourages students to try to use accurate and clear language in oral communications as their primary goal. Then, once students perceived such attempts as unsuccessful or incomplete, they then applied CSs to modify and/or improve their intended meaning.

However, in this study, teaching some language expressions for CSs such as lexicalised fillers and interactional strategies was less successful. In line with Kongsom's (2009) study, this research revealed that after the CS instruction students tended to resort to short and easy words and phrases for these specific CSs, rather than the longer and more sophisticated ones which were also taught in the CS lesson. For example, simple and short fillers such as *well*, *yes*, *I think*, and *something like that* were commonly used instead of other sophisticated fillers taught, such as *That's a good question*, and *I see what you mean*. This finding confirms Kongsom's (2009) opinion that many Thai students are unfamiliar with these fillers, which are also more difficult to remember, so they resort to the simpler and more familiar fillers.

In the same vein, the most common expression used for interactional strategies such as direct appeals for help was *again please* in both pre- and post- assessments. This expression is the most commonly used by Thai EFL students, but it is not always considered an accepted linguistic form for asking an interlocutor for repetition (Wannaruk, 2003). In this study, some students tended to use more appropriate expressions in the post-assessment, for example, from *Hah?* in the pre-assessment to *Pardon?* in the post-assessment. However, longer and more appropriate expressions taught in this study were not employed such as *Could you repeat that please?* or *Could you say that again please?*. Also, some students used one particular word *right?* for modified interaction strategies, instead of *Do you see what I mean?* or *Is that clear?*.

This use may also link to students' unfamiliarity with English expressions for direct appeals for help and modified interaction and the lack of extensive practice to become more fluent in English. Therefore, my results re-iterate the findings from Kongsom's (2009) study that introducing question structures related to these CSs should be followed by consistent practice in real-life situations. However, it would be difficult to be exposed to real-life interaction outside the EFL classrooms in the EFL learning context. Perhaps, the most appropriate means of practising appropriate expressions for fillers and interactional strategies is through classroom interactions with English native speaking teachers and interlocutors.

### **7.3.5 Conclusion for how to teach communication strategies**

The discussion regarding pedagogical perspectives for teaching CSs in this section, argues for teaching CSs explicitly and also broadening the aims of explicit teaching of CSs to focus more on the quality than the quantity of CS use. The discussion also suggests ways of teaching CSs to help students enhance their oral communication performance. Firstly, teaching a wide range of CSs allowed students' flexible choice to resort to using CSs appropriate to the situations and their language ability. Secondly, utilising a variety of communicative tasks also provided students' opportunities to practice using a wide range of CSs. Thirdly, the tasks that involved culture-specific situations and terminology and English speaking interlocutors were considered sufficiently challenging to foster a use of a wide range of CSs. Furthermore, teaching other linguistic knowledge, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, also enhanced the quality of expressions used in particular CSs and these teaching activities could be complemented by adding a problem-solving discussion task and classroom interactions. These tasks should then promote students' adequate and appropriate use of

interaction strategies as well as improve their interactive oral communication performance so it is not merely informative.

### **7.4 Section 3: The improvement in students' oral communication performance through the communication strategy instruction**

This final section discusses the answers to the last research question of my action research study:

4) In what way does the implementation of the CS instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

The study suggests that teaching CSs, to some extent, contributes to improvement in the students' oral communication performance. In this study, teaching CSs appeared to help raise students' awareness of using CS along with their awareness of linguistic knowledge and promoted positive attitudes towards the CS instruction. These aspects are likely to lead students to improve their oral communication performance overall.

#### **7.4.1 Raising students' awareness of CSs and language features**

The current study found that teaching CSs appeared to help raise students' awareness of using taught CSs along with linguistic knowledge for oral communication. This language knowledge included vocabulary, pronunciation, and the role that grammar plays in oral communication. This finding provides crucial evidence against concerns raised by Tarone and Yule (1989) and Swan (2001) that teaching CSs may hinder language development. Such arguments could be true when focusing on

developing either linguistic knowledge or CSs alone. However, this study suggests that teaching linguistic knowledge alone did not help students improve their oral communication and teaching CSs alone did not help students develop their overall language awareness. Therefore, both language and CSs awareness are equally important and interrelated elements in learning and interacting in English, and should be equally focused in the teaching instruction.

The finding of this study, similar to that reported by Iwai (2006), also demonstrated that teaching CSs enabled students to change declarative knowledge (the what) to procedural knowledge (the how) of language, leading to better development of their oral English communication. Declarative knowledge involved knowledge about the linguistic features and procedural knowledge involved knowledge of how to use such linguistic features. This can be seen in the learning activities provided in the CS instruction. Introducing and reviewing core vocabulary, pronunciation, and relevant language structures reinforced students' declarative knowledge of the language. As shown in Phase two, students reported that they had gained linguistic knowledge from the lessons, particularly vocabulary and pronunciation. Practice that used such knowledge in pre-task activities (e.g., pronunciation of minimal pairs and vocabulary gaps fillings) and the communicative tasks (e.g., describing objects and explaining proverb) also helped develop students' procedural knowledge of the language. Based on the data in Phase Two, students reported that they were able to apply vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge to perform the tasks for each lesson. With declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge of the language, students not only knew more about vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure, but were also more able to apply such linguistic knowledge to perform the target tasks, as well as to help improve the quality of expressions created for CSs.

The study also provided additional evidence revealing that students' awareness of linguistic features may be raised through the use of CSs. Many key CSs taught in the CS instruction in this study either directly or indirectly helped develop oral language communication. For example, circumlocution and approximation involved procedural knowledge of vocabulary (Faucette, 2001) and directly promoted the development of vocabulary (Tarone, 2005). Based on the data in Phase Two, students reported that they had gained vocabulary knowledge most in the lesson of describing objects which focused on teaching circumlocution and approximation. Also shown in this study, for example, when performing the pre- and post-assessment tasks, lower level students used direct appeals for help to ask the English speaking interlocutor for appropriate vocabulary and correct pronunciation of their problematic words.

This study also confirms Ellis's (2008) view on the significance of teaching CSs that encourages students' transition from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge of CSs. In this study, this idea is seen in students' ability to identify CSs and reflect on their own thoughts about CSs which revealed their declarative knowledge of CSs (Wenden, 1998). Students also made use of this declarative knowledge by resorting to employing the CSs available to them, which were appropriate to their language ability. For example, with limited language knowledge, the lower level students tended to try out CSs whether they were effective or not and they also sought help from the interlocutor. The medium level students relied more on themselves for solving problems and were more able to use effective CSs as supported by their higher language ability. This outcome could link to learning activities in the CS instruction. Focusing on the key CSs essential to both medium and lower level students by introducing and reviewing the nature of CSs with examples in the pre-task activities of the CS instruction, helped these students gain declarative knowledge of CSs. Practice with using CSs in pre-task

activities and communicative tasks in the lesson also helped develop students' procedural knowledge of how to use CSs. These activities enabled students to understand the nature of particular CSs, see how these CSs can be used in the particular situations, and try them out to solve problematic situations, and consequently gain confidence, make their own choice, and apply CSs appropriately to other situations (Murphy, 2008).

The CS instruction appeared to develop the declarative and procedural knowledge of language and CSs, which together enabled students to achieve communication goals. However, this finding, similar to that reported in Lam's (2006) study, revealed that as the CS instruction was only implemented for a short period of time, it appeared to have a greater impact on learner's declarative knowledge than procedural knowledge of CSs. The data in Phase Two showed that students were able to identify types of CSs they used to deal with problems in communicative tasks, reflecting their knowledge about CSs. However, the data in Phase Three showed that some students were unable to use some CSs appropriately and effectively, particularly interactional strategies. The finding implies that transition from implicit declarative knowledge of CSs to explicit procedural knowledge of CSs requires time for such strategic behaviour to become explicit and observable. The students in the study may have been in between the implicit process of developing their strategy knowledge, as in Phase Two, they showed their knowledge about CSs as they were able to analyse their oral performance, identify the CSs they used, and recommend alternative CSs as better solutions to their problems in communication.

However, some of the students did not seem able to apply such CS knowledge to real situations and use CSs adequately, appropriately and effectively when performing the post-assessment tasks. An extended time of CS instruction may have helped these

students fully develop metacognitive awareness of CSs so that they would be able to control and manage their own use of CSs (Nakatani, 2005). Metacognitive strategies involve application of declarative and procedural knowledge, as well as conditional knowledge (when and why) to employ them (Schunk, 2012). Conditional knowledge seemed to be the most challenging, but the most important area that needs to be developed over time. With all three types of knowledge, students could have made better choices of CSs. For example, the lower level students might have been able to shift their use of all CSs available to them to selectively use particular effective CSs for a task, as the medium level students did in this study. The medium and higher level students might then have been able to use more sophisticated language expressions for fillers and interactional strategies in order to enhance interactive performance or minimise the occurrence of problems and their use of CSs as they gained increasing knowledge of the language. Metacognitive awareness would also help those students with the unchanged and lowered scores improve their oral communication by avoiding overusing particular CSs and overemphasising language forms during their oral interactions.

#### **7.4.2 Positive attitudes towards the communication strategy instruction**

Similar to that reported in Dörnyei's (1995) and Kongsom (2009), the current research demonstrated that students appeared to have positive attitudes towards the CS instruction. The data in Phase Two revealed that students enjoyed learning the CS lessons, found the lesson useful, and desired to practice oral communication skills more. These findings imply that the positive feelings related to the CS instruction could be a driver to the improvement in their oral communication performance.

Students' positive attitudes towards the CS instruction could link to the view that teaching CSs provided students with a new approach to achieving their goals of communication, whether or not they were proficient in English. They were encouraged to take risks in interactions and to focus on getting the meaning across rather than focusing on forms. Focusing on meaning may lessen students' anxiety about trying to produce perfect English so that they may feel more relaxed and enjoy their interactions in English. This is supported by Manchón (2000) who points out that teaching CSs helps develop students' tolerant attitudes towards language errors so that they become more confident and willing to participate in interaction. Also, by using the CSs they were learning, the students may have felt more secure to stay in the conversation and therefore gain more opportunities to be exposed to more linguistic resources. This view supports A. D. Cohen and Dörnyei's (2002) statement that CSs "extend the learners' communicative means beyond the constraints of target-language proficiency and consequently help to increase their linguistic confidence as well" (p. 179). Furthermore, similar to that reported by Kongsom (2009), students appeared to be more self-confident in interactions, according to the reflections made by students' on their learning from Lessons 1 to 6. This finding seemed to indicate that once students are able to solve problems successfully, they may become more confident and accustomed to dealing with unforeseen problems in other situations. These skills and confidence led them to becoming more willing to be engaged in the interactions. Such confidence and positive attitudes towards oral interactions are not an explicit criteria for speaking assessments, but supportive of enhanced performance in oral communication (Brown, 2007).

Another possible explanation for students' positive attitudes towards the CS instruction is that this instruction focused on oral communication which was highly related to the students' tourism context. Normally they had few opportunities to use and

practice such skills in their EFL classrooms. Classroom pre-task activities in the CS lessons, such as describing tourism related objects and reviewing CSs used in the previous lessons, also promoted students' involvement and created an active learning atmosphere for the whole class, in which they took turns performing tasks in front of the class or participated in brainstorming discussions. Oral communicative tasks in the CS lessons, such as describing objects, explaining proverbs, and oral presentation of Thai temples, also enhanced the students' motivation to communicate in the target language. These tasks were new for them, and such novelty can foster a pleasant learning atmosphere. The tasks were also relevant to their needs in the tourism contexts and involved the native English speaking interlocutor, which helped promote meaningful and authentic communication. According to A. D. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002), these features help generate and maintain learners' motivation in learning and using the target language. These findings also support Macaro's (2001) statements that students generally feel more motivated and pay more attention when they are experiencing new learning activities, and such affective conditions therefore may positively affect their progress in learning. In this study, such attention and motivation appeared to lead to learning progress as the majority of the students found the CS instruction useful in terms of expanding their linguistic resources. Such oral language learning progress can also lead to greater linguistic confidence to communicate in English as a way of improving their oral communication performance.

The CS instruction, to some extent, contributed to positive attitudes and higher motivation for English language learning and interaction. However, it was found that the number of students participating in the CS lessons gradually decreased from Lesson 1 to 6. This result could be linked to the fact that the CS instruction was a short voluntary course without a grading system and not one of the compulsory courses of the

tourism programme. Therefore, some students were more likely to spend their available free time to complete assignments and prepare themselves for the mid-term exams as their priority. Integrating the CS instruction in the EFL compulsory courses of the tourism programme could overcome this attendance issue. As suggested from Maleki's (2007) study, including the CS instruction in students' major courses helped ensure exposure to CSs and their benefits for achievement and confidence in oral communication.

#### **7.4.3 Conclusion of the improvement in students' oral communication performance through the communication strategy instruction**

The current action research suggests that teaching CSs can contribute to raising students' awareness of both language and CS use, as well as promote positive attitudes towards the CS instruction. Such awareness and attitudes are seen as supportive to the ongoing development of language learning and improvement in interactions in English. It is recommended that extending the time for teaching and practising CSs would more fully develop students' knowledge of CS use. Teaching CSs should also be integrated into the English language course to ensure that all students can gain benefits from their full participation and involvement in the language classroom.

### **7.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the key findings from the three phases of classroom action research have been discussed in relation to the four research questions and with support from previous literature. The significance of teaching CSs was discussed in terms of the

needs and teaching of CSs, and the contributions to students' oral communication performance.

Firstly, eight CSs were considered useful for tourism students and therefore should be taught. They were discussed in terms of their effectiveness for solving communication, developing language awareness, and improving students' oral communication performance. These CSs included circumlocution, approximation, literal translation, self-repair, and self-rephrasing as achievement strategies for compensating for linguistic and sociolinguistic gaps. By using these CSs, students' language flexibility is fostered so they creatively apply and modify their language resources as a way to develop the procedural knowledge of the language and improve the quality of messages delivered. Lexicalised fillers, although not directly helping to compensate for linguistic gaps, are useful for filling pauses and maintaining the flow of the communication. In addition, two types of interactional strategies, direct appeals for help and modified interaction are also important for negotiating the meaning and establish mutual understanding between speakers.

It is interesting to note that students need to learn different types of CSs in order to become more proficient and able to improve their oral performance. The medium level students who were able to use effective CSs, such as circumlocution, also needed to use interactional strategies to further improve their oral communication performance. The lower level students needed to learn to use alternative CSs such as approximation, literal translation, self-correction, and interactional strategies when they were unable to either deliver intended meaning or have access to more sophisticated CSs.

Secondly, key findings regarding how to teach CSs were discussed to support the explicit teaching of CSs. Key considerations for teaching CSs were seen to involve

teaching a wide range of CSs, utilising a variety of communicative tasks, and also teaching linguistic knowledge. These three pedagogical aspects were considered important for encouraging students to develop their own choices of CSs according to their preference, language ability, and situations and for promoting the balance and the quality of CS use.

Lastly, the contributions of CS instruction to improve students' oral communication performance were discussed in terms of raising students' awareness of language and CSs and enhancing positive attitudes towards language learning and interactions in English. The development of interrelated areas of knowledge of language and CSs, supported by positive attitudes for learning and interaction, can lead to improvement in their oral communication performance.

The key findings in this discussion chapter suggest that the integration of CSs could lead to further implications for teaching and researching into CSs in this Thai tourism programme context. These implications include the teaching of metacognition for students to manage their own use of CSs, adding a problem-solving discussion task and classroom interaction to maximise the use of CSs, as well as extending the time for implementing CS instruction and integrating teaching CSs into the EFL and English for Specific Purpose classes to ensure students become more effective users of CSs and language. These implications will be discussed further in the next Chapter.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Introduction

This thesis focused on a classroom action research study which aimed to develop the communication strategy instruction for fourth year undergraduate Thai EFL tourism students. The conclusions of this study are presented in this final chapter. A summary of the research process is presented, followed by research contributions and implications. The limitations of the present study are then addressed and recommendations are made for future research. The researcher's final conclusions are provided at the end of the chapter which highlight the necessity and significance of explicit teaching of CSs for Thai EFL tourism students.

### 8.2 Summary of the research process

Communication strategies are useful techniques for solving problems as well as enhancing communication in intercultural contexts. Therefore, it is also important to include CSs in teaching and learning English to enable students to employ CSs adequately, appropriately and effectively, and to improve their oral communication performance. The current classroom action research was undertaken to develop the CS instruction for the undergraduate Thai tourism students. To gain insights into teaching CSs, this research involved the investigation of students' needs, key CSs to be taught, the ways to teach CSs, and contributions of teaching CSs, which were part of the research questions:

1) What CSs do students need to acquire to become more proficient in their oral communication performance?

2) What CSs could be taught to improve students' oral communication performance?

3) How should CSs be taught to maximise the improvement in students' oral communication performance?

4) In what way does the implementation of the CS instruction improve students' oral communication performance?

This classroom action research was undertaken in three phases of data collection and analysis. The first phase investigated the students' needs for CS instruction based on their oral communication performance in the pre-assessment. The second phase developed and implemented the CS instruction, along with collecting and analysing feedback on students' learning and the CS lessons from the students' self-report questionnaires and my teaching journals. The last phase examined students' oral communication performance in the post-assessment and compared those with the pre-assessment.

### **8.3 Research contributions**

This research makes noteworthy contributions with the use of an action research approach in the field of CSs and the teaching of CSs. The contributions to research in this field are discussed in terms of: 1) knowledge of effective communication strategies, 2) knowledge of teaching communication strategies, and 3) knowledge of research practice.

### **8.3.1 Knowledge of effective communication strategies**

The research revealed that eight CSs played effective roles in helping tourism students solve problems in oral communication, enhance their interactions, and develop their language learning in general. Circumlocution and lexicalised fillers were found to be the most effective CSs for improving students' oral communication performance. Other CSs, including self-correction strategies, interactional strategies, approximation, and literal translation proved to be alternatives for students who are unable to use more sophisticated CSs because of the limitation of their language proficiency. The study also revealed that students needed to learn different types of CSs, depending on their levels of oral communication performance. Medium level students using mostly effective CSs also needed to use more interactional strategies and lower level students needed to use not only effective strategies, but also alternative strategies which were easier to access.

### **8.3.2 Knowledge of teaching communication strategies**

The results of this classroom action research also makes several contributions to the current literature regarding teaching CSs. Firstly, the findings provide additional evidence to support the arguments for the necessity of explicit teaching of CSs (Dörnyei, 1995; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2005) and also challenges those who disagree with teaching CSs explicitly such as Bialystok (1990) and Kellerman (1991). This study found that the explicit teaching of CSs was beneficial for students to improve their oral communication performance, particularly in terms of raising students' awareness of using CSs. Teaching CSs also helped develop students' awareness of their vocabulary, pronunciation, and the role that grammar plays in oral communication. In addition, teaching CSs promoted positive attitudes towards language learning and oral interaction. Explicit teaching CSs is useful as a new approach for enhancing the

effectiveness of communicative language teaching in Thailand which aims to focus and promote oral communication in an intercultural context of EFL students (Wiriyaichitra, 2002).

The study also strongly suggests broadening the aims of teaching CSs to focus on using CSs adequately, appropriately, and effectively, rather than just using them more extensively. Many previous studies have examined the effectiveness of teaching CSs on the basis of the frequency of students' use of CSs after the CS instruction. However, the findings from this study shows that overuse of specific CSs may not help improve students' oral communication performance so the quality of using CSs should be the focus, instead of emphasising quantity. This means that EFL teacher should be aware of the difference between "adequate" and "frequent" use of CSs, and guide students to use a variety of CSs to solve communication problems, rather than relying on few particular types of CSs.

In addition, this study suggests practical ways to teach these CSs such as teaching the range of CSs along with linguistic knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar for oral communication). The study also highlights the significance of using culture-specific situations and terminology and having an English speaking interlocutor as key elements of communicative tasks to stimulate students' use of CSs and promote intercultural communication. These two elements are very useful for EFL teachers who want to promote and are involved in intercultural communication in their classroom. As consequence of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Thailand's tertiary education situation has recently moved towards educational exchange programmes between ASEAN institutes and also admitting international students from ASEAN countries to attend Thai universities and institutions. In this

context, intercultural communication inevitably exists, in and outside the classroom, and with these culture-specific situations and misunderstandings.

### **8.3.3 Knowledge of research practice**

This study shows that classroom action research is a successful approach for researching the teaching of CSs. While most research on teaching CSs has been quantitative-based (e.g., Maleki, 2007; Nakatani, 2005) and mixed-methods (e.g., Kongsom, 2009; Lam, 2006), this study adopted a classroom action research approach to investigating the process and content involved in the teaching of CSs to tourism students to improve their oral communication performance. The dynamic process of this approach enabled the collection of in-depth data, regarding students' needs to use CSs, the selection of CSs to teach, how to teach them, and ways the teaching of CSs affected the oral communication performance of students with different levels of English competency.

The classroom action research was time consuming, however it combined research and teaching practice of CSs to meet the complex and dynamic real-life classroom situations. Needs analysis in Phase One was an initial and important process that provided an overview of students' prior knowledge of CSs in order to select the CSs to teach and plan the CS instruction. In Phase Two, the ongoing self-reflective processes of classroom action research enabled continual selection of CSs and development of the CS instruction to meet students' needs that constantly changed and emerged along their learning process. Engaging in the research context as a teacher researcher and implementing the CS instruction, along with continual reflections enabled me to experiment and examine the application of CS theory, as ways to

improve practice. This is an important advantage of using classroom action research (Burns, 2010). In Phase Three, comparing students' oral communication performance before and after the CS instruction enabled me to examine the outcome of my teaching practice.

All three phases involved utilising many methods for collecting data and included critical friends as additional sources of perspectives to improve my teaching. Triangulation of methods through pre- and post-assessments, students' self-report questionnaires, my teaching journals, critical friend reflections, and myself as teacher researcher strengthened the rigor of the action research (Piggot-Irvine, 2009). These three action research phases could be continued in an iterative and ongoing process to further investigate the teaching of CSs in my context and could also be extended to other English language teaching and learning areas in the tourism programme.

Another contribution of this research is the reflection and ongoing improvement of my teaching practice through the classroom action research. In this study, I integrated an action research process to develop and improve the CS instruction and conceptualised the resulting process into the three phases. To further expand my experience as an action researcher, it is recommended that a continuous and longer study would allow more flexible choices of direction to achieve further reflection and improvement in my teaching practice. In addition, the implications and recommendations from this study can be considered in an effort to continue improving my teaching practice, when I return to teach next year at this Thai university, in the English for tourism courses. Also, similar classroom action research project could be encouraged to improve practice for other Thai EFL teachers, particularly for new Thai EFL teacher researchers seeking ongoing improvement in their teaching practice. This

could be used as a form of professional development for the Thai tertiary EFL teachers in the local context.

## **8.4 Implications of this study**

Action research is commonly conducted in a specific context and the findings are not commonly generalised to other contexts (Piggot-Irvine, 2009). However, action research can provide implications and recommendations that might be useful for other similar research contexts (McGee, 1999), such as tourism programmes in other Thai universities. The current classroom action research, which involved the development of CS instruction for Thai EFL tourism students, has provided several pedagogical implications for teaching and learning CSs for EFL undergraduate students studying Tourism in this tertiary institution in the north of Thailand. These implications include 1) integrating CSs into English for Tourism courses, 2) broadening the aims of teaching and learning CSs, 3) practising CSs through classroom interaction, 4) creating real-life intercultural communication contexts, and 5) considering students' individual differences for studying CSs.

### **8.4.1 Integrating communication strategies into English for Tourism courses**

This study showed that tourism students with different levels of oral communication performance appeared to benefit from the CS instruction. Therefore, it is beneficial to integrate teaching CSs into the regular English for Tourism courses for these Thai students. Such integration can provide these students who have different levels of oral proficiency with equal opportunities to learn CSs, develop their strategic competence, and consistently practise using CSs along with their linguistic knowledge

and communicative tasks relevant to their course objectives. Consistent and long-term practice using CSs in these classes would also promote their ability to effectively manage their own choice of CSs.

Based on the policy of the English language curricula in Thailand, CSs are included in all English language courses as key skills Thai EFL students have to achieve (Wiriyaichitra, 2002). However, this policy seems to challenge EFL teachers to put this into practice. The possible reasons are that Thai EFL teachers may not be aware of, or uncertain about, the significance of teaching CSs and may not know how to teach CSs (Goh, 2012). Particularly, many teachers in Thailand rely on EFL textbooks which contain little or no practice of CSs. They also focus more on teaching vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing than speaking and listening which are more difficult to teach and time-consuming (Khamkhien, 2010). Therefore, it is important for the Thai EFL teachers designing and teaching English for Tourism courses to be more informed about understanding how to teach CSs in their classrooms while maintaining a balance between teaching CSs and other areas in the English for tourism courses. The possible means of informing teachers about how to integrate teaching CSs in their course is through seminars and workshops. These venues should enable teachers to design their course outlines to include language components with corresponding communicative tasks and pre-task activities which promote both language learning and CSs.

#### **8.4.2 Broadening the aims of teaching and learning communication strategies**

This research broadens the understanding of how to effectively teach CSs and suggests focusing on raising students' awareness of using CSs adequately, appropriately, and effectively, rather than using CSs extensively. Therefore, the Thai

EFL teachers need to reconceptualise their understanding of these aims, possibly through seminar and workshop on teaching CSs. Students should also be informed about the aim for teaching CSs so that they know not only the advantages of using CSs but also the drawbacks of overusing them. They should also be encouraged to use a wide range of appropriate expression for target CSs. They should also be stimulated to use different types of CSs through different task types and use a cluster of CSs in order to effectively achieve their goal of communication.

#### **8.4.3 Practising communication strategies through classroom interaction**

Consistent practice of CSs through classroom interactions in general EFL and English for tourism courses is a way to promote the use of CSs. For example, students may ask teachers to provide linguistic knowledge (e.g., appropriate words), to repeat the questions, and to clarify their explanations. Teachers can also be models using the expressions that negotiate meaning (e.g., using modified interaction strategies for checking students' understanding) and stalling for time strategies (e.g., using English lexicalised fillers to gain time to think about the answer to students' questions). Consistent practice through classroom interaction would help students to become more familiar with English expressions for CSs and which they could then automatically apply.

#### **8.4.4 Creating real-life intercultural communication contexts**

The study suggests that English speaking interlocutors and culture-specific situations and terminology are important elements of realistic and authentic communicative tasks to stimulate students' use of CSs in the tourism classes. It would

be beneficial for teachers to create real-life intercultural communication in the classrooms to foster the use of CSs. English speaking interlocutors, international students, and overseas staff could be invited to interact with students in the classroom, whenever possible. There are also possible ways to promote intercultural communication among Thai monolingual classroom without English speaking interlocutors, for example, students taking turns describing culture-specific situations and terminology from other countries. Students can also be asked to describe rare ancient objects from their hometown and give the literal meanings of local names of places.

#### **8.4.5 Considering students' individual differences for studying communication strategies**

The study revealed that students with different levels of oral communication performance had different needs and approaches to use of CSs to improve their oral communication performance. Teachers should be aware of such differences. The choice of CSs to teach should not be limited only to effective CSs which are commonly linguistically demanding (e.g., circumlocution) which seemed to accommodate proficient students. Teaching useful alternative CSs for less proficient students (e.g., approximation and literal translation) which can also lead them to achieve similar communicative goals, could help gain students' confidence to gradually develop their strategic competence. Students could also learn to combine two or more CSs to elaborate and express more variety of messages. Teaching all students' language features, such as core vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar that play important roles in oral communication, are also the way to ensure all students have sufficient language background to use CSs and perform the appropriate communicative tasks.

Furthermore, adding activities to raising students' metacognitive awareness is a way to encourage students, with different levels of oral proficiency, to use CSs adequately, appropriately, and effectively. Nakatani (2005) suggests using students' diaries to review their use of CSs, make plans to use CSs and to prepare linguistic knowledge for the upcoming task, and evaluate their own performance and CS use. Based on Nakatani (2005)'s idea, teachers can devise CS booklets with descriptions and examples. This CS booklet could also have blanks to fill in additional CSs with descriptions and examples that emerge during the students' instructional periods. There could also be a section in which students can note and evaluate their own use of CSs after performing different tasks to initiate their awareness of CSs. Teachers would need to provide a brief session in introducing key CSs as well as how to use the booklet in the course orientation at the beginning of the semester. Students should also be encouraged to constantly reflect and evaluate on their own use of CSs after performing tasks during their instructional periods. These uses should be practised with the positive supervision of teachers, who may briefly review students' use of the booklet by brainstorming discussions in class.

## **8.5 Limitations of this study and recommendations for future research**

This section acknowledges some limitations of the current action research. Two major limitations that may affect the findings of this research involved sample size and time, as addressed in the following page.

### **8.5.1 Sample size limitation**

The number of participants who signed the consent form was 24 in total. However, 22 students participated in the pre-assessment, comprising 11 medium level students and 11 lower level students. Only 10 of these students participated in the post-assessment, including eight medium level students and two lower level students. Eight of these ten students had attended and completed all six lessons of the CS instruction. One from improved group and another from unchanged group had not completed all lessons as they did not attend the last two lessons. Due to the dropout rate from Phase One to Phase Three, the findings from this study might not well represent the diversity of undergraduate Thai EFL tourism students in the research context. However, because of the triangulation of the four sources of data and because of the action research methodology, this approach provided in-depth insights into students' use of CSs.

### **8.5.2 Time limitation**

The current study was also limited by time, with only nine weeks available in the research setting. With time limitation, only six CS lessons developed in the CS instruction and these could not fully improve students' strategic competence. More time was needed to further improve the teaching practice of CSs. Also, with this time limitation, this classroom action research became rather linear and prescribed. More time to conduct classroom action research in the research setting would enable me to be more flexible, adapt and adjust research methods to collect more data. Action research is known to be time consuming because of its complex phases that keep action researchers busy with a series of ongoing actions and reflections (Piggot-Irvine, 2009). This was definitely a challenge in this research.

For further research, a longer study is recommended to be undertaken in several classes of teaching CSs. It would be interesting for a group of EFL teachers to conduct action research in teaching CSs in their classrooms and compare the results of their findings across different EFL classes. It would also be interesting to conduct prolonged exploration of learners' development and transitions of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of CSs. In addition, further research might examine the effectiveness of students' use of CS clusters and transferability of CSs from classroom to real-world contexts.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

This classroom action research concluded that explicitly teaching CSs contributed to improvements in oral communication performance of the fourth year undergraduate Thai EFL tourism students. Importantly, this study has shown that using a classroom action research approach to developing and improving CS instruction linked theory with practice and brought about practical knowledge of teaching CSs in the research context. Such knowledge can be the basis of further teaching and research practice. This study suggests that classroom action research can be the most appropriate means for ongoing professional development of Thai EFL teachers and for developing EFL students' language learning, the major aim for all teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

I argue that teaching CSs is important and essential for undergraduate EFL students, particularly in this increasing globalised intercultural context. Teaching CSs enables students to cope with problems that may be caused by intercultural communication, and therefore enhance their ability to communicate with different

people around the world. Explicit teaching of CSs is also important in EFL classrooms which generally comprise students' with different levels of language proficiency, learning styles, and preferences. Teaching CSs provides equal opportunities to all students to improve their oral communication performance.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1 Pre-assessment

### Task 1: Describe these culture-specific topics in English.

You have one minute for preparation, then one minute to describe each topic.

#### 1. ศาลพระภูมิ San-Pra-Phoom (Spirit house)

- What is it?
- What is it like?
- What is it for?
- How does it involve Thai people?



#### 2. ไหว้/กราบ Wai/Krap (paying respect)

- When is it done?
- How is it done?
- Why do Thai people do it?



### Task 2: Tell a story about the following festival to a tourist.

You have one minute for preparation and one minute to talk about this festival.

#### ลอยกระทง Loy Krathong

- What is this festival?
- When does it take place?
- What is the purpose of this festival?
- What kinds of activities do Thai people do during this festival?



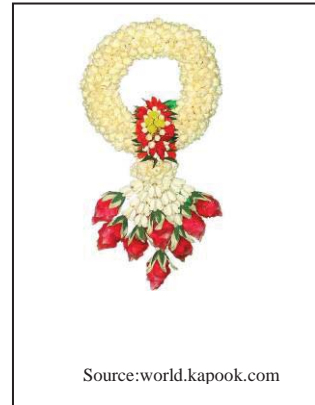
## Appendix 2 Post-assessment

### Task 1: Describe these culture-specific topics in English.

You have one minute for preparation, then one minute to describe each topic.

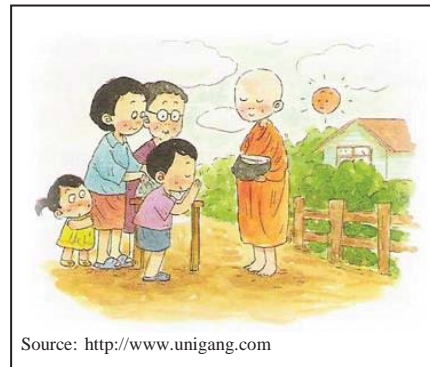
#### 1. พวงมาลัย **Poung Ma Lai (garland)**

- What is it?
- What is it like?
- What is it for?



#### 2. การตักบาตร **Tak Bat (alms giving)**

- What is it?
- When is it done?
- Why do Thai people do it?

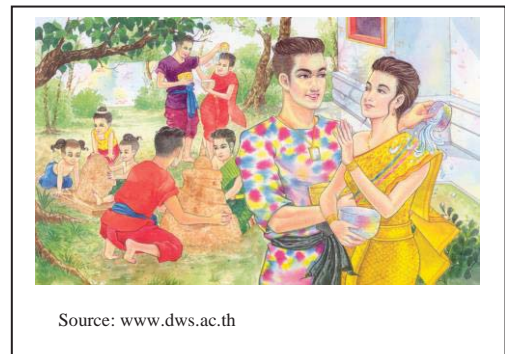


### Task 2: Tell a story about the following ceremony to a tourist.

You have one minute for preparation and one minute to talk about this festival.

#### สงกรานต์ **Songkran**

- What is this festival?
- When does it take place?
- What is the purpose of this festival?
- What kinds of activities do Thai people do in this festival?



## Appendix 3 Pre- and Post-assessment Criteria

Band	Fluency & Coherence	Lexical resource (vocabulary)	Grammatical range & accuracy	Pronunciation
<b>Area-focused</b>	Coherence Fluency	Variety/Appropriateness Idiomatic language/ Formality /Collocation /Paraphrase	Errors & mistake Grammatical range Complex sentence	Word stress/Sound pronunciation/ Chunking /Sentence stress/Intonation
<b>7</b> Good user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently with limited repetition, language-related hesitation, or self-correction</li> <li>uses a wide range of connective words or phrases to link ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary including some less common words</li> <li>uses appropriate style and collocation, with small number of inappropriate choice</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of complex sentences with minor grammatical errors</li> <li>uses a range of grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has clear pronunciation</li> <li>speaks with appropriate word stress with minor errors that do not affect comprehension</li> <li>able to chunk phrases together</li> </ul>
<b>6</b> Competent user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to speak continuously although with some repetition, self-correction or hesitation</li> <li>shows ability to seek clarification</li> <li>uses fillers instead of keeping silent</li> <li>uses a few different connective words/phrases or sometimes use a variety of connectors but not always appropriately</li> <li>shows some ability to extend information but not always successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary but can be limited when discussing unfamiliar topics</li> <li>able to communicate with appropriate word choice but sometimes use formal language and word combination inappropriately</li> <li>usually rephrases sentences successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts to use a mix of simple and complex structures</li> <li>frequently makes grammatical mistakes, particularly in complex structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has clear pronunciation</li> <li>can generally be understood throughout</li> <li>mispronunciation reduces clarity occasionally</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> Modest user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently using simple communication</li> <li>in some complex communication, speaks slowly and uses repetition, self-correction of word and grammar choice</li> <li>often uses particular connective words repeatedly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses appropriate words repeatedly to discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics</li> <li>shows little knowledge of the different levels of formality</li> <li>makes a number of errors in word combination, leading to confusion</li> <li>sometimes paraphrases but not always successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>successfully uses simple grammatical structures</li> <li>sometimes makes grammatical errors leading to comprehension problems at times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>occasional mispronunciation but can be understood</li> <li>attempts to use a range of clear pronunciation</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> Limited user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks with noticeable pauses, frequent repetition and self correction</li> <li>usually speaks slowly when discussing unfamiliar topics</li> <li>links some basic sentences</li> <li>uses simple connectors repeatedly</li> <li>delivers unclear information related to complex topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses short simple words to discuss unfamiliar topics</li> <li>frequently uses inappropriate word choice</li> <li>rarely attempts to paraphrase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes frequent errors, leading to misunderstanding</li> <li>attempts to use simple structures repeatedly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of pronunciation features</li> <li>attempts to control features such as rising/ falling intonation, but lapses are frequent</li> <li>occasional mispronunciation causes some comprehension problems for the listener</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> Extremely limited user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks with long pauses</li> <li>may not be able to answer complex questions</li> <li>mostly unable to link basic sentences</li> <li>delivers short messages that sometimes do not link with the questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses simple vocabulary to discuss familiar topics</li> <li>discusses unfamiliar topics with insufficient vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses basic structures but not always successfully and relies on memorised expressions</li> <li>makes a number of errors when creating their own sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speech is sometimes unintelligible</li> <li>mispronunciations often cause difficulty for the listener</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 Example of the CS Lesson

### Lesson 3 Thai proverbs

#### A: Match Thai proverbs with their meanings.

1. Follow the majority, if you are minority; adapt to situations and people around you.
2. Someone who behaves as if they are more important or cleverer than they really are
3. It is always better to work with another person to solve a problem.
4. To escape a danger only to meet another

สองหัวดีกว่าหัวเดียว	หนีเสือปะจระเข้	เข้าเมืองตาหลิ่ว ต้องหลิ่วตาตาม	เห็นช้างขี้ ขี้ตามช้าง
<b>Two heads are better than one</b>	<b>Out of the frying pan, into the fire.</b>	<b>When in Rome, do as the Romans do.</b>	<b>Too big for your boots</b>
			
Source: <a href="http://dvogelsang.blogspot.com">dvogelsang.blogspot.com</a>	Source: <a href="http://www.EngTest.net">www.EngTest.net</a>	Source: <a href="http://quizasunaexpressinglesameayude.blogspot.com">quizasunaexpressinglesameayude.blogspot.com</a>	Source: <a href="http://www.legendnews.net">www.legendnews.net</a>

#### How to describe Thai proverb

##### 1. Identifying purposes

- It's used to describe human behaviour (เข้าเมืองตาหลิ่ว ต้องหลิ่วตาตาม)
- It's used to describe forbidden behaviour (เห็นช้างขี้ ขี้ตามช้าง)
- It's used to teach woman (Fine feathers make fine birds= ไก่งามเพราะขน คนงามเพราะแต่ง)
- It's used to describe working situation (By hook or by crook= ไม่ได้ด้วยเล่ห์ ก็เอาด้วยกล)
- It's used to admire someone (To hit the nail right on the head = พุดได้ตรงประเด็น)

##### 2. Providing literal meaning

- Escape from a tiger to be eaten by a crocodile. (หนีเสือปะจระเข้)
- When in the city of the slanted-eyed, do squint your eyes.  
When you enter a town where people wink, wink as they do. (เข้าเมืองตาหลิ่ว ต้องหลิ่วตาตาม)
- See an elephant defecate and try to defecate as much. (เห็นช้างขี้ ขี้ตามช้าง)

##### 3. Comparing

- Crocodiles and tigers refer to danger, they can harm human. (หนีเสือปะจระเข้)
- A bird represents a woman, its feathers represent woman's clothes. (ไก่งามเพราะขน คนงามเพราะแต่ง)

##### 4. Exemplifying situations

- If you get out of one problem, but find yourself in a worse situation, you are out of the frying pan, into the fire.
- If you dress elegantly, people will think you are elegant. (ไก่งามเพราะขน คนงามเพราะแต่ง)

### Task sheet: Lesson 3

**Task :** Working in pair to describe each Thai proverb in English to class

- |                                       |                                |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) สวยแต่รูปจูบไม่หอม                 | 2) ไม้อ่อนค้ำง่าย ไม้แก่ค้ำยาก | 3) อิงกระสุนนัดเดียวได้นกสองตัว  |
| 4) ระยะทางพิสูจน์ม้า กาลเวลาพิสูจน์คน | 5) ราไม่ดีโทษपीโทษกลอง         | 6) สาวไส้ให้กากิน                |
| 7) อย่าจับปลาสองมือ                   | 8) ว่าแต่เขาอิเหนาเป็นเอง      | 9) ขวานผ่าซาก                    |
| 10) จี้ข้างจับตักแตน                  | 11) เส้นผมบังภูเข              | 12) สำเนียงส่อภาษา กิริยาส่อสกุล |

Listen to your friends explaining the proverbs. Then match each proverb explanation with its English equivalence.

- a) To kill two birds with one stone (.....)
- b) You can't have your cake and eat it (.....)
- c) It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks (.....)
- d) The pot calls the kettle black. (.....)
- e) Calling a spade a spade. (.....)
- f) Looking for a needle in a haystack. (.....)
- g) Do not wash dirty linen in public. (.....)
- h) A bad workman blames his tools. (.....)
- i) Beauty without grace is a violet without smell. (.....)
- j) Time will tell. (.....)
- k) To use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. (.....)
- l) Manners make the man. (.....)

## Appendix 5 Students' Self-report Questionnaire

**The Development of the CS Instruction (OCSI)  
for Undergraduate Students in a Tourism Education Programme in Thailand**

**Student's Self-Report Questionnaire**

*This questionnaire will be used for improving the CS lessons, not for assessing your English proficiency.  
Please feel free to answer the questions.*

**Part I: Your oral performance**

**Instructions:** Choose 3 statements that are likely to describe you when communicating in English.

*Rank them from 1-3 (1=most likely, 2=more likely, and 3=likely).*

You can also write additional information in Thai and/or English in the space.

- 1) What were the major areas of your communication problems?  
\_\_\_ a) Speaking                      \_\_\_ b) Listening                      \_\_\_ c) Pronunciation  
\_\_\_ d) Vocabulary                    \_\_\_ e) Others (*please specify*) .....
  
- 2) What situations likely occurred when you communicated with others in English?  
\_\_\_ a) I spoke with many pauses.  
\_\_\_ b) I had very hard time thinking about words I should use to communicate with others.  
\_\_\_ c) I couldn't catch what the interlocutor asked.  
\_\_\_ d) I took much time to think how to make English sentences.  
\_\_\_ e) Others (*please specify*) .....
  
- 3) What did you do to ease the difficulties in your oral communication?  
\_\_\_ a) I used fillers such as "Well" and "Let me see" instead of keeping silent.  
\_\_\_ b) I used simple/familiar words to communicate with others.  
\_\_\_ c) I gave examples to describe something until others understand.  
\_\_\_ d) I tried to speak clearly and loudly.  
\_\_\_ e) I repeated what I want to say until others understood.  
\_\_\_ f) I changed some words that I feel unconfident to use or pronounce.  
\_\_\_ g) Others (*please specify*) .....

**Part II: Your learning performance**

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions about the lesson in Thai and/or English.

- 1) What have you learned from this lesson?  
.....
- 2) What do you like and/or dislike about this lesson?  
.....
- 3) Do you think this lesson is useful for improving your English oral performance?  
.....
- 4) What would you like to learn in the next lesson?  
.....
- 5) Other comments  
.....

**Thank you☺**

## Appendix 6 Example of My Teaching Journal

### **Journal 3: Design, Pilot and implementation of lesson 3**

#### **Monday 21 June 2010: Design**

This lesson was designed based on the reflection from the previous lesson where the English speaking teacher was the focus as to promote students to talk more and use more CSs to cope with problems in communication with people from different culture background. Further, I chose Thai and English proverb as the main part of the lesson. This idea came up from my daily conversation with the English speaking teacher last week about Thai and English proverb equivalence. While talking about many Thai proverbs, I found myself using a lot of CSs and conversation style (e.g., giving examples, literal meaning, explanation, comparison and contrast). Proverbs in each country are related to cultural and social background of the home country. This is challenging especially when talking with people from a different country who has a different cultural and social background. My friend who teaches tourism subject area also found this is a common topic among tourist and a tour guide when they travel around and do activities in the local places.

Therefore, the aim of this lesson was to practice using circumlocution and approximation when students are explaining Thai proverbs to the English speaking teacher. The lesson I designed comprised three key activities. The first part was warming-up where I showed examples of Thai proverbs and asked students to match them in English. Then, I taught and gave some examples of language repertoire in describing Thai proverb (e.g. identifying purpose, providing literal meaning, comparing, and exemplifying the situations).

The second part was practicing describing Thai proverbs in class (two students per a proverb, helping each other describe until their friends can guess) and let their friends guess what proverb was described. After practicing the second part, students worked in a group of three and described a Thai proverb to the English speaking teacher who tried to match it with the equivalent English proverb.

#### **Wednesday 23 June 2010: Pilot**

The pilot was undertaken with two students. Still, I found this task took time so I tried to choose the proverb that was common known by Thai students and had equivalent English proverbs because many proverbs were found too difficult to describe while some had many different meaning that might cause confusions.

### **Thursday 24 June 2010: Implementation**

Students cooperated well in this lesson. After warming up with examples and linguistic tools, they were enthusiastic in explaining a proverb to the class. Although challenging, this lesson allowed students to use language more extensively than the previous task, describing objects to each other. It was challenging but fun (as they laughed often). At the beginning, although each pair explained the proverb well, but provided a short description so the rest of the class couldn't guess what proverb being described. Then, I convinced them to talk more by considering four aspects of describing proverb taught at the beginning of the class. They did well by being aware of these aspects. Literal meaning was used often and it helped facilitate understanding a proverb.

In part three, students in group talked with the English speaking teacher who matched the described Thai proverb with an equivalent proverb. I think students did well, all proverb were matched correctly. Here were some examples: the English speaking teacher convinced them to talk more, although he can match them all but still let them explain in more details. Students used some CSs taught before including approximation (e.g. action, behaviour), and circumlocution (e.g., giving examples, describing purpose of action, giving examples of the related situations). Literal meaning was also commonly used but it was very difficult to understand especially when it was used as the first attempt. Fillers were also used such as like, something like, well, let me see, etc.. They practiced vocabulary strategies through real-life communication with the English speaking teacher and gain confidence.

#### **Students' self-assessments**

As they mention, the major problem are vocabulary & listening. They speak with many pauses and cannot catch the NS speech. To cope with this problem, they report that they used use simple words, use of fillers, give examples, speak clearly and loudly, and repetition.

#### **Students' feedback on the lesson**

Students report that they have learned comparing Thai and English literal meaning of idiom, translation, new words, and giving examples. They like the lesson because it is fun and comprises new activities. They also thought the lesson useful as it gained a range of vocabulary and ability in explanation, developed English ability, used simple sentence, as well as develop practical and simple words that were useful for everyday life. In the next lesson, they want to learn about many things such as storytelling. It also allows them to describe different words, simplify complex sentence, history, food, costume, festival, interview technique, word order in a sentence, listening, and worldwide tour.

### **Friday 25 June 2010: Reflection**

Students used a variety of strategies to cope with communication problem when they interacted with the interlocutor. I think this was because the nature of the task that stimulated them to use CSs particularly circumlocution and approximation. The interlocutor also encouraged them to describe and explain more. He said that this task was unique and promoted language use in the tourism field. Although there were some long pauses in the conversation with the English speaking teacher, I'm glad that some students are aware of using fillers rather keeping quiet. They described and explained more as the English speaking teacher always convinces them to explain in more details. These situations promote the use of CSs very well. However, listening problem still found unsolved. In the conversation with the interlocutor, some students did not seem to ask the interlocutor for help and repetition, as well as checking and confirming his understandings. I think this point should be focused in the further lesson.

This was my favourite lessons. It facilitated students to use English purposefully, very interesting topic while challenging to do so. Students had to talk more to describe such cultural related proverb to the one who doesn't share the same culture. Further, giving them language repertoire how to describe the proverb made them more confident to describe and were aware of it when describing the Thai proverb to the English speaking teacher. Practice individually or in pair took so long time but worth doing so. This is because I wanted individual students to have equal opportunity to practice speaking. While one practices speaking, the rest of the class practiced listening as they were required listening what has been described and matched them with Thai proverbs.

## Appendix 7 Institution Consent Form



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

**Dear President**

My name is Supornphan Konchiab. I am studying for a PhD (Education) at Massey University, New Zealand. **I am writing to ask you for your approval to carry out my research with the fourth year students in the Tourism Department at Chiang Mai campus.** The title of my research project is "The development of oral communication strategy instruction (OCSI) for undergraduate students in a tourism education programme in Thailand". The research will be guided by three research questions:

- a) *What do tourism students need to improve in their oral performance?*
- b) *What and how OCSI can be taught and refined to meet the students' needs?*
- c) *What are the effects of this OCSI on students' oral performance?*

The aim of the research is to develop the OCSI short course for improving in oral proficiency of the undergraduate students in tourism education programme in Thailand. The OCSI will be undertaken as a short course 3 hours a week for 8 weeks. I will teach this short course outside students' regular study plan and the course is not assessed or graded. All fourth year students in tourism would be invited to participate in the research, those who volunteer will be included in the research.

### **Project Procedures**

The research will be carried out in three phases for 8 weeks in semester 1:

Phase 1: Needs analysis will be conducted in the 1<sup>st</sup> week (3 hours) of the OCSI short course. All participating students will be asked to perform pre-oral evaluation with an English speaking teacher. Their performance will be audio recorded and evaluated by an English speaking teacher and an EFL teacher.

Phase 2: Designing, implementing, and refined the OCSI short course will be undertaken for 6 weeks (18 hours) in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> week of the short course. All participating students will be asked to study the OCSI lessons weekly for 6 weeks. They will complete the self-report questionnaires outside their study time after the study of the OCSI short course. The questionnaire will be distributed and collected by the secretary of the tourism department.

Phase 3: Evaluating the effects of the OCSI on students' oral performance will be conducted in the 8<sup>th</sup> week (3 hours). All participating students will be asked to perform post-oral evaluation with an English speaking teacher. Their performance will be audio recorded and evaluated by an English speaking teacher and an EFL teacher.

Every care will be taken to protect the identity of the participants and the institution in data collection, reports, presentations and publications on the research.

All data generated will be securely stored for a period of five years, and it will then be destroyed.

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Letter Requesting Access to Institutions

Page 1 of 2

Te Kunenga  
ki Pūrehuroa

Institute of Education

Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 [www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)

### Participant's Rights

Participants would have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time;
- review the audio recordings of their oral performance;
- withdraw from the research at anytime;
- ask any questions about the research at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that *their* name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the research findings when it is concluded.

### Project Contacts

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact:

1. The researcher: Supornphan Konchiab, Tourism department, Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai  
Phone +64211688595(NZ), +6653311447(Thailand),  
email [Supornphan.Konchiab.1@massey.ac.nz](mailto:Supornphan.Konchiab.1@massey.ac.nz)
2. Chief Supervisor: Professor James Chapman, College of Education, Massey University,  
Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, New Zealand, Phone +64 6 356 9099 ext 8938,  
email [j\\_chapman@massey.ac.nz](mailto:j_chapman@massey.ac.nz)
3. Co-Supervisor: Dr. Alyson McGee, School of Educational Studies, College of Education,  
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, New Zealand, Phone +64 6 356  
9099 ext 8830, email [a.mcgee@massey.ac.nz](mailto:a.mcgee@massey.ac.nz)

### Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/69. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email [humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz)

***If you agree that the fourth year students in the Tourism Department at Chiang Mai campus can participate in this research, please sign and return the attached Consent Form.***

Sincerely yours,

Supornphan Konchiab

---

Letter Requesting Access to Institutions

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## Appendix 8 Participant Information Sheet



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

### ***The Development of Oral Communication Strategy Instruction (OCSI) for Undergraduate Students in a Tourism Education Programme in Thailand***

#### **Information Sheet for Participant**

##### **Introduction**

My name is Supomphan Konchiab. I am a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) candidate at College of Education, Massey University in Palmerston North. I am doing a research project about teaching English as a foreign language. The research is supervised by Professor James Chapman, College of Education and Dr. Alyson McGee, School of Educational Studies, College of Education.

##### **Project description and invitation**

The aim of the research is to develop the OCSI short course for improving the oral proficiency of the undergraduate students in the tourism education programme in RMUTL Chiang Mai. The potential participants will be the fourth-year students in tourism who voluntarily participate in this research.

The purpose of this information sheet is to describe my research to you and to invite you to participate in my research project according to your availability and willingness. *However, non-participation will not affect studies.* Every care will be taken to protect your identity in reports, presentations and publications on the research.

##### **What you would do**

You are being invited to participate in the three phases of the research:

##### **Phase 1: Needs analysis**

**Aim:** To explore your learning needs to improve your oral performance, based on oral evaluation prior to the study of the OCSI.

**Time:** 3 hours after class time, starting in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of semester 1.

**What you would do:** You would be asked to perform the five-minute oral evaluation with an English speaking interlocutor. Your performance would be audio recorded and evaluated to see your language needs based on your level of oral proficiency prior to the research. Some will be analysed in greater details. This evaluation is not assessed and graded. However, you are welcome to have a copy of your recording.

**Phase 2: Designing, implementing, and refining the OCSI short course**

**Aim:** To design, implement, and refine the OCSI to meet your learning needs

**Time:** 6 weeks (18 hours) in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> week of the short course.

**What you would do:**

- (i) You would be asked to study the OCSI lessons weekly for 6 weeks. The OCSI will be undertaken as a short course, outside your regular study plan. This course is not assessed or graded. You can benefit from studying this course including improving your oral performance, increasing awareness of using communication strategies to solve communication problems, and encouraging a positive attitude toward communication with English speaking tourists.
- (ii) You would also be asked to complete a self report questionnaire outside your study time after studying the weekly lesson. Distributed and collected by the department secretary, it will take approximately 5 minutes. Your reflection on the self-report questionnaire will be used for collecting feedback to improve and adjust the OCSI lessons to meet your learning needs, not for evaluating your English proficiency.

**Phase 3: Evaluating the effect of the OCSI on students' oral performance**

**Aim:** To evaluate the effect of the OCSI on students' oral performance based on an oral evaluation after studying the OCSI for 6 weeks.

**Time:** 3 hours in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the OCSI short course

**What you would do:** You would be asked to perform a five-minute oral evaluation with the English speaking interlocutor. Your performance would be audio recorded and evaluated to see the effect of the OCSI on your level of oral proficiency. The evaluation is not assessed and graded. You are welcome to have a copy of your recording.

**Data management**

All data generated will be securely stored for a period of five years, and it will then be destroyed.

**Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time;
- review the audio recordings of your oral performance;
- withdraw from the research at anytime;
- ask any questions about the research at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

### **Project Contacts**

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact:

1. The researcher: Supornphan Konchiab, Tourism department, Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai  
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### **Committee Approval Statement**

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/69. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)

*If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the attached Consent Form and return it in a stamped addressed envelope provided within seven days.*

Thank you

Supornphan Konchiab

## Appendix 9 Participant Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

### *The Development of Oral Communication Strategy Instruction (OCSI) for Undergraduate Students in a Tourism Education Programme in Thailand*

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – Participating students

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this research under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Yes

No

I agree to my oral performance in the speaking evaluations being audio recorded.

Yes

No

*I agree to my oral recording being transcribed and analysed by the researcher and I understand I will not be able to correct or change the transcript.*

Yes

No

I would like to have a summary of the findings from the research through e-mail.

Yes (please provide your e-mail address).....  No

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

*If you agree to participate in this study, please return the signed Consent Form in a stamped addressed envelope provided within seven days. Thank you.*