



**CLT-BASED LESSONS ON RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS IN  
ENGLISH FOR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT  
UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY**

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## บทคัดย่อ

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เป็นเวลาหลายทศวรรษที่วิธีการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสารถูกแนะนำให้ใช้กับการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทย แต่กลับยังไม่เป็นที่แพร่หลายในห้องเรียนไทยเนื่องจากแนวคิดและวิธีปฏิบัติของการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสารมีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมากเมื่อเทียบกับวิธีการสอนภาษาแบบเดิมที่มีครูเป็นศูนย์กลางการสอน งานวิจัยนี้จึงสำรวจการสอนภาษาผ่านแนวทางการสื่อสารภายใต้หัวข้อการตอบรับคำชมเป็นภาษาอังกฤษแบบอเมริกันสำหรับนักศึกษาสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษมหาวิทยาลัยอุบลราชธานี โดยเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากสามวิธี อันได้แก่ แบบทดสอบก่อนและหลังเรียน แบบสอบถาม และบันทึกจากครูผู้สอน สิ่งที่ได้จากการศึกษาเผยให้เห็นว่าการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสารสามารถพัฒนาการตอบรับคำชมของนักศึกษารวมถึงช่วยให้นักศึกษามีโอกาสใช้ทักษะเดิมมาใช้ในการฝึกภาษาอีกด้วย งานวิจัยยังพบว่าเทคนิคการสอนโดยเพื่อนช่วยสอนมีบทบาทสำคัญต่อความสำเร็จสำหรับกลุ่มตัวอย่างกลุ่มนี้ สิ่งที่ได้จากงานวิจัยยืนยันผลประโยชน์ในทางทฤษฎีของการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร และงานวิจัยเสนอให้นำแนวทางการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสารไปปรับใช้อย่างเหมาะสมสำหรับนักเรียนไทย

## ABSTRACT

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PEER TEACHING

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been introduced to use for English teaching in Thailand for decades. However, CLT is still not widely applied in Thai EFL classroom as the CLT concepts and practices are very different from the usual traditional teacher-led teaching method. This study investigates the use of CLT-based lesson on compliments responses in Standard American English for English major students at Ubon Ratchatani University. Three sources of data were used, namely pretest and posttest, questionnaires, and teacher's diary. The findings indicate that the CLT-based lesson help students improve skills in responding to compliments in Standard American English while providing them opportunities to practice other skills in English they previously acquired. It was also found that peer teaching plays an important role in the success of CLT for this group of participants. These findings confirm the theoretical advantages of CLT. Practical suggestions are offered for optimal use of CLT for Thai students.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the theoretical basis of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and reviews related studies to provide justification for the use of CLT as an approach to teach English to Thai students in the present study.

### **1.1 Theoretical background**

For decades, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), or the communicative approach, has been a popular teaching method that rivals other methods such as grammar translation and audio–lingual methods for second language (L2) teaching. Despite obstacles and weaknesses (Li, 1998; Bock, 2000; Tan, 2005), international research has confirmed the greater merits of CLT in enhancing L2 learning than those offered by other approaches (Taylor, 1983; Maley, 1986; Rifkin, 2006; Keng, 2012; Edisherashvili, 2014).

The main argument of any CLT approach is that for any successful language learning, second language learners are required to not merely learn grammatical form, but also must acquire communicative competence to successfully engage in social interactions similar to real life communication, which is the ultimate goal of language learning (Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 1991). The concept of communicative competence is therefore the foundation of CLT. Hymes (1971) brought attention to this concept several decades ago, and ever since it has been widely accepted among scholars in the field of second language education. In CLT, communicative competence is knowledge about the linguistic rules and the rules for their uses that help speakers make appropriate speech exchanges in a particular conversation and within a particular situational context.

Communicative rules or conventions exist in the learners' first language (L1) and second language (L2). L2 learners are often faced with difficulties in learning and using L2 due to the complexity in conveying and interpreting messages when the conventions of the two languages do not match. For this reason, communicative competence, that is, to become a competent L2 user, the speaker must understand what

is, and what is not an acceptable choice of words when producing an utterance in L2 on a topic, which is dependent on who they are talking to, and the social circumstances has an important role for learners to become competent L2 users. Summarizing the core principles of all CLT approaches, Hymes (1971: 277) writes that acquiring communicative competence requires learners to know “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner.”

Language learning in CLT is a linguistic and social act. Halliday (1973: 345) suggests “Learning language is learning how to mean,” which requires grammatical knowledge in addition to other kinds of knowledge. In fact, learners learn how ‘to mean’ in L2 via a combination of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic knowledge of the L2 (Canale, 1983). Alternatively, to enhance L2 verbal communication, L2 learners must know the rules of language and conversation that are adopted in specific social contexts, the rules of cohesion and coherence in a discourse genre, and the rules of linguistic forms and their sociolinguistic patterns. Therefore in language learning, as far as CLT is concerned, learners should be exposed to and be equipped with all these communicative competencies in order for them to effectively convey the meaning of their utterances to another person.

Communicative competence has been adopted as the main theoretical framework of all teaching approaches that have collectively been labeled communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT approaches may differ in the detail, but the core concepts of CLT are similar through the influence of the emphasis on communicative competence. These concepts are student-centered learning, teacher as facilitator, balance of explicit and implicit learning, meaning-focused interaction, real-life based communication, and use of authentic materials (Littlewood, 1981; Harmer, 1982; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Savignon, 1987; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell, 1995; Richards, 2006).

Communicative competence has been continuously applied to derived customized effective CLT approaches in different L2 teaching and learning contexts. In the context of limited reliable published research on the use of CLT in Thailand, the present study seeks to how best this communicative competence derived CLT can be designed to be more contextually sensitive to improve the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in an EFL context in Thailand.

## 1.2 Rationale

CLT is used in many educational contexts. CLT has been found to be effective in western countries (Kaufman, 1987; Aski, 2000; Magedanz, 2004). Meanwhile in Asia there are a number of recent studies related to CLT (Hiep, 2007; Chang, 2010; Bruner, Singwongsuwat and Bojanic, 2014). The Asian studies show that enhancing language learning using CLT in class continues to have some obstacles. For instance, Hiep (2007) found that in Vietnam, there are conflicts between beliefs about CLT and actual teacher implementation, while the progress in the classroom was revealed to be teacher–centric rather than student–centric. Furthermore, Chang (2010) revealed that the Taiwanese education system does not support CLT practices, while Bruner, Singwongsuwat and Bojanic (2014) noticed that unrealistic roleplays were used with large classes in CLT in Thailand. These studies provide an impression that there is much to think and rethink about existing CLT practices in Asia. Although the approach is widespread and a number of people claim to have used it in their teaching, there are fundamental misconceptions about it and the use of non–CLT practices. An urgent need exists to return to the core CLT principles previously discussed so that CLT can more effectively be utilized in countries such as Thailand.

The implementation of CLT in English education in Thailand is not as effective as it should be. EFL teaching in Thailand has long been dominated by traditional teaching methods, in which teachers and learners are used to teaching and learning by focusing on grammar and accuracy rather than productive skills that provide opportunities students to use language. These traditional methods leave students accustomed to passive learning, and the classes following a teacher–centric approach which appears common in other Asian English teaching contexts (Nguyen, 2005). Outside the classroom, Thai students lack opportunities to engage in real–life communication (Punthumasen, 2007). From the existing English learning and teaching context in Thailand, it seems difficult to apply a CLT approach to improve English education in Thailand, despite the approach being used effectively elsewhere. Nevertheless, after years of broadly unsuccessful English education in Thailand, it is likely time to seriously reconsider existing language teaching practices by focusing on ways to improve it. CLT has been proved useful elsewhere, perhaps due to appropriate adjustment of the CLT design to specific contexts. Replicating such a CLT approach to a Thai classroom context may result in similar problems found in previous studies. It is

therefore the objective of the present study to develop a CLT-based approach that suits the Thai context in order to improve English teaching and learning for Thai students.

It is widely understood that Thai students are not good at English (Noom-ura, 2013). The problem is said to be due to different causes, such as ineffective teacher training, low motivation levels, varied student proficiency, large class sizes, and limited opportunities for students to engage in daily English communication. Nonetheless, passive learning is the most frequently reported problem (Punthumasen, 2007; Dhanasobhon, 2010; Noom-ura, 2013). No matter how good a teaching technique is, it is ineffective if learners do not actively engage in their own learning. The present study draws on the concept of peer teaching in the development of a context-sensitive CLT framework to tackle the problem of passive learners. Peer teaching is where learners collaborate with each other in their learning and thinking to achieve interactional tasks (Grosse and Bachmann, 2000). The causes of passive learning can vary, with anxiety being found to be a major cause for Thai learners. (Basilio and Wongrak, 2017). Peer teaching may help Thai students because it can help reduce anxiety derived making errors in front of teachers and motivates learners to cooperate.

In this study, the CLT lessons will be on responding to compliments as this is something different in English compared to the Thai students' L1. Cedar (2006) identified responding to compliments in English as one area that causes communicative problem for Thai students. Thailand is socio-linguistically diverse, with this sociolinguistic context leading to differences in giving and responding to compliments in Thai, Lao Isan, and other local languages. Like most Thais, people in Northeast Thailand are used to conventions in how they respond to compliments in their local languages and Thai since most are bilingual speakers of Thai and a local language which have similar conventions. For instance, students are used to responding to compliments through verbal acceptance, or gestures such as silence or smiles, which are common responses in most local Thai cultures. Problems arise in how they respond to compliments in English because the language is not yet part of the linguistic repertoires of most Thai students. In English, the common kinds of responses in Thai and local languages may be perceived negatively by native English speakers. Responses like silence and smiles are not the usual responses to compliments in an English speech community (Gajaseni, 1994).

To examine whether a customized CLT approach can help Thai students produce appropriate verbal responses to compliments in American English and whether it can improve student performance, the CLT lessons will be used in a case study design with a group of first year English major students at Ubon Ratchathani University. These students were selected as participants due to the ease of access since the researcher is a graduate student at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University. Since the participants are students of English, the CLT lessons will be relevant to their studies and interests. Moreover, the study is a small-scale independent study. All these reasons should make the convenience sampling method appropriate to recruit participants. The study includes all four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the development of the CLT lessons to help the participants develop the skills necessary to respond to compliments in meaningful interactions. The meaningful interactions will include situational activities in the hope that this will support them to achieve the goal of having real-life communication competence.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

This study aims to investigate the use of lessons from a CLT approach to help English major students at Ubon Ratchathani University in Northeast Thailand to improve how they respond to compliments in English. The target English variety and speech convention for the study is Standard American English since it is the most widely used variety of English and has significant differences in how to compliments to the Thai students' L1 are made (Cedar, 2006). The customized CLT-based lesson is expected to help the participants notice the differences and improve their performance in responding to compliments in Standard American English.

### **1.4 Research question**

The theoretical and contextual discussion leads to the following research question; “To what extent can CLT-based lessons improve skills in responding to compliments in Standard American English for first year English major students at Ubon Ratchathani University?”

To examine the extent to which the CLT lessons have any effect on the development of the target skills, the study focuses on the end product, which is the students' performance in responding to compliments in addition to the process by

which the CLT lessons help learners build communicative competence.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The present study is very detailed in terms of CLT lesson development. The study findings are useful for English teachers seeking an effective teaching approach to help improve students' English learning. These benefits are not limited to the case in the present study of responding to compliments.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter contains four sections: communicative language teaching, responding to compliments, peer teaching, and previous studies. Each section is discussed and clarified in detail as follows.

#### **2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

The section introduces communicative language teaching. Four CLT topics will be discussed, namely the theoretical background of CLT, the theoretical development from communicative competence (CC) to CLT, the main principles of CLT, and problems found in CLT classrooms.

##### **2.1.1 Communicative competence and CLT**

Communicative language teaching (CLT) was originally developed decades ago by the Council of Europe (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Richards and Rodgers report that from the late 1960s onwards there was a change in British language teaching from traditional to situational language teaching. Situational language teaching followed the premise that learners should learn a new language in a particular setting or a situation. This early CLT approach was influenced by concepts developed by Hymes (1971) and other scholars who saw the importance of helping learners express meaning through situational events.

Hymes (1971) posit that language users should obtain communicative skills in order to enhance their language learning. He debates Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence that was then applied to language teaching, which placed emphasis on the need to obtain knowledge of language structures. Hymes (1971) further argues that there is an equally important need to stress performance or communicative competence and performance to be successful communicators. According to Hymes, it is necessary for language learners to learn the grammar of a new language, but that will not be sufficient for real communication. Both kinds of competence linguistic and communicative should therefore be the focus of language learning. Since Hymes proposed the idea of communicative competence, other researchers have clarified the

ideas and laid the foundations CLT. Of these researchers, Canale and Swain are the most notable. Canale and Swain (1980) clarified the term of communicative competence to make the concept more inclusive. They suggest that communicative competence should include grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Canale(1983) later added discourse competence into its dimensions. Each dimension of communicative competence will be discussed in light of the present study's theoretical framework.

Communicative competence has become an umbrella term that embraces four types of competence: grammar, sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategy. Grammatical competence concerns the understanding of language rules in term of phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge. Grammar is basic knowledge which must be learned by language students. Next, sociolinguistic competence is to understand what utterance should be produced in a certain social context to maintain an appropriate interaction with other people, whether language users can effectively apply grammatical knowledge can be determined by observations and their appropriation of sociolinguistic rules in a particular society. Meanwhile, discourse competence is considered an integration of grammatical form, concerning how cohesion and coherence are used in different genres of communication. For example, different patterns of written forms are used in different genres, such as an academic essay, an application letter, an invitation card, and so on. Finally, strategic competence is a mastery of both verbal and non-verbal communication that language users apply to overcome communicative problems. These elements of communicative competence highlight how communicative methods can be used to improve second language pedagogy as an alternative to traditional methods such as grammar translation and the audio-lingual method.

Communicative competence is a key concept in CLT. Since the introduction of the communicative approach in language teaching years ago, there have been many different versions of CLT, yet all seek to move away from an approach driven solely by a focus on language structure to a more socially driven one. The development of CLT will be discussed so that an appropriate CLT design for the present study can be proposed in Chapter 3.

### 2.1.2 Defining CLT

Communicative language teaching, known as the communicative approach, derives from efforts to ensure that students learn and acquire necessary communicative competence in a second language from within the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Language is considered as a tool for communication in CLT, meaning there is a balance between teaching knowledge of language structure and teaching language functions. Littlewood (1981) claims that to achieve a goal of conversation, learners should have linguistic knowledge as well as realize the functions of language use so that they can develop the communicative skills that are required in real social communication. This idea of teaching language for communicative purposes is also supported by other early academics working on CLT. For instance, Harmer (1982) posited that CLT aims to make learners aware of how to convey messages to fulfill the ‘want’ by giving the correct meaning to receivers or to achieve the purpose of the conversation. Similarly, Savignon (1987) believes that communicative teaching is not simply teaching; rather it is a universal effort that directs and seeks to inspire language learners to become involved in effective interactions. Thonbury (1996: 57) summarizes that any CLT approach can be generally characterized as “not grammar-driven” and instead “meaning-driven.”

Modern guidelines to CLT approaches have been clarified by Richards (2006) who explains the other aspects that define CLT. Most importantly, CLT does not simply shift the focus from teachers to learners, but CLT is seen as a set of holistic language teaching that integrates the learning process, the role of the teacher, the role of learners, and the use of activities to support language learning. All these factors are considered important for any CLT design.

In conclusion, the concept of CLT is broader than classroom-based language teaching and learning, and represents a way to encourage language learners to use language and attempt to communicate effectively and appropriately. Grammar teaching is not ignored but rather it is integrated into an environment that motivates students to interact in artificial situations. This study will therefore find a way to create CLT lessons that foster effective language learning by helping students learn language patterns and use them in communicative activities.

### 2.1.3 Principles of CLT

CLT is essentially an attempt to utilize communicative competence to help with language learning. These fundamental concepts have already been discussed previously along with other related characteristics of CLT. The principles that govern CLT classroom teaching and activities will now be considered.

Drawing from the related concepts discussed above, it can be concluded that every CLT approach is designed to follow four essential principles. Firstly, the teacher is no longer a controller but a facilitator. Secondly, students are no longer passive, but now rather active learners. Thirdly, activities in the learning process are not merely to remember steps but are to motivate language use among the learners. Finally, material used in the class should be authentic and reflect real world contexts (Maley, 1986; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Savignon, 1987 and 1991; Richards, 2006). All four principles can be clarified as follows.

#### 2.1.3.1 Teacher-related principles

In the CLT classroom, the teacher is a facilitator who must monitor activities, observe and adjust tasks to motivate students to participate in the activities (Maley, 1986). The role of teacher changes from feeding information to the students to facilitator; that is, teachers are required to speak less while students encouraged to speak more. Nevertheless, the importance of the teacher is not diminished as Littlewood (1981) underlines that while the CLT teacher does not perform the same dominant role at the center of the class, in CLT they do not merely become a class supporter either. Instead, in a CLT classroom the teacher has a significant role to ensure the students are fully supported and have the opportunity to use the target language. Richards and Rodgers (1986) add that the teacher is not simply a facilitator, but they also play the role of co-learner who considers how activities should be organized and arranged according to the needs of the students. Being a co-learner will then help teachers open their mind and understand the students' perspectives. By learning together, the teacher and students can find solutions to fix any flaws in the students' learning. Another CLT teacher-related principle is for the teacher to consider what to do when students make errors; teachers must avoid immediate correction so that they do not discourage the students. Instead, the main concern for the teacher is to focus on the meaning, while feedback can be done later and given in many different ways (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003).

There are also some suggested required characteristics for teachers to have who wish to apply CLT in their classes. To begin, Savignon (1991) suggests that beyond their teaching skills, teachers should have a good understanding of the culture of the target language. Comprehension of the language along with social practice will help teachers be successful CLT facilitators. Moreover, teachers should be creative thinkers. For instance, students may only try to interact with their friends who sit near them, while ignoring their other classmates. A creative teacher should be able to find way of facilitating students to work well in a group (Basta, 2011). Furthermore, CLT teachers should be able to modify the activities in textbooks to personalize them and match with the students' abilities (Ko, 2014).

### 2.1.3.2 Learner-related principles

The alternative role of the teacher in CLT is important, but CLT students must also change their role to enhance the success of a CLT classroom. The second principle of CLT therefore focuses on the students. Firstly, passive learners must become more active learners in the CLT classroom. CLT students are required to not simply passively follow the lesson; rather they are required to responsibility for their learning and play the main role in the classroom (Maley, 1986). This student role change makes them the main actors in the learning process, resulting in CLT being very different from traditional classrooms. To be the main actors, learners must cooperate with other actors, including with the other students and the teacher. They must not just come to class to do individual tasks and assignment. Social communication is a part of the learning process and students should communicate with each other and with the teacher (Littlewood, 1981), with the activities being used as an aid for them to become negotiators in group conversations (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Language learning occurs when students use patterns of language to fulfill a communicative purpose. CLT activities seek to provide the learners with opportunities to practice interacting with others in an environment where they feel free to communicate using their own words (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003). Put alternatively, active students should understand the purpose of the CLT activity and draw on all their existing and newly learned competence to help them successfully perform a task.

Another student related principle is that for CLT students to become autonomous learners, they must be creative thinkers, have cooperative attitudes, and actively engage in the classroom (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003). Once students are creative

thinkers, they will willingly involve themselves in activities without being instructed to do so by the teacher. A cooperative attitude is also important, as Basta (2011) indicates that students should focus on cooperating in group work rather than competing against other classmates to get higher scores. These characteristics of CLT learners derive from the idea that the CLT classroom is not a place where students should focus on competing against each other, but rather should together to achieve a communication goal. Developing a positive attitude is crucial for students to make the most of CLT activities. While a positive attitude towards language learning is required, active engagement is expected. Savignon (1991) specifies that it is important for students to 'take a risk' to use language because they can acquire and develop their language skills thorough productive learning. Moreover, L2 learning also requires motivation to enable learners to put in the effort to develop their L2 implementation (Dornyei, 1998). Through these requirements, it could be said that achieving communicative learning goals requires the participation of everyone in the classroom.

#### 2.1.3.3 Principles related to the learning process

The use of CLT emphasizes the new teacher and student roles. The next principle which is as important is CLT activities. The design of CLT activities is quite different from other approaches. The main characteristic of CLT activities is their focus on individual and group learning. Jacobs and Farwell (2003) write that CLT does not emphasize learning flow for each individual in the class, but instead emphasizes that the whole class should develop as an individual person. To achieve goal, CLT activities require all the individual students to use their skills to complete a task. This can be done through sharing and discussion with other students, whether seeking to find solutions to a problem or to make a decision (Maley, 1986). Students will learn to use language from their peers or other group members as well as from the class. CLT activities should create opportunities for students to use all their skills and communicative competence to deal with a communicative task. Through well deigned activities, learners will have the chance to exploit previous knowledge and practice new language patterns to meaningfully and effectively convey messages in the particular situations where the interaction takes place (Littlewood, 1981). As a result, the success of a CLT class depends on the CLT activities which different according to the activity purpose.

Although the end goal of a CLT lesson is to provide opportunities for learners to actively use the target language for communication, CLT activities can be as diverse as mechanical grammar drills to social activities so long as they meet the learners' needs. While cooperative learning is a must, discarding grammar teaching from CLT practice is inadvisable, especially for lower proficiency learners. Richards and Rodgers (1986) forward the view that beginner-level learners should learn language structures from small practices to help them make links with their background knowledge. After that, they can then begin more communicative activities such as roleplay or other oral productive group work. Grammar teaching therefore continues to be necessary for beginners. Much research agrees with Richards and Rodgers on this point. For instance, Savignon (1991) states that when operating a CLT class, teaching grammar or language structure is unavoidable. Students won't be able to perform a communicative task until they have an understanding of target language patterns. Savignon believes that grammar is a component which can be integrated into communicative activities. Likewise, Jacobs and Farrell (2003) reveal that CLT activities in class are divided into two groups: the first section is content which aims to provide students with the knowledge of what they should know, while the second section is a performance in which students act out something that they have learned.

Richard (2006) echoes a similar opinion in his suggestion that grammar teaching should be considered. Richard clearly separates the steps of CLT practice into three parts, beginning from what he refers to as 'mechanical practice' (language structure teaching), then 'meaningful practice' (language-use practice), through to communicative practice (the use of language in situational tasks). Richard's typology of CLT activities provides a clearer picture of how CLT can be used with low proficiency students. That is, CLT practice is not simply leaving students to work in a group and watch them interact. In contrast, the teacher must consider the learners' needs and prepare activities accordingly that can help them gradually learn to be more active CLT learners, by providing them with knowledge of language functions before they begin interactive practices.

#### 2.1.3.4 Principles related to learning materials

The teacher's considerations of CLT arrangements should concern both the teaching process and the materials available in the classroom. CLT classrooms require many different kinds of materials, from authentic materials to materials to

motivate students to communicate with each other. Maley (1986) states that teaching materials should invoke students to use language in a wide range of communication. Such materials can come in different formats. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), there are three types of material used in CLT classrooms. The first type is text-based materials such as textbooks. The second type is task-based materials such as cards or games. The final type is realia, meaning authentic. In general, CLT material can be anything which people can find in real life that can promote the language using experience, such as newspapers or advertisements.

Briefly, there are four main principles for the use of CLT in a second language classroom. In developing a CLT lesson, care must be given to issues related to the teacher, students, activities, and materials. CLT designs from around the world all have some of the aforementioned features. Some designs are more successful than others. When designs fail to function as much planned, the obstacles to their success can aid the success of new CLT designs, such as the present study.

#### **2.1.4 Problems in CLT classrooms**

Existing studies show a number of successful international classroom implementations of CLT. However, some cases faced obstacles in their use of CLT. These problems are related to factors including teachers, students, materials, policy, and assessment. A discussion of these factors will aid the design of appropriate CLT lessons for this study.

The first group of obstacles concerns the teacher. Thornbury (1996) indicates that the goals of CLT may be unachievable for teachers lacking experience in communicative language teaching. The primary problem that Thornbury discovers is when teachers ignore the need for students to use the target language. Moreover, some teachers who are very proficient in the L2 may not attempt to understand why the students are struggling. Such indifference prevents them from noticing what students require to effectively communicate in the L2. Bock (2000) reports that English teachers in Vietnam agreed with this, in that they felt inadequately prepared to use CLT in their classrooms. Those teachers mentioned difficulties in designing lessons, blaming problematical conditions such as incapable teaching facilities, large class sizes, students with variable proficiency levels, and teachers lacking sufficient CLT training to manage classrooms using CLT learning methods.

Meanwhile, problems in the use of CLT can also be caused by the students. Bock (2000) and Basta (2011) indicate that problems in CLT can be due to students being unable to become active learners because they lack motivation and confidence, are afraid to ask the teacher, questions, or rely on other classmates during group work. Bock (2000) found that some students have a tendency to refuse to work in a team, while other students join teams but only use L1 during the group work. These factors prevent them from experiencing communicative improvement because they fail to make use of the learning opportunities. A further problem is that many classes are mixed-ability classes, in which there are significant individual differences among learners in the same class (Maley, 1986; Bock, 2000). Large class sizes can also make it difficult for teachers to individually monitor all of the students. Due to differences in learning styles, some students may be given inappropriate tasks which do not match their level of ability. Indeed, this is normal in large classes where the same task is given to all students. To reduce problems of mixed-ability classes, there is a suggestion to employ a placement test to divide oral English communication classrooms into smaller groups based upon the students' proficiency level (Bruner, Singwongsuwat and Bojanic, 2014). However, along a similar line, Jacobs and Farrell (2003) argue that individual differences can help promote student's social skills. Students can learn from each other and learn to deal with various interactions, such as by enhancing their language use to communicate with higher proficiency students, or by trying to make their language more appropriate to interact with lower proficiency students.

As mentioned in the previous section, learning process and materials play important roles in CLT classrooms. Here, the availability and quality of activities, materials and other supportive tools are two important issues. Bock (2000) states that many CLT classrooms lack conducive facilities. The use of materials, especially task-based and realia material, is not included in the lesson of the present research due to time and budget constraints. Moreover, material usage should be well planned to support activities; if it is too complicated it may be ignored by the teacher, leaving textbooks as the only material used as in traditional language teaching. Ko (2014) views that textbooks fail to provide enough activities to help learners explore authentic situations in support of the support real communication that they will have beyond the classroom. He further reveals that the English textbooks used in Hong Kong and

Malaysia still appear traditional.

An additional important factor is the educational policies. Problems can be caused because policies can have significant impacts on teaching. Unsupportive policies can bring about ineffective CLT implementation (Maley, 1986). For example, unclear policies may result in a mismatch between the learning and test content. According to Jacobs and Farrell (2003), contradictory realities occur because while CLT pushes students to improve their communication, tests instead focus on traditional objectives and formats. Therefore, while CLT activities prepare students to communicate in the L2, traditional examinations are mostly summative and usually aim to test the students' knowledge of language structure.

A further issue related to testing and assessment is that the process-based CLT takes time and may not provide the same definite results that the traditional assessment seek to assess (Maley, 1986). Learning outcomes in CLT are not easy to evaluate. Often teachers are unable to obviously notice what students acquire during the learning process. Teacher therefore cannot assume to see the results as immediately as most explicit teaching method. Instead, CLT acknowledges learner differences and places emphasis on the learning progress of each individual learner. Teachers must work hard to track each student's learning improvement. Students may also use different strategies to deal with the same task. The assessment of communicative teaching therefore requires attention from the teacher to set an evaluation method which focuses on each individual's learning progression.

The problems found in previous CLT classrooms will be taken into consideration for the development of CLT lessons in the present study. The present study is a case study that utilizing specific lessons designed for the study purpose. The lesson is not part of the policy of the Ministry of Education or the curriculum, meaning that policy factors do not pose significant issues. Instead, the lessons have been developed with consideration of other factors related to the teacher, students, and assessment to ensure that the design will be suitable for the participants and reduce potential obstacles.

## **2.2 Responding to compliments**

The present study considers the type of communicative competence selected as the focus of the study. The study focuses on how compliments are responded, to which are

different in the students' L1s and English. This section discussed the types of compliment responses in English and the differences in how compliments can be responded to between Standard Thai and American.

### **2.2.1 Types of compliment responses in English**

A number of researchers have investigated types of compliment responses. Herbert (1989) is one such researcher who has been widely cited in this field. Herbert analyzed and grouped compliment responses into three main categories: agreements, non-agreements, and request interpretation. Each category includes sub-categories, as follows.

#### **2.2.1.1 Agreements**

In the response grouping 'agreements', the compliment receiver accepts the compliment. There are several additional sub-categories: acceptances, comment history, and transfer.

Acceptance is the simplest way of accepting a compliment, and is further divided into three dimensions; a) appreciation tokens, which are not considered to be qualification to a compliment as it can be done in non-verbal ways such as by nodding the head; b) comment acceptances, which are considered as a compliment qualification such as saying "thank you," and c) praise upgrades, in which the receiver accept the compliment and enhances the compliment in a self-praising manner. People responding using 'acceptances' will typically offer a brief response in the reply to compliments.

While short responses are generally referred to acceptances, 'comment history' always provide more details. A comment history is a way of accepting compliments and in the response the speaker adds more impersonal details into the response. Herbert claims that it may imply a will of the speaker to create a back-and forth conversation, with them expecting the compliment giver to say something further allowing the compliment receiver to reply again to lengthen the conversation.

The final sub-category in the agreement group is 'transfer' which is a limited degree of acceptance. It is divided into two dimensions; a) reassignment, in which the speaker directs the praise either to a third person or to the object that the directed was directed towards; or b) return, where the speaker returns the compliment to the compliment giver. This is seen as an indirect acceptance because the responses

refer to a third person.

#### 2.2.1.2 Non-agreements

The second type of compliment response is called ‘non-agreements’ which are different from agreements because they are used to reject the compliment. The speaker can show their rejection in one of four ways, whether to scale down, non-acceptance, question response, or giving no acknowledgement, as described below.

A scale down response is used when the speaker disagree with the compliment and tries to point out hidden flaws in the compliment. For example, if a compliment giver praises them on a new bag, the compliment receiver may reply that the bag is just old fashion. In this way, the speaker downgrades the praise to avoid the compliment.

A non-acceptance type of response is a stronger type of rejection to display the speaker’s strongly disagreement with the compliment. This response is divided into two further divisions. First, it is a disagreement, in which the speaker disagrees with the compliment and asserts that the compliment is overdone. Second is the use of a qualification, in which the speaker chooses not to accept the full compliment, and instead adds words to the end of the disagreeing statement, such as through, but, yet, and so on.

The third sub-category in the non-agreement group is question response. Question response is used when the speaker requests for an expansion of, or a repeat of the compliment assertion. For example, the speaker will reply with a question such as “Really” or “Do you really think so?” to show that the compliment is quite unbelievable.

All these compliment response types show that speaker pays attention to the compliment, which is dissimilar to the no-acknowledgement where the speaker verbally ignores the compliment.

#### 2.2.1.3 No-acknowledgement

No-acknowledgement is the final sub-category of non-agreement. There are two possible explanations. First, the compliment receiver may not hear the compliment utterance. Otherwise, they may need to react somehow. To interpret the meaning, the compliment giver must be able to understand the compliment receiver’s intentions.

The final type of compliment response in English is ‘request interpretation’, which is related to a compliment response that the speaker produces for a purpose other than a compliment. For instance, the receiver believes that the compliment giver may have a motive so returns the compliment to make a request from the compliment receiver.

To summarize, the types of compliment responses can be divided into three groups: agreement, non-agreement, and request interpretation. The sub-categories in each type are clarified by the compliment receiver’s different actions. However, responses can be perceived differently in different cultures. As the present study deal with compliment responses in English by Thai learners of English, the following section will explore the differences between responses in other cultures.

### **2.2.2 Differences in responding to compliments between Standard Thai and American English**

As discussed, there are many ways for people to respond to a compliment, but a typical style of response can be found in each speech community and can lead to incorrect interpretation when used in a different speech community. People in different speech communities may act differently depending on their familiarity of the responses. Gajaseni (1994) and Cedar (2006) share interesting studies on the contrast between Standard Thai and American responses. Although Thai students were most likely to use the acceptance strategy, a strategy found used by Thai students but not by American students was a ‘smiling strategy’ (Cedar, 2006), or ‘smiling and nodding’ (Gajaseni, 1994) when given compliments. Cedar (2006) mentions that in Thai culture, smiling or nodding the head can either show politeness or imply that the receiver does not want to show too much self-praise that could disrespect the compliment giver, especially when the giver is in a higher social position. In addition, those two studies found that Thai students tended to downgrade the compliments or used a scale down strategy more often than American students.

The Thais’ use of downgrading was also found by Boonkongsaen (2011) who compared Filipino and Thai compliment responses in English. Boonkongsen made comparisons in four situations: appearance compliments, character compliments, ability compliments, and possession compliments. The study showed that Thais usually used a combination of strategies, while Filipinos used the acceptance strategy the most. The combination strategy that the Thais used combined a token and downgrading, such

as “Thanks, I think it was just ok,” or “Thanks Mark! I think I could have done it better” (Boonkongsan, 2011: 52). Meanwhile, Gajasen (1994) and Cedar (2006) found that when compliments were given, Americans required a different reaction to the compliment, such as through explicit positive feedback, else they would interpret the response as indifference. In the American culture, it is generally important that the receiver makes a verbal response. Moreover, Gajasen (1994) construes that using a short expression like ‘Thank you’ may sometimes be problematic because it is ambiguous for the giver to understand whether the receiver either appreciates the compliment or simply just acknowledges it.

Hence, this study aims to design lessons on responding to compliments to help Thai students be aware of appropriate ways to respond to compliments in American English. A purpose for this is to help students develop their confidence by practicing responding to compliments in fictional situations. The present study applies the concept of peer teaching to help Thai students make the most of the CLT lessons.

### **2.3 Peer teaching**

That students are generally known be characteristically passive in the classroom. Peer teaching is one technique that might help them improve communicative language learning, which will now be discussed.

Peer teaching or peer tutoring is a learning process that requires high proficiency students to help low proficiency students to achieve the goal of an activity (Arta, 2012). When an activity is organized in the classroom, instructions or materials may be given to the students for them to practice with the language. In a normal class, students have differing levels of ability to understand the lessons, instructions, and the use of materials (Arta, 2012) and the teacher may be unable to monitor large classes to help all the students. Hing Wa Sit (2012) suggests that peers can help explain things and can contribute to large classes to being more successful. Peer teaching can also help increase motivation and awareness of one’s own learning because the creation of a supportive and positive learning environment by the classmates will helps learners to learn better (Arta, 2012; Ismail et al., 2015). Peers taking roles in assisting a class will bring about a non-threatening learning atmosphere, with the students free to share their ideas and feel relaxed because their confidence in speaking the L2 is increased (Arta, 2012). These disclosures lead to an idea to use peer teaching to help Thai students more

actively engage and reduce their anxiety in the English language classroom.

## **2.4 Previous studies**

The present study focuses on the use of CLT lessons combined with peer teaching, so a discussion of previous studies will help improve the lesson design. Three previous studies are included as they are directly related to the purpose of the present study, with two studies related to CLT, and a further study about peer teaching.

Hiep (2007) who observed the use of CLT in Vietnam classroom selected three teachers from a university in Vietnam as participants, with the data acquired from interview records with the three teachers and from the researcher's class observation records. The data was collected over a twelve-week semester. Hiep found that all three teachers believed that CLT was useful, and they created meaningful communicative tasks to use in their classes. However, the teachers claimed that their communicative activities were unsuccessful. One teacher found that the effect of using CLT the real classroom contradicted with what she had learned from the CLT theory. She noted that it was difficult for students to work in a team or in pair group work because they continued to compete with each other on the expectation that they would gain higher scores, at the expense of collaborating to fulfill the task goal. Another teacher indicated that students lacked the confidence to use English in the practice roleplay or in the newspaper prompted discussion. Hiep suggests that CLT activities should be authentic and relevant to the students' real lives.

Hiep's suggestion and findings are useful for this study's CLT lesson design. The present study adapts CLT concepts and seeks to make the lesson appropriate for the participants. For instance, the main activities used in the present study are situational tasks which the participants are able to relate to in their real lives. There are no given scores or grades for the tasks since the participants should focus on collaboration. The participants are instructed to use their skills as much as they can in order for them to complete the tasks together with their partners.

A further study of relevance is Nanthaboot (2012) who used communicative activities to develop the speaking skills of 30 students in Matthayomsuksa Three of Watsantikaramwitthaya School. Data was collected from an English speaking test and student opinions after the 7 week lesson series. The lessons included five communicative activities, consisting of describing and drawing, map dialogue,

information gap, jigsaw, and spot and the difference. The findings showed that the posttest scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores. The students were encouraged to share their opinions about communicative activities, with their feedback showing that they were satisfied with the activities since they helped them improve their use of vocabulary and grammar, as well as their pronunciation. Moreover, they had confidence to speak English, opportunities to practice, and enjoyed the English learning. Nanthaboot (2012) discussed that practicing in varied situations allowed the students to explore the functions of English for real. The positive class atmosphere also helped the students to learn better compared with the traditional classroom they would otherwise have. The students also developed a good attitude towards English learning.

Nanthaboot (2012) argues that CLT is useful and can help improve students' skills. The various situations in the CLT activities shows that practicing for real is required during the learning process, however the researcher did not provide instructional information about the design of the activities, instead only mentioning the topic of each activity. An explanation of the activity design in the present study may help rectify this issue.

Finally, Nguyen (2013) reflects on the usefulness of peer scaffolding in a collaborative oral presentation. The researcher used peer scaffolding with third year English students undertaking a speaking course at a university in Vietnam. There were twelve participants who were matched into six pairs, with the course held over fifteen weeks. The study used qualitative data collected from the students' reflective reports and student interviews. Nguyen found that there were six types of scaffolding effects in the study: workload sharing, partners were able to explain things that the other partner may not understand, technological support for speaking presentation, feedback for language development, support in answering questions from an audience, and support for completing task with rapport and self-confidence. Nguyen confirmed that using peer scaffolding helped to enhance the students learning by forcing themselves to achieve instead of completing individual tasks.

Nguyen (2013) supports the idea of using peer teaching, which may be applicable for the present study. According to a CLT principle, group work or pair group work should focus on helping to develop students' communication. This is challenging for Thai students since most students are considered to be passive learners, although peer teaching may be able to resolve this problem. When suggestions or interactions are

offered by peers, the resultant CLT task engagement may become more successful than individual work due to lowered anxiety. Therefore, the present study will use peer teaching in the CLT-based lesson to support active learning.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter includes information about the methodological design of the study, detailing the participants, research design, research instruments, data collection, and the data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This study seeks to investigate the use of CLT based lessons on responding to compliments in Standard American English for first year English major students at Ubon Ratchathani University. The study uses mixed methods to gather the relevant data to answer the research question discussed in Section 1.4. Quantitative data is sourced from test results, while qualitative data is derived from teacher's observation and student opinions. Mixed method design is used to ensure effective triangulation. The data from the three methods is used to cross-check the analysis and results against the other methods. Quantitative data is used to compare the test results before and after learning with CLT based lessons. Qualitative data is then used to explore the impacts of CLT based lesson on the students' learning through the perspectives of the teacher and students.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants were sampled using the convenience sampling method to recruit participants from first year students on the B.A. in English and Communication program at Ubon Ratchathani University. The convenience sampling method is a way of selecting participants for the purposes of the investigation in a way which is convenient to the researcher, and reaches easily accessible or willing participants (Dornyei, 2007). As stated in the purpose of the study and the research question, this study requires participants who are able to communicate in English, but have never properly practiced responding to compliments in English. Accordingly, first year English and Communication major students are considered to be an appropriate target group as they have some English skills since their major is related to communication,

while the language function of responding to compliments should also be of interest to them. Moreover, from the program of study there is nothing to suggest that they have learned, currently learning, or will learn about compliment responses in their first year of study. Another reason for selecting this group of participants is that they have a tendency to more fluently express themselves in conversations in English compared to students from other majors and faculties, meaning that responding to compliments might well be relevant to their real-life conversational encounters with English-speaking foreigners. Finally, it is convenient for the researcher's data collection since the students study at the same faculty that the researcher is undertaking an M.A. course.

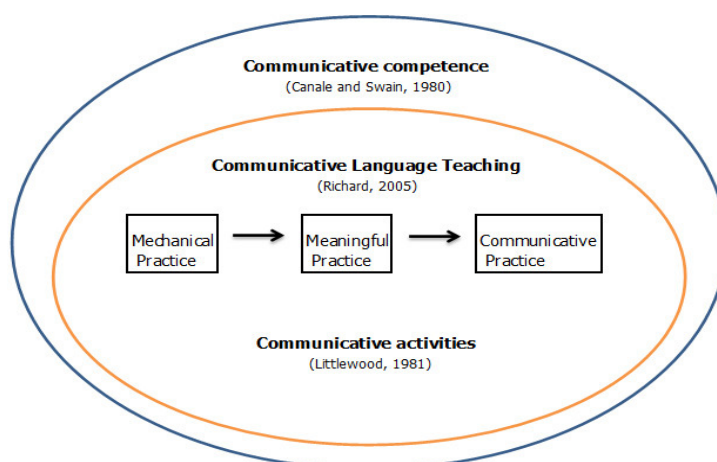
There were 53 students in total, but for the purpose of this small-scale study a group of ten students was randomly selected. Research approval was granted from the teacher responsible to include the research project in the language development project of the B.A. program in English and Communication. To begin with, the researcher intended to offer the lessons to any other willing students, although the data was only drawn for detailed data analysis from the ten randomly selected students.

### **3.3 Research instruments**

There are three topics in this section. The study first takes into account the summarized theoretical framework to show the overall conceptual design related to the instruments. The process of test design for the data collection tools used in the lessons is then introduced. Finally, an explanation is given concerning the use of the tools, the teaching period, and the teaching activities.

#### **3.3.1 Theoretical framework for designing tools**

The theoretical framework includes three important concepts. The first concept is from Canale and Swain (1980) who expand the scope of communicative competence that was originally proposed by Hymes (1971). The second concept is from Richard (2005) who explains the three steps of CLT practices which require mechanical practice, meaningful practice, and communicative practice. Finally, a concept from Littlewood (1981) is discussed, which clarifies that CLT activities should include functional communication activities and social interaction activities.



**Figure 3.1 Theoretical framework for the CLT lesson design**

From Figure 3.1, the concept from Richard (2005) is used as the main concept of the activity design for the study and procedure, which is into three steps: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative. The design uses adapted suggested activities from Littlewood (1981), including reconstructing story–sequences and a roleplay through cued dialogues.

According to this design framework, the first step of the practice is ‘mechanical practice’. Mechanical practice emphasizes teaching categories of compliment responses and different responses in Standard Thai and Standard American English. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the participants are exposed to the necessary language structures and the different strategies in Thai and Standard American English. The practices focus on language use for giving and responding to compliments. The activities used in this mechanical practice stage were a lecture, paper exercises and short practices.

The second step of the design is referred to as ‘meaningful practice’. Participants are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge from the mechanical practice. The participants begin by working in pairs and making interactions in a cued roleplay. Fluency development is expected to start from this practice. Participants apply what they know from the previous practice and integrate their language skills to deal with unprepared conversations. The conversation situations are relevant to real life to make the activities more meaningful. The roleplays used in this step of the practices are cued roleplay, with short conversations without a prepared script. Unscripted conversations are used to prepare the students for the communicative practice in the

final step.

The third step of the practice is ‘communicative practice’. The participants work in a larger group to perform an unscripted roleplay. They are encouraged to use all their knowledge and skills to achieve the task goals. It is expected at this stage that the participants will exploit their communicative competence. The communicative practice in this CLT based lesson is considered as a situational task which reflects real situations that the participants may find themselves in outside the classroom.

### **3.3.2 Pilot study**

The aforementioned methodological plans were tested in a pilot study which was completed over three hours with a small group of five participants who are first year English and Communication students. These students were not included in the main study. For the data collection process, the pilot study tested the use of student diaries and the teacher’s journal to collect qualitative data. A pretest and posttest were also used and reviewed to find any improvements for the main study.

#### **3.3.2.1 Design of the pilot study**

A pilot study conducted with five volunteer participants who joined the CLT lesson on the topic “Responding to compliments,” which was arranged on 26 March 2018 over a course of three hours. The three-hour lesson was shorter than the actual lesson plan of the main study and included some of the same main activities. Activities included in the pilot study included an explanation of all the compliment response types, examples of acceptable strategies for Standard American English, conversation rearranging, a small unscripted practice, and an unscripted roleplay.

#### **3.3.2.2 Results of the pilot study**

The Thai students in Gajasen (1994) and Cedar (2006) had a tendency to reject, downgrade the compliment, or say a phrase such as ‘Thank you’ with no further expressions. The pilot study pretest results appeared to show different results from those arguments. The pretest results showed that most of the participants opted to use the ‘comment acceptances’ strategy (31 times), followed by ‘return’ (8 times), and ‘Comment history’ (6 times).

None of the participants in this group used ‘scale down’ or ‘disagreement’ strategies as was found in previous research. However, most of the participants responded to compliments using a single phrase ‘thank you’ with no further expressions. It could be said that Thai students may be familiar with this short

utterance and their use of it was an automatic response. While the test papers were being distributed to the participants, one participant asked the classmate sitting next to her whether it was OK to answer 'thank you' to all the test items. It was assumed that these participants may be used to accepting compliments rather than rejecting them. After the pretest, upon being asked about the differences between Standard Thai and Standard American English on appropriate compliment responses, one participant stated that American people preferred us to say 'thank you' and that we should also give a big smile to the person giving a compliment. This participant's answer showed that he was aware of appropriate ways to respond to compliments, leading to him being further tested by the teacher who offered a compliment that mentioned that he was very clever and gave a good explanation to his classmates. He reacted only by nodding his head and quietly smiled to himself. This reaction shows that despite knowing how to appropriately respond, he could not act the appropriate response immediately. Nevertheless, another potential reason is that the teacher was not an American, meaning that the participant was not in an American context. Instead, the participant may have felt more comfortable in responding in the way Thai people usually do.

During the first step of the lesson, the teacher explained about appropriate compliment responses in Standard American English. Some participants giggled when the teacher suggested that Thai people tend to reject compliments by saying something like 'Oh, it's nothing,' or 'No, I'm not,' while others reply only with 'Thank you' with no appreciation. The participants may have prior experience of seeing or performing these kinds of response before, with the teacher's suggestion prompting their memory which made them embarrassed. The participants then began mechanical practices, in which they were introduced to types of compliment responses and asked to share phrases for giving and responding to compliments. Some participants did not show their phrases to the group so the teacher asked them individually. All were able to begin responses confidently with 'thank you,' but then they began to struggle to say anything beyond that. Two required more time to think about their answers each time they were asked. The teacher then presented examples of acceptable compliment response strategies in Standard American English.

After the mechanical practice, the participants took part in a small roleplay during the meaningful practice. The participants greeted each other and gave compliments without preparation. It was noticed that the participants tried to speak

using different strategies such as ‘comment history’ or ‘return.’ At one point a participant pretended himself to be a fiction writer and all the participants were enthusiastic to have a conversation with him and even had more extended interactions beyond the focus of the pilot study. The teacher did not interrupt them and observed that a participant who spoke less than other participants during the first activity was trying to ask questions and push herself to join the conversation without being instructed to do so by the teacher. This participant may have a positive attitude toward the activity, particularly since it allowed her to participate in interactions with all the classmates.

The final activity was communicative practice in which the participants performed an unscripted roleplay. To begin with, all the participants struggled because they had never experienced this kind of activity before. The teacher was required to explain the roleplay a second time and allow them another opportunity to do it. At this point, none of the participants used ‘disagreement’ or ‘scale down’ strategies in the conversation. Instead all the participants attempted to use their speaking skills to perform the role as best they could. To support the teacher’s observation on this, a participant comment stated that she appreciated the activity, especially the unscripted roleplay that she had never done before. She continued to state that she now had more confidence to verbally respond to compliments in an appropriate way, with the lesson helping her to enhance her compliment response skills. This participant’s comment also matched with the posttest results which showed that the participants improved their skills in responding to compliments, as show in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1 Pretest and posttest results of the pilot study**

<b>Type of strategies</b>	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
Comment acceptances	31	21
Praise upgrade	1	1
Comment history	6	14
Reassignment	-	1
Return	8	8
Scale down	-	-

**Table 3.1 Pretest and posttest results of the pilot study (Continued)**

Type of strategies	Pretest	Posttest
Disagreement	–	–
Qualification	2	–
Question response	1	–
Request interpretation	1	4

**Table 3.2 Comment acceptance strategies**

Comment acceptances			
Pretest		Posttest	
Type A	Type B	Type A	Type B
16	15	7	14

**Type A** = a single phrase “Thank you,” “Thank you so much,” “Thank you very much.”

**Type B** = additional expressions after a phrase “Thank you.”

From the results shown in Table 3.1, the ‘qualification’ strategy which includes a word such as ‘but’ in the response does not appear in the posttest. The posttest shows that participants used ‘comment acceptances’ (21 times), ‘comment history’ (14 times) and ‘return’ (8 times). Comment acceptances can be further grouped by different expressions. It was found that the participants added more utterances than simply repeating the expression ‘thank you’ which appeared in the pretest. Comment acceptances were used 31 times in the pretest, which can be separated into Type A (16 times or 51%) and Type B (15 times or 49%). Meanwhile in the posttest, comment acceptances were used 21 times which can be grouped for Type A (7 times or 33%) and Type B (14 times or 67%). This shows that the participants improved their skill in responding to compliments. As for Type B, the examples of the expressions which they added into the responses included ‘It’s kind of you to say so’ or ‘I’m happy you like it.’ The participants tried to make the compliment givers feel that their responses not only acknowledging the compliment, but also provided actual appreciation. Nevertheless, for the comment history strategy, the participants preferred to use more comment history in the posttest than they did in the pretest, potentially because they learned

about the concept of comment history and applied it to enhance their responses.

### 3.3.2.3 Ideas for the main study

The pilot study results suggest essential ideas for improving the lesson plan for the main study. The experience from the pilot was used to revise the testing tools, exclude unnecessary activities, and adjust the data collection methods.

First, the main study revised the test items so that they are shown one at a time on a PowerPoint slideshow, with the participants required to write an answer for each question on the paper. In the pilot study, the participants were required to complete the ten-item paper test within 20 minutes. However, three participants refused to hand the paper back to the teacher within the given time. The teacher waited for almost an additional thirty minutes before they returned the papers. After all the papers were returned some of the answers appeared to have been revised. This form of testing was problematic as their answers did not show instant responses. Subsequently for the main study, blank paper was issued to the participants instead of paper with the questions printed on it with designated space available for the answers. The test items were shown individually with the projector. Each test item was repeated by the teacher two times before it was changed to the next item. This was to elicit the first expressions that came into the participants' minds in an attempt to replicate the immediate response that would be found in a speaking scenario.

Second, the mechanical practice took a lot of time for the students to study the patterns of giving compliments. It was found even after the participants learned various types of giving compliments; they continued to use patterns that they were used to. Moreover, this practice had no effect on how to respond to compliments, which is the focus of the main study. The lesson on giving compliments was subsequently removed from the lesson plan. Instead a new activity was created and added into the meaningful practice because it is better for the participants to have more time to practice using the focus language function.

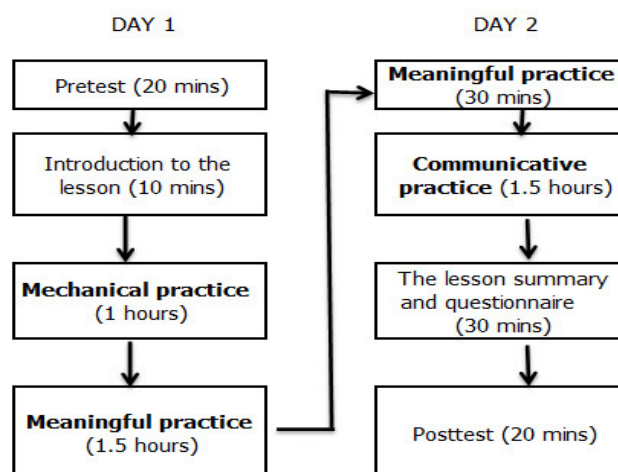
Finally, it was found that the student diaries after the class were not an appropriate way to collect data. The day after the lesson the teacher received only two papers back from a total of five participants. Since the teacher had no personal relationship with the participants, they may have ignored the instruction to write the diary because it was not related to their regular study. In place of this, a questionnaire was used to get the participants to write their opinions directly after the lesson. One

participant revealed that the teacher could not fully explain some points and she needed to study the material more.

The pilot study was very useful since it helped to identify possible challenges to consider in order to eliminate any potential faults in the main study.

### 3.3.3 Instructional design

The pilot study results helped to improve the design for the lesson implementation. The duration of the lesson was planned to be six hours over two days, making it similar to how the university operates normal classroom teaching. The learning details of each hour are clarified in Figure 3.2



**Figure 3.2 A lesson plan for responding to compliments in English**

The first day of the lesson consisted of three hours, with the first hour including a pretest, an introduction to the lesson, VDO about responding to compliments in Standard American English, and worksheets about the different compliment responses in Standard Thai and Standard American English. The VDO used in the lesson was acquired from the internet since in modern learning classroom students need to use technology to help increase their study engagement. The Office of Educational Technology in the United States (2017) reveals that technology is a powerful tool for the student learning experience, helping students to move beyond the classroom into other relevant content and real-time information. Therefore, the present study used VDO to make the participants more aware of the standard compliment responses expected by Americans using real-world information.

An introduction to the lesson was given to present all the types of compliment responding strategies, with the teacher then allowing the participants to predict which strategies are normally found in the Standard Thai and Standard American English contexts. Next, the participants watched a VDO about responding to compliments in English before being asked to discuss the contents of the VDO to check if they understood the details. The participants were then asked to think and provide more examples of appropriate responses in Standard American English besides the examples given in the worksheet which included comment acceptance, comment history, reassignment, and return strategies. During this task the teacher observed the participants' performance to divide the class into two ability groups, before matching pairs from each ability group to form five mixed-ability pairs. Each participant was suddenly given a compliment and required to participate in small talk with the teacher. The students who were able to correctly interact using positive compliment responses from the mechanical practice and could complete the small talk conversation were placed into the first group. The students who remained silent or were unable to complete the small talk were placed into the second group. The teacher then matched participants from each ability group to do pair work in the next hour of the class.

The meaningful practice was undertaken over the following hour. The meaningful practice included three activities. The first activity concerned conversation sequences, in which the participants worked with their peers to rearrange a sequence of conversations. Three different situations were given with three different responding strategies. The printed dialogue was cut into pieces and the participants were required to reorder the pieces of paper to make meaningful dialogues. After completing all the tasks, the participants were asked to read along with the dialogues. The next activity involved the participants creating their own dialogues. Each participant group randomly selected a situational instruction from the teacher, with six situational instructions clarifying background plot of the dialogue available. After selecting one, the participants created their own conversations following the detail of the plot. In this activity the participants were allowed to write scripts, but were not allowed to read the scripts while doing the roleplay. The participants then took turns as the compliment giver and then compliment receiver in the roleplays.

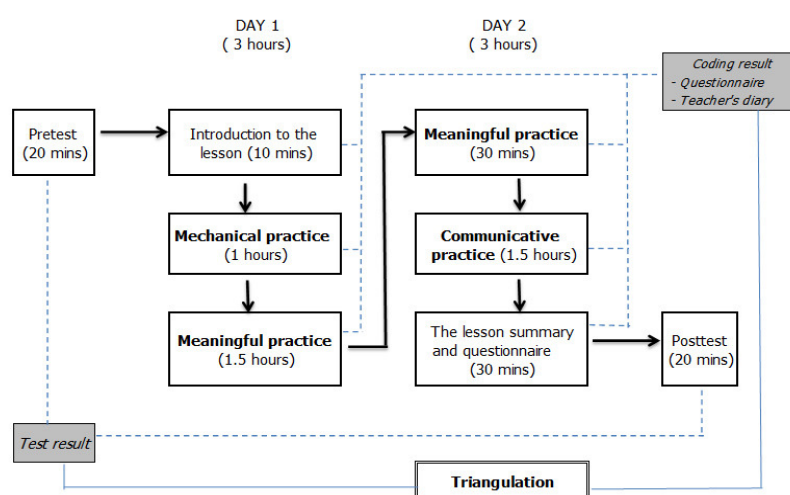
On the second day, the third activity of the meaningful practice – a short unscripted conversation – was arranged for thirty minutes to remind the participants of

the previous day's practices. The teacher prepared many objects for the participants to select, such as a hat, bag, bracelet or necklace. All the participants were told to act like they had accidentally run into each other, make a greeting, conduct small talk, and give a compliment on the object their peers had with them. The participants were given no time to prepare a script because they did not know what their peer would say to them. The task was completed once the teacher saw that both of the participants had taken turns being the compliment giver and receiver.

The communicative practice was undertaken in the final hour, with the participants introduced to do an unscripted roleplay in a group of five participants. They responded immediately using their previous knowledge from the mechanical and meaningful practices for a situational task given, which was to prepare a party. The teacher checked the participants' understanding to ensure that they understood their roles and instructed them to not disclose information to the other members. In addition to compliment giving and responding, the participants were also asked to create a question in their mind as if they had problems with the role they had been given and whether they required suggestions from the group leader. The non-performing group observed the other group's performance and was asked to comment on them after each roleplay.

### 3.3.4 Tool design

This study uses the concept of data triangulation in the data analysis. Therefore, three kinds of data collection tools were used to cross-reference the data and results as shown in Figure 3.3



**Figure 3.3 Qualitative and quantitative tools used in the study**

The quantitative tool used in this study was a pretest and posttest, which was the main tool used in the study. A pretest and posttest were used to check the participant's improvements in their compliment response skills in Standard American English. The same questions were used in both the pretest and posttest, and contained a total of ten items. Each item presented a situation in which an interlocutor gives a compliment, then allowing the participant to record the response that they immediately thought of. The data from the pretest and the posttest were compared to assess the participants' compliment response skills before and after the lesson.

Next is the questionnaire which is a qualitative data collection method. The questionnaire data is descriptive as it contained open-ended questions. This type of questionnaire allows participants to freely express themselves (Dornyei, 2007), helping to reveal the participants' opinions about the lesson, and how the activities affected their compliment response skills and other areas of language use. The questionnaire included four parts regarding their opinion on mechanical practices, meaningful practices, communicative practices, and the use of peer teaching.

The final tool was the teacher's diary. After the class the teacher noted to detail any major issues that occurred during the lesson. This was used to help clarify how the lesson went, to clarify the participants' performance, and detail the teacher's opinions about matters affecting the students' learning process (Dornyei, 2007).

### **3.4 Data collection**

The pretest was conducted in the first hour of the course while the posttest was undertaken in the final hour. The pretest and posttest data were compared after the end of the lesson. The participant questionnaires were completed after finishing the lesson. The answer could be written in either Thai or English. The teacher's diary was written in Thai at the convenience of the teacher, and written after each day of learning. As far as possible, the teacher reported her observations during the class by specifying the participants with letter codes from A to J in order to monitor their performance on the first and second day of teaching. Some short VDOs were recorded during the activities to help remind the teacher to write about the conversations between the participants.

The questionnaire answers and the teacher's diary written in Thai were translated into English, with the accuracy of the translation checked by a professor and a native English speaker.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

This study uses two methods to analyze the two kinds of data: coding was used to analyze the questionnaire and teacher's diary data and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the pretest and posttest results.

Coding was for the quantitative analysis, with descriptive statistics, especially percentages, applied to find and compare variations between the pretest and posttest results. The findings were used to answer the research question. The findings from comparing the pretest and the posttest results (quantitative data) may potentially be used to confirm the coding analysis results (qualitative data), as Dornyei (2007: 45) describes that mixed methods benefit from "...the strengths of one method can be utilized to overcome the weaknesses of another method used in the study."

The last method used in the present study is coding, which was used to thematically group the qualitative data. Coding helps to interpret and draw conclusions from the questionnaire and the teacher's diary. Coding in qualitative methods refer to the way in which descriptive data is read and labeled with familiar words or phrases before being grouped into themes, which is then analyzed for potential conclusions (Dornyei, 2007). The coding in the present study looked into two main areas. The first main area sought to the analyze effectiveness of the CLT-based lesson in responding to compliments, while the second area analyzed the usefulness of peer teaching in the CLT classroom.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

Chapter four presents the results from the analysis of the pretest and posttest scores, the participants' opinions, and the teacher's diary. The findings from the comparison between the pretest and posttest scores provide evidence that the CLT-based lesson helped the participants improve their competence and performance in responding to compliments. Moreover, the participants' opinions support the assertion that the CLT lesson was useful in this regard. The teacher's opinion also showed evidence for the participants' developing communicative competence while they were engaged in the CLT activities.

#### **4.1 Results from the pretest and posttest**

The pretest and the posttest data was collected from nine of the twelve participants who joined the activities from the beginning of the main study. Three of the participants were absent on the final day of the lesson so were excluded from the study.

The research question for this study is "To what extent can CLT-based lessons improve skills in responding to compliments in Standard American English for the first year English major students at Ubon Ratchathani University?" To answer this, the data was analyzed by comparing the frequencies of all the compliment response strategies used by the participants in the pretest and posttest. The results are divided into three parts. The first part shows the frequencies that all the types of strategies that the participants used in the two tests. The second part compares the variation between the use of agreement and non-agreement strategy groups. The last part is an additional analysis on the two most common types of strategies used in the pretest and posttest; comment acceptance and comment history. The detailed analysis of these common strategies shows the extent to which the participants appropriately responded to compliments using the strategies they learned in class and made changes to for actual use after the lesson.

#### 4.1.1 Types and frequencies of all strategies

The participants used ten types of strategies in the test. Based on the type of response, the pretest data shows nine types of strategies were used in total. In contrast, the posttest data shows that seven types of strategies were used.

**Table 4.1 Frequencies of all the types of strategies used in the pretest and posttest**

Pretest				Posttest			
Rank	Type of strategies	Frequency	(%)	Rank	Type of strategies	Frequency	(%)
1	Comment acceptances	53	58.89	1	Comment acceptances	43	47.78
2	Comment history	11	12.22	2	Comment history	27	30.00
3	Scale down	9	10.00	3	Reassignment	10	11.11
4	Qualification	5	5.56	4	Qualification	4	4.44
4	No acknowledgement	5	5.56	5	Return	3	3.33
5	Reassignment	2	2.22	6	Disagreement	2	2.22
5	Return	2	2.22	7	Praise upgrade	1	1.11
5	Praise upgrade	2	2.22	8	Scale down	-	-
6	Question response	1	1.11	9	Question response	-	-
7	Disagreement	-	-	10	No acknowledgement	-	-
Total				Total			

The frequencies of strategy uses were different between the pretest and posttest. From Table 4.1, the pretest results show that the participants used comment acceptances the most (used 58.8 percent of the time), followed by comment history (12.22 percent), scale down (10 percent), qualification (5.56 percent), no acknowledgement (5.56 percent), reassignment (2.22 percent), return (2.22 percent),

praise upgrade (2.22 percent), and finally question response (1.11 percent). The posttest results show that a different number of strategies were used while also different frequencies of those strategies. In the posttest, the most frequently used strategy was comment acceptance (47.78 percent). Other strategies used were comment history (30 percent), reassignment (11.11 percent), qualification (4.44 percent), return (3.33 percent), disagreement (2.22 percent), and praise upgrade (1.11 percent).

The rank and percentage of strategy use in the posttest differs from those found in the pretest. That is to say, the frequency of comment acceptances decreased by 11.11 percent in the posttest, although it remained the most commonly used strategy. Meanwhile, comment history remained the second most common strategy, but with a higher frequency than found in the pretest. Reassignment was the fifth most commonly used strategy in the pretest, being used 2.22 percent of the time, but in the posttest it was the third most common strategy which was used 11.11 percent of the time. The scale down strategy was the third most common strategy in the pretest, but was not used at all in the posttest. Similarly, the no acknowledgement strategy with a use of 5.56 percent in the pretest also disappeared in the posttest. On the contrary, disagreement did not appear in the pretest but was used in 2.22 percent of the responses in the posttest. Other strategies, namely, qualification, return, and praise upgrade saw no significant change in their rank and frequency.

#### **4.1.2 Agreement and non-agreement strategies**

The results also indicate differences between two groups of the strategies, namely, agreements and non-agreement. The strategies in the agreement group include comment acceptances, comment history, reassignment, return, and praise upgrade. The second group labeled non-agreement includes qualification, disagreement, scale down, question response, and no acknowledgement. While learning, the participants were encouraged to use the first type as they are common compliment response strategies used in Standard American English (Gajaseni, 1994; Cedar, 2006). After the analysis, the pretest and posttest results present decreasing use of the non-agreement strategy group. As shown in Table 1, the pretest shows that scale down, qualification, and no acknowledgement were used for 10 percent, 5.56 percent, and 5.56 percent of the responses respectively. Meanwhile, the non-agreement strategies were used in the pretest 19 times, or in 21.12 percent of the responses. In contrast, in the posttest results qualification and disagreement were the only non-agreement group strategies used in

the posttest, with a total frequency of 6 times, or in 6.66 percent of the responses. These results show improvements to the participants' skills in responding to compliments in Standard American English.

### **4.1.3 Most frequently used strategies**

The most used strategies by the participants in both the pretest and the posttest were comment acceptances and comment history. As shown in Table 4.1, it was found that even before participating in the CLT activities, the study participants had a degree of awareness of appropriate ways to respond to compliments in Standard American English; the pretest results in Table 4.1 shows that the participants accepted compliments rather than refused them. Nevertheless, a closer inspection of their mostly used strategies showed that their previous knowledge or competence in responding to compliments was limited, and the CLT lesson helped to improve their previous knowledge about comment acceptances and comment history, while expanding their competence with other kinds of response strategies.

#### **4.1.3.1 Comment acceptance**

An analysis of comment acceptances indicates two variations in the use of them in the pretest and posttest. The first kind is comment acceptances with short expressions, and the second is comment acceptances with extended expressions.

The length of expression is considered to distinguish between the two kinds of comment acceptance. Compliments accepted by uttering a single expression such as 'Thanks,' 'Thank you,' or 'Thank you so much' is defined as a short expression, which essentially consists of thanking without adding any other message. Conversely, acceptance with or without 'thanks' with an additional expression such as 'Thank you, I'm happy to hear that,' or 'it's nice of you to say so' in the strategies is determined to be an extended kind of acceptance.

The frequency of comment acceptances for both types shows a significant change of use for this strategy. After the lesson, the participants used short expression types considerably less, instead favoring more extended expressions (Table 4.2)

**Table 4.2 Comparison of short and extended comment acceptances in the pretest and posttest**

Type of comment acceptances	Pretest		Posttest	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Comment acceptances with short expressions	22	41.51	4	9.30
Comment acceptances with extended expressions	31	58.49	39	90.70
Total	53	100	43	100

From Table 4.2, comment acceptances were used in the pretest 53 times, including 22 uses of short expressions (41.51%) and 31 with extended expressions (58.49%). By contrast, the posttest results show that comment acceptance was used a total of 43 times. This includes 4 comment acceptances with short expressions (9.30%) and 39 comment acceptances with longer expressions (90.70%).

The results show that, after the lesson the participants used more extended expressions than short expressions. Nonetheless, while reviewing shifts in the way the participants used extended expressions after the lesson, it was found that the students' style of expressions changed between the pretest and posttest. Table 4.3 presents examples of the participants' extended expressions.

**Table 4.3 Examples of extended expressions**

Extended expressions used in the pretest	Extended expression presented in the lesson	Extended expression used in the posttest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I wish to hear this, thank you so much.</li> <li>– Thank you for supporting me.</li> <li>– Thank you for admiring me.</li> <li>– Of course, I hope you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Thank you, it's nice to hear.</li> <li>– Thank you, that's very kind.</li> <li>– Thank you, I'm happy you think so.</li> <li>– Thank you, I appreciate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Thanks, I'm happy to hear that.</li> <li>– Oh! I'm happy that you think so.</li> <li>– Thanks, it means a lot to me.</li> <li>– That made my day,</li> </ul>

**Table 4.3 Examples of extended expressions (Continued)**

<b>Extended expressions used in the pretest</b>	<b>Extended expression presented in the lesson</b>	<b>Extended expression used in the posttest</b>
enjoy that. – I really appreciate. – Thank you, I will continue attention.	the compliment. – Thank you, I’m glad you like it.	thanks. –Thanks, I can’t believe myself I can do that! – Thanks, and I want to learn more. – Thank you so much, I enjoy to do presentation.

In the pretest, some participants expressed their acknowledgement of compliments by showing their expectation, such as ‘I wish to hear this,’ or showing gratitude like ‘I really appreciate.’ The posttest had extended expressions in the same manner, such as ‘I’m happy to hear that,’ or ‘I’m happy that you think so.’ Moreover, the participants used expressions that were not presented in the lesson. Expressions such as ‘it means a lot to me,’ or ‘I can’t believe myself I can do that’ indicate that the participants understood the purpose of the lesson. The participants used expressions by not merely copying what they learnt from the lesson, but by adapting expressions based on the compliments they were given. It could be said that the participants were not passive learners; rather they did not simply comply with the responses presented in the lesson, but instead gave further thought about the other potential expressions they could use to appropriately express their ideas.

To conclude the variation in the use of comment acceptances, the participants preferred to apply short expressions in the pretest instead of extended expressions. However, in the posttest the participants clearly used more extended expressions than short expressions. Furthermore, the participants’ use of extended expressions developed from their own understanding that they had derived from the lesson.

#### 4.1.3.2 Comment history

Another common strategy was comment history. The frequencies in Table 4.1 show that the participants made greater use of comment history after the

lesson. In the pretest, the participants used comment history 11 times, while in the posttest they used it 27 times. The results therefore show that the use of comment history more than doubled between the pretest and posttest. The examples in Table 4.4 indicate that the participants learned more than just new responses strategies from the lesson, but also creatively adapted and applied the strategies in the posttest.

**Table 4.4 Comparison of comment history use in the pretest and the posttest**

<b>Comment history used in the pretest</b>	<b>Comment history presented in the lesson</b>	<b>Comment history used in the posttest</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of course, because I do my best, and before the show I practice every day.</li> <li>- Thank you, I really work hard for that.</li> <li>– I want[ed] it to be amazing!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thank you, my win is a result of long hours of practice.</li> <li>-Thank you, it was a birthday present from my sister.</li> <li>– Thank you, I bought it for the trip to Chiang Mai.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I so thank you because I study very hard to get a good grade.</li> <li>– Thank you, I prepared for many days to get the best presentation.</li> <li>– Thank you, I got the recipe from my mother.</li> <li>– Thank you everyone for attention at my picture, it from my imagine!</li> <li>– Thank you, I have inspiration from my country to do this print.</li> <li>–I try to this menu many times and thank you so much.</li> <li>– Thank you, I find many interesting information to write it down.</li> </ul>

From Table 4.4, the participants were able to provide more information for comment history in the posttest in comparison to the pretest. In the pretest the participants gave background about what they had done, such mentioning their hard work ‘I practice every day,’ or their desire to have a successful outcome, such as ‘I want[ed] it to be amazing.’ During the lesson the participants were presented with examples of comment history, and were encouraged during the practice to try to give information related to the object of the compliments, such as what, when, and how. The participants then creatively used comment history in the posttest by referring to the compliment object. For example, when a participant was given a compliment about a picture that he had drawn he responded by revealing how he obtained the idea for the picture by saying ‘Thank you everyone for attention at my picture, it from my imagine!’ [sic] in the posttest, or when a participant was complimented on her writing, her response referred to a writing method, “Thank you, I found many interesting information to write it down.” These pretest and posttest examples show the participants’ developing compliment response skills as a result of the CLT-based lesson.

To conclude, CLT lesson helped to improve the participants’ competence and performance. Use of positive strategies such as comment acceptances, comment history, and reassignment strategies increased between the pretest and posttest. Meanwhile, negative strategies such as scale down, qualification, or no acknowledgement strategies were used less in the posttest. Moreover, the details of the participants’ performance in the posttest shows that they expressed their compliment acceptances more appropriately and used creative responses, as shown in the comment history.

## **4.2 Participant opinions**

This section analyzes the participants’ opinions recorded in the questionnaire, which revealed two issues. The first issue was the effectiveness of the CLT-based lesson in improving the participants’ compliment response skills. The second issue is the usefulness of peer teaching.

### **4.2.1 Effectiveness of the CLT-based lesson in improving the participants' compliment response skills**

Participants expressed their opinions in the questionnaire in either Thai or English at the end of the lesson. They were asked to give their opinions about the mechanical practice, meaningful practice, and communicative practice of the CLT-based lesson. Their reviews were grouped into two topics; the role of mechanical practice in the CLT-based lesson; and the role of meaningful and communicative practice.

#### **4.2.1.1 The role of mechanical practice in the CLT-based lesson**

The participants' opinions show that they considered the mechanical practice to be an indispensable component of the CLT-based lesson for two reasons. First, it helped them learn different kinds of responses, and second it helped them learn to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate strategies.

For the first finding, the participants believed that the mechanical practice as the first step in CLT-based lesson helped them understand appropriate compliment responses in Standard American English as shown in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1: This can help us to know thing that we've never knew before about the responding compliments in English.

[In English, sic]

Excerpt 2: It's good. I got a lot of knowledge from this. Know how to say responding that I never know before. [In English, sic]

The participant in Excerpt 1 implied that the mechanical practice helped them to acquire new knowledge about compliment responses. Meanwhile, the participant in Excerpt 2 supported the notion that they acquired lots of knowledge about responding to compliments during the mechanical activities. Moreover, the participant in Excerpt 2 also revealed their positive attitude towards the activity by commenting 'It's good.'

Besides knowing about the different compliment responses to use in Standard American English, the participants realized the reasons why some types of compliments are considered inappropriate, and what can be done to make their compliment responses more appropriate.

Excerpt 3: I have known about the good compliment responses which are different from Thai. In Thai we refuse compliment because we need to keep our manner, but in foreign country it is considered impolite. [In Thai]

Excerpt 4: It's not only saying 'thank you very much', we can extend our sentence to make the intent of conversation more clear. [In Thai]

Excerpt 3 shows that the participant understood the use of appropriate compliment responses for Thai and non-Thai speakers. As appeared in the comment, the participant compared good responses on the basis of manners. The participant in Excerpt 3 realized that an acceptable manner in one place may be unacceptable in another place. Likewise, the participant in Excerpt 4 reflected on his own performance, stating that he preferred to use an extended expression than only utter a short expression to make the message clearer. According to the participants, adding more words in the responses helps avoid misunderstanding their intention. The explicit mechanical lesson made them know and be aware of using compliment responses.

These examples concur with posttest results in finding increased use of positive strategies. When participants realized appropriate and inappropriate responses in Standard American English they changed their strategies to use more suitable responses.

#### 4.2.1.2 The role of meaningful and communicative practices

The participants' comments from the previous section presented the role of mechanical practice in the development of the participants' communicative competence and compliment response performance. This section shows their opinions about the roles of meaningful and communicative practice. Four main themes were found from the participants' opinions, related to their confidence, practice opportunities, authentic situations, and multiple skills. Excerpts of their opinions are shown and discussed below.

Excerpt 5: I have a chance to practice and use knowledge about compliment responses in a set up situation. I applied my knowledge for real use [in meaningful and communicative practices] and did not feel shy when making interaction. [In Thai]

Excerpt 6: [During meaningful and communicative practices] I think about what kind of responses I should use. It helps me not to be nervous. I practice thinking and use what I have known. It's useful to improve my skill. [In Thai]

Excerpt 7: I have prepared well through my thinking process. I have confidence to speak and there was no struggle. [In Thai]

Excerpt 8: Work with group. It's look real. It's made me feel that I have confident and it another way for up skill how to answer. [In English, sic]

Excerpt 9: We hadn't prepared anything [before the meaningful and communicative practices] and I felt so excited. The situation made us react immediately. It helped me practice fast thinking. [In Thai]

Excerpt 10: I really appreciated this [communicative] part. It made me apply many skills especially responding to compliments and resolving problems. I was confident to speak and made interaction. This part of the CLT practices can be used in our daily life for real. [In Thai]

Excerpt 11: This lesson improves my English so much. It shows the real situation. [In English, sic]

From the above examples, the first point that requires emphasis is that the meaningful and communicative activities helped to increase the participants' confidence during the CLT interactive tasks. Meaningful and communicative practice helped the participants increase their confidence in two ways, including preparing their ideas by practicing and preparing their performance with a person or group of people. The participant in Excerpt 5 said 'I applied my knowledge for real use [in meaningful and communicative practices] and did not feel shy when making interaction. During the activities this participant was not reserved while doing the activities. The participants in Excerpts 7 and 8 also agreed in the same way that they now had the confidence to speak the language. The participant in Excerpt 7 noted that there was no struggle for her because she was well prepared throughout the learning process, while the participant in Excerpt 8 added that her confidence was a benefit for her when she joined the group practice.

Second, the meaningful and communicative activities gave participants the opportunity to completely engage in language practice. For example, the participant in Excerpt 6 expressed that their skill improved thanks to the opportunity to think and practice, with the participant stating ‘I practice thinking and use what I have known.’ This participant showed that such practice was useful for enhancing the target skill. This benefit of having the practice chance was confirmed by the participant in Excerpt 5 who emphasized the benefit of the opportunity to practice and use the knowledge in the meaningful and communicative activities. Moreover, the participant in Excerpt 10 revealed that ‘This part of the CLT practices can be used in our daily life for real,’ implying that the participant supported the notion that meaningful and communicative practices were useful because they believe that the skills honed in the practices are transferable to real use.

Thirdly, communicative practice created strengthened positive attitude towards using English for the participants. The communicative activity was designed to be a situational-based imitation of a potential real-life situation. In the activity, the participants held conversations without the use of a prepared script. They could not predict what other participants would say, as mentioned by the participant in Excerpt 9 ‘We hadn’t prepared anything and I felt so excited. The situation made us react immediately.’ The activity allowed them to be ready at all times so that they would be able to promptly react. The participant in Excerpt 11 also thought that this situational based task in the communicative activity helped to enhance their English skills, stating “This lesson improve my English so much. It shows the real situation,” From these excerpts, a situational-based communicative practice was understood as a model of a real situation, with the participants feeling as if they were a central component of it. By this characteristic of the practice, the participant in Excerpt 10 mentioned ‘I really appreciated this [communicative] part,’ showing that their positive attitude encouraged them to speak English.

Lastly, multiple skills were enhanced during the meaningful and communicative practices. The participant in Excerpt 10 revealed that the activities helped to enhance many skills, namely in responding to compliments, solving problems in the tasks, and their thinking skills. According to the participant, the activities were appreciated since ‘It made me apply many skills, especially responding to compliments and resolving problems.’ This statement is similar to opinions

expressed by participants in Excerpts 6 and 9, which stated that ‘It’s useful to improve my skill,’ and ‘It helped practicing on fast thinking, respectively.’ The activities promoted the participants’ thinking skills, which helped them immediately react during the conversations. The communicative activity therefore helped to enhance various skills in many areas of language use, not only those related to those targeted by the lesson.

The excerpts in this section confirm that meaningful and communicative activities provided opportunities for the participants to practice using the target language. The activities helped to reduce their anxiety and increase their confidence to take part in the conversation. Situational-based tasks encourage participants to maintain their attention and continually make conversations to complete the tasks. In addition, the activities stimulated the participants to integrate multiple skills which is a necessary process for the participants to achieve the purpose of the lesson.

#### **4.2.2 The usefulness of peer teaching**

It was found from the comments from the participants that the use of peer teaching in CLT class provided two benefits, including mental support and learning support. All the participants agreed that peer teaching was helpful, with no participants expressing any negative attitudes about it. Sample excerpts from the questionnaire are discussed as follows.

Excerpt 12: I practice together with friend. I don’t feel nervous or shy. [In Thai]

Excerpt 13: Partner will help teach me what I don’t know. We share our different experiences to each other. [In English, sic]

Excerpt 14: I know much more about positive responding and negative responding that very helpful and useful. Partner makes me feel relax. [In English, sic]

Excerpt 15: We can help together, find information. We can consult and share idea. [In English, sic]

The above excerpts firstly reveal the usefulness of peer teaching by providing mental support. Besides the actual language practices discussed in 4.2.1 that helped to reduce the participants shyness and increased their confidence, pair work further helped them feel more relaxed and reduce their stress while doing the activities,

as mentioned in Excerpts 12 and 14, “I don’t feel nervous or shy,” and “Partner makes me feel relax”[sic].

Next, peer teaching brought improved learning effectiveness. In the study participants expressed similar opinions about the important role of the interaction partners on providing information or sharing their experiences. The interaction partners ‘help teach’ (Excerpt 13), and find information and act as a consultant (Excerpt 15). That is to say, peer teaching created a cooperative learning environment which is beneficial for learning.

Altogether, the participants agreed that the lesson helped to improve their English skills, especially in compliment responses. The activities increased their confidence and developed their performance. The CLT-based activities also offered new experiences to the participants by encouraging them to interact with each other while making use of multiple skills. Finally, peer teaching was found to help support the participants’ feelings that they could learn autonomously, which contributed to their learning success. This final point will be discussed in the following chapter as it may contribute to a means of improving CLT in Thailand.

### **4.3 Teacher’s observation**

This section presents the teacher’s diary data analysis, which indicated three issues, including the participants’ perceptions on appropriate compliment responses in Standard American English, the benefits of the positive atmosphere in the CLT classroom, and the effectiveness of peer learning.

Firstly, it can be seen from the observation that the CLT activities helped the participants perceive the different uses of compliment responses in Standard American English and Thai. This exposure leads to the participants improving their strategies in Standard American English. For instance, according to the teacher’s diary recorded on March 26, 2018, there was a short video presented to the participants during the mechanical practice. The video showed styles of compliment responses that were considered appropriate and inappropriate for American people. After watching part of the video, the teacher asked a random participant about inappropriate strategies in Standard American English, and what she thought about that compared to Thai. The student suggested that there were some differences since in Thai it is acceptable to refuse a compliment and tell a person that someone else can cook better than them,

while highlighting that these are unacceptable in Standard American English. The participant's understanding of the difference between Thai and Standard American English implies that they learned an important lesson from the video and was able to make a comparison between what is expected in the two cultures.

Secondly, instances of the participants' interactions provided evidence for the positive atmosphere created by the CLT classroom, with the atmosphere providing benefits to the learning process for the participants. The coding from the teacher's diary dated March 26, 2018 and April 4, 2018 indicated that the CLT activities created a non-threatening, friendly, cooperative and supportive atmosphere. This highlights the participants' motivation during the lesson to participate in the lesson and complete the tasks. For example, during the communicative activity one participant tried to make conversation, with the Teacher's notes revealing that Student H was able to make better use of English in the interaction in comparison with the previous task. The notes continue that he appeared more relaxed and that he teased Student D in a way which made the other participants laugh [Teacher's Diary, April 4, 2018]. It can be seen that during the activities the participants appeared to enjoy themselves while they were engaged in the CLT task. Moreover, the participants were eager to prepare themselves before starting the roleplay, as mentioned in the diary on April 4, 2018 that the participants showed an interest when they saw the teacher preparing the materials for use in the activity.

In addition, as revealed in the teacher's diary, the participants appeared excited to do an unscripted roleplay and seemed enjoy preparing and the room for the situational acting. The data shows that the activity was useful for different kinds of learners and for the mixed-ability group. The teacher's diary dated April 4, 2018 suggests that during the situational-based task, the skilled participants tried speaking naturally when interacting with the other participants. Participants with limited speaking fluency appeared to be motivated to express themselves by using short phrases or repeating utterances to complete an interaction. For example, the teacher's diary states that a transcribed section of the VDO recorded on April 4, 2018 shows that Student F was unable to firmly carry a conversation, but instead tried to speak very slowly and used non-verbal language, 'The paper cannot... ummm...stick...(use her finger tapped on the board)...the board' [Teacher's Diary, April 4, 2018]. Student D could therefore guess what Student F meant and provided some suggestions for Student F. This

instance of language use can be explained by Student F trying to push herself to speak and finish the conversation. The positive atmosphere during the CLT activities helped the participants to be unafraid of making speaking mistakes, and they instead firstly tried to convey meaning. In brief, the positive learning atmosphere created by CLT can bring success to learning because it helps the participants of differing abilities to have the opportunity to develop their communicative competence at their own pace and without external pressure.

Lastly, peer learning helped activate success on the CLT tasks. For example, during the meaningful practice the teacher's diary records that on April 4, 2018, Students H and I worked as a pair. Each freely selected an object prepared by the teacher and instantly roleplayed giving compliments and responding to compliments, taking the roles in turn. When Student H became silent during a roleplay, Student I raised another topic to encourage Student H to speak [Teacher's Diary, April 4, 2018]. If Student I had of ignored what was happening and allowed Student H to remain silent, Student H would have lost the opportunity to fully participate and would have been unable to complete the task. Peer teaching in mixed-ability groups allowed the higher skilled participants to help the lower skilled participants. Besides, the other example is found in a communicative task that required cooperation from all the group members. In this task, the participant leading the group activity had an important duty to ensure that the whole group completed the task. As stated in the teacher's diary on April 4, 2018, Students C and D were selected by the teacher to lead each group because they had the ability to solve problems quickly and were able to control the situation well. Members in both groups were encouraged to respond to compliments and were pushed to ask for suggestions from the group leaders. From the teacher's diary, following the leaders of each group, all the participants tried using English at their own ability levels to help their team complete an instant conversation. This learning therefore can enhance participant language use and help the participants successfully complete the tasks.

To conclude this chapter, the findings show that the CLT-based lesson helped the participants improve their competence and performance. The participants learned to understand how to appropriately respond to compliments in Standard American English. Use of positive strategies increased at the expense of negative strategies during their performance. It was found that mechanical practice helped the participants

to acknowledge practicable strategies in Standard American English. Meaningful and communicative practices developed the participants' confidence to use language, gave practice opportunities through a situational task, and enhanced various skills of the participants. It is also evident that peer teaching contributes to the effectiveness of CLT lessons by providing learning and peer support for the participants.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

In this study, it was found that using CLT-based lessons can enhance compliment response skills in Standard American English for the participants in their first year studying on the B.A. program in English and Communication at Ubon Ratchathani University. This chapter discusses issues related to this finding. Firstly, the effectiveness of the CLT lesson in improving students' competence and performance in responding to compliments will be considered. Then, the chapter will focus on issues related to the design of CLT activities used in the study and the role of motivation in CLT will also be discussed. Finally, the discussion will shed light on how peer teaching helped CLT achieve its goals in the present study.

#### **5.1 Effectiveness of CLT in improving the participants' skills**

The study shows that there are two issues regarding the effectiveness of using a CLT-based lesson. First, it was found that the participants improved their compliment response skills via the CLT activities. This finding helps confirm the theoretical benefits of CLT in that the study participants first learned the target form and function of English compliment responses before using that this knowledge of appropriate compliment responses in Standard American English. Besides improving the compliment responses, the participants' other language-related skills also been developed. These two points will be discussed separately as follows.

##### **5.1.1 Effectiveness of CLT in improving the target skill**

CLT activities helped the participants improve their compliment response skills in terms of competence and performance. Before discussing this point, there is an additional issue about the participants' existing knowledge which must be clarified to aid with discussing the effectiveness of CLT in the present study.

As shown in the pretest results, most of the participants were aware that they should accept the compliments. However, they had limited strategies to make the responses more effective. During the pretest it was found that the participants used some positive responses more than negative responses, even before learning about

them during the lesson. These positive responses are common kinds of responses in Standard American English. The results of the present study is different the findings of previous studies. According to Gajaseneni (1994) and Cedar (2006), when compliments were given, Thai students had a tendency to use negative responses more than positive responses. The different result found in the pretest of the present study suggests that the participants had awareness, to a certain extent, of cultural differences in responding to compliments. This awareness of the differences can be explained in two ways.

To begin with, the participants were explicitly told before the pretest that the study concerned compliment responses in Standard American English. This may have aroused their awareness about selecting appropriate responses before the pretest as they were aware of their existing competence and what the research was interested in. In contrast, the research objectives in previous studies may not have been explicitly presented to their participants.

Apart from knowing what they would learn from the lesson, which could influence how they responded in the pretest, it must be noted that the participants were first year English major students in their second semester at the time of the study. This makes them different from the non-English major students in Gajaseneni's study (1994) and the international students studying on an ESL program at Boston University in Cedar's study (2006). This contextual difference might explain the fact that the participants in the present study were able to respond more appropriately, even before taking the lesson.

Nevertheless, despite the students' previous knowledge and awareness of the study's focus, their competence and performance remarkably improved after the lesson. To account for this, the effectiveness of CLT will be discussed in terms of both competence and performance (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003; Richard, 2006). The participants' previous knowledge or competence was enhanced by the lesson. In this study, the CLT-based lesson introduced the participants to a variety of strategies to ensure that they achieved the linguistic input or the target form from the carefully designed mechanical CLT activities. Such mechanical activities are necessary for the students to acquire before engaging in more challenging social activities (Harmer, 1982; Littlewood, 1983; Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon, 1991; Richards, 2006). Without the mechanical activities the CLT learning may not be as successful, with Bock (2000) and Hiep (2007) find that it was impossible to use CLT in their

classrooms, yet they provided no evidence that they made use of mechanical practice.

The participant's performance, which is the main focus of CLT, also improved (Littlewood, 1983; Savignon, 1987; Richards, 2006). This was the result of the meaningful and social activities which followed the mechanical practice. During these activities, in a given situation the participants had to immediately make a decision to use an appropriate strategy. As a result, the activities allowed the participants to apply their knowledge or linguistic competence by responding in real time during situational practices. This impromptu use of the target form helped to improve their performance in responding to compliments. According to Littlewood (1981), realizing that linguistic knowledge of the target language is required in addition to opportunities to use the function in communicative and social situations are essential to acquire the target language.

To conclude, the participants' competence and performance improved as a result of the effective CLT activities.

### **5.1.2 Effectiveness of CLT in providing the participants with opportunities to use multiple skills**

The second effectiveness point is that the participants had the opportunity to develop other English skills while engaging in the CLT activities. Theoretically, learning a language through CLT is a way to ensure that learners acquire a range of skills that are required for effective communication (Littlewood, 1981; Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Researchers such as Maley (1986) and Savignon (1991) propose that through CLT, students can integrate their old and new knowledge in L2 to use English in different situational tasks of prepared and impromptu practices to realize their communicative goals. The effectiveness of CLT is found in the results of the present study. As found in the questionnaire data, the participants showed that the CLT activities allowed them to apply their existing and new knowledge and skills in English during the communicative activities. The lesson in the study focused on compliment responses. In real life communication, compliment response strategies are only a part of the many functions of language use that are required to fulfill a certain communicative event. Therefore, the CLT lesson ensures that the participants had opportunities to practice other functions of L2, namely greetings, small talk, asking for suggestions, and bidding farewell, despite these not being explicitly taught during the lesson. This opportunity to use other English skills supports the proposed advantage of

CLT in that it provides providing chances for learners to make use of various skills in L2 to complete tasks designed to mimic real life situations (Littlewood, 1981; Maley, 1986). CLT therefore does not merely help develop the target function of L2, but also helps learners practice using the other English skills that exist in their repertoire.

## **5.2 Potential design of CLT-based activities**

Previous studies suggest that there are difficulties in implementing CLT concepts in Asian contexts (Bock, 2000; Hiep, 2007). However the present study shows a different result. The success of using CLT in the classroom in this study is the result of carefully designing a careful the activities according to three main considerations. First, a step-by-step design helped to strengthen L2 learning and acquisition. Second, all the tasks were designed based on contexts familiar to the participant, and finally CLT is adaptable for different levels of language ability and is flexible with no fixed rules meaning that it is not out of the reach of other teachers to try using.

To begin, an appropriate sequence of practices facilitates the implementation of CLT. In CLT, students should be provided essential knowledge or small practices before expecting them to perform more complex tasks (Littlewood, 1981; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Jacobs and Farrell, 2003; Richard, 2006). Every activity in this study was designed to follow sequential steps. First, the whole lesson consisted of three practices; mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practices. Each practice helped to support the following practice, as previously discussed. Moreover, this idea was used to design of all the roleplays, in which the first step of the roleplay allowed the participants to read and practice with the script that had been prepared by the teacher. Second, the participants wrote their own scripts with a peer and then learned the script for the roleplay. Finally, the participants would then perform an immediate and unscripted conversation roleplay, thereby fulfilling the ultimate goal of CLT. If the teacher suddenly asked the participants to do the final roleplay without the previous two steps, the participants may have become confused and subsequently fail the task, not because they are unable to use English, but because of being unsure about what to do. Designing CLT activities following sequential steps gives the participants essential knowledge and opportunities to practice in small practices before engaging in more challenging communicative or social activities (Littlewood, 1981; Richard, 2006). In brief, CLT activities require a step-by-step design to help learners gradually develop

their competence which can help their performance, and vice versa.

Another point related to the success of CLT in this study is the consideration taken to ensure the learners were given appropriate tasks. This present study's successful use of CLT relied on the sequence of the activities and task familiarity. Their engagement with the pre-task activities meant that the participants were familiar with the situational tasks. Moreover, familiarity with the topic helped them draw on their own background knowledge and previous experience to use in the task, such as an activity set at a party and conversation in their daily lives. Hiep (2007) claimed that CLT was ineffective, although it is unclear what roleplay situation was selected by the teachers during the study. Hiep (2007) found that a teacher used a newspaper and tried asking the students to conduct a prompt discussion in English about the newspaper content. The teacher claimed that the use of the CLT-based task was not successful. In this instance, the student's unfamiliarity with the topic may account for this failed attempt to use CLT. Other studies also show that teachers report difficulty in using CLT-based tasks in the classroom due to the classroom's context. According to Bock (2000) and Hiep (2007), students lacked the motivation to work cooperatively using English because the classroom conditions did not support CLT learning. For example, ill-equipped classrooms without a writing board or projector, or noisy classrooms had negative effects on doing CLT activities. In contrast, this study found that additional tools were not required to do the CLT activities, with the teachers only requiring some paper, inexpensive materials and ensure that each student has the opportunity to practice using English in the classroom.

In addition, CLT concepts should be adaptable and flexible to use with mixed ability learners (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). For example, drilling may be used or use of the learner's native language may be acceptable for practical purposes. The lesson in this study did not begin with having the participants undertake a roleplay or a group discussion in English. Instead, the teacher first explained the details of the lesson before proceeding to make small discussions, during which the participants were allowed to use Thai. L1 use during early activities in the classroom is acceptable since it helps to pave the way for a more effective implementation of the main activities. From the teacher's observation in this study, the participants discussed or spoke in Thai to understand the concept of the activities. Later during the roleplay, none of the participants use Thai to interact with their peers. Although some participants had

limited English abilities, they tried using only English during the roleplay. Thus, the use of Thai to explain the activities helped the participants to clearly understand the tasks. They subsequently derived benefit from their comprehension so that they could effectively perform during the roleplay.

The design of CLT lessons should therefore consider using sequential activities, the students' familiarity with the topics, and use a flexible approach to use CLT concepts. Sequential activities help to gradually develop the students' understanding of the lesson content. Meanwhile, an effective CLT lesson design also motivates the learner' motivation to engage in the activities. The participants' learning motivation will be discussed in the following section.

### **5.3 Learning motivation in the CLT classroom**

The CLT classroom promoted learning motivation for the participants, which played an important role in sustaining their engagement while using English in the CLT activities. This study found two sources of motivation in the CLT classroom. The first source is that the participants were motivated as they were given control over their engagement with the activities, while the second is related to their confidence. The participants were motivated to use English because they became more confident due to the step-by-step sequential design of the activities.

The participants were encouraged to use the target language during the situational tasks which were similar to real events. During the task, the participants asserted that they felt able to immediately draw from many skills so that they could deal with unprepared interactions. After the instruction, the participants were left to decide how they would participate in the activity independently to complete the activity goal. Through this, they were forced to develop a sense of self-determination. Dornyei (1998) posits that self-determination refers to the way that learners participate in an activity with a desire to engage, make their own choices, or rely on taking responsibility for their own learning, whether or not it is successful. Dornyei (1998) believes that this self-determination leads to motivation to learn L2. Self-determination is a main principle in the implementation of the CLT activities in the present study. During the social activities the participants had to make their own decisions and plan to conduct a conversation without control from the teacher. The participants performed well in terms of their fluency and accuracy, as well as their

willingness to participate in and complete the task. Their motivation came from free thinking and autonomy as was revealed in the questionnaire data. Hence, the self-determination developed by the social activities lead to motivation, which in turn contributed to the success of the CLT lesson.

The other source of motivation is concerned with the student's confidence to use English. Linguistic self-confidence motivates a person to learn and use L2 (Dornyei, 1998). This study shows that all the participants had the confidence to use language to communicate in the final stage of the CLT activity. The participants declared in the questionnaire that they felt confident to speak and make interactions, and they also did not feel shy to use language. The participants believed that they had an ability to use the language thanks to the mechanical and meaningful activities. Meanwhile, their confidence brought about the necessary motivation for them to perform in the tasks.

To conclude, motivation is another important factor for effective learning in CLT. The participants learned sequentially and were allowed to take full responsibility to control tasks themselves. All together, these elements helped them to gain the confidence that supported their motivation.

#### **5.4 Peer teaching and the success of CLT for Thai students**

Peer teaching is an inevitable part of the success of CLT in a Thai context. The CLT classroom in this study required the students to work with partners, although this arrangement needs careful thought, not merely to match the students who work together. Arta (2012) states that to make the task goal achievable, students with high and low abilities should be matched together. The present study found that the learning was generally successful with a mixed ability group. Good students helped to reduce their peer's anxiety during the lesson, since the lower ability partner felt comfortable to ask their partner questions instead of feeling uncomfortable while asking the teacher.

The participants stated that they did not feel nervous while working with their partners. Rather, they felt relaxed doing the tasks together, with the teacher available if they required additional assistance (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Pair group work helped to bring about a positive atmosphere, and it was noticed that the participants appeared to enjoy doing the tasks and tried to create conversations using humor. This atmosphere of a CLT classroom is expected to reduce anxiety (Arta, 2012). According to Basilio and Wongrag (2017), anxiety is the main problem for Thai students, with it

obstructing their learning, especially their speaking. This study shows that the use of peer teaching in CLT helps reduce anxiety in the classroom. From this, it can be concluded that peer teaching is necessary for successful implementation of CLT in contexts similar to the present study.

To conclude, the present study shows that the CLT activities are effective at enhancing the participants' compliment responses in Standard American English, which was the target function of English in the study. In addition, the less helped the participants to elicit and apply their existing English skills to complete the communicative tasks. Finally, motivation and peer teaching are important supporting elements that helped the participants to successfully complete the learning.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Influenced by the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1971; Canale and Swain, 1980) and previous studies using CLT in L2 classrooms (Littlewood, 1981; Harmer, 1982; Taylor, 1983; Maley, 1986; Savignon, 1987; Jacobs and Farrell, 2003; Richards, 2006), this study was conducted with an aim to teach compliment responses in Standard American English to English major students at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University. Previous studies found that this particular language function is differently expressed in Standard Thai and Standard American English (Gajasen, 1994; Cedar, 2006).

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

This study found that the CLT-based lesson helped to improve the participants' performance of appropriately responding to compliments in Standard American. This is supported by the posttest results which show that the students used fewer negative responses than positive responses, which is expected in Standard American English. The findings were discussed in terms of CLT activity design, multiple skill development, learner motivation and confidence, and peer teaching.

#### **6.2 Limitations and implications**

The present study indicates that the CLT-based lesson is effective at enhancing the participants' target language function. Nonetheless, since the present study was conducted with a small group of participants which aimed to verify the use of sequentially designed tasks only, future research should focus on using all the steps of CLT tasks with bigger class sizes. One problem that Thai learners of English face is that the class sizes are too big, making it difficult for teachers to ensure that all students can effectively engage in CLT activities. However, the present study shows that peer teaching can be used to support CLT practices, while peer teaching also encouraged the

participants to take responsibility in their learning roles. Therefore, with carefully designed activities CLT may be beneficial for other Thai EFL classroom contexts with large numbers of mixed ability students.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Research Tools**

**Compliment responses pretest and posttest**

- 1) You got an award from your department for an excellent academic performance. Today at school, your professor comes over to greet you and says,

Professor: You're so smart. Everyone was sure you were going to get it.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) You have just won a scholarship to study abroad. Today is commencement day and after the ceremony, a professor comes up to congratulate you and says,

Professor: You're an excellent student.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) You are applying for graduate school. You go to the register's office to pick up a transcript. You run into a friend there. While you are talking with him, he takes a glance at your transcript and says,

Friend: Hmm...you're a very good student.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) You have a class presentation today. You have a lot of nice graphics to show. The professor seems to like your performance a lot. After class, he says to you,

Professor: I really like your presentation. It was enjoyable.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) You got straight A's last semester. Today is the first day of a new semester. You meet a friend at school and he says to you,

Friend: I heard you got straight A's last semester. Good job.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) You enrolled in a painting class this semester. When the lessons were over, the students' works are displayed at an exhibition. Your paintings get a lot of attention. A friend comes over to greet you and she says,

Friend: Your paintings are the most outstanding ones in this exhibition.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) Your professor holds a party at her place to celebrate the end of the semester. Just for the fun of it, everyone has to bring something they cooked. Your professor tastes your food and she says to you,

Professor: Hey! This is really delicious.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 8) You had a test last week. Today, the professor announced that you got the highest score in the class. After class, a classmate comes over to you and she says,

Classmate: You did really good. The test was very tough.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 9) You wrote an article for one of your classes. Later, it was published in a journal. Today, you meet a professor who has read your article. He says to you,

Professor: Your article is interesting. I really like it.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

- 10) You joined a university's theater group. It organizes a play every semester. A play was put on last night and you had a leading role. Today at school, a friend walks up to you and says,

Friend: I went to see the play last night. You were terrific.

You: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CLT Lessons**

### **PART I - Introduction to the lesson “Compliment responses”**

There are three categories of compliment responses according to Herbert’s Framework (1989). Look on each sub-category and consider it most appears in Thai culture or American culture.

Categories	Example	More appears in	
		Thai culture	American culture
<b>1) Agreements</b>			
<i>1.1) Acceptances</i>			
(a) Appreciation Tokens	A: Nice Tie. B: (smile).		
(b) Comment acceptances	A: I like your jacket. B: Thanks, I like it too.		
(c) Praise upgrades	A: I like that shirt you're wearing. B: You're not the first one and you're not the last.		
<i>1.2) Comment history</i>	A: I love that outfit. B: I got it for the trip to Arizona.		
<i>1.3) Transfer</i>			
(a) Reassignment	A: That's a beautiful sweater. B: My brother gave it to me.		
(b) Return	A: You're funny. B: You're a good audience.		
<b>2) Nonagreements</b>			
<i>2.1) Scale down</i>	A: Your hair looks good today. B: Oh! It's just the same old thing.		
<i>2.2) Nonacceptance</i>			
(a) Disagreement	A: Nice haircut. You look good. B: I hate it.		
(b) Qualification	A: You must be smart. You did well on the last linguistic test. B: Not really. You did better.		
<i>2.3) Question response</i>	A: That's a nice sweater. B: Do you really think so?		
<i>2.4) No acknowledgement</i>	A: That's a beautiful sweater. B: Did you finish the assignment for today?		
<b>3) Request interpretation</b>	A: I like those pants. B: Well, you can borrow them anytime.		

**\*\* Now, think of yourself for which responses you always make or you see most in Thai context and then discuss with a friend next to you.\*\***

### Types of Compliment responses

Categories	Description	More appear in
<b>1) Agreements</b>		
<i>1.1) Acceptances</i>		
(a) Appreciation Tokens	Responses that not fit to the compliment (it could be interpreted as acceptance or only acknowledgment)	<i>Thai</i> (with nod or smile)
(b) Comment acceptances	Responses that fit to the compliment (it relates to the compliment)	<i>American</i>
(c) Praise upgrades	The speaker increases complimentary as self-praise.	Not clear (prefer in joking)
<i>1.2) Comment history</i>	Although agrees with the compliment, the speaker gives impersonal detail and extend conversation to be longer.	<i>American</i>
<i>1.3) Transfer</i>		
(a) Reassignment	The speaker directs the praise to a third person or to the object complimented itself.	N/A
(b) Return	The speaker gives compliment back.	N/A
<b>2) Nonagreements</b>		
<i>2.1) Scale down</i>	The speaker does not disagree and points to hidden flaws.	<i>Thai</i>
<i>2.2) Nonacceptance</i>		
(a) Disagreement	The speaker disagrees with the compliment and asserts that the compliment is overdone.	<i>Thai</i>
(b) Qualification	The speaker chooses not to accept the full compliment, usually employing through, but, yet etc.	N/A
<i>2.3) Question response</i>	The speaker requests for expansion or repetition of a compliment assertion.	<i>Thai</i>
<i>2.4) No acknowledgement</i>	- The speaker may not hear the utterance of compliment. - The speaker may need to change conversation topic.	<i>Thai</i>
<b>3) Request interpretation</b>	The speaker treat compliment as something other than a compliment.	N/A

### Example of appropriated responding style in Standard American English

#### 1) *Comment acceptances*

- Thank you / thanks, that's very kind.
- Thank you / thanks, that's very nice / sweet of you to say so.
- Thank you / thanks, I appreciate the compliment.
- Thank you / thanks, that's a nice compliment.
- Thank you / thanks, I'm glad you like it.
- Thank you / thanks, that means a lot!
- Thank you / thanks, how nice of you to say that.
- Thank you / thanks, it's nice to hear.
- Thank you / thanks, I'm happy you think so.

#### 2) *Comment history*

- Thank you / thanks, it was a birthday present from my sister.
- Thank you / thanks, I bought it for the trip to Chiang Mai.
- Thank you / thanks, my win is a result of long hours of practice.

#### 3) *Reassignment*

- Thank you / thanks, Sarah works on it too.
- Thank you / thanks, it wasn't all my work. Jim gave me a lot help.
- Thank you / thanks, I couldn't have done it without the support from Jones.
- Thank you / thanks, I'll pass along the compliment to Diana. She was really involved throughout the process.
- Thank you / thanks, I'm lucky to have such a great teacher.
- Thank you / thanks, I'm lucky enough to have learned from the best.

#### 4) *Return*

- Thank you / thanks, you look very nice too.
- Thank you / thanks, your coat looks fashionable too.
- Thank you / thanks, I like your dress too.

**PART II**

Rearrange orders of these conversations with your partner and do a role-play

In a birthday party

Saranya :	Thanks. My sister gave it to me as a birthday present. It becomes my favorite now.
Amy :	You surely do it. By the way, I was just noticing your brooch. It's lovely.
Saranya :	Right, I must try this color on my next party.
Saranya :	Amy! Your pink shoes look nice!
Amy :	Thanks, I love pink color. I think you would look nice in pink also.

In a shop at art street

Max :	I see. I love that place too and this painting reminds me of happiness when I was there. You're a genius.
Chaichan :	Thank you. I love painting with oil paint. This one was inspired by my traveling to Cheng Mai last time.
Max :	Wow, your painting is so wonderful.
Chaichan :	I'm so glad you like it. So if you need to buy it I would give you a special discount.
Max :	Thanks. It sounds great!

In a school

Sophia : Thank you. I've been practicing Thai so hard every day. Anyway, it would be nice if you help teach me more, would you?

Wipada : Thanks. I love helping people anyway.

Wipada : Why not? I don't think I should hesitate to teach an encourage person like you.

Wipada : You know? You're the first exchanged student who can learn Thai language very fast.

Sophia : That's very kind of you. How nice you are!

### **Write dialogue and do role-play**

(I) You enrolled in a photography class this semester. It is a requirement that every picture be reviewed in class. When you show your first picture to the class, your professor seems to like it a lot. Professor gives you a compliment and you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment acceptances

Role B -> Comment history

(II) You are a musician. Tonight, you and the university band perform at the auditorium. After the concert, your professor, who is in the audience, come up to you. Professor gives you a compliment and you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment acceptances

Role B -> Reassignment

(III) Your professor takes your class out of town on an excursion. On the way, somebody grabs a guitar and ask you to sing. After the singing, everybody gives you a big round of applause. A friend smiles at you and she gives you a compliment, then you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment acceptances

Role B -> Comment history

(IV) You go to a library to study for an exam. As you are studying, a professor happens to walk by. So she stops and talks to you for a while. When she notices that you're studying, she gives you a compliment and then you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment acceptances.

Role B -> Comment history

(V) You can speak English very fluently. Today, there are visitors from The U.S. at your department. You are assigned to be their host and they are very pleased with the visit. After the visitors have left, a friend gives you a compliment and you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment history

Role B -> Return

(VI) You are on the university swimming team. Today, you won first place in the competition. After an awards ceremony, a friend congratulates you. He gives you a compliment and you respond to the compliment.

Role A -> Comment history

Role B -> Comment acceptances

Work in pair. Student A start conversation first. Student B listens to what A says then does corresponding respond. You will have one minute to read each cued dialogue and think about conversation. You can look at the sheet '*Form of compliments and compliment responses*' to create your own sentences.

**(1) Acquaintances**

A	B
You meet B who is your acquaintance	You meet A who is your acquaintance
A: Greet B	A:
B:	B: Greet A
A: Compliment B for his/her necklace.	A:
B:	B: Respond to a compliment from A Then, compliment A back about his/her new bag.
A: Respond to a compliment from B	A:

**(2) Teacher – Student**

A	B
You meet B who is your teacher	You meet A who is your student
A: Greet A	A:
B:	B: Greet A
A: Compliment B for his/her teaching style.	A:
B:	B: Respond to a compliment from A Then, compliment A back about his/her presentation last time.
A: Respond to a compliment from B	A:

**(3) Best friends****A**

You meet B who is your best friend

**A: Greet A****B:****A: Compliment B for his/her drawing.****B:****A: Respond to a compliment from B****B**

You meet A who is your best friend

**A:****B: Greet A****A:****B: Respond to a compliment from A**Then, compliment A back about  
his/her fiction writing.**A:****(4) Stranger****A**

You meet B who is a stranger

**A: Greet A****B:****A: Compliment B for his/her shirt.****B:****A: Respond to a compliment from B****B**

You meet A who is a stranger

**A:****B: Greet A****A:****B: Respond to a compliment from A**Then, compliment A back about  
his/her hat.**A:**

### **PART III**

Work in group of 6. Each member of the group is assigned to perform acting in a different role. Suppose that you are in a party place where American culture is held. One of you will check the readiness of a welcome party for your American students. The rest of you will do different roles to fulfill the party's requirements. (Teacher will help rehearsal and brief their actions for once. Students can talk to the teacher for clearly understanding before starting the actual role-play.)

#### **A**

You are a student leader who plans a welcome party for exchanged American students and is going to check if the party is arranged as planned. Before the welcome party starts this evening, you will check all the 5 preparations of your friends and you feel you satisfy with them. You walk around and give compliment to each of them on their assigned jobs. You also ask if their jobs already completed or if they have any problem for you to help. If you are not sure about your decision, you can ask all of your friends for what they think.

-----

#### **B**

You are student who is assigned to organize the place. You've rearranged layout many times before it looks perfect today. You work hard on it and it seems going well. You feel so glad that everybody likes it. A student leader will give you a compliment and you will respond to that compliment. Then, you give compliment back for her good managing about budget and keeping patience even you offered to change layout again just this morning.

-----

#### **C**

You are a student who is assigned to make flowers decoration. You already complete your job by helping from student B. A student leader will give you a compliment and you will respond to that compliment. By the way, you like colorful flowers decorated around the room so much. You ask the student leader if you can take some of them back to your home after the party end.

-----

**D**

You are a student who is assigned to make balloons decoration. You enjoy this assignment because you like balloons. A student leader will give you a compliment and you will respond to that compliment. Anyway, you have an additional idea to attach ribbon on each bunch of them but you afraid it may take time. You ask the student leader to request if other friends can help you. (For friends who help you, you appreciate their kindness and compliment them.)

-----

**E**

You are a student who is assigned to make a welcome board decoration. You spent whole day to design and finish it. You completed it with your pride. A student leader will give you a compliment and you will respond to that compliment. Now you need to have new shoes before the party start. You notice that a student leader is wearing nice shoes. You compliment her about that shoes and ask where she bought them from, so you will hurry go there to buy them.

-----

**F**

You are a student who is assigned to prepare food and drinks for the party. You feel happy about drinks but not about food. A student leader will give you a compliment and you will respond to that compliment. However, the student leader seems does not notice that fruit is missing on the table! You suddenly cannot contact to the fruit shop owner. You ask the student leader for her advice.

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Sample data from the questionnaires**

## Part 1

Does mechanical practices help you to improve responding to compliments in English?

(กิจกรรมในส่วน mechanical practice ช่วยในการปรับปรุงการตอบรับคำชมเป็นภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Why? Please explain to support your answer above.

ก็ได้รู้ตัวอย่างการตอบรับคำชมจากตัวอย่างประโยค ซึ่งก็มีบทบทน์ที่มาจากบทละครไทย  
ที่เน้นการตอบรับ = การปฏิเสธ (การล้อเล่น) แต่ในสถานการณ์ = ไม่ให้เกียรติ ไม่ได้อวดดี  
ยกนำไปปรับใช้ แล้วก็ได้รู้ว่าการตอบรับในแบบต่างๆ จากเอกสาร ทำให้ผมไม่กลัวว่า Thank you.

## Part 2

Does meaningful practices help you to improve responding to compliments in English?

(กิจกรรมในส่วน meaningful practice ช่วยในการปรับปรุงการตอบรับคำชมเป็นภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Why? Please explain to support your answer above.

Because I think. It's a good way made me try to  
think and improve my idea better.

## Part 3

Does communicative practices help you to improve responding to compliments in English?

(กิจกรรมในส่วน communicative practice ช่วยในการปรับปรุงการตอบรับคำชมเป็นภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Why? Please explain to support your answer above.

กิจกรรมในส่วน เน้นให้เราได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์การสนทนาที่จริง ๆ  
เพราะเราได้มีการสนทนาด้วยสถานการณ์จริง ๆ เราจะได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ  
และเราได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ เราจะได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ  
และเราได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ เราจะได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ  
และเราได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ เราจะได้รู้ถึงสถานการณ์ที่จริง ๆ

## Part 4

Does peer teaching help you to improve your learning?

(การเรียนรู้โดยมี partner ช่วยในการปรับปรุงการเรียนรู้ของท่านหรือไม่)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Why? Please explain to support your answer above.

ได้ฝึกฝน skill ไปพร้อมๆ กับเพื่อน ทำให้ไม่  
ประหม่า และไม่เขิน ทำให้กล้าตอบโต้ จึงเพื่อนช่วยคิดและ  
กระตุ้นผมฝึกทักษะ.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Sample data from teacher diary**

### Sample from teacher's diary

- นักเรียน A เมื่อถูกกล่าวชม ตอบรับโดย short expression แม้นักเรียน A จะมีความประหม่าอยู่บ้างทำให้พูดติดขัด ไม่สามารถพูดโต้ตอบได้คล่องแต่ก็พยายามอธิบายให้ D รับทราบถึงปัญหาที่ตนมีโดยใช้วิธีพูดประโยคเดิมซ้ำๆ เพื่อให้ D เข้าใจและช่วยแนะนำวิธีแก้ไขให้ (I have no enough flowers. / I have no enough flowers, room is too big.)
- นักเรียน E เมื่อถูกกล่าวชม ตอบรับโดย comment history นักเรียน E มีความสามารถในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษระดับหนึ่ง สามารถอธิบายรายละเอียดงานที่ตัวเองจัดเตรียมได้และโต้ตอบบทสนทนาได้อย่างต่อเนื่อง (นักเรียนอธิบายถึงเมนูที่ตัวเองจัดเตรียมในแต่ละอย่าง)
- นักเรียน F เมื่อถูกกล่าวชม ตอบรับโดย short expression นักเรียน F พูดโต้ตอบได้ไม่คล่องแต่มีความพยายามที่จะอธิบายโดยวิธีการพูดเป็นคำๆ จนกระทั่งเพื่อนเข้าใจและให้คำแนะนำในการแก้ปัญหาได้ (The paper cannot.....stick...(ใช้นิ้วเคาะกระดาน).....the board.)
- นักเรียน H เมื่อถูกกล่าวชม ตอบรับโดย extended expression นักเรียน H สามารถพูดตอบโต้บทสนทนาได้คล่องกว่ากิจกรรมที่แล้วและดูผ่อนคลายมากขึ้น สังเกตได้จากการที่สามารถใช้ภาษาอังกฤษพูดแทนนักเรียน D เพื่อให้เพื่อนในห้องหัวเราะได้

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