



**THAI NATIVE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF USING
COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
IN EXTENDED EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

BY

CHUENJIT INPRASIT

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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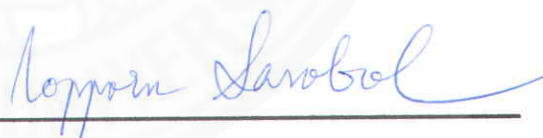
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THAI NATIVE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF USING COMMUNICATIVE
LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EXTENDED EDUCATION SCHOOLS

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

Thailand is a non-English speaking country. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is acutely aware of the significance of English and has promoted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in schools. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate teachers' experiences of using CLT in English language teaching. This study investigates implementation of CLT in English language classrooms, personal opinions of teachers when CLT was implemented in their classroom, problems encountered, solutions to solve those problems, and suggestions to all educational stakeholders. The participants were 20 teachers who were teaching at extended education schools under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3. The criterion-based purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and sorted into 'meaning units' or themes based on research purpose. The emergent results were categorized into three dimensions namely, personal opinions of teachers : the advantages and disadvantages of using CLT: (1) problems; problems of learners, problems of teachers, problems of materials and equipment, and another affecting factors, (2) solutions and (3) suggestions of teachers. The results revealed that teachers and learners who were the agencies of the operation of implementing CLT in extended education school had various difficulties mainly relating to the characteristics of the learners, the low proficiency of the learners and teachers lack of confidence. O-NET, based on linguistic competence, affected effective achievement of CLT. Consequently, Thai native teachers of English need to have a clear initial conception of CLT and need to be continually supported with effective training development programs in both teaching pedagogy and professional English communicative performance.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), experiences of teachers, phenomenological study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
Communicative Language Teaching	(CLT)
English as foreign language	(EFL)
Native English speaking teachers	(NEST)
Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization)	(ONESQA)
Ordinary National Education Test	(O-NET).
Professional Development	(PD)
The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008	(BECC, 2008)
The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	(CEFR)
The Ministry Of Education	MOE
The Office of the Basic Education Commission	(OBEC)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

At the present, English as an international language has definitely become essential in the daily lives of Thai people to serve as an important tool for communication, education, seeking knowledge, livelihood and creating understanding of cultures and visions of the world community. In 2015 Thailand entered the ASEAN economic community, and English has become the official language in this region. Thus, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) has established educational policy through the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 (BECC 2008) for Thai students using English as a foreign language for communication as well as for easier and wider access to bodies of knowledge, and having vision in leading their lives. The learning area for English as a foreign language is aimed at enabling learners to acquire a favorable attitude towards English language, the ability to use English language for communicating in various situations, seeking knowledge, engaging in a livelihood and pursuing further education for lifelong learning.

The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2008) appoints the benchmarks and indicators for implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to teach English as foreign language (EFL) in ordinary classrooms. The main objective of the English education is that students should be able to use language for communication in real situations. Furthermore, students should be able to apply learning experiences in the classroom to real situations in school, community and society. Moreover, they should be able to interpret, and present data, concepts and views on various matters, and create interpersonal relationships appropriately. However, teaching English as a foreign language in extended schools in the Thai educational system has not been successful as graduates still have low levels of English proficiency. Although they have been studying English for many years, they

still cannot communicate in English. Most students have a low level of performance according to standards and indicators of BECC, 2008.

Possible causes of the problem include teachers' pedagogic proficiency, learners' learning abilities, and the implementing of the core curriculum. OBEC has been providing a lot of funding to arrange projects, for example, intensive English camps, and, tutorial camps which are expected to increase the English proficiency of Thai learners in primary schools. In addition, there are a lot of training sessions, seminars and workshops which are intended to develop teachers' English proficiency and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Many of these professional development programs (PD) are concerned with the use of a communicative approach, the approach which is believed to be appropriate for teaching Thai students to be able to communicate in English effectively. After attending the PD programs, teachers are expected to use a communicative approach in their teaching. Some teachers have tried to utilize the activities and techniques they learned from the trainings sessions, while others have still used teaching approaches they were familiar with and felt more comfortable with. Some were successful in implementing a communicative approach, whereas others had difficulties in implementing it. There are a lot of studies on implementing the communicative approach in Thailand, e.g. Darasawang, 2007, Sooksil (2010). However, most of them have been conducted quantitatively. Therefore, in this study, the researcher would like to investigate the teachers' experiences of using communicative approach in English language teaching using a qualitative approach.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of Thai native teachers of English in using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in English language teaching.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question was as follows:

1. What are teachers' experiences of using communicative approach in English language teaching?

The sub-questions were the following:

1. What are their personal opinions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using a communicative approach in teaching English?

2. What problems do they have when using a communicative approach?

3. What are some solutions they think can help solve the problems?

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) refers to the ultimate function of language learning. It is an approach that focuses on learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communication in real-life situations.

Teachers refer to the teachers who teach English in extended schools which are under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3.

Teacher experiences refer to teachers' personal teaching pedagogical knowledge as well as including teachers' comments on the advantages and disadvantages of using the Communicative Language Teaching approach in extended schools.

Extended Education Schools refer to schools that have different levels of education: kindergarten, primary, and junior secondary level that are under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings from this research will increase the understanding of the experiences of teachers as well as all administrators who were actual participants of implementing a communicative approach in teaching English in their schools. This study can be

beneficial for policy makers who would like to develop and implement policy to promote the use of the communicative approach in teaching and learning English effectively.

1.6 STATEMENTS OF PROBLEMS

Plenty of previous research studies have been conducted in the quantitative paradigm which analyzes numeric data collected. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the individual teacher's experiences of using the communicative approach in English language teaching particularly in an Extended Education School and has been conducted in a qualitative paradigm.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This phenomenological study was conducted with a small number of teachers teaching English in extended education schools under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other teachers in other settings.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives an introduction, comprising the background of the research, the reasons why the study was conducted, the research objectives and research questions, as well as the significance, statement of problems, and limitations of the study. Chapter two contains literature reviews of the relevant studies regarding educational policy in Thailand, curriculum framework of Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and the theoretical framework of communicative competence and the,—communicative approach, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and communicative language teaching implementation in non- English speaking countries in the research. It also reviews previous studies in similar areas. Chapter three discusses the methodology used in the study, what analysis was done and how each aspect was

analyzed in order to reveal the teachers' opinions of their teaching methods, problems, solutions and suggestions. Chapter four illustrates findings that have been transcribed and sorted into analyzed data. Chapter five concludes the results, explains the findings of the study and states recommendations for further studies.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Educational Policy in Thailand

The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) revised the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 in order to prepare the updated Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008. The principles of Basic Education Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008) strongly determined that the learner-centered approach should be considered in the learning process to prepare Thai children and youth for their future; doing so would result in improvements to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills required for their lives in the continuously changing society. In global society, English as a lingua franca is undeniably essential to daily life. Thus, the various benefits of learning English support as an essential media for communication, education, seeking knowledge, livelihood and creating understanding of cultures and visions of the world community.

The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2008) especially prescribed the learning area for English as a foreign language which was aimed at enabling learners to acquire a favorable attitude towards English, the ability to use English for communicating in various situations, seeking knowledge, engaging in a livelihood, and continuing further education at higher levels. Thus, learners have been enabled to gain knowledge and understanding of stories and cultural diversity of the world community, and would be able to creatively convey Thai concepts and culture to the global society through the main content as following:

Strand 1: Language for Communication

Strand 2: Language and Culture

Strand 3: Language and Relationship with Other Learning Areas

Strand 4: Language and relationship with Community and the World

Moreover, there are five learners' key competencies where the curriculum facilitates full development of learners' knowledge and skills for communication: critical thinking abilities, problem-solving, technological know-how, and life skills. All four strands are represented by eight standards and different indicators which specify what learners should know and are able to perform according to their characteristics for each level in all primary classes (Prathom 1-6) and lower secondary classes (Mutthayom 1-3). Therefore, the aims of teaching English as foreign language, based on the four strands, are to improve learners' communication capacity to interchange various information e.g. linguistic ability and skills in expressing one's thoughts, knowledge and understanding, feelings and opinions for exchanging information and experience. The students should have effective abilities, such as to negotiate in order to solve or lessen problems and conflicts, to distinguish and choose information through proper making decision and reasoning, and to choose effective techniques of communication which avoid possible negative effects on oneself and society.

2.2 Curriculum Framework of Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

The Thailand educational policy thus promotes learner-centred approach, learners' communication capacity, and skills for communication in BECC 2008. Breen and Candlin (2008) states that the prospective methodology of communicative curriculum implementation in schools consisted of four consistency initial elements; 1) the process of teaching and learning, 2) the roles of teachers and learners, 3) the role of content within teaching and learning, and 4) assessment of the learning process and curriculum accomplishment.

2.2.1 Process of Teaching and Learning

Methodology as a communicative process

The language learning process within a communicative curriculum is most appropriately seen as communicative interaction between learners, teachers, texts and activities. This communicative interaction is likely to engaged the abilities within

learner's developing competence in an arena of cooperative negotiation, joint interpretation, and expressing ideas. The communicative classroom can support learners' aptitude characterized by the stimulation which depends on the provision of a range of different text-types in different media—spoken, written, visual, and audio visual — which the participants can make use of to develop their competence through a variety of activities and tasks. Communicative abilities permeates the set of skills which can be seen through speaking, listening, reading and writing and to be independent of any prescribed selection or combination of these skills. There is no single communicative ability that can be developed independently so that the development of one such skill depends on the appropriate development of other skills.

2.2.2 Roles of Teacher and Learners

The roles of teachers

Breen and Candlin (2008)² and Littlewood (2008)¹ concludes that within a communicative methodology the teacher has two main roles. The first role is the *facilitator* as organizer to arrange the communicative process between all participants in the classroom, and among these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is the *interlocutor* as an interdependent participant within the learning- teaching groups. The roles of teacher are performed to make clear to the learners what they need to do in order to achieve some specific activities or task, if they indicate that such guidance is necessary. The teacher can guide and monitor with the aims of facilitating and shaping individual and group knowledge and manipulation of capabilities during learning. The teacher can offer feedback at appropriate moments. In this way the teacher can pay attention on the learning process of the learners.

The roles of learners

All L2 learners of English face the challenge of *how to learn* the language. Learners can achieve learning by sharing responsibility with others or teacher. The roles of the learner can be, first, an important monitor to other learners to provide feedback, second, a respondent to the teacher regarding his own learning progress, and lastly, the

learners can offer the teacher and other learners a source for new directions in the learning-teaching process of the group. Essentially, the relationship between teacher and learners is strengthened based on a communicative methodology, which seems supportive of participants in a communicative process of learning and teaching.

2.2.3 Roles of Content within the Teaching and Learning

Breen and Candlin (2008)³ maintain that the communicative curriculum places content within methodology and provides the supportive role of assistant to the learning-teaching process. Thus, content is not necessarily prescribed by purpose but selects and organizes within the communicative and differentiates process by learners and the teacher as participants in that process. Therefore, the learner uses the content of the curriculum as a medium to transfer his learning process and support opportunities for communicative experiences.

The entire goal of the communicative approach is to emphasize students' communicative ability in actual situations. Xia (2014) suggests that the teaching syllabus of communicative language teaching is to mostly include:

1. The social circumstances should be subjective for students to use a target language.
2. The topic of each lesson should be practicable.
3. The language functions should be necessary for students to use in daily life.
4. The appropriate words and language rules need for these functions.
5. The communicative skills require in usual social interactions.

2.2.4 Assessment of Learning Process and Curriculum Accomplishment

Breen and Candlin (2008)⁴ note that an authentic assessment of communicative language learning leads towards an emphasis on *formative* or ongoing evaluation rather than *summative* or end-of-course evaluation which should be based on some required criteria. Any shared and negotiated evaluation within the classroom generates

potentially formative learner-learner and learner-teacher feedback. Formative evaluation should not only indicate the relative success and failures of both learner and curriculum but it could also indicate new and different directions in which both can move and develop. However, summative evaluation focuses on assessment of the learner's developing communicative knowledge and abilities as well as on his actual performance within the target capacities. Summative evaluation becomes valuable if it can reveal the learners relative achievement of particular target performance. The essential incorporation of dual roles within the communicative process of teaching and learning can support evaluating learner progress and the ongoing curriculum.

2.3 Theoretical Framework of Communicative Competence

According to Chomsky (as cited in Costin: 2011) describes the concept of competence as what the learners knew about the language; on the other hand, performance is what the learners are able to do with the language and how they master the language in real-world communication. Hymes (as cited in Costin: 2011) argues that communicative competence is the ability to use the language correctly in a given social context or communicative situation. As Lightbown and Spada (2013: pp.60, 214) show, communicative competence is the learners' ability to apply the knowledge of language in different situations and settings and convey messages without grammatical accurateness.

Costin (2011) indicates Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence involves four main components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Grammar competence means the understanding of the linguistic code (verbal and non-verbal) including grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the precise use of the appropriate language based on the rules and conventions of different social contexts.

Discourse competence refers to the ability to merge language structures in order to create comprehensible expression for texts of different types.

Strategic competence refers to aptitude of spoken and written expression to make discourse more effective and overcome communication difficulties

In addition, Savignon (2002) asserts that the four competences are not independent. They merge importantly in their application and are equally interrelated. The communicative competence is relative with context and applicable to both oral and written communication.

2.4 Communicative Approach

2.4.1 Background

Littlewood (2008, pp.x,xi)² claims that a communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language. Language for communication cannot be considered only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also focuses on the communicative functions that students can perform when they want to communicate with each other. Therefore, a communicative approach proposes that a teacher should be aware that it is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate the structures of the foreign language. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. A teacher can provide learners with ample opportunities to use the language themselves for communicative purpose. A teacher should also remember that teaching language enhances the learners' ability to participate in the communication process through language, rather than aim to perfect mastery of individual structures.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) advocates the development of communicative competencies as a primary goal of language teaching through the extensive use of the target language as a channel of communication during classroom sessions (Chang, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, as cited in Jafari, Shokrpour and Guettman, 2015). Jafari, et al. (2015) conclude that developing L2 where students can improve communicative competence through interaction and communication is the essential purpose of CLT. They state that communicative

competence includes not only knowing a set of lexical, grammatical, and phonological rules but also the ability to use the knowledge in a variety of communication situations. It deals with both social and cultural knowledge that speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms as well as meanings (Dahmardeh, 2009, p. 36 as cited in Jafari, Shokrpour and Guettman, 2015).

According to the theoretical background of CLT, Richards and Rogers (as cited in Costin (2011) conclude that the type of language use for communication and a set of characteristic of the method are described as following;

1. Language is the ability to express meaning systematically in communication.
2. The principal function of language use is for interaction and communication.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not simply its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in the discourse.

2.4.2 Characteristic features of communicative language teaching

In accordance with Littlewood (2008, pp.1, 6) states that the most significant characteristic feature of communicative language teaching is the combination of both systematic attention to functional and structural aspects of language into a more meaningful communication. He summarizes four extensive domains of skill in term of a speaker's perspective which promotes a person's communicative competence, and which must be recognized in foreign language teaching.

1. Learners attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in operating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.
2. Learner distinguish between the forms which he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions that they perform.

3. Learners develop skills and strategies for using language to express meanings as effectively as possible in real situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language.

4. Learners are aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.

Furthermore, he proposes that the importance of particulars about language use is learners communicated by exploiting the creative potential of linguistic structures. This has always been recognized in language teaching, and as a result, he identifies a wide range of techniques with which teachers can help learners to master the linguistic system of a foreign language as a broader conception of communicative ability in which:

1. Teachers should adapt various familiar methods for controlled practice so that the learner is facilitated and be able to relate language forms to their potential functional and/or social meanings.

2. The learners can gain experiences in situations where they must use language as a tool to meet substantially communicative needs, and where the criterion for success is functional effectiveness rather than structural accuracy.

3. The learners can be assisted to use language as an appliance for social interaction, for example through role-playing activities, in which an emphasis is on both the communicative effectiveness and the social acceptability of the language used.

For foreign language teaching contexts, teachers should be aware of the entire goal of instructing the concept of communicative competence to gradually enhance learners' communicative performance. Richards and Burns (2012) conclude that the ten general principles to apply CLT in a classroom setting are as following:

1. Learners are motivated to learn English as a second language which is simplified and take part into interaction and comprehensible expression.

2. Learners acquire language from effective classroom learning tasks and proper exercises which provide opportunities for students to negotiate comprehensible expression, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in the meaningful interpersonal exchange.

3. Learners create meaningful communication by processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging in their real lives.

4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.

5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involves inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.

6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.

7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.

8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.

9. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of the facilitator and language expert who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides supportive opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.

10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing.

However, Richards (2006, pp.22-26) defines current communicative language teaching theory and practice as a number of various sources convey on a number of different practices or communicative tasks. The principles of communicative language teaching in second language learning today can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals, and so on. Current approaches to methodology draw on earlier traditions in communicative

language teaching and continue to make reference to some scope of traditional approaches. Thus, teachers should organize classroom activities which typically have some of the following characteristics:

1. They search for developing students' communicative competence through linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate. Hence, grammar is not taught in isolation but often arise out of a communicative task, thus creating a need for specific items of grammar. Students might carry out a task and then reflect on some of the linguistic characteristics of their performance.

2. They create the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through the use of activities such as problem solving, information sharing, and role play.

3. They provide opportunities for both inductive as well as deductive learning of grammar.

4. They make use of content that connects to students' lives and interests.

5. They allow students to personalize learning by applying what they have learned to their own lives.

6. Classroom materials typically make use of authentic texts to create interest and to provide valid models of language.

Richards states several approaches of language teaching today seek to cover the understanding of language and language learning assumed by a communicative view of language. According to Jacobs and Farrell (2003, as cited in Richards, 2006) state that the moving toward CLT is a shape of expansion model of educational practitioner about teachers, learning, and teaching. They identify key components of this shift in the learning process as follows:

1. The learning process involves shift in role of learners from a teacher centered to a learner-centered instruction.

2. The learning process shifts from a product-oriented to a more process-oriented instruction.

3. Greater attention can be paid to the learner's social contextualized and nature of learning.

4. Teachers can bring unity in diversity appreciating the individual differences that exist amongst learners.

5. Educators can focus on the views of research and theory-building internal to the classroom rather than solely valuing the views of those who come from outside to study classrooms, investigate and evaluate what goes on there, and engage in theorizing about it. This shift is associated with such innovations as qualitative research, which highlight the subjective and affective, the participants' insider views, and the uniqueness of each context.

6. Teachers can promote a holistic approach to learning emphasizing on idea of connecting the school with the world beyond.

7. Teachers can gear efforts to help learners understand the purpose of learning to develop their own purpose.

8. Facilitating a whole-to-part orientation instead of a part-to-whole approach allows students to understand the various features that enable texts to function, e.g., the choice of words and the organizational structure of a text.

9. Teachers may provide suggestions towards the importance of meaning rather than drills, rote and other repetitive forms of learning.

10. Teachers should significantly promote lifelong learning process rather than just focusing on the preparation for the exams.

As Richards shows, the current CLT archetype move outlined above has led to eight major changes in approaches to language teaching. These changes are:

1. Learner autonomy: Giving learners greater choice over their own learning, both in terms of the content of learning as well as processes they might employ. The use of small groups is one example of this, as well as the use of self-assessment.

2. The social nature of learning: Learning is not an individual, private activity, but a social one that depends upon interaction with others. The movement known as cooperative learning reflected this viewpoint.

3. Curricular integration: The connection between different strands of the curriculum is emphasized, so that English is not seen as a stand-alone subject but is

linked to other subjects in the curriculum. Project work in language teaching also requires students to explore issues outside of the language classroom.

4. **Focus on meaning:** Meaning is viewed as the driving force of learning. Content-based teaching reflects this view and seeks to make the exploration of meaning through content the core of language learning activities.

5. **Learners Differences:** Teaching needs to account for learners' different styles rather than trying to force them into a single mold. In language teaching, this lead to an emphasis on developing students' use and awareness of learning strategies.

6. **Thinking skills:** Language should serve as a means of developing higher-order thinking skills, also known as critical and creative thinking. In language teaching, this means that students do not learn language for its own sake but in order to develop and apply their thinking skills in situations that are far beyond the language classroom.

7. **Authentic assessment:** A range of new processes of evaluation are needed to replace traditional multiple-choice and other items that tests lower-order skills. Multiple forms of assessment (e.g., observation, interviews, journals, portfolios) can be used to build a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a second language.

8. **Teachers as facilitators:** The teacher is viewed as an organizer who is constantly trying out different alternatives, i.e., learning through doing.

These changes in thinking have not led to the development of a single model of CLT that can be applied in all settings. Rather, a number of different languages teaching approaches have emerged which reflect different responses to the issues identified above. While there is no single syllabus model that has been universally accepted, a language syllabus today needs to include systematic coverage of the many different components of communicative competence, including language skills, content, grammar, vocabulary, and functions. Different syllabus types as well as various approaches that are currently in use around the world within a communicative orientation to language teaching employed different routes to developing communicative competence. Consequently, the teaching methodology of

communicative language teaching could be adapted as long as it could promote the result of learners' communicative competence effectively.

2.4.3 Methodological Framework

According to Littlewood (2008, p. 20) proves that teachers designs communicative activities to provide an opportunity for learners to produce language that they have just learnt in classroom. Then, they aim to prepare the learners to utilize later communicative activities by providing them with necessary linguistic forms and ample links between forms and meanings. The two main categories of various communicative activities are *functional communication activities* and *social interaction activities*.

Functional communication activities (e.g. identifying pictures, discovering sequences or locations) are emphasized with communicative skills where learners are able to produce appropriate language in a particular situation in order to get meaning across as effectively as possible, whether the language used is grammatically accurate or not. The interaction becomes less controlled by artificial classroom settlements. Learners have to gradually develop their language creatively. However, there is a wide range of communicative function that is unlikely to occur in real life, for example greeting, inviting, and asking permission. The teacher should also provide learners with clear feedback about adequacy of their successful performances or failed attempts to communicate. The activities also simulate the demands of language outside the classroom where learners are able to adapt accordingly within the suggested parameters and to solve immediate communication problems.

Social interaction activities (e.g. discussion, role-playing) are further aimed to take account of the social meaning as well as the functional meaning of different language forms so that learners have not only to convey meaning effectively, but also pay attention to the social context in which the situation took place. Teachers should consider the classroom itself as a social context where learners and teacher participate in an equally real social relationship with each other. The structures and skills that learners acquire during classroom interaction are able to later be transferred to other kinds of situation. This is particularly important for young school learners

who do not yet have a clear perception of the actual situations in which they would finally need English. Littlewood proposes four approaches to take advantage of the classroom environment as a social context, namely: using English for classroom management, using English as a teaching medium, conversation or discussion session, and basing dialogues and role-plays on school experience.

In line with Littlewood (2008, pp. 85-89) indicates that the main conception of the learning process with which teachers should be concerned before orienting their own activities is the most significant distinction of methodological framework between *pre-communicative* and *communicative learning activities* as follows:

Pre-communicative activities aim to activate the learners' fluency on meaning rather than the linguistic forms. The teacher singles out specific elements of knowledge or skill which compose communicative ability and provide the learners with opportunities to practice them independently. The learners are thus trained in the part-skills of communication rather than practiced the total learning skills.

The major learning activities are found in textbooks and methodological handbooks such as different types of drill or question-and-answer practice. These intentional objects are to provide learners with a certain understanding of the linguistic system without entirely requiring them to use this system for communicative purposes. Thus, the criterion for accomplishment is learners are able to produce language which is acceptable language rather than to communicate meanings effectively.

Communicative activities aim to stimulate the learners integrated pre-communicative knowledge and skills in order to use them for communication meanings. Therefore, learners are engaged in practicing the total skills of communication to come across the various types of communication situations. The learners are thus expected to increase their total aptitude which begin from intended meaning, and choose appropriate language forms to produce those expressions fluently. The criterion of learning accomplishment is whether the meaning is conveyed effectively.

The arrangement of both pre-communicative and communicative work is to identify the methodological relationship reversing between different types of activity. When the teacher generates pre-communicative activities in which the learners rehearse certain language forms or functions, these activities lead into communicative work. During the classes, learners produce the new language they have acquired then the teacher monitors their learning progress. That moves on from controlled practice to creative language use. On the other hand, the reverse sequence is able to begin with a communicative activity, such as role-play based on a situation which the learners might expect to encounter. This activity has two essential utilities: it enables the teacher to diagnose the learners' weaknesses in a particular kind of communication situation, and it enables the learners themselves to become aware of their language needs. The teacher is able to organize controlled practice of language forms which will enable the learners to communicate more effectively or appropriately. There is a further phrase of communicative activity where learners are able to apply their new linguistic knowledge and skills.

2.4.4 Teaching Syllabus of Communicative Language Teaching

Larsen-Freeman (2002. p.121) depicts the main purpose of communicative language teaching as being broadly for teachers to apply the theoretical perspective of a communicative approach by establishing learners' communicative competence and by admitting the interdependence of language and communication. Teachers can design their lessons so that students should get a desire to communicate something; supply them a purpose of communicating, for example, to write a letter to a friend, to make an appointment with a teacher, to invite friends to a party, and so on. Xia (2014) indicates that the syllabus of communicative language teaching generally included:

1. The social situations typically for students to use a foreign language.
2. The familiar daily life topics they are likely to address.
3. The useful speech acts they need to perform.
4. The vocabulary and grammar structures need for these functions.
5. The communicative skills require in typical social situations.

For the syllabus design, teachers should choose appropriate approach to arrange classroom activities that activate students' communicative competence. Larsen-Freeman (2002. p.137) exemplifies communicative language teaching as three approaches that make communication central: content-based instruction, task-based instruction, and the participatory approach. These approaches give priority to process over predetermined linguistic content. Students employ English to learn it.

Content-based instruction means using content from other disciplines in language courses. The special contribution of content-based instruction is that it integrates the learning of language with the learning of some other content or subject matters.

Task-based instruction aims to provide learners with a natural context for language use. As learners work to complete a task, they have plentiful opportunity to interact. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning.

The participatory approach is presented as similar to the content-based approach. It begins with content which is meaningful to learners and any forms that arise from that content. The participatory approach aims to help learners to understand the social, historical, or cultural forces that affects their lives, and then to help empower learners to take action and make appropriate decisions in order to gain control over their lives.

2.5 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The English Language Institute under supervision of The Office of the Basic Education Commission (ELIOBEC, n.d.) approves The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) that implements it in all private schooling in Thailand. The ELIOBEC distributes at the new trend teaching English manual which follows the CEFR and definitely focuses on Communicative Language

Teaching (CLT) for primary and secondary levels to guide Thai native teachers of English to consistency in teaching English to significantly support educational policy.

Gyllstad, Granfeldt, Bernardini, and Källkvist (2014) reported that the CEFR is a plentiful paper of teaching, learning and assessment which is now widely used in modern language syllabuses and in proficiency tests. The CEFR provides the notion of a language-independent description of language use and a definition of communicative proficiency at six levels; A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The levels primarily range the quality of language students and teachers with three broad proficiency bands: Basic Use (A), Independent User (B), and Advanced User (C). The ELIOBEC believes that CLT will essentially enhance teaching English achievements under the CEFR direction compares to the expected character of language students specified in the BECC, 2008.

2.6 Communicative Language Teaching Implementing in Thailand

Thailand now IS one member of the ASEAN community where English is the official language. However, Thailand is a non-English-speaking country. Thus, The Ministry of Education (MOE) is definitely aware of the significance of English and promotes CLT to become the norm of teaching English as foreign language.

The Ministry of Education set up The National Education Act of 1999 in Thailand to reform educational instructions for all schools. As Prapaisit de Segovia and Hardison (n.d.) have shown, the policy commanded a transition from teacher to learner-centered instruction for all subjects including English. This shift was associated with the need for development of communicative ability in English to meet the needs of globalization. The implementing education reform: EFL teachers' perspectives study investigated the policy behind and implementation of the reform in English teaching following Johnson's (1989) decision-making framework for a coherent curriculum. The stimulated recall and interviews with teachers revealed confusion about the reform's principles and their application. The result of this study revealed that there was no evidence of communicative language use. Teachers were concerned about

their English proficiency, insufficient training, and inadequate resources and professional support due to the fact that the reform's principles were not suitable for teaching English. Some newer teachers indicated that they taught other subjects during English class because of their low English proficiency. However, they felt several problems inhibited them from teaching English communicatively, for instance, insufficient time and financial resources to prepare materials, few teaching manuals, and only one or two days of training.

In addition, the researchers stated that some students who were illiterate in Thai and this deficiency of mother tongue fluency affected the learning of English. They also lacked interest in English because it was not used outside the classroom. The result pointed to areas of the curriculum where consistency could vanish during reform. It was not too surprising that the shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach did not evolve smoothly. Thus, it required an understanding of the language learning process in order to establish attainable goals and compatible methodology. This must be done in view of constraints on achievement, including the lack of contact with the target language outside the classroom. Education stakeholders needed to be consulted. Pre-service training for teachers should include English proficiency improvement, coursework on materials development and assessment, and importantly, observations of CLT classes.

The related research of Sooksil (2010) examined the effectiveness of communicative language teaching approaches as implemented by teachers teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in selected Thai primary schools. The aim of this study was to develop three teaching units using different methods within a communicative approach, and investigated the extent to which these units assisted EFL teachers at the primary level to implement effective English teaching. A case study approach was adopted involving four in-service EFL teachers in four public primary schools in Maha Sarakham, Thailand. These teachers were purposively selected as EFL teachers who did not graduate with an English major. Each teacher implemented all of the three units: a unit of a weak version of communicative language teaching (CLT weak version), a unit of the concentrated language encounters method using paper materials

(CLE+paper), and a unit of the concentrated language encountered using computer-based language activities (CLE+COBLA).

The mixed methods were used in both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The qualitative data was gathered through unstructured interviews, observational field notes and audio taped transcriptions; the quantitative data was collected using an observation form, and students' pre-tests and post-tests. The findings from this study revealed three obvious school conditions affecting the characteristics of the teaching of the teachers in their English classes namely, institutional factors, pedagogical factors, and policy factors. The study found that most teachers had difficulties implementing approaches to the English teaching provided. Only the teacher with pedagogical experience was able to effectively carry out her class through three phases of the CLT weak version unit; meanwhile the other three participating teachers were stuck only in the first two phases. Many conditions impacting classroom pedagogy were found. These were teachers' English proficiency, overloaded teachers, too many subjects to teach, extra school duties, quality and accessibility of the teaching materials, and the insufficient activeness of the teaching methods. The research findings showed that EFL teachers in Thai primary schools needed to be supported by teaching materials or innovations which enhanced their language development and confidence in teaching English. Training programs for various pedagogic developments needed to be provided for the in-service primary EFL teachers. Educational administrators needed to address the problems of the excessive workloads of the primary teachers as an important strategy for improving English language teaching in Thai schools.

English has become the international language. Baker (2003) stated that multicultural use of English has become an increasingly important component of English language teaching in recent times. Asian countries, especial Thailand, where English was used in ways where native speaker norms had very different conventions, value systems and educational doctrines from the traditional English speaking countries. Almost all classes were generally taught by Thai teachers with a small number of native English speaking teachers (NEST). Thai learners also needed to be encouraged to deal with a

target language culture as a new cultural experience which was inconsistent to their native norms. The researcher suggested that Thai learners and also teachers needed to use English in multi-cultural contexts rather than with reference to only the English speaking community. In addition, teaching methodology itself needed to mediate between Thai and Western educational values, especially concerning communicative, learner centered approaches to language teaching. Materials used must also encourage learners to compare culture and to adopt a critical perspective upon class discussion, or role-plays. Using materials drawn from English speaking countries that promoted discussions, comparison, and reflection on English culture should be applied to the Thai learners' environment.

This was similar to Nannapat (n.d.) who reported in her research the difficulties English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers encountered while implementing the communicative curriculum in their classrooms. The review aimed to reiterate the difficulties other countries had had in implementing the communicative curriculum and similarities in Thailand. In essence the review identified several difficulties confronted by the EFL teachers in an EFL context (particularly in Asian countries). These included, for example, a disconnection between curriculum policies and classroom practice, teacher qualifications, students' low English proficiency, and the authenticity in language classrooms, among many others. More importantly, the policy implementation needed more research to further investigate and debate the issues of these difficulties in the Thai context due to the fact that the necessity had largely been excluded from the actual practice of EFL instruction.

Baker (2016) observed that a common strategy to enhance English learning in Asian countries was to begin instruction at the primary level, but policymakers faced the challenge of preparing teachers of young learners with the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge to provide high quality English education. The collaboration effort between Baker and MOE officials during primary professional development sessions across Thailand were aimed to not only impart knowledge about CLT but also to provide teachers with the practical tools and confidence to implement CLT in the classroom. They initiatively planned to simplify four principles of CLT to be (1)

meaningful communication; (2) collaborative students group work; (3) language connected to context; and (4) language to engage in critical thinking. The MOE had advocated for CLT for over two decades (Darasawang, 2007; Kustati, 2013). However, the approach has not been implemented consistently in Thai schools.

According to the report, the participants' perception of their English abilities and lack of self-confidence in English, rather than actual proficiency level, appeared to be the main barrier to applying CLT. Common responses included hiring foreign English teachers and sending primary Thai teachers to study abroad in English-speaking countries, reflecting a priority to use English teachers with native or native-like proficiencies. While not underestimating the real need to improve the English proficiency of Thai primary teachers, an associated issue was the self-confidence level of teachers in speaking English. Teacher training was only one strategy for improving student learning. Professional development could not occur in isolation from other efforts, nor could it be expected to single-handedly transform teaching and learning. Baker thus put forth a few policy recommendations for Thailand from the experiences in the Primary-PD Program where these systemic changes might enhance the probability that the CLT addressed in Thai PD would make its way into the classrooms and impact student learning. Perhaps the most radical recommendation was for EFL countries to rethink policies on English instruction at the primary level.

Darasawang, 2007; Kustati, 2013 (as cited in Baker, 2016) claimed that ample resources in the areas of curriculum, assessment, personnel, and home support needed to be in place to ensure effective English learning at the primary level. In particular, teachers needed to be knowledgeable in both the language and the pedagogy. Currently, Thailand's education policy did not require primary teachers to demonstrate a minimum level of English proficiency or to major in English at the university level, resulting in English classrooms led by teachers who were unable to communicate in English. Instead of investing resources in pedagogy and language training for these teachers, Thailand might consider prioritizing secondary level English education, in which English teachers were required to major in English at the university and then specialize in the subject for teaching. Meanwhile, primary teachers

could focus on ensuring students had a strong literary background in Thai and (if applicable) their mother tongue. Seminal bilingual researchers have long propounded the benefits that first language literacy brings to learning a second language so by improving Thai language education, primary teachers would be contributing to students' eventual English language learning.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the use of a communicative approach as a phenomenon in English language teaching through a phenomenological theoretical framework. The research question was as follows:

1. What were teachers' experiences of using communicative approach in English language teaching?

The sub-questions are as follows:

1. What were their opinions about using a communicative approach in teaching English?
2. What problems did they have when using a communicative approach?
3. What were some solutions they think can help solve the problems?

3.1 Research Design

This study was a phenomenological study. Phenomenological research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher identifies the 'essence' of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study; the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994; as cited in Creswell, 2003). Also, it is a kind of research where the researcher puts aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Niewiadomy, 1993; as cited in Creswell, 2003).

3.2 Participants

The participants were teachers teaching at extended education schools under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3. The criterion-based purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. The criteria for selecting the participants were as follows:

1. The teachers had to teach both primary and junior secondary levels at the extended education schools under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3.
2. The teachers had to use a communicative approach in teaching English.

To recruit the participants for the study, the researcher conducted a preliminary study by informally interviewing 50 teachers from 40 extended education schools under supervision of Nakhon Sawan Primary Educational Service Area Office 3 to identify which participants met the criteria. Of the 50 teachers, there were 20 teachers who met the criteria and were willing to participate in this research.

3.3 Data Collection

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. The researcher asked the participants about their teaching experiences in using communicative approaches with both primary and secondary students. The interviews were recorded.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed through steps involved in phenomenological data analysis. The data were grouped into 'meaning units' or themes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings which were analyzed with phenomenological research methodology. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with participants who graduated in an English major and had English teaching experience in communicative language teaching (CLT). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and sorted and matched to the sequencing of the research questions. The results from analysis of the primary data could be categorized into three main meaningful themes, namely:, 1) personal opinions regarding advantages and disadvantages of using a communicative approach in teaching English, 2) problems, and 3) solutions.

4.1 PERSONAL OPINION OF TEACHERS

The participants of this study commented on the advantages and disadvantages of CLT as implemented in their classroom, based on teaching experience and their point of view. The participants' personal opinions about CLT were separated into three main dimensions: agree, partially agree, and disagree.

The personal opinions of the teachers, who agreed that CLT made a positive impact and that the advantages of CLT had provided prompts for students to speak and exchange interpersonal communication, affirmed that CLT was suitable for the Thai students learning context.

“CLT aims to promote communicative skills in language learning which can be perceived in different ways. It can either be a gesture, using eye contact, nodding, etc. Or we can just make a question from one word like “breakfast”? So people know that we asked them if they had already had breakfast. I totally agree that CLT is suitable for Thai students. Because as you may see we have been trying to focus so much on grammar and

structure which has failed and made students bored with English language. Although they have to study grammar and structure for examination, I would rather teach those after teaching them communicative skills.” (Asi)

“It’s a teaching method that allows students to use English in daily life. If we focus too much on grammar, it may take a long time to digest and to be able to use. But CLT gives you a guideline what are the good points for students to learn. Students will not only memorize sentences but they can apply how to use the sentence in different situations. For example, it is easy for them to understand a conversation in YouTube as they will also see the context for each situation.” (Suj)

“Since Thai students prefer talking than writing. Whenever they are free they will talk, so the CLT suits their nature. Children love talking so they can still keep speaking for long.” (Mon)

In addition, some participants revealed that the benefits of CLT support O-NET scores, since some parts of the test referred to communicative functions which were used in daily life dialogues which had been already taught in classroom activities. Hence, students would either be familiar with those typical questions or they could grasp comprehensible inputs which benefited them during the examination.

“CLT works out pretty well with Thai students in term of winning their heart. There is no wall between English and students. But if you start with structure, it will become a wall and they won’t be interested to learn. If you make it easier and fun at the beginning, they will be happier to learn. And I am not too stressed about the results of ONET because in the end, students get to learn something.” (Asi)

“It helps a lot indeed. Since most of the questions in O-NET examination are actually based on everyday life. The most difficult part for students is

that they don't understand the vocabularies so that they give up and refuse to read those long sentences. If we apply CLT technique especially for O-net examination, it will be hugely beneficial to our students' ability to pass the exam." (Api)

Some teachers partially agreed with suggestions that CLT could be suitable for Thai students; however they differentiated CLT in some cases of the interesting strong and weak points of CLT; for instance, linguistic features, learners' characteristics, availability of materials and equipment, and time demands as well.

"I think it works. It is the same as learning your mother tongue language which starts with listening to something you are familiar with repetitively until you can remember the words. It's realistic, practical and can be used in daily life. To focus on repetitive learning is also very useful especially for good students. Language learning should begin with listening just like when we were little and we listened to our mother and father talking to us every day, then, eventually we were able to speak the language naturally. And CLT also focuses on real teaching materials or if you can't find them, you can use pictures to teach your students. However, the weak point of CLT is that it focuses less on grammar. But we can solve this problem by making up extra classes. At our school, we do have extra tutoring hours for good students before they take an examination but weak students we use repetitive methods to teach them." (Nit)

"After the official announcement of AEC, Thai students must be able to communicate in English. The CLT helps to train their communicative skills, makes them more confident, and they can use the useful expressions to answer simple questions. On the contrary, in my opinion there are lots of disadvantages too. The students are too shy to speak. They aren't aware how important English is, so they don't have a motive

to learn English because they don't have a chance to speak English.”
(Ora)

“It is good in a way but first of all you need to change the attitudes of your students and also yourself because Thai students are shy to express their feeling, they just want to listen and not to speak. I was also like that when I was student. Their belief is that teachers should be the ones who speak and students just listen. CLT will be successful if you can stimulate students to be more active but if they don't participate, it will not work out well.” (Cho)

“I think it is suitable. These days English is getting more important as we are a member of ASEAN. And also English is being used worldwide. Thai students should be able to communicate in English. The disadvantage is Thai students are shy to speak English or present in front of the class.” (Sut)

“I think. It works for big schools in the city. On the contrary, the small schools may have some technical problems. They may not have enough equipment to support any media for CLT. If the schools in rural areas are not ready for this methodology it may not be fully effective. When they evaluate the national results of English, they do overall areas; it highlights as low level.” (Sta)

“I think, yes it is. But it took time for the students to become familiar with the learning process. When they got used to the process, it was easier because they knew what was coming next.” (Cha)

“I think it is. But the readiness of students is one important factor of the effectiveness in learning CLT particularly, in the extended education schools.” (Pri)

Regarding the ten core assumptions of CLT described in the literature review, some teachers kept on the track of CLT principles;, on the other hand,; some teachers pointed out that they adapted some CLT features such as games, songs, or doing role play, applying them to their classroom instruction based on their school context or their personal belief.

“I do apply the activities that I learned from CLT to be in accordance with the context of our school which is considered as rural where English is not commonly used.” (Api)

“I think, it is useful and can be applied. However, I haven’t tried all CLT activities yet, I’ve picked some activities which I think are appropriate them. During a school year, I use multiple activities. So, I cannot try out all CLT activities.” (Nir)

“I think if they can read they can remember vocabulary. This is the way Thais learn. I teach less and use learn more activities. In my experience, this method is hard if the students don’t have a motive to learn, they will not be active. They should understand the communicative English and grammar.” (Jon)

On the contrary, some teachers who disagreed with the approach probably encountered problems teaching English using CLT methods. The participants mentioned some factors that may inhibit the accomplishment of implementing CLT in school. Learners’ low learning proficiency and learners’ characteristics are obstacles to their learning, namely, being shy, lacking confidence, insufficient time for practice, and less disciplined learning, etc.

“It is hard because the students don’t use English daily. When they want to speak English they have to think about the words, if they cannot remember, they will not be able to communicate. They remember the phrases or useful expressions from the books but they cannot remember

them all. So they may forget when they want to speak. Their brains store only few English words, so it's hard to recall what words should be used in the contexts. Also they don't know parts of speech, so they cannot form any sentences." (Suk)

"CLT focuses on communicative English which is student-centered and language usage in the real situation. This method helps to fix previous English teaching method. Also group activities make learners sympathetic to others. CLT emphasizes on communicative English which learners should be able to apply the form to the meaning. But Thai students cannot connect their knowledge they are poor in vocabulary too, so they get confused. It causes them trouble speaking English. English is not our mother tongue, we learn English as a second language, we use English infrequently in daily life. Let's say we don't learn English naturally. We learn as a language." (Wan)

"If English is vital in daily life they can enhance their English performance. Then they can use English fluently when they grow up. The disadvantage is the students are not ready with this method. They don't dare to speak English. Even though I would like my students to be able to communicate in English but they forget what they have learnt so far." (Aro)

"I think it is necessary for them but we don't use English in daily life. Truthfully, the students do not practice at home, they only practice in classes. Additionally, there are no foreign teachers in many schools. The students don't have a chance to practice with foreigners. Due to this, CLT is not effective for Thai students, in my opinion." (Jon)

In summary, the participants who agreed on the advantages of CLT agreed that a CLT method could promote students' communicative skills and support O-NET achievement scores. They believed that CLT was correlated to students' learning

styles. Students would not memorize the dialogues but they could employ sentences in particular situations. In the case of teachers who partially agreed with the advantages of CLT, they assumed that CLT could be suitable for Thai students. However, they asserted that students needed more time to practice because of their natural characteristics and a lack of teaching materials. The teachers who disagreed with CLT revealed that students not only lacked linguistic competence but also the opportunity to practice English outside classroom. In the particular circumstances of teachers who had some technical problems while teaching, they felt overwhelmed, by CLT.

4.2 PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING CLT

The participants indicated that the problems affecting CLT implementation in classrooms could be categorized into 4 aspects, namely, 1) the problems of learners, 2) the problems of teachers, 3) the problems of materials and equipment, and 4) other affecting variables.

4.2.1 Problems of learners

Problems of learners usually occurring in the classes correlated to characteristics of students who were often shy to show their capability. They mostly had no confidence to speak due to the teasing of their friends.

“They are afraid of losing face in front of the class; their friends may bully them later on.” (Ora)

“They are too shy to speak. They are afraid to make a mistake and their friends will bully them and make them feel embarrassed, especially teenagers.” (Cho)

In the view of teenagers, the relationship of the students being the member in their group affected students' behavior in social interaction. In some circumstances, students were hesitant to talk to teachers, especially a foreign teacher in the school. If

they showed outstanding performance they may bring disunity among their members in the group.

“I think they relied on their friends, if their friends didn’t go along, they didn’t dare to speak with teachers. I think they were afraid of being black sheep among their friends.” (Sta)

Some students were afraid of losing face. They did not want to be teased by friends, although, they knew the lesson or questions. Thus, they were anxious about making small grammatical mistakes or mispronouncing words.

“They are often able to understand the question but cannot answer in English. They are afraid of using incorrect sentences.” (Aro)

“They are not confident enough to speak in front of the class because they don’t know how to pronounce the words, so they choose not to speak.”(Ban)

“Some of them are shy. They don’t dare speak out as they are concerned that their pronunciations are not correct.” (Pri)

“Most importantly, they are too afraid to express anything, although they know what to say. They are normally afraid to pronounce the word wrongly.” (Api)

The students lack opportunity to practice English both outside the classroom and in daily life.

“Even though I tried to talk to them, they don’t talk. They don’t use English in everyday life. When they go back home they don’t practice either.”(Aro)

“The hardest part is that students don’t have any chance to practice.” (Pri)

“They don’t have a chance to practice English outside class. They can only practice with their English teacher. (Wan)

“We don’t use English in daily life. Frankly, the students do not practice at home, they only practice in classes.” (Jon)

“In reality, they don’t use it 24 hours but only in English class. When the class finishes, they just go back to speaking Thai, when they go back home, they also speak Thai.” (Ben)

In some cases, students focused on their examination. They did not want to practice for communication and they wanted to graduate in Matthayom 3 to apply for a career.

“Honestly, students do not think English plays a vital part in their lives. It’s only important to them when they have to take an examination to enter junior high school. Further than that, it is useless because they don’t have a chance to use it.” (Ben)

“It takes time for a person to be able to communicate in English. For my students English is not vital, they just want to finish grade 9 to get the educational certificate and apply for job. The satisfaction of English is the lowest priority as their perception is that English is too difficult for them.” (Aro)

Since, students from poor families had less opportunity to practice English in daily life they were not aware of the importance of English. They did not realize that English was essential for their further education.

“English is an unnecessary factor in their lives; some of them are from very poor families. They have to help with the work after school, so they don’t give any value to English.” (Pri)

“Students especially those in the rural area have no idea why they have to study English when they won’t have a chance to use it anyway.” (Ben)

Fortunately, some schools provided students with an opportunity to communicate with foreigners. However, students were still afraid of talking with foreign teachers.

“They also avoid contact with foreign teachers because they are too afraid to begin a conversation. They are afraid that a foreigner might ask them something they would be unable to answer.” (Ben)

“I think they are afraid of talking to foreigners.” (Sta)

Students in the same class had different levels of competence and were not willing to learn so that teachers spent a lot of time arranging the learning activities.

“There are mixed classes with smart and weak learners together. They affect the class effectiveness.” (Ban)

“As I observed, they are retarded. But they are not on the school LD list. Their learning process is slower than usual. In some activities, I observed that they could not catch up with others.” (Mon)

“The students are different; some students are too shy to speak, even they though open their mouths they don’t speak. They are unequal learners.” (Sir)

“The problem is that they have different abilities of leaning English. I have to work more for the weak ones. They sometimes have to get the

work done during lunch time if they can't complete the assignment.”

(Nit)

Students had no discipline for self-learning. They were not willing to learn because of having less motivation or economic status.

“In the Extended Education Schools, the students don't have motive to learn.” (Pri)

“Our students are not very eager to learn, especially English language. They just focus on the activities in their daily life like today their moms will come back from working the sugar cane plantation, their families are working in the rice field, tonight they will catch some rats and fish in the rice fields.” (Asi)

Nowadays the Internet can be accessed more easily. However, some students did not concentrate on their learning. They enjoyed surfing the Internet for entertainment with games or social media such as Facebook on their mobile phone or in Internet cafe.

“These days, the students are addicted to the internet. They don't concentrate with their studies and they don't have any learning motivation. They prefer using internet for their own entertainment rather than self-studying. They lack self-discipline.” (Jon)

“Most students just play with their phones or other things after class.” (Cha)

“There are social problems in the communities; broken families, addiction to games. Sometimes, they skip class to stay in the internet café to play computer games. I can't put too much pressure on them or else they will be absent.” (Aro)

To conclude, the problems of learners were complex issues that corresponded to their individual personality; for instance, being shy, being afraid of losing face, a lack of confidence, so they were speechless in class. Other factors that affected the promotion of learners' communicative competence were they lacked the opportunity to practice English both outside the classroom and in daily life, in particular those from poor families. Hence, they were not aware of the benefits of English. Some schools provided foreign teachers for better learning English however students were afraid of talking with foreign teachers because of their inadequate linguistic competence as well as problems with different levels of learning. One added significant reason for slow progress is that nowadays students who enjoy using social media and playing computer games are not prepared to commit the time and effort.

4.2.2 Problems of teachers

Thai native teachers of English mentioned that they themselves had low communicative proficiency particularly in listening and speaking. Some of them had difficulty with pronunciation. Other teachers had no confidence to communicate in English. They were concerned about making mistakes and their inarticulateness.

“Teaching primary levels for so long made me feel like English knowledge diminished.” (Aro)

“I have a bit of a problem with speaking, I cannot think of the words or structures naturally.” (Ban)

“Teachers who have no confidence to speak English with students are also afraid to make a mistake.” (Api)

“I think I am confident using English but sometimes I take time to think of the vocabulary. If we don't use in daily life, even teachers forget.” (Wan)

“I personally struggle in listening more than other skills. When I listen to foreigners, I have to watch their mouth which is a problem for conversation via phone. For speaking, I am a little nervous about grammatically accuracy. It’s because we don’t really use English all the time.” (Ben)

Thai teachers not only taught English but they had to teach other subjects also. Some of them taught different classes. They had a heavy workload in addition to teaching so that they had insufficient time to prepare English lessons.

“My problem is a plan. I have insufficient time to write lesson plans and prepare myself. Lessons take time to plan, to find materials, to think about activities. In one lesson plan I would include of activities that take a bit longer to prepare properly. It would be great if I had time to prepare as thoroughly for every lesson however, there are lots of things to be done and I teach other subjects too.” (Mon)

“My problem is preparing for teaching. I teach grade 1 to grade 9. I have only short time to prepare for each class. I teach English 18 hours per week. I also teach P.E. Sometimes, I am exhausted teaching P.E., then I have to teach English for grade 1. Teaching grade 1 you have to be energized because you have to raise the class dynamically. It’s a bit hard.” (Nir)

“Actually, the problems are that we teachers are too busy and have loads of work. For example, we need to do many things at the same time which are teaching, greeting visitors, conducting an urgent project.” (Ben)

“I don’t have enough time to teach and there are lots of school administration responsibilities. Teachers do too many other duties.” (Sir)

“We are under mannered; I am the only English teacher. There is loads of work already. I cannot manage to do any projects or extra activities.”
(Atc)

Moreover, The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 (BECC, 2008) consists of four strands, eight learning standards and different indicators in each level_(: Prathomsuksa 1-3; 16 items, Prathomsuksa 4-6; 18 items, Matthayomsuksa 1; 20 items, Matthayomsuksa 2-3; 21 items) that all teachers have to finish in a year. Thus, some skipped the lessons which they were uncertain about because of limited time.

“We are overloaded. There is tons of work, if you teach different grades and classes. I have to prepare several lesson plans. I also have to assist with such as library and health care. So, I don’t have enough time to prepare. I have to teach to accomplish the objectives or indicators. Sometimes, I cannot finish them. I have to skip some lessons. There simply aren’t hours to teach.” (Ora)

One teacher who felt diffidence with commercial text books published by western publishers was unfamiliar with western culture as well.

“Normally, textbooks are written in western context which students are not familiar with their culture. Not only students, but teachers are also not so familiar too.” (Api)

In summary, the participants reported that they themselves were not expert on communicative competence. They had less skill in listening and speaking, had difficulty with pronunciation, no confidence to communicate in English, and in some cases, were unfamiliar with western culture also. In addition, they had heavy workloads for school duties and lots of expectation resulting from BECC, 2008. Consequently, they had limited time to prepare English lessons properly.

4.2.3 Problems of materials and equipment

Materials used in many schools were commercial textbooks for sale in book stores. There are plenty, most of them written by western publishers. However, Thai students' language proficiency levels, especially those in Extended Education Schools are rather moderate. Due to the complexity of both difficult content and vocabulary used, and the differences of cultural context, the texts are very different from students' native environment.

“They are probably too difficult for their target. The exercises from the textbooks do not necessarily match with our contents.” (Mon)

“I have to select textbooks which are suitable with Thai context as some foreign textbooks are too difficult for our students.” (Suj)

“It's quite difficult using the books; there are many examples and very long scripts.” (Nir)

“The content in the textbook for junior high school are quite complex and not in-line with their experience, in term of both vocabularies and stories.” (Cho)

“The content in the textbooks is sometimes not so close to real experiences in students' life.” (Api)

Some schools lack suitable equipment to support teaching English, for instance a television, DVD player, or computer. In addition, there is limited access to the Internet to download other useful video clips, and songs.

“The school lacks sufficient devices to support visual materials; there are not enough projectors or screens to be used to open the visual files.” (Sut)

“The teaching materials for some schools are very poor. They lack many educational materials like a computer, and have limited internet access, more electronic media could make students learning more convenient.” (Api)

“I don’t use any electronics media. There is no language laboratory at school. We simply don’t have the necessary equipment.” (Ora)

“Then the teaching materials, the teaching media or devices at school are not good. We often have an internet connection problem. It’s hard to rely on the visual files to get their attention.” (Atc)

“I would like to ask for funds for ICT equipment. I use my personal devices. There are not enough devices at school. I have to bring the devices I need from home.” (Aro)

“I tried to solve the problem myself or request help from school. I used my own laptop with the screen with HDMI cable.” (Pri)

In conclusion, the participants argued that the commercial text books were too difficult for Thai students in order of complexity of content, difficult vocabulary and, the differences of cultural context. Some schools lacked sufficient devices to support teaching English and have limited access to the Internet.

4.2.4 Problems caused by other affecting factors

Thai native teachers of English planned to support students using English outside classroom. They designed projects such as “English Today” that required help from teachers who taught other subjects to encourage students to talk in English. However, the project was unsuccessful because almost all of those teachers lacked confidence and couldn’t help students make dialogue properly.

“There were some teachers; that didn’t respond to the students when they tried to greet the teachers. Sometimes, only English teachers respond to the students. Sometimes, when the students wanted to talk to teachers, they would stop the students suddenly. Perhaps the teachers cannot answer their questions. It is the weakest point of using English in school”
(Cha)

“Our teachers are not keen on speaking English with students. But I think I’d rather start in the next semester when other teachers will have to help.” (Nit)

The main complaint from teachers was that teaching English as a foreign language for young learners required ample time to practice, otherwise students would forget the knowledge that they had just learned. The Basic core curriculum provided insufficient teaching time for English, just 2 hours a week for primary level and 3 hours a week for junior secondary level. It is unreasonable to expect teachers accomplish over all strands, learning standards, and all indicators in the limited time available.

“Unfortunately, I meet them 3 times a week. They probably forget what I have taught previously. The limited amount of time allotted is a huge problem too.” (Aro)

“The problem is that I don’t have much time, it can be only once or twice a week. I think 2 hours per week is definitely not enough. I think there should be continuity, with only 2 hours per week it is easy to forget what they have just learned. ” (Suj)

“English classes these days are too few, there is simply not enough time.”
(Mon)

“I have too little time to teach; there are only 2 hours a week for each class, which I don’t think is enough. In the past, there were 5 hours a

week for English; I remember they were good and fun. Learning English needs more time.” (Cha)

“For Prathom 6, I actually have only 2 hours a week to teach that is not enough as the course comprises a lot of content.”(Asi)

“I have a problem with the teaching period. I don’t have enough time to teach. There are too few hours to teach, I never finish the books.” (Ban)

In addition, almost all Extended Education Schools had various extra activities to promote learners’ key competencies and desirable characteristics. Thus, English hours were shared with other extra activities in each semester.

“There are 3 hours a week for English. Additionally, there are other extra activities to replace their English hours sometimes. They neither have enough time to practice in class nor practice at home.” (Suk)

One teacher mentioned that the number of students in each class in her school made the classroom activities disorderly.

“There are lots of students in the class. Too many students in one class can interrupt the class. (Ora)

The BECC 2008 was aimed at the full development of learners with all aspects of knowledge and skills for communication, thinking, problem-solving, technological know-how, and life skills. However, in reality the learning assessment is to focus in particular on the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET). This is a contradiction to the aim of the curriculum and the administrative policy.

“The examination focuses very much on grammar. It is sometimes confusing for Thai teachers because you aim to focus on communication to make them feel more confident to communicate with foreigners. But

when it comes to examination, it's all about grammar. And if I teach too much grammar for them, they will get bored.” (Ben)

“I don't think CLT works for O-NET. It is absolutely opposed. I think, O-NET is mostly focused on a paper test (reading) but CLT is communicative English. Sometimes, the students know the words, sentences or phrases but they cannot read; they can only talk.” (Jon)

“The test is mainly grammar, so we have to concentrate on a paper test rather than a practical session. The grammar tutorial sessions are therefore arranged, and the communicative approach is abandoned.” (Suk)

“I think it is hard if you expect your students to get good scores in the examination. CLT is more useful for their communicative skills which focus more on communication not for the test.” (Suj)

“O-NET is tricky and unlike the lessons. Sometimes, they change vocabulary, situations.” (Ban)

“We know the educational strands and indicators but we don't know the contents of O-NET. They were easy in some years but they were very hard in other years too. We can guess their contents. However, they are problem for some students, if they don't know the vocabulary they cannot do the test. When the results come out, it appears they have learnt nothing for three years.” (Pri)

The classroom surrounding affected students' learning effectiveness. Students felt comfortable in rooms which had a relaxed atmosphere and were clean. However, the problem of the school environment was too difficult to manage.

“Our school areas are quite limited. We don’t even have an English study room. They just do everything in their own classroom. Every time we do some activities, I always have to tell them to lower their voice, and not to jump around, which makes it less fun as they can’t naturally express themselves.” (Api)

“There are some pigeons inside the room, I feel uncomfortable.” (Pri)

With the complexity of such additional troubles, schooling not only includes the students learning problems. There also were social complications.

“There is social problem also, they live with the elders. The grandparents don’t care what the students have learnt at school, don’t check their homework. It turns into serious learning problem. Some of their parents also ignore English.” (Pri)

“They will find no one at home if they go back early.” (Cho)

“I think the readiness of students is the major contributor. I teach in the Extended Education Schools. They have many social problems. They don’t have time to revise lessons because they have to help their families after school. So they don’t have time to practice English either.” (Ban)

“The urban students have their parents to help them and they always have tutorial classes, but the rural students don’t have any one to support them.” (Cha)

To summarize, the participants concluded that the complicated variables that influenced teaching and learning English in the Thai schooling context were multilayered. Teaching English as a foreign language was allocated insufficient time while the number of students in each class made the classroom activities inconvenient. Thai native teachers of English needed help from colleagues to assist their teaching

and help to solve school environment problems also. Moreover, the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) and troubles in students' families made them feel their teaching was ineffective.

4.3 SOLUTIONS TO TEACHING

The participants indicated that they arranged solutions wherever they had to solve problems which influenced their students learning.

4.3.1 Solutions to Problem of Learners

Teachers tried to solve the problems of learners who were shy and had no confidence to practice language skills. Teachers were not afraid to instruct by example to encourage students to mimic them.

“They can practice speaking English with their teacher and also with friends. I just try to make it more relaxed, and a friendly atmosphere. They are sometimes too shy to speak. I have to make them understand that this is a normal way to speak English and show them the right way to move your mouth when speaking and they will imitate you. They will get better if they continue doing it. Most importantly, teachers shouldn't be shy, if you are shy, they won't listen to you.” (Cho)

“Teachers must be friends with the students sometimes, make them trust you. They will rely on you. I play the different roles, be friend, be mother or be sister. Build the relationship with them. When they feel close to you they will speak with you, this point helps them speak English more easily because they aren't shy. They will enjoy learning, and confident enough to ask questions.” (Cha)

Sometimes, teachers provided reinforcement with something for giving students rewards or compliment.

“I encourage them, give them rewards, and talk nicely to them. I encourage them by using English in class and I give them performance points; score is a good motive. I give students compliments and little prizes.” (Sir)

“I will give them positive reinforcement and assessment to encourage them. I try to build their confidence. And let their friends help them to. I am friendly and nice to them; sometimes you should be friend with your students and mingle outside the class. I think I am funny so they love talking to me.” (Ora)

The students lacked opportunity to practice English both outside the classroom and in daily life. Teachers responded by acting like foreigners in the school.

“I often use English everywhere, not only in the classroom like saying “Good morning” to students. I am not offended whether people will think I am overacting. I do it for sake of my students to be familiar with English. And I also ask them to call me teacher Koy and try to speak English with me as much as possible.” (Asi)

“I also have to encourage them to use English in daily life by asking them to speak English every time they want to ask for permission to do something or enter or leave the classroom. Just try to use simple sentences that they are able to speak.” (Nit)

Students in the same class have different levels of ability and varied performances. Some teachers managed extra classes or tutorial sessions for developing weak students.

“I have a tutorial session for the slow learners.” (Ban)

Besides that, teachers arranged the students with similar abilities together by organizing level appropriate activities.

“I divided students in groups depending on their level of interest. For the group of weak students, they need different way of learning which should be easier than others because not all students can accomplish the same lesson. We also make up an extra class for them in the evening and invite them to join for free and some of them come to participate.” (Suj)

“Teachers have to prepare a lot of activities because not all of them will be successful with all groups of students. You have to adapt your activities to match the abilities of each group.” (Ben)

To suit some students learning styles, teachers allowed smarter students to be the tutor for their weaker close friends.

“I had to repeatedly tutor again and again. Sometimes, I let their friends teach them. I just thought that they are the same age, they might understand each other. Sometimes it works, some not. Some students are gifted teachers.” (Mon)

“And I’ll ask other students whose English is better to help them because they might be afraid of teachers. And they probably communicate better with friends.” (Asi)

“You have to organize the learning system in the class. It can be to put strong and weak students together so that they can help each other. You should allow good students to show their ability for others to follow and not put pressure on the weak students or ask those questions that you know they are unable to answer because they will be discouraged and their friends will make fun of them. You need to smile and cheer them up.” (Cho)

“Most of the students lacked confidence. I’ve tried to encourage them. To conduct group activities, I had to place some courageous students in each group, or someone who had leadership qualities to help them work more easily.” (Nir)

Teachers faced up to students who had no discipline for self-learning. Some of them were Internet addicts. They used their mobile phone only for entertaining themselves and chatting online. The teachers would recommend useful websites or guide the students how to use a search engine to support their learning.

“I recommended them to engage the lesson with technology like internet where there are lots of useful websites to learn from.” (Suj)

“I suggested they learn more from the internet to try to listen to native speaker’s accent, or listen to soundtrack program on TV but students don’t really like it because they are too lazy to read subtitles. But it works well for my children; they now enjoy listening to English speaking program.” (Cho)

“We should help them build their learning behaviors. I help them solve their learning problems by letting them arrange their own schedule, when they are able to manage their time and their learning style under teachers’ guidance. The result turned out good, so I think we are on the right track.”(Cha)

To summarize, many solutions were adopted to reduce the learning problems. Teachers were friendly and kind to engage students’ attention. The teachers really knew their students’ abilities so they set up group work with smart students to be tutors for the weak ones, managed extra classes or tutorial sessions, and provided positive reinforcement encouraging students’ attitudes. The teachers assumed the role of interlocutor, talking with their students in English. In addition, they need to be a

master of technology to help students learn via computer or smart phones.

4.3.2 Solutions to Materials and Equipment

Materials used, such as commercial text books, are complicated for Thai learners. Teachers simplified the units' content to make it appropriate to students' preferences or students' learning style, and sourced material from the Internet or other text books which were relevant to the teaching topic.

“I use some parts of the textbook. I adapt them to be easier so that the students will not get upset with the difficulties. Most content I search from other sources. There are lots of good pieces on the internet.” (Mon)

“I don't actually focus too much on the textbook. I chose one topic, for example, a topic about health and then try to see the crucial sentence and pattern that students should know then rather than using only one textbook. I'd look at other books which might have more sentences or situations for students to explore.” (Suj)

For the circumstances that evolved from being unfamiliar with western culture, teachers recommend students compare the distinctions between foreign and Thai culture. Teachers should adapt general contents to the relevant context.

“We as a teacher will have to explain or at least to compare the culture such as breakfast which is totally different from other nation. So students will also learn their culture too. For example with the topic of food and drink, we will have to apply the context into Thai culture. We put Somtom, Tom Yam Kung or another Thai dish instead of ordering a hamburger. The drink will be coffee or anything that students are familiar with.” (Asi)

“I will only pick the content partly from text books and adapt content from other sources together in order to match with students’ context. I bring some pictures to help with understanding, or tell them roughly about the story and ask them to compare it with an activity which they have experienced so that they are able to understand. I do this because I personally think that a little understanding is better than nothing.” (Cho)

In the case of materials and equipment problems they had to support themselves with their own budget.

“I would like to ask for a Language Laboratory with some adequate CDs for the students. I want them to practice listening and speaking. School should provide the equipment that can be ready to use for any teaching materials. I think using the visuals media can help to raise students’ attention.” (Ora)

“I faced the classroom environment and equipment problems by trying resolve them myself or request assistance from school. I used my own laptop with the screen with HDMI cable.” (Pri)

“There are not enough devices at school. I have prepared need devices from home. If I have straight schedule I cannot set up the devices for the following classes. I use myself as teaching materials.” (Aro)

Due to the fact that the allotment of teaching time was limited, teachers planned to arrange their time for making an extra class.

“I sometimes have to make up an extra class when I know that my students have free time.” (Suj)

“I have to make up extra class to teach because I don’t have enough time. I think there should be more hours for students to learn English. And I need to raise awareness that English is important for their future.” (Cho)

In summary, the teachers simplified the unit content to correspond to students’ interest from Internet resources or other text books, and compared the differences between foreign and Thai culture in the lesson. For the lacking equipment problem, they asked for help from the school or used their personal devices. And, they spent their free time to set up extra classes.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

4.4.1 Suggestions for other teachers

The participants claimed that teachers had an important role to play in encouraging student learning. Being teachers meant not only to teach contents or subject matter but to be supportive and care about student wellbeing. In addition, teachers should be the students’ consultant.

“You need to encourage your students a lot. They need a lot of support. And let them repeat many times without commenting negatively when they say something wrong. For young students, especially, you are not supposed to make them feel embarrassed.” (Api)

“To motivate students’ perception then open their mind, I compare strict teachings to independent learning. The independent learning works for them as I can see their eyes, emotions. They are happy. It improves classroom atmosphere.” (Mon)

“Make them feel positive and become passionate about English language and things will be alright. I used to ask them and they said they were afraid to make a mistake about the structure of a sentence or the correct

tense. I just gave them support and advised them that they shouldn't be afraid of making mistakes as long as they can communicate with others.” (Asi)

“It is very important for teachers to be supportive because you are the only one who knows your students better than others.” (Cho)

In addition, teachers should play different roles to make students feel trust.

“Teachers must be friends with the students sometimes, make them trust you. They will rely on you. Build a relationship with them. When they feel close to you they will speak with you, this point helps them speak English more easily because they are no longer shy. They will enjoy learning, dare to ask the questions.” (Cha)

“The interaction between students and teachers somehow removes the barrier between us and we are more like buddies in some activities together. It's more of the participatory learning which creates shared of language use.” (Asi)

Thai native teachers of English should be aware of professional standards in the teaching area, and language knowledge. Thus, a teacher must strive for continuous self-development and be enthusiastic to improve themselves by using technology. They could gain English competency daily through Internet resources or other training workshops.

“Teachers should be the first ones to be reviewed. We have to assess ourselves and improve our weaknesses. I would like to suggest to teachers that there are now many ways to develop our skills. I myself still have to improve every day, so I would like to encourage all teachers to improve your skills by yourself. There's no need to wait for the government or any organization to hold training for you, but you can

practice your skills everywhere. The more you listen and read, the better you will become. Try to make it part of everyday life to make you feel more confident. 3-4 days training will not be as effective as you actively seeking knowledge by yourself.” (Api)

“Yes, and teachers have to continue developing professionally. Every time I have a chance to join training, I’m always enthusiastic and excited. It’s like I get to charge my battery. If you keep teaching the same thing, in the same class over and over for years, your knowledge will not be expanded. I think teachers are the key factor for the success in teaching English. Successful teachers are not only the ones who attended many training sessions but it is how you make use of it to benefit your student. You need to be creative to try a new teaching style that you learned from the training to see if it works with your students. Who knows it might work great. That is what I have been trying to do to keep myself up to date” (Cho)

“I’d like to improve my teaching ability and language skills especially my listening skill as I am pretty weak. Students learn directly from you so you need to be a knowledgeable person and also provide great learning experiences for your students. Teacher development is therefore a vital part to help improve standards which makes them feel more confident to teach. Teachers should be well prepared, eager to learn and always ahead of the coming trend of language learning. Your personality needs to be positive and open to seek more knowledge” (Asi)

A good teacher should be enthusiastic and create enjoyable classroom activities more effectively.

“You need to love teaching. You need to love your job. Even if you are already passionate about it, you must be enthusiastic and eager to search for more books and information from the internet to improve some

creative ideas that you can apply in your teaching. Passion is a good start.” (Ben)

“You should create a fun leaning teaching style, not to make it too boring or focus too much on the contents. If they get bored, they will not be interested to learn. Teachers should create more fun activity and use English in the class because students only have a chance to practice English with you, if you don’t speak, they don’t know where to practice. We have to make the English class more fun so that both of us enjoy it.” (Cho)

To summarize, the participants suggested that to be an effective English teacher you should master the English subject matter and teaching pedagogy to construct enjoyable and more applicable classroom activities. You should keep up continuous self-improvement and be enthusiastic about self-improvement, especially by using technology. Furthermore, teachers should be kind and play different roles to make students feel trust in them.

4.4.2 Suggestions for all educational and other necessities administrators

The participants suggested that all educational administrations had responsibility to provide as far as possible the necessary budget and supportive resources. Some teachers have made requests for foreign teachers who are native speakers in Extended Education Schools, in order that both students and teachers could more frequently improve their English competency, as some students stated that they did not want to speak English with Thai native teachers of English.

“Actually, I want to have a foreign teacher at school. Having a foreign teacher is beneficial for students. It would give them courage to use English. We teachers may speak fluently but in students’ eyes we are still Thai.” (Mon)

“And also encourage them to speak English with the foreign teacher who is a native speaker. They only want to use English with foreign teachers not with Thai teachers. (Suj)

“The Ministry of Education should provide the budget to hire foreign, native speaker teachers to teach in every school in the countryside so the children will be able to use English in their daily life. If they see a foreigner every day, they will be brave enough to speak English with them. There are actually many exchange students who would like to contribute.” (Ben)

“For having foreign teachers in school, I think it is beneficial for our students if they have a chance to communicate with foreigners.” (Cho)

“Of course, native speaker teachers are useful and important for our students to improve but I don't think we should prioritize them too much. Filipino teachers are also better at English than Thai and they understand Thai students due to a close cultural background better than native speaker.” (Api)

The Thai teachers requested to be trained in English aptitude, new efficient teaching techniques, and media production procedures.

“I would love to enhance my teaching skills in creating teaching materials. I think teaching materials really help to draw students' attention. I would like to improve the classroom resources and the authentic assessment. Our teaching techniques should be up-to-date. There should be workshops to exchange ideas of activities and teaching techniques between ourselves.” (Ora)

“Not only teachers need to be improved but it needs good co-operation from many organizations.” (Ben)

The Thai teachers demanded the provision of ready-made lesson plans, media or materials that can be used effectively.

“The ready-made teaching handbooks which are designed especially for Thai students are urgently needed. I don’t have enough time. For this reason many teachers who have trouble preparing lesson plans just follow the content in the textbook. I have to look at the handbook for each lesson to see what strategies I can apply with my students. I still have no time to come up with my own ideas.” (Ben)

“We should be provided with instant lesson plans.” (Sir)

The teachers commented that the supervisors of all administration levels should realize the benefit of teaching English for communication rather than the achievement of high O-NET scores.

To conclude, all educational organizations should recognize the responsibility to support useful resources, budget, or foreign teachers, whether native speaking English teachers or Filipinos, in Extended Education Schools. Administrators should not focus on O-NET high scores but should concentrate on students’ learning and communication abilities in equal measure to O-NET.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION

Communicative Language Teaching has been used as the approach to teaching English in many countries, including Thailand, for years. In the case of Thai schooling, the achievement of implementing CLT is unsatisfactory in terms of Thai learners, especially those in extended education schools who communicated ineffectively. This is noted in several dissertations which revealed that the difficulties of implementing of CLT in Thai schools have had a number of complex troubles, for instance, low proficiency of learners, workload of teachers, and lack of effective materials.

This study discusses the specific results of the participants' responses. Firstly they revealed their personal opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of CLT and whether this method was suitable for Thai students, based on their teaching experiences and point of view. Secondly, the participants identified some emergent problems which occurred in their classes and proposed their own solutions to cover those problems. Lastly, they gave some general suggestions for other teachers to improve their English teaching as well as their English proficiency.

The personal opinion of teachers who agreed with CLT, in line with Littlewood (2008, p.15) notes that EFL students gradually improve their communicative ability in order to participate in meaningful interaction and can accomplish learning with more confidence. It is specifically the experienced teachers who have a positive opinion of this approach. Most Thai native teachers of English whether graduated in English major or not, normally feel less confident to speak English with both their students and their colleagues. That is inconsistent with Lightbown, Spada, (2013, p.118) referring to Vygotsky's view and Larsari, V. N. (2008) who pointed out that learners needed to acquire language through sufficient exposure, both the linguistic and

pragmatic knowledge of the target language, from social interactions. Otherwise, the communicative competence was not likely to be promoted. In my point of view, this would more likely occur in an English-speaking country where the non-native workers migrated, settle down, and could acquire authentic language from their environment. Since, Thailand is a non-English speaking country and the allotted time to teach English is limited, teachers cannot help students to reach the communicative goals. That is the hardest problem that Thai native teachers of English experience.

One undeniable result of ineffective implementing of CLT in the Thai schools context is that teachers do not completely use communicative techniques based on CLT principles, but audio-lingual and grammar translation approaches are put into practice to clarify the basis of the target language. The classroom language is predominantly Thai. The major learning activities in the lessons are memorization of dialogues from text books, repetition, substitution drills and translation. These tasks seem to mirror the traditional learning experiences of teachers. Students just repeat and drill with artificial situational dialogues. In this regard, teachers probably have misconceptions over CLT. This result is similar to the study of Mareva, and Mapako, (2012) in Zimbabwe. Almost all of the participants reported that their most frequent classroom activity was a role-play. They assumed that this activity could emphasize on promoting communicative competence in order that the learners might not clearly comprehend the language functions were used in actual situation. In other words, real communication does not exist because students can never grasp real English communication properly. Nonetheless, this does not absolutely fail. They can actually grasp the basis of language as comprehensible inputs which help them for synthesized features until challenged by a foreign communicator. By this, Krashen, as cited in Lightbown, Spada (2013, p. 114) means that students have modified their interaction when they have opportunity to interact with foreign speakers to reach mutual comprehension through negotiation for meaning.

Similarly Memari (2013) concluded in his study that implementing CLT in China, Vietnam, and South Korea shared the same phenomenon as the Thai circumstances that led to various frustrations; namely, grammar-based examinations, limitation of

exposure to authentic language, and a few cultural barriers as constraints on applying CLT. These factors are the reasons why Thai native teachers of English have requested The Office of the Basic Education Commission to recruit native English speaking teachers to improve both their students and their own English communicative proficiency. Thai teachers, aware of their limited proficiency, need to attend professional training programs to enhance their own communicative competence as well as developing how to teach communicatively. By this Hongkham (2013) meant that the professional training (PD) program should be applied for practicing rather than simply providing teachers with more theoretical knowledge. These types of training can last continually from several days to two years. Actually, nowadays, PD programs are organized only on weekends by MOE, which requires the accomplishment of standardized educational results. However, teachers have a heavy workload, as well as a duty of pastoral care. In fact teachers need more time to prepare the proper English lessons. Present policy should be questioned so that Thai teachers can do things properly in the allocated time. I would like to assert that Thai native teachers of English also need more teaching strategies to cope with their responsibilities and to properly apply all relevant pedagogical and theoretical knowledge.

All the participants in this research coincided with a study in Iran 2015 by Jafari, Shokpour, and Guetterman suggested that the current Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) system, which assesses linguistic competence rather than communicative competence, should be reformed. As things are, the achievement of O-NET scores is the most significant indicator that the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) pay attention to when evaluating the quality of all Thai schools. For this reason, most teachers pay attention to and arrange tutorial classes focused on grammar instead. Thus, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other educational stakeholders should rethink the entire students' learning skills prescription rather than focusing on a high expectation for results of examination scores. Savignon (2006) stated that the essential CLT conception of language use and language learning could be implemented in classroom teaching practices but relies on

the ability of practitioners, and policy makers to work together to adapt applied linguistics knowledge.

Finally, I concur with Richards (2006, p.22), who stated that applicable CLT principles can be undertaken in various instruction, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals, and so on. In my point of view, the primary objectives of student' development of English should be grounded continually to complete the learning strands and engage students to gain better attitudes towards learning English. In doing this, Thai native teachers of English must be aware of the student' competency levels and performance, based on the teachers' careful analysis.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study interpreted in detail participant experiences related to the main research questions:

1. What are teachers' experiences of using the communicative approach in English language teaching?

This was broken down into three dimensions of sub questions based on teachers' experiences using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in their classroom instruction as follows:

The sub-questions were as follows:

1. What are their opinions about using a communicative approach in teaching English?
2. What problems do they have when using communicative approach?
3. What are some solutions they think can help solve the problems?

5.2.1 PERSONAL OPINIONS OF TEACHERS

The participants who believed in the benefit of CLT agreed that the CLT method could promote students' communicative skills. They believed that CLT was correlated

to students' learning styles. Students would not memorize dialogues but they could employ the sentence in particular situations. In addition, they asserted that CLT was an appropriate method for teaching English in the Thai classroom setting and supports an increase in O-NET scores. In the case of teachers who partially agreed with the advantages of CLT, they argued that students needed more time to practice because of student' characteristics and lack of teaching devices. Teachers who disagreed with the benefits of CLT revealed that students not only lacked linguistic competence but required more opportunity to practice English outside the classroom in view of the lack of family and community support. In particular circumstances, some teachers who faced technical problems while teaching were overwhelmed by CLT.

5.2.2 PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING CLT

5.2.2.1 Problems of learners

The problems of learners were complex issues that corresponded with individual personality traits. The participants attribute the ineffective classroom behaviors such as being shy, being afraid to lose face and a lack of confidence to a reluctance to speak in class. In addition, one reason behind insufficient communicative competence was students' lack of opportunity to practice English both outside the classroom and in daily life, particularly for students from poor families. Hence, learners were not aware of the benefits of English. In some schools foreign teachers were available for better English learners; however students were still afraid of talking with foreign teachers because of their inadequate linguistic competence, as well as different levels of learning. Another significant reason is that nowadays, students who enjoy using social media and playing computer games have no desire to learn effectively. Moreover, the students in extended education schools have less motivation and self-discipline to learn English because of their limited economic status, and family goals. Thus, they do not aspire to discover the value of English.

5.2.2.2 Problems of teachers

The participants disclosed their own lack of expertise in communicative competence. They had inadequate skills for listening and speaking, faced difficulties in terms of pronunciation, lacked the confidence to communicate in English, and were unfamiliar with western culture. In addition, they had an excessive workload for school assignments and were expected to meet with the demands of BECC, 2008. Thus teachers had limited time to prepare English lessons properly.

5.2.2.3 Problems of materials and equipment

The participants argued that the commercial text books were too difficult for Thai students owing to the complexity of content, difficulty of vocabulary, and cultural differences. Some schools lacked electronic teaching aids and had limited Internet accessibility to support the teachers.

5.2.2.4 Problems caused by another affecting factors

The participants concluded that the complicated factors influencing the teaching and learning of English in the Thai schooling context were augmented by different problems. Constraints in time and the number of students attending each class resulted in making it difficult to undertake activities to teach English as a foreign language. Also, Thai native teachers of English needed help from other colleagues to assist their teaching and help solve school environment problems. Moreover, the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) and students' family problems made teachers feel as though they had under achieved.

5.2.3 SOLUTIONS TO TEACHING

5.2.3.1 Solutions to Problem of Learners

Several solutions were proposed to alleviate the learning problems. Teachers should be friendly and kind to engage students' attention. The teachers really know their students' abilities so they should set up group work with smart students to be tutors

for the weak ones, manage extra classes or tutorial sessions, and provide positive reinforcement, improving students' attitude. Teachers, as interlocutors, must talk with their students in English. In addition, they should master technology to help students learn via computer or smart phones. However, certain issues were beyond the teachers' responsibility, such as a lack of family support, or parents who were unaware of the value of English language.

5.2.3.2 Solutions to Problems of Materials and Equipment

The teachers simplified and supplemented unit' content to better align with students' interest, using Internet resources or other text books. Thai and foreign culture in the lessons were compared. Teachers overcame the problems relating to the lack of equipment by asking for help from the schools or using their own personal devices. Furthermore, they spent their spare time setting up extra classes.

5.2.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

5.2.4.1 Suggestions for other teachers

The participants suggested that in order to be effective English instructors, teachers should master the subject matter in English and teach pedagogy to construct enjoyable and more applicable classroom activities. They should continue to self-improve and be enthusiastic about using technology. Furthermore, teachers should be kind and play different roles to make students feel trust in them.

5.2.4.2 Suggestions for all educational and other necessities administrators

For the organizations who have direct responsibility to supply useful resources, budgets are needed to recruit foreign teachers who are either native speakers or Filipinos for the Extended Education Schools. Then, they should focus on enhancement of students' learning abilities instead of high O-NET scores.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.3.1 This study is limited to data in terms of teachers' perspectives. Any further research could be conducted using a mixed method. The quantitative paradigm, as well as the number of participants, should be generalized for purposeful sampling and also a qualitative paradigm including class observation based on students' experiences and their satisfaction with CLT learning should be considered.

5.3.2 The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and The Ministry Of Education (MOE) should investigate the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to determine what is appropriate or applicable for Thai school contexts.

5.3.3 MOE or other educational stakeholders should conduct dissertations to underpin the appropriate approaches for applying CLT in Thai school contexts.

5.3.4 MOE should investigate follow up for teachers after training development programs.

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