



**MEANING NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES IN THAI ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNER'S CHAT**

SUTHASINEE PIAKAM

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
MAJOR IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS
UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015
COPYRIGHT OF UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY**



UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY
INDEPENDENT STUDY APPROVAL
MASTER OF ARTS
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS

TITLE MEANING NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES IN THAI ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNER'S CHAT

AUTHOR MS. SUTHASINEE PIAKAM

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

DR. ORANUCH PUANGSUK	CHAIRPERSON
DR. SAOWANEË T. ALEXANDER	MEMBER
DR. JIRAPORN SMYTH	MEMBER

ADVISOR

.....
Jiraporn Smyth
.....
(DR. JIRAPORN SMYTH)

.....
P. Charoentubtra
.....
(ASST. PROF. DR. PREEYAPORN CHAROENBUTRA)
DEAN, FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS

.....
A. Pongrat
.....
(ASSOC. PROF. DR. ARIYAPORN PONGRAT)
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

COPYRIGHT OF UBON RATCHATHANI UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my truly kind advisor, Dr. Jiraporn Smyth, for her professional but friendly support, great patience and valuable suggestions which lead to the success of this study. I am also so thankful to my readers, Dr.Saowanee T. Alexander and Dr. Oranuch Puangsuk, for sacrificing time and being patient in reading throughout this study and giving valuable comments. Special thanks go to my husband, Mr. Matthew Alan Craddock, who encouraged me to keep working on the study and sacrificed his free time after hard work taking care of our beloved son so that I could finish my paper.

This acknowledgement of appreciation is also extended to my family, for their encouragement and understanding.

Suthasinee Piakam

Researcher

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my truly kind advisor, Dr. Jiraporn Smyth, for her professional but friendly support, great patience and valuable suggestions which lead to the success of this study. I am also so thankful to my readers, Dr.Saowanee T. Alexander and Dr. Oranuch Puangsuk, for sacrificing time and being patient in reading throughout this study and giving valuable comments. Special thanks go to my husband, Mr. Matthew Alan Craddock, who encouraged me to keep working on the study and sacrificed his free time after hard work taking care of our beloved son so that I could finish my paper.

This acknowledgement of appreciation is also extended to my family, for their encouragement and understanding.

Suthasinee Piakam

Researcher

บทคัดย่อ

- เรื่อง : กลวิธีการต่อรองความหมายในบทสนทนาออนไลน์ของนักเรียนไทย
ที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ
- ผู้วิจัย : สุธาสินี เพี้ยกำ
- ชื่อปริญญา : ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
- สาขาวิชา : การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ
- อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : ดร. จิราภรณ์ สมิธ
- คำสำคัญ : กลวิธีการต่อรองความหมาย, บทสนทนาออนไลน์, การสื่อสารผ่านคอมพิวเตอร์

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษากลวิธีการต่อรองความหมายในบทสนทนาออนไลน์ของนักเรียนไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ รวมทั้งศึกษาว่าการสื่อสารผ่านคอมพิวเตอร์ในรูปแบบการสนทนาออนไลน์ช่วยพัฒนาการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักเรียนไทยในระดับปริญญาตรีที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ จำนวน 20 คน ซึ่งใช้โปรแกรมสนทนาออนไลน์ของเว็บไซต์แห่งหนึ่งเพื่อฝึกภาษา ผู้วิจัยได้สุ่มเก็บข้อมูลจากนักศึกษาแต่ละคนทั้งหมด 5 ครั้ง รวมทั้งสิ้น 100 บทสนทนา ผู้วิจัยได้นำข้อมูลที่ได้นี้ไปวิเคราะห์ทั้งในเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพเพื่อศึกษาถึงกลวิธีการต่อรองความหมายที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้ในขณะสนทนา ซึ่งได้วิเคราะห์แยกตาม 5 กลวิธี ได้แก่ การขอคำอธิบาย การตรวจย้ำความมั่นใจ การตรวจสอบความเข้าใจ การพูดซ้ำคำพูดตัวเอง และการพูดซ้ำคำพูดผู้อื่น นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยยังได้ศึกษาถึงนัยยะสำคัญที่อาจบ่งชี้

ผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่านักเรียนไทยใช้กลวิธีในการต่อรองความหมายที่หลากหลายในระหว่างการสนทนาออนไลน์ โดยพบว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างได้ใช้กลวิธีต่างๆในต่อรองความหมายในระหว่างการสนทนาจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 342 ครั้ง ซึ่งครอบคลุมทั้ง 5 กลวิธี ผลการวิจัยยังแสดงให้เห็นว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างมีแนวโน้มที่จะต่อรองความหมายในการสนทนาครั้งต่อไปเพิ่มมากขึ้นเรื่อยๆ นอกจากนี้ยังมีหลักฐานที่บ่งชี้ถึงสัญญาณการเรียนรู้ทางภาษาของกลุ่มตัวอย่างในระหว่างการศึกษาวิจัย ซึ่งผู้วิจัยพบว่าหลากหลายกลวิธีที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้ต่อรองความหมายนั้น มีส่วนช่วยในการพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษทั้งในด้านภาษาศาสตร์และการสื่อสาร และช่วยให้พวกเขาประสบความสำเร็จในการสื่อสารกับคู่สนทนา ดังนั้นผู้วิจัยจึงเห็นว่า ครูที่สอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศควรพิจารณานำโปรแกรมสนทนาออนไลน์ไปประยุกต์ใช้เพื่อการพัฒนาการเรียนการสอนทั้งในห้องเรียนและนอกห้องเรียน

ABSTRACT

TITLLE : MEANING NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES IN THAI ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNER'S CHAT
AUTHOR : SUTHASINEE PIAKAM
DEGREE : MASTER OF ARTS
MAJOR : TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
ADVISOR : JIRAPORN SMYTH, Ph.D.
KEYWORDS : MEANING NEGOTIATION STRATEGY, CHAT,
COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

The purposes of this study were to examine meaning negotiation strategies employed by Thai EFL learners while chatting, as well as to find out if text-based Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in the form of chat helps facilitate English language learning. The participants were twenty Thai EFL undergraduates who used chat applications from a website as a tool to practice English. Out of five chat sessions, one hundred chat scripts were extracted. The extracted chat scripts were used to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse meaning negotiation strategies the participants produced concerning five types of meaning negotiation strategies: clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self-repetition, and other repetition. The chat scripts were also analyzed to see participants' signs of learning during English online chat.

The results revealed that chat encouraged Thai EFL learners to contribute various meaning negotiations. With a total of 3500 turns extracted, 342 negotiations were evident during the study. The meaning negotiations included all five meaning negotiation strategy types, and the participants tended to increase the number of negotiations across time. Also, there was evidence for the participants' signs of learning English. During the chat process, participants contributed numerous meaning negotiations which helped enhance both of their linguistic (forms) and communicative competence and helped facilitate successful communication. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL teachers consider implementing online chat in their language teaching, both inside and outside classroom.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	I
THAI ABSTRACT	II
ENGLISH ABSTRACT	III
CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	VII
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Rationale	1
1.2 Research Questions	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study	3
1.4 Significance of the Study	3
1.5 Definitions of Key Terms	4
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Second Language Acquisition	5
2.2 Limitations of Language Learning in EFL Context	6
2.3 Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)	7
2.4 Chat	10
2.5 Meaning Negotiation Strategies	12
2.6 Previous Studies	14
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHOD	
3.1 Participants	18
3.2 Instruments	19
3.3 Data Collection	21
3.4 Data Analysis	22
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	
4.1 Frequency of Meaning Negotiations	23
4.2 Types of Meaning Negotiation Strategies	33
4.3 Signs of Language Learning of Thai EFL Learners	40

CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	PAGE
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Conclusion	53
5.2 Limitations	54
5.3 Pedagogical Implications	54
5.4 Recommendations for Further Study	55
REFERENCES	56
CURRICULUM VITAE	61

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
4.1	Meaning Negotiations Produced by All Participants	24
4.2	Meaning Negotiations Created by Each Participant	27
4.3	Meaning Negotiations Generated by Each Participant in Each Chat Period	30

LIST OF FIGURE

FIGURE		PAGE
3.1	A Chat Room on <i>Interpals</i>	20
3.2	Chat Wall on <i>Interpals</i>	21
4.1	Total Meaning Negotiations Created in Each Chat Period	25

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's rationale, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Rationale

According to Blake (2008), learning process of another language other than your native language is both an intensive and time-consuming activity as it takes approximately from 700 to 1,320 hours or four to six years of intensive study to reach functional proficiency in a second language. For students majoring in a foreign language, four years in the university are not enough to gain functional proficiency. Blake (2008) revealed that most university students spend only 150 hours per academic year studying a second language actively and the crucial point to their second language learning is the extent and nature of the input received.

Concerning second language acquisition (SLA) theory, a second language is best learned through social interactions (Gass, 1997). Learners can notice their own mistakes via interactions with peers and then seek a solution to improve their interlanguage. They also develop their communication strategies through unpredictable difficulties during interactions (Blake, 2008). Unfortunately, formal second language learning is found barely successful due to insufficient interactions and input in the target language (Cummins, 1998). Increasing contact with the target language, then, may be the best solution to this problem. In particular, going abroad to the places where the target language is spoken and immersing oneself in the society and culture remains the most preferable method to learn a foreign language (Blake, 2008). However, it costs a lot of money. Davidson (2007) stated that less than three percent of university students can afford to go overseas on either academic or internship programs. For most language learners who cannot go abroad but need more of social interactions and exposure to the target language, technology could, therefore, play a significant role in improving their contact with the target language and

eventually their language learning progress if wisely used. Moreover, Chun (1994) revealed that learners perform a much wider range of speech acts, including negotiation, in their online communication than in the traditional teacher-centered classroom.

As computers are becoming dramatically popular, it is suggested that computer technology can be used as an effective tool to learn languages as a new medium of skills development in addition to face-to-face communication (Lengluan, 2008). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been employed in language learning and appears to serve several advantages (Blake, 2000). CMC allows various communication exchanges; providing opportunities for language learners to experiment and try out what they know, express their ideas and opinions, interact with others and negotiate meanings (Pinweha, 2010). CMC can be divided into two main types: synchronous and asynchronous. According to Murray (2000), synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) occurs in real time such as online chat; whereas in asynchronous computer-mediated communication (ACMC), participants do not need to communicate with one another in real time such as email.

One of the most popular forms of CMC is chat. Chat refers to a kind of synchronous computer mediated communication that provides users around the world real-time communication via a computer network (Spencer & Hiltz, 2002). Social networking sites are increasingly used nowadays and most sites contain a chat environment available for synchronous communication among users. Bosch (2009) discovered that social online networks have potential applications for learning. Online chat is also included. Chat helps foster second language learning as it permits its users to engage meaningfully in negotiated interaction, gain exposure to comprehensible input and modified output and notice the gaps between their interlanguage ability and that of skilled peers (Pinweha, 2010). While negotiating for meaning via chat, learners employ strategies to maintain communication flow. Hence, it is essential to find out if online chat facilitates language learning that affects linguistic and communicative competence.

Although online chat conversation has been widely investigated in some EFL/ESL contexts, the area of conversational analysis via online chat in the Thai EFL context remains under-explored. Therefore, this study is conducted to find out chat behaviors

of Thai EFL learners which, in this case, is negotiation strategies. It is also conducted to investigate the significance of using online chat as a tool to improve English language learning.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of this study were:

1.2.1 What meaning negotiation strategies do Thai EFL learners use in an English online chat?

1.2.2 Are there any signs of language learning of Thai EFL learners during English online chat?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how text-based CMC or chat can provide Thai EFL learners opportunities to be exposed to English language and engage into meaningful negotiation and interaction. I, as the researcher, aim to examine meaning negotiation strategies employed by Thai EFL learners while chatting. In addition, I would like to find out if online chat helps facilitate English language learning.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The present study analyzes negotiation strategies of Thai EFL learners' chats. It also investigates how effectively online chat may assist Thai EFL learners to improve their English language ability. The findings were expected to show that online chat may facilitate their English language learning. This study may be useful for Thai EFL learners, suggesting them a new tool to enhance language learning. It may also be beneficial for EFL teachers in implementing online chat in their language teaching.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

The terms that need to be defined are as follows:

1.5.1 Computer Mediated Communication refers to technologies used for communication where the computer plays a major role. It includes online newspapers, chat rooms, e-mail and computer-mediated conferencing (Dehghania & Azizi, 2011). Often, it is abbreviated to CMC.

1.5.2 Chat refers to a type of synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC) that provides users around the world real-time communication via a computer network (Spencer and Hiltz, 2002).

1.5.3 Meaning Negotiation refers to “the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (Pica, 1994, p. 493). Each strategy used in this study is illustrated using examples taken from Oliver’s (1998) study. They are clarification requests, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, self-repetition and other-repetition.

The study was conducted during April 2014 – January 2015. One chat transcript was randomly extracted and collected from each participant for every two months. The conversations were in English and could be on any topics and with any speakers from any countries. After the period of ten months, one hundred extracted transcripts total were analyzed to see the meaning negotiating strategies used by the participants, as well as the participants’ signs of language learning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides background knowledge relevant to the topic of this study. They are second language acquisition, limitations of language learning in EFL countries, computer-mediated communication, chat, meaning negotiation strategies and previous studies on meaning negotiation strategies of chat.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition

Regarding second language acquisition (SLA) theory, a second language is best learned through interactions (Gass, 1997). Learners' efforts to solve miscommunication during interaction help foster their second language acquisition, as it leads to more exposure to comprehensible input and modified output. This type of interaction is known as *negotiation of meaning* (Gass, 1997).

SLA studies have proved that only comprehensible input from Krashen (1983) is not sufficient to acquire a second language. Modified output or comprehensible output is also necessary (Blake, 2008). Swain (1985) emphasized three important features of output: 1) It provides the opportunity for contextualized meaningful use of one's linguistic resources, 2) It allows the language learner to test out hypotheses about the target language and 3) It encourages the language learner to move from a purely semantic analysis of the language to syntactic processing.

Through negotiated interaction, the output production in the target language helps learners "notice" problems in their own interlanguage and then "seek a solution" in order to produce modified output and improve their interlanguage. They also develop their communication strategies through negotiated interactions. In the output hypothesis, modified output may include speaking or writing activities that do not seem to be fully acquired from the input provided alone (Swain, 1985).

2.2 Limitations of Language Learning in EFL Context

EFL learning is not considered very successful in many EFL countries. Unsuccessfulness appears to result mainly from limited opportunities for authentic language interaction, which integrationists believe to be necessary for second language acquisition (Cheon, 2003). There are some limitations of language learning in these countries that lead to insufficient interactions in the target language, which finally result in low language proficiency.

Larsari (2011) observed that, unlike ESL learners, EFL learners do not generally use the target language outside classrooms. They put English language into practice only when having classes. However, they have limited time and opportunity to use English in their classes, especially in those traditional classrooms that when a person is talking and the other should be silent and wait until he or she finishes the talk (Hansen, 2001). Larsari (2011) further indicated some of EFL learner personalities that may cause problems when speaking up in class. For example, shy language learners, usually afraid of making mistakes, may choose to speak little in class or group discussions.

In South Korean, Cheon (2003) showed that Korean EFL schools have been seriously suffering in English teaching. The failure seems to result from the insufficient interaction in English since, similar to other EFL countries, English is not widely used as a means of communication in South Korea (Cheon, 2003). Regarding the significance of interaction for SLA, EFL teachers should create an interactive learning environment in which learners can negotiate meaning in the target language via interaction (Cheon, 2003). However, this environment is hardly found in Korean EFL context as they have encountered problems of oversized classes along with limited opportunities for authentic language interaction. Task-based activities are adopted as 'modified interaction' to solve the problems, but Korean students usually revert into their native language to complete the tasks and solve miscommunication, even in face-to-face oral exchanges. As a result, Korean EFL learners cannot have enough access to meaningful negotiations in English and teaching English remains unsuccessful.

In EFL countries, it seems difficult for language learners to get exposure to the target language, both inside and outside classroom. With the limitations mentioned, they have a difficult time improving their target language proficiency. Some language researchers,

therefore, pointed out that CMC may help provide language learners with more opportunities to expose to the target language and engage in meaningful negotiations.

2.3 Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Computer mediated communication (CMC) can be widely defined as "human communication via computer" (Higgins, 1991). This refers to interaction between humans who use computers to connect to each other and usually refers to "any communication pattern mediated through the computer" (Metz, 1994: 32). The important point is that communication occurs "*through* a computer between human beings, instead of *to* an already determined computer system" (Ferrara et al, 1991: 31). To sum up, CMC can be defined as "communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers" (Herring, 1996: 1).

Warschauer (1999) restricted the definition of CMC to the modes in which people can deliver messages to individual groups. Murray (2000) narrowed down Herring's definition by modifying communication to include only text-based modes. Ho (2002), however, indicated that CMC technology today has advanced to incorporating oral and visual input into text. In this paper, only studies on text-based CMC in the application form of chat will be reviewed.

2.3.1 Types of Computer Mediated Communication

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) can be divided along two main dimensions: time: synchronous and asynchronous (Hubbard, 2009).

2.3.1.1 Synchronous CMC

In synchronous or real-time CMC, participants interact spontaneously in the same session. Communication takes place at the same time. Synchronous CMC may include chat programs, instant messaging and MOOs (multi-user domain, object oriented) which appear in the text mode and VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) which appears in the audio mode. Due to the advancement of technology, a lot of newer CMC formats such as blogs allow users to post comments and send SMS text messages via mobile phones.

2.3.1.2 Asynchronous CMC

Asynchronous CMC, on the contrary, has a delay between sending and reading/responding. This type of CMC does not require participants to be online at the same time, such as email, bulletin boards or discussion boards in the text mode

According to Hubbard (2009), the majority of CMC research has been focusing on text-based CMC recently. The focus, however, may change in the future because online audio and video communications are becoming more popular and widely used.

2.3.2 Computer Mediated Communication and Language Learning

According to Okuyama (2005), CMC offers several advantages in education and learning. Interestingly, it can provide communication between users of distance education (both between teacher-student and student-student); even though the users are in different places. This new communication feature has currently encouraged a variety of pedagogical applications in the field of second language acquisition (SLA).

Larsari (2011) proposed five benefits of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) in language learning as follows:

2.3.2.1 Increase Interactive Communication and Exposure to the Target Language. CMC provides opportunities for language learners to communicate and learn collaboratively with others worldwide. With CMC, learners can participate actively in more interactions by responding to messages on discussion boards, replying emails to keypals, or having conversations in chat rooms. This learning method helps learners expose more to the target language and engage them into more authentic social interactions.

2.3.2.2 Create Opportunities to Participate in the Target Socio-Cultural Context. Using CMC, learners are exposed to the target social and cultural context. They can work on their pragmatic knowledge, which is difficult to achieve in the EFL context. When using email or chat programs, they can send photos, audio or video attachments to introduce their families, countries and cultures to their friends. As using microphones and web cameras, they participate in online conversation that almost resembles face-to-face communication. Through audio or video communications, they can learn both verbal and non-verbal cues that are essential for developing social competency (Shumin, 1997).

2.3.2.3 Promote Language Proficiency. CMC tools such as emails, web journals, chats and discussion boards allow learners to respond actively and interactively to other users. When learners freely use the target language to express meaning, communicative skills can be highly promoted (Braine, 2004). Networked tools such as word processors help learners compose and revise texts and check spelling and grammar. This increases learners' confidence in their writing ability. Audio and video conferencing can also promote learners' speaking proficiency (Hubbard, 2004).

2.3.2.4 Encourage Motivation and Learner Autonomy. Engaging learners in online authentic and meaningful interactions with other users worldwide increases motivation in language learning. The collaborative support and appreciation from their co-participants can create a highly motivating environment for them to improve their language skills (Holiday, 1995; cited in Cheon, 2003). Learners can also check their language before posting responses. They may refer back to their language knowledge gained in classrooms. The process of checking language output from resources usually helps learning to take place and generates learner autonomy.

2.3.2.5 Promote Social Equality and Identity. CMC is viewed less stressful and more face-saving than face-to-face communication. Learners are more willing to express their identity and personal opinions to others because they are not stared at by the whole class (Hansen, 2001). Learners who are usually afraid of making mistakes in class are more willing to contribute through online conversations on discussion boards or online communities (Pennington, 2004); therefore, leading to the increase of social equality to speak up in and out of classrooms.

In conclusion, CMC helps foster language learning by increasing opportunities for more interactive communication, exposure to the target language, and participation in the target socio cultural context. Moreover, it helps promote English proficiency and social equality and identity and encourages motivation and learner autonomy. CMC also promotes second language acquisition as it increases opportunities for negotiated interactions and modified output production. One way of looking at it is through conversations on chat programs.

2.4 Chat

2.4.1 Definition of Chat

Lengluan (2008) defines chat as a two-way form of synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC), which allows participants to have a dialogue in real time by typing words on a computer. Texts typed in the conversation can be seen instantly by the co-participants so that they can respond right away.

Spencer and Hiltz (2002) refer to chat as a synchronous computer mediated communication that provides users around the world real-time communication via a computer network. Chat sessions consist of users logging on to a server and posting messages to a common viewing area. When people see messages posted, they can immediately respond or make a comment. It is available only on the Internet.

To sum up, chat is a technological tool that occurs in real-time and permits users to use spoken language in the same manner as face-to-face interaction by typing on a computer. Chat applications on the website *interpals.net* are used for this study.

2.4.2 Benefits of Chat

2.4.2.1 Benefits of Chat in Language Learning

Sykes (2005) presented four features in which the Internet chat facilitate language learning as follows: 1) A great number of participants' roles are shared in chat such as the roles of attacker, challenger, supporter and joker, 2) Discourse functions and syntactic complexity in SCMC such as chat discussions share a great number of features with oral communication (Sotillo, 2000), 3) Meaning negotiation and various communication strategies are used in chatting, although, at times, more explicitly and in the learners' native language (Vick et al., 2000; Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbeláiz, 2002; Smith, 2004; cited in Sykes, 2005), 4) Negotiation within the chat environment is effective in improving and retaining unknown lexical items. Learners notice lexical gaps and work to negotiate their understandings (Blake, 2000).

The four features of chat brings to the conclusion that, in terms of participant roles, discourse functions, and negotiation of meaning, Internet chat and oral communication share similarities. Sotillo (2000) stated that "as with face to-face communication, the synchronous discussion data show the functional uses of language as students engaged in interaction" and SCMC chat "seems to encourage communicative fluency, which is generally understood as a quality of oral communication" (p. 102).

Sykes (2005) mentioned that Internet chat contains a number of features that oral interaction has despite the dependent upon a number of factors. Thus, online chat can somehow provide a similar environment to practice and afford the learners with the target language input.

2.4.2.2 Benefits of Chat in Comparison to Face-to-Face Interaction

Regarding conversational dynamics of chat, Payne and Whitney (2002) also informs four benefits of chat in comparison to face-to-face interaction: 1) Through meaning negotiation, online chat environment plays a significant role in interlanguage development, 2) In chat rooms, learners tend to produce more complex language than in traditional face-to-face communicational settings, 3) Participation increases in “quieter” students because they can participate in a written chat discussion as much as, or more than, participants who usually dominate the classroom, 4) Learners’ attitudes towards second language learning tend to improve.

The chat environment has been found beneficial over face to-face interactions, which is facilitative to SLA. As learners interact to each other via chat, they can monitor and edit their language production. Moreover, they can review their production in chat logs after the chat sessions (Kern, 1995; Ortega, 1997; Pellettieri, 2000; cited in Lengluan (2008). This characteristic of chatting may promote "noticing," a significant factor of SLA described by Swain (1985). Yuan (2003) reported that online chat participants could self-correct their own errors from chat discussion as well as improve their grammatical knowledge. The conversations in chat rooms allow learners to scroll up and down, reconsider what had been posted and reformulate their own language before posting the next comment into the chat rooms.

In conclusion, chat provides many benefits for learners and language learning. Paulus (2007) promoted the benefits of chat, by stating that Internet chatting allows language learners to participate equally in conversations, and it could be the technological tool that encourages their language production. Learners can also be active while chatting.

2.5 Meaning Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation refers to “the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (Pica, 1994). Negotiations can be made not only for overcoming trouble sources but also for better discourse management (Chu, 2003.) According to Pica (1994), meaning negotiation helps foster second language learning as when learners negotiate for meaning, they produce comprehensible input and tend to modify their speech linguistically and produce comprehensible output in the target language. Meaning negotiation offers them opportunities to access second language form and meaning. In this way, learners can be pushed to the production of output that is more complete and accurate, far more than merely comprehensible. They accomplish this task by repeating a message, adjusting its syntax, changing the vocabulary, or modifying its form and meaning.

Long and Robinson (1998) classified meaning negotiation process under the Interaction Hypothesis. This hypothesis explains that the conditions for second language acquisition are developed when learners negotiate meaning with others. These negotiations lead to the increase of comprehensible input through language modifications such as simplifications, confirmation or clarification requests, elaborations, and recasts.

Although meaning negotiation can be examined in several ways, the following strategies were the basis of analysis usually undertaken in studies. Each strategy is illustrated using examples taken from Oliver’s (1998) study. The meaning negotiation strategies include clarification requests, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, self-repetition and other repetition.

2.5.1 Clarification Requests

Clarification requests are utterances made by a participant to clarify what the other participant have said, and include statements such as “I don’t understand,” wh-question, yes/no questions and tag questions, as in the example below:

NS: A little line in the leave.

NNS: A what?

2.5.2 Confirmation Checks

Confirmation checks are utterances made by a participant to assure that the preceding utterance had been understood accurately. They include repetition of all or part of the utterance accompanied by a rising intonation, or in chat, by ending with the question mark, as in the following example:

NNS1: How tall is the tree?

NNS2: How- tall?

NNS1: Yes

NNS2: Oh, ah, seven.

2.5.3 Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are those utterances made by a participant to check whether a preceding utterance had been correctly understood by the co-participant and consisted primarily of questions, either tag questions, repetition, or questions such as “Do you understand”, as in the example below:

NNS: You know? [OK?]

2.5.4 Self-Repetition

Self-repetition consists of the participants’ partial, exact and expanded repetitions of lexical items from their own preceding utterance within five turns, as in the following example:

NNS: How long centimeters?

You know? How long? (Partial)

2.5.5 Other Repetition

Other repetition includes partial and exact repetitions of lexical items from the co-participant’s preceding utterances within five turns. They also included expansion of the co-participant’s utterances, as in the following example:

NNS1: Two meters from the edge?

NNS2: Yes, two meters. (Partial)

Two meters from the edge. (Exact)

According to second language acquisition theory, interaction and meaning negotiation are crucial elements of language acquisition (Gass, 1997). These negotiation strategies may be key factors to help learners succeed in language learning.

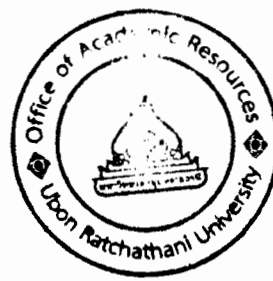
In this study, the meaning negotiation strategies taken from Oliver's (1998) study are implemented to investigate meaning negotiation behavior of Thai EFL learners during their chat process.

2.6 Previous Studies

Concerning studies of meaning negotiation strategies in EFL and ESL context, researchers call the term of meaning negotiation strategies differently. Some call meaning negotiation strategies or strategies of negotiation for meaning, whilst others call meaning negotiation functions, interactional strategies, interactional modifications, communication strategies, or corrective feedback.

Chu (2003) examined the types of interactional modifications, or in other word meaning negotiation strategies, produced between Japanese and Korean students during synchronous online chat communication. The participants were 8 Korean students from Korea University and 8 Japanese students from Waseda University of Japan who participated in a Cross Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) program. Their English language proficiency level was between intermediate and high-intermediate. They were asked to chat online in pairs with their assigned partners from different countries on free topics for five chat sessions. Only two out of five chat sessions were selected for the investigation. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively for the total number of negotiations, frequencies of interactional modifications, and the nature of negotiations. The results showed that from a total of 1605 turns, the number of interactional modifications was 595, which was 37 % of all turns. Also, participants engaged in meaning negotiation during online chat and used various strategies. The most used strategies were paralinguistic features which include punctuation, onomatopoeia, and emoticons (51.1%), framing (12%), clarification check (8.9%) and confirmation check (3.1%). Chu also showed that the participants produced negotiations by content and lexical items, but no negotiations employed in terms of grammar and syntax. Therefore, he recommended that CMC of online chat can be an effective tool for enhancing interactive competence, but the effectiveness of it on the development of grammatical competence is questionable.

Samani and Noordin (2014) examined students' interactions, which were involved in negotiation of grammatical structures, in terms of types and frequencies of meaning



negotiation functions in a Malaysian context. Participants were 15 ESL undergraduate students at University Putra Malaysia. The participants were online for five one-hour chat sessions negotiating different ways of combining simple sentences using the preselected grammatical structures. The analysis of their chat scripts was carried out through computer mediated discourse analysis (CMDA). The findings revealed that out of 25724 analyzed words, the number of words related to negotiation of meaning was 4121, which means 16% of the words were related to meaning negotiation functions. In addition, the total number of meaning negotiations found in this study was 496, which means that per 100 words, students produced 1.93 meaning negotiations. The findings also showed that the most frequently used functions were confirmation (28%) and confirmation check (28%), followed by elaboration (18%), elaboration request (10%), self-correction (7%), clarification request (3%), reply elaboration (3%), comprehension check (1%), reply clarification or definition (1%), and reply confirmation (1%). Four functions of reply comprehension, reply vocabulary, vocabulary check and vocabulary request were not apparent in the data. The researchers recommended that teachers use the Internet in the process of second language learning with their students since using functions like clarification, confirmation, elaboration, reply clarification, reply confirmation and reply elaboration, can help students build on their scaffolding in the process of second language learning.

Lengluan (2008) investigated the meaning negotiation strategies twelfth-grade Thai EFL students employed during conversational exchanges via a chat program and their language development. The participants were twelve of pre-intermediate Thai students aging 17-18, interacting with native American-English speakers via Yahoo Messenger for 16 chat sessions. The findings from this study revealed that a chat program could offer Thai students opportunities to engage in meaning negotiation in the target language. The results showed that among the total of 4,587 turns submitted by the students, 178 negotiations were apparent. Clarification requests were found employed the most (33.70%), followed by self-repetition (30.34%), incorporations (21.91%), comprehension checks (5.62%) and confirmation checks (5.05%), respectively. There was also evidence showing that participants' language skills were improved. During chat sessions, they produced and developed their discourses that facilitated successful communication. According to the transcripts recorded, participants appeared to monitor and notice the

native speakers' outputs, then imitated their linguistic features and were able to produce their outputs more properly. This approach relates to second language acquisition theory and helps them facilitate and improve their English. From the interviews, participants reported that their speaking skills were also improved. Another interesting finding is that corrective feedback given by the native speakers also helped students notice and correct their output production. Moreover, the students strongly recommended a chat program as a tool in language classroom.

Worajittipol (2010) investigated the interaction of eleven pairs of adult Thai speakers and fluent English speakers from their twelve chat sessions on open topics. The study analyzed meaning negotiation and relationships formed between the pairs and their effects on Thai speakers' perceptions in using a chat program. The data was collected from chat scripts, interviews from both Thai and English speakers, and reflective notes written by Thai speakers. Regarding meaning negotiation strategies, the results showed that Thai speakers used the dictionary strategy the most (32%), followed by word substitution (27.2%), request for help (16.8%), confirmation check (11.2%), avoidance (7.2%) and rephrase (5.6%), respectively. For the degree of success, the results showed that Thai speakers succeeded in using the rephrase strategy (100%) to explain their problematic message to English speakers. They were also successful in using the dictionary strategy (100%) to look up meanings of unfamiliar words and search for proper words to express themselves better. The other two successful strategies were request for help (95.2%) and confirmation check (85.7%). The findings suggested potential benefit of reflective note writing for morphosyntactic improvement. The findings also revealed that Thai speakers viewed their chatting experience as an opportunity to use a second language in a meaningful context and build a friendship with people from different cultures. The friendly relationship between Thai and English speakers and positive comments from their English partners helped develop Thai speakers' self-confidence in using English and encouraged them to improve their English language skills.

Lijuan (2010) investigated how task characteristics (task complexity and task difficulty) affected the quality and quantity of meaning negotiation. The participants were 40 English-majored undergraduates from Jilin University. Three research methods were adopted: four tasks for group discussions, questionnaires and interviews. The

findings revealed that task complexity affected the quality of meaning negotiation in that more cognitively demanding tasks caused participants to use more complex but less accurate and fluent language and vice versa. Concerning the relationship between task complexity and the quantity of meaning negotiation, Lijuan followed Oliver (1998) to analyze participants' negotiation strategies: clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks and repetitions. Evidently, repetitions were used far more frequently than other strategies. Comprehension checks were used the least frequently. The findings also revealed that task complexity and task difficulty correlated positively. Both implied the same thing, which was the more complex the task was, the more use of negotiation strategies by participants. In both tasks, repetitions occurred at a higher level than the other strategies. One possible explanation for the high occurrence of repetitions may be that, these tasks put a significant strain on participants in that the tasks made significant demands on their limited linguistic competence. This implied the possibility that the negotiation took place at a more basic level, where more repetitions, but fewer of comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks may be found. Overall, the findings indicated that participants contributed multiple negotiation strategies to overcome communication breakdown or prevent conversational problems. In other words, meaning negotiation is desirable as well as necessary for communication.

As mentioned above, there are some significant studies conducted in terms of meaning negotiation strategies. However, in Thai EFL context, discussions of chat's meaning negotiation strategies remain under-explored. It is, therefore, a challenge to analyze Thai EFL learners' chat conversations in the proposed terms, as well as the effects of chat on their English language proficiency. The next chapter is used to explain the established methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the research method used in the study in order to answer the following research questions.

(1) What meaning negotiation strategies do Thai EFL learners use in an English online chat?

(2) Is there any implication of language learning improvement of Thai EFL learners' during English online chat?

It describes participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were twenty Thai EFL learners who have been using *interpals.net* website as a tool to practice English for more than one year. They were undergraduate university students with intermediate English proficiency level, who were randomly selected based on specific criteria put in the search icon. In order to get participants for this study, I had to create my *Interpals* account first. Then I searched for active members from Thailand by going to search icon, putting in the target information which were age: 17-30, sex: both male and female, location: countries>Thailand, looking for: language exchange, sort: last login, and clicking *search*. The searching results randomly showed Thai latest active members with profile photo, age, location, brief personal introduction and duration of time the members had been members of the website. I chose the participants from the first ten pages shown from the searching results who revealed that they were EFL undergraduate students with intermediate English proficiency level. To reduce the risks that participants might close their accounts before the study could be finished, I picked active members who had a consistent chat history on their walls and assured that the last time they logged in was within fourteen days. Finally, four male and sixteen female members were randomly selected for this study. However, the gender variable was not considered. The topics these participants chatted were open.

I bookmarked their profile pages so that I did not have to waste time searching for them again next time and I could look at their information, view their chat history on their walls, or collect data anytime I wanted.

3.2 Instruments

The following research instruments were applied in this study in order to identify the frequency count of the meaning negotiation strategies as well as examine the extracted chat transcripts to find out the participants' signs of language learning while chatting. The meaning negotiation strategies taken into account in this study include clarification requests, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, self-repetition and other repetition.

Interpals Chat Applications

For several years, *Interpals* has been the premier website that links pen pals together for online correspondence, cultural exposure and foreign language exchange. According to the information stated on its website, *Interpals* was launched in 1998 as the "International Penpal Page," a friendly forum for people to find email and postal pen pals worldwide. The page rapidly became so popular that it was recreated in the following year and renamed '*InterPals*'. Recently, it is claimed to be one of the largest and most popular free pen pal sites used by millions users. On December 29, 2015, the number of active members is 4,910,576 according to the information on the website. There were 104,253 Thai members among these active members. *Interpals* has been the go-to site for language practice since it has an interesting feature where people can search for a language partner to practice foreign languages they are learning. *Interpals* members can search for pen pals or language partners by age, language ability, country, or continent.

Interpals has two chat features allowing for synchronous Computer Mediated Communication where members can interact with other members, which are chat rooms appearing in the 'forums' section and chat walls appearing on each member's main page. By using either of the chat features, chats could occur instantaneously and members can co-construct conversations as in oral communication. If a member wants to review other members' messages or chat history, he or she can scroll up and down to find them. Chat transcripts can be seen and recorded if members do not choose to

have private chat in chat rooms, or adjust their setting as ‘private’ for chat walls in which allows only added friends to view their conversations and communicate with them. To collect the data from chat rooms, I clicked the icon “forums” and then icon “chat”. I randomly chose the days to observe in the chat rooms. If one or more of the targeted members were using any chat rooms, I would keep collecting the chat conversations the targeted members communicating with their partners which appeared on the main chat rooms and deleting conversations from unwanted members if there were any. To collect the data from chat walls, I simply visited each member’s main page when they were online to view their page and their chat conversations being created on their walls. I could see their ongoing conversations as well as search for their chat history as long as they did not block me or set their privacy setting as “private” in which allows only added friends to see their information and/ or chat conversations.

In the cases that participants changed their privacy settings into ‘private’ during the study, I had to send them friend requests and add them as friends in order to keep observing and collecting data. Otherwise, I had to look for new participants for the study since this study was unbeknownst to the participants.

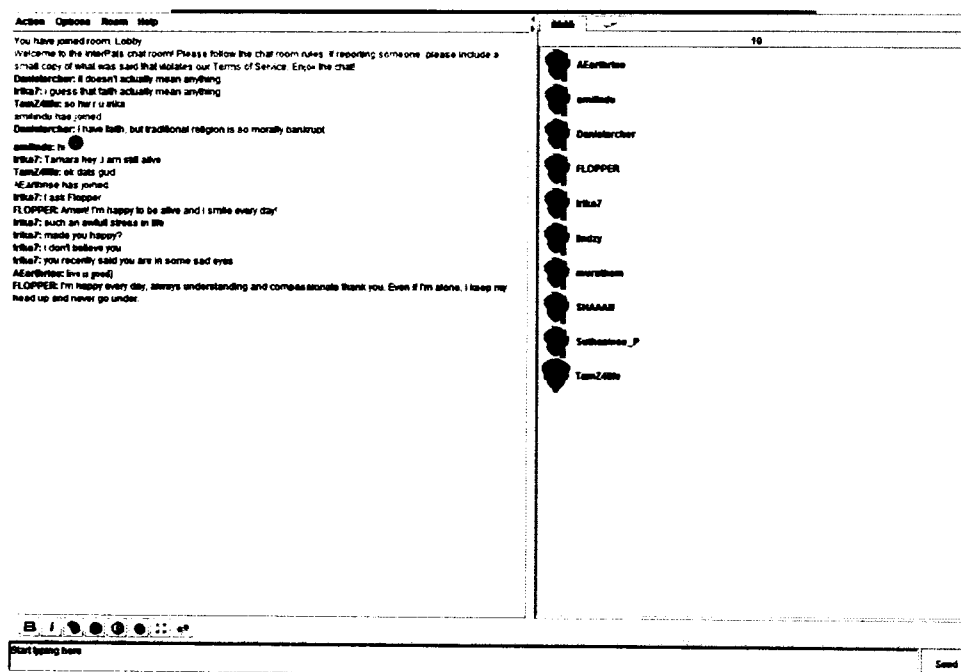


Figure 3.1 A Chat Room on *Interpals*



Figure 3.2 Chat Wall on *Interpals*

In this study, I used English conversations appearing on both chat rooms and chat walls in which Thai EFL learners chat with other chat partners at the same time. One chat transcript was extracted every two months from each participant in order to see the pattern changes that may occur over time. To make it comparable in length, 35 turns were contained in each chat transcript.

3.3 Data Collection

The study was conducted during April 2014 – January 2015. Data collection was divided into two phases: observation and collection of chat transcripts respectively.

As one hundred chat extracts total were needed for this methodological purpose, five chat extracts were pulled out from each participant, one for every two months. To make this study comparable, each chat extract contained 35 turns in length. For each two-month period, one chat transcript was randomly extracted and collected from each participant. The conversations were in English and they could be on any topics and with any speakers from any countries.

3.4 Data Analysis

After a period of ten months, I used mixed-methods to analyze the extracted chat transcripts qualitatively and quantitatively in order to examine the meaning negotiating strategies generated by participants as well as the signs of language learning of the participants.

First, the number of meaning negotiation strategy frequency was categorized, counted and converted into percentage. The percentage was calculated by dividing the number of negotiation strategies (e.g. clarification requests) by the total number of meaning negotiations created and multiplying by 100. To avoid ambiguity and overlapping among strategies, I only made judgment on the negotiations that showed obvious signs of each strategy in this study. As mentioned previously in chapter two, the meaning negotiation strategies taken into consideration are clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self- repetition and other repetition. The total number of negotiations made by participants as a whole picture was also included in the data analysis process.

Second, the extracted chat transcripts were qualitatively analysed according to the five types of meaning negotiation strategies to find out the signs of language learning towards both linguistic and communicative competence.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and the discussion of the data collected from participants' chat transcripts via *Interpals* chat applications, which presents according to the order of the research questions.

To answer the first research question, the analysis of the frequency count of meaning negotiation strategies employed by Thai EFL learners is introduced, as well as the evidence of meaning negotiation strategies created while chatting. Then, the signs of language learning during English online chat are presented in response to the second research question.

4.1 Frequency of Meaning Negotiations

4.1.1 Frequency of Meaning Negotiations

The meaning negotiation strategies 20 Thai EFL learners contributed during the study were examined and classified into five categories namely clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self-repetition and other repetition. The analysis of the frequency count of meaning negotiation strategies employed by Thai EFL learners is as followed.

With 100 chat transcripts of 35 turns each (3500 turns total), 342 negotiations were evident. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the total number of meaning negotiations created by all participants in terms of strategy types and chat periods. It presents the information in the forms of number and percentage.

Table 4.1 Meaning Negotiations Produced by All Participants

Meaning Negotiation Strategies Types	Period 1 Apr14 - May14	Period 2 Jun14 - Jul14	Period 3 Aug14 - Sep14	Period 4 Oct14 - Nov14	Period 5 Dec14 - Jan15	Total	%
Clarification Requests	6	18	12	21	21	78	22.81
Confirmation Checks	8	14	21	13	21	77	22.51
Comprehension Checks	2	6	7	3	4	22	6.43
Self-Repetition	7	11	11	11	14	54	15.79
Other Repetition	16	23	22	19	31	111	32.46
Total	39	72	73	67	91	342	100

Based on Table 4.1, the meaning negotiation strategy that Thai EFL learners produced the most during the study was other repetition (32.46%). Clarification requests, confirmation checks and self-repetition were produced second (22.81%), third (22.51) and fourth (15.79%) respectively. In contrast to other repetition, comprehension checks was contributed the least during the study which was 6.43%. These findings agree with Lijuan (2010) in that repetitions were used far more frequently than other strategies whereas comprehension checks were used the least frequently. This implied the possibility that the negotiation took place at a more basic level, where more repetitions, but fewer of comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks may be found.

4.1.2 Number of Negotiations Across Time

The findings from Table 1 also indicates that the frequencies of negotiations produced by participants varied by type and chat period. It reveals that participants in general tended to increase the number of negotiations across time in total as shown in Figure 4.1.

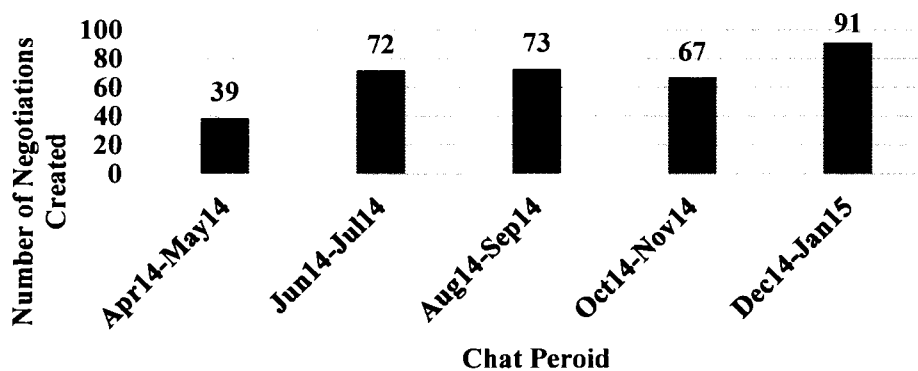


Figure 4.1 Total Meaning Negotiations Created in Each Chat Period

Based on Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, participants generated the smallest number of negotiations in chat period 1 (April 2014 – May 2014) with evident 39 negotiations and the largest amount of negotiations in chat period 5 (December 2014 – January 2015) with obvious 91 negotiations. The findings imply that participants tended to employ more negotiations across time using the *interpals* chat applications.

The increasing tendency shows that the chat applications provide participants more opportunity to learn the language. It may also reveal that participants are more confident to chat with their partners and more willing to take risks when producing the target language. However Figure 4.1 showed that the number of negotiations created dropped down a little in chat period 4 before going up again in chat period 5.

4.1.3 Frequency of Meaning Negotiations in Each Participant

The findings shows that each participant created various types and numbers of meaning negotiations in each chat period as showed in detail in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Meaning Negotiations Created by Each Participant

Participant/ gender	Types of Meaning Negotiation Strategies/Chat Period																								Total						
	Clarification Requests						Confirmation Checks					Comprehension Checks					Self- Repetition					Other Repetition									
	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total		1	2	3	4	5	total
1/f	0	2	1	1	3	7	3	0	1	1	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	3	1	3	2	2	2	10	27
2/f	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	3	2	2	9	19
3/f	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	3	4	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	0	2	3	1	9	23
4/f	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	4	0	2	1	1	2	6	17
5/m	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	4	1	0	1	6	12
6/m	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	7
7/f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	3	11
8/f	1	0	2	2	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	4	14
9/m	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	5	11
10/f	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	4	13
11/f	0	2	1	0	3	6	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	2	2	4	16
12/f	1	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	2	7	1	1	3	2	3	10	25

Table 4.2 Meaning Negotiations Created by Each Participant (Continued)

Participant/ gender	Types of Meaning Negotiation Strategies/Chat Period																					Total										
	Clarification Requests						Confirmation Checks					Comprehension Checks					Self- Repetition						Other Repetition									
	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3		4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total	
13/m	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	8	13	
14/f	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	1	5	10
15/f	0	2	0	3	2	7	0	3	2	1	3	9	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	2	1	4	25	
16/f	1	2	0	1	2	6	0	2	3	0	1	6	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	4	1	2	0	0	3	6	23	
17/f	1	0	3	4	3	11	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	4	6	24	
18/f	0	3	0	1	3	7	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	1	1	2	6	2	1	1	0	1	5	23	
19/f	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	1	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	9	
20/f	1	1	0	2	1	5	0	1	2	2	1	6	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	5	20	
Total %	6	1	1	2	2	78	8	1	2	1	2	77	2	6	7	3	4	22	7	1	1	1	14	54	1	2	2	1	3	111	342	
	8	2	1	1			4	1	3	1										1	1	1					6	3	2			9
	22.81						22.51					6.43					15.79					32.46					100					

The information on Table 4.2 indicates that out of equal number of turns extracted among twenty participants, participant no. 1 employed the most frequency of negotiations (27) whereas participant no. 6 employed the least frequency of negotiations (7). The information also shows that 18 participants or 90% of all participants contributed 10 or more meaning negotiations during the chatting process. Interestingly, it indicates that 11 participants or 55% of all participants used all five meaning negotiations strategies in the study, 8 participants or 40% employed 4 strategy types and 1 or only 5% produced 3 types. No participants were found using less than 3 meaning negotiation strategy types in the study.

4.1.4 Number of Negotiations across Time in Each Participant

During the study, each participant created various numbers of meaning negotiations in each chat period as shown in Table 4.3. This may relate to some signs of language learning for each participant.

Table 4.3 Meaning Negotiations Generated by Each Participant in Each Chat Period

Participant / gender	No. of chat posts	Thai Friends Added (%)	Number of Negotiation Used in Each Chat Period					total
			1 Apr14-May14	2 Jun14-Jul14	3 Aug14-Sep14	4 Oct14-Nov14	5 Dec14-Jan15	
1/ f	5579	10	4	7	5	6	5	27
2/ f	1953	16	2	4	4	4	5	19
3/ f	1175	14	3	3	3	7	7	23
4/ f	899	22	3	2	5	4	3	17
5/ m	766	28	2	5	3	1	1	12
6/ m	612	26	0	3	1	2	1	7
7/ f	1782	36	1	1	3	3	3	11
8/ f	1176	NA	1	2	6	2	3	14
9/ m	600	NA	0	2	2	3	4	11
10/ f	1324	NA	2	2	2	2	5	13
11/ f	983	20	0	2	3	2	9	16
12/ f	1046	13	3	7	7	3	5	25

Table 4.3 Meaning Negotiations Generated by Each Participant in Each Chat Period (Continued)

Participant / gender	No. of chat posts	Thai Friends Added (%)	Number of Negotiation Used in Each Chat Period					total
			1 Apr14-May14	2 Jun14-Jul14	3 Aug14-Sep14	4 Oct14-Nov14	5 Dec14-Jan15	
13/ m	1389	47	2	0	2	5	4	13
14/ f	9872	40	1	4	2	0	3	10
15/ f	3677	18	1	7	3	6	8	25
16/ f	3657	NA	2	6	6	2	7	23
17/ f	2850	NA	3	3	5	5	8	24
18/ f	4389	14	5	5	4	3	6	23
19/ f	5002	54	1	3	3	1	1	9
20/ f	7567	13	3	4	4	6	3	20
Total			39	72	73	67	91	342

Based on the information on Table 4.3, 16 participants (80%) out of 20 produced more negotiations in chat period 5 than in chat period 1 which could imply the relationship between the *interpals* chat applications and the increasing number of meaning negotiations created across time, whereas 3 participants (15%) produced the same amount of negotiations and 1 participant (5%) produced less. Since the conversations were extracted in any available time and free on topics with any speakers from any countries, there might be some factors that were not considered in this study affecting the variety of number and types of negotiations produced both in total and each chat period; such as the complexity of chat topics, the chat partners' English language proficiency levels, the attractiveness of chat partners, etc.

Although conversations were free and various on topics and chat partners, the findings indicate that 6 participants or 30% of all participants tended to surprisingly and continuously generate more negotiations across time in each chat period. They are participant 2, 3, 7, 9, 10 and 17.

Additionally, it appears that for each participant, there are two noticeable factors associated with the number of meaning negotiations created in total, which were the number of total chat wall posts appeared on their main page and the percentage of Thai members they added as friends. From Table 3, it seems that participants with higher number of chat wall posts appeared on their main page tended to create more negotiations out of equal number of turns extracted during the study. Participant 1 and 15, for example, with 5579 and 3677 chat wall posts appeared on their main page, created 27 and 25 negotiations respectively out of equal 175 turns extracted during the study. On the contrary, participant 6 and 9 with only 612 and 600 chat wall posts appeared on their main page created only 7 and 11 negotiations out of equal 175 turns extracted. However, participant 19 whose number of chat wall posts was high (5002) contributed only 9 negotiations out of 175 extracted turns. This low rate of meaning negotiations contributed seems to relate to the number of Thai members the participant added as friends. From the data collected, participant 19 has 72 Thai friends out of total 133 friends which is about 54%. Considering the information on Table 4.3, it appears that the participants with a higher percentage of Thai friends added seem to create fewer meaning negotiations in total than those with lower percentage of added Thai friends no matter how many chat wall posts appeared on their main page. This

might be because many of their wall posts were from talking to their Thai friends, which were usually in Thai language and that caused high number of wall posts.

In summary, the interesting numbers from these findings could imply that the chat applications encourage language learners to create meaning negotiations and with various types of meaning negotiation strategies. Vick et al., (2000); Fernández-García & Martínez-Arbelaiz (2002) and Smith (2004), cited in Sykes (2005), mentioned that meaning negotiation and various strategies are used while chatting, although, at times, more explicitly and in the learners' native language. This supports Lenguan's (2008) and Worajittipol's (2010) study that chat could offer Thai EFL learners more opportunities to produce more negotiations in a second language in a meaningful context.

4.2 Types of Meaning Negotiation Strategies

4.2.1 Clarification Requests

Clarification requests are utterances made by a participant to clarify what the other participant has said and include statements such as "I don't understand," wh-question, yes/no questions and tag questions.

Example 1 presents the evidence of clarification requests employed by the Thai EFL Learners while chatting.

Example 1. Thai EFL Learners' Clarification Requests

Example 1.1 Participant No. 20. Time Period 1

NNS1: I'm reading for midterm exam ^_^

NNS2: bonne chance ! ;)

NNS1: What's bonne mean??

NNS2: good ☺ it's French for: Good Luck ☺

NNS1: Oh okay thanks my friend ☺

According to Example 1.1, NNS1 did not know the meaning of the phrase "bonne chance!" created by NNS2, so she employed the clarification request "What's bonne mean??", requesting a definition of the unknown phrase by using wh-question. She was given the definition later and knew that "bonne chance!" is not actually an English word but a French word and means good luck. She figured out that her chat

partner said good luck to her for her coming midterm exam, so she told him “thanks my friend”.

Example 1.2 Participant No. 3. Time Period 5

NNS2: hahahahh yess the sun is my best friend :) thats all :)) hehehhe

NNS1: The sun is your best friend? Lucky you ;)

And poor me ☹ the moon is my best friend lol

NNS2: haha the moon? Hahah great ☺

Moon and sun best friends too ☺

NNS1: well....you live with the sun and I live with the moon

NNS2: and when you meet me one day we have a sunmoon
hahhahahaha ☺

NNS1: a sunmoon?? Looool how could that be?

NNS2: hhahhah sunmoon ☺ when the sun and the moon have a date
☺ hahahaha

According to Example 1.2, NNS2 stated the word “sunmoon” in line 7 in which NNS1 was not familiar with. She had no idea what NNS2 was trying to say, so she produced two clarification requests using yes/no question: “a sunmoon??” and wh-question: “how could that be?” requesting for clarification of the word “sunmoon”. Her partner clarified his previous sentence, telling her that “sunmoon” in his idea meant “when the sun and the moon have a date”.

4.2.2 Confirmation Checks

Confirmation checks are utterances made by a participant to assure that the preceding utterance had been understood accurately. They include repetition of all or part of the utterance accompanied by rising intonation, or in chat, by ending with the question mark.

Example 2 presents the evidence of confirmation checks employed by the Thai EFL Learners while chatting.

Example 2. Thai EFL Learners’ Confirmation Checks

Example 2.1 Participant No. 4. Time Period 1

NNS1: What are you doing now?

NNS2: I am listening music gone. Did you listen that? That is really
good music

NNS1: 'gone'? the name of song by Jong hyun huh?

NNS2: no T..T the song by Dynamic Duo

Maybe you don't know them they're Korean rapper. ^^

NNS1: oh I know but not well > <

They are nice rapper :P

From Example 2.1, NNS 2 was talking about the music named "gone". NNS 1 wanted to understand her partner's message correctly. To make sure that it was the same song by the same singer or band she thought it would be, she asked NNS2 "'gone'? the name of song by Jong hyun huh?" for confirmation by using repetition of NNS2's previous utterance and a wh- question. By producing the confirmation checks, her chat partner let her know that the song was from a different singer or band.

Example 2.2 Participant No. 12. Time Period 2

NS: Do you have any pets?

NNS: I feed a goldfish its very fat goldfish hahaha

What your dog name? I called my goldfish 'ໂອ້ນ' it mean very fat ☺

NS: My dog's name is "Taco"

NNS: hahaha taco?

Maxican food?

NS: Sure

From Example 2.2, NS told NNS that his dog's name was "Taco". NNS wanted to make sure that she understood the word "Taco" that NS created correctly, so she used a repetition of NS' previous utterance producing the confirmation check "taco?" and the yes/no question "Maxican food?" asking for confirmation. From the confirmation checks she produced, NS confirmed her that what she understood earlier about the word "Taco" was accurate.

4.2.3 Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are those utterances made by a participant to check whether a preceding utterance had been correctly understood by the co-participant.

They are consisted primarily of questions, either tag questions, repetition, or questions such as “Do you understand?”.

Example 3 presents the evidence of comprehension checks employed by the Thai EFL learners during the study.

Example 3 Thai EFL Learners' Comprehension Checks

Example 3.1 Participant No. 1 Time Period 2

NNS2: Why you're so much pretty and cute? Are you angel? XD

NNS1: you're liar ><

NNS2: No. I'm not liar ☺ I just tell you “true” XD

I was almost dazzled by your beauty ☺

NNS1: you made me shy ><

So you're the beast? Cuz Beauty and the beast!

Have you ever know that?

NNS2: Yes, then I'll be beast, and you'll be beauty. right? XD

According to Example 3.1, NNS2 was complimenting about NNS1's beauty. Then, the famous story “Beauty and the beast” popped up in NNS1's mind, so she asked NNS2 “So you're the beast?” To help NNS2 understand more about what she was trying to convey earlier, NNS1 said the name of the famous story “Beauty and the beast” as shown in line 6. Then, NNS1 realized that she wanted to check if NNS2 was on the same page with her, so she employed a comprehension check “Have you ever know that?” Her co-participant let her know that he understood everything NNS1 said, so he said “Yes, then I'll be beast, and you'll be beauty”.

Example 3.2 Participant No. 16 Time Period 3

NNS: well how tall are you? ☺ I think you taller more than me for sure. lol

NS: I'm like 5'5 lol (: and im doing good lots of school stuff

NNS: I just 155 cm. hahaha lol when you're age 18 years you would be tall around 190 cm. I guess lol

NS: huh what do you mean >>?<<

NNS: I mean in the future when you're 18 years of age.

You mayhave a height up to 190 cm. ☺

Are you understand?: P

NS: Yea. I understand ☺

According to Example 3.2, NNS produced the sentence “when you’re age 18 years you would be tall around 190 cm. I guess”, but NS could not completely understand the message so he asked NNS what she meant. NNS explained to him more clearly by restructuring her previous sentence saying that “I mean in the future when you’re 18 years of age. You may have a height up to 190 cm.” Then to ensure that her latest utterance was correctly understood this time, she employed the comprehension check “Are you understand? :P” This time, her message delivery was successful because NS replied her “Yea. I understand.”

4.2.4 Self- Repetition

Self- Repetition consists of the participants’ partial, exact and expanded repetitions of lexical items from their own preceding utterance within five turns. However, according to the recorded transcripts, this strategy was employed the least compared to other strategies.

Example 4 presents the evidence of self-repair employed by the Thai EFL Learners during the study.

Example 4 Thai EFL Learners’ Self- Repetition

Example 4.1 Participant No. 20 Time Period 4

NNS: Besides violinist~ which jobs are you interested in?

NS: I would like to teach or become a Lawyer ☺

NNS: wow cool~ I want to be flight attendant and guide~

Something related about language: D so I’m trying to learn more laguages ^^

*languages

NS: that would be a cool job, but I’m terrified of flying

NNS: WHY? I think it’s fun: P

From Example 4.1, NNS used self-repetition strategy to correct an error she made from a previous turn, which in this case is misspelling. She corrected her misspelled word from “laguages” into “languages” as shown in line 4 and 5.

Example 4.2 Participant No. 5 Time Period 2

NS: I wanna go Phuket! :D

NNS: Wowww Phuket!!! It’s awesome place <3

I never go there !!! but I wanna go ~~~
 Many spouse from around the world wanna honeymoon in
 there <3

NS: hahaha I know~ I heard the beach there is beautiful.

NNS: yeah!!! xD it's very near !!! >_<

NS: is it near bangkok?

NNS2: Singapore it's near Phuket xD

NS: ahhh... really? I thought it's far? If Malaysia, then its near Singapore.

From Example 4.2, NNS and NS from Singapore were talking about Phuket, a famous tourist place in Thailand. NNS said in line 6 that "it's very near", which caused ambiguity to NS. NS asked NNS for clarification if Phuket was near Bangkok. Then, NNS used self-repetition strategy to correct an error he made which in this case is the ambiguity of the meaning of the sentence "it's very near". He self-repeated his previous sentence with better explanation saying that "Singapore it's near Phuket."

4.2.5 Other Repetition

Other repetition includes partial and exact repetitions of lexical items from the co-participant's preceding utterances within five turns. They also included expansion of the co-participant's utterances.

Example 5 presents the evidence of other repetition employed by the Thai EFL Learners during the study.

Example 5. Thai EFL Learners' Other Repetition

Example 5.1 Participant No. 20. Time Period 1

NS: hey

NNS: oh! Hey ^^ Thank you for visiting ^-^

NS: Would you be interested in writing snail mail....

NNS: yes, I would be interested in writing snail mail ^-^

But my English is not good ☹..haha ^o^

NS: well I am an English teacher

So I can help you

NNS: Thank you for that ☺

I hope my English will be improve more..^-^

Sometimes the participants used other-repetition to express that they accepted their partners' offers and/or agreed with what their partners had just said, as shown in Example 5.1 From the example NS made an offer to NNS by asking "Would you be interested in writing snail mail..." NNS accepted NS' offer, so she said "yes, I would be interested in writing snail mail". She repeated NS' whole sentence to produce other-repetition strategy. In some cases, the participants seemed to use other repetition because they were more confident with their chat partners' English skill than their own, and probably thought if they repeated what their partners said, they could avoid creating grammatical mistakes, especially if their chat partners were English native speakers. This example could be applied as well.

Example 5.2 Participant No. 2 Time Period 1

NNS1: now it's rainy season....

It's very hot and I think you don't like hot weather, right? ^o^

Anyway, welcome to Thailand ☺

NNS2: Thank, I'll come ☺

I like rain, but want sun now.

NNS1: Oh! You like rain ...^^

I like it too but sometime it made me feeling blue and homesick

Sometimes, the participants contributed other-repetition strategy because they wanted to show their chat partners that they were listening, or really interested in what their chat partners had just said as shown in Example 5.2 From the example, NNS2 told NNS1 "I like rain, but want sun now." NNS1 wanted to show NNS2 that she was really listening and interested in what NNS2 had just said, so she partly repeated NNS2's sentence adding a backchannel "Oh! You like rain ...^^"

These are some examples of meaning negotiation strategies the participants employed during the study. They indicated that the participants contributed several meaningful sentences using all five meaning negotiation strategies namely clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self- repetition, and other repetition. To avoid overlapping among strategies, I only chose the negotiation that showed obvious signs of each strategy in this study.

4.3 Signs of Language Learning of Thai EFL Learners

Regarding the signs of language learning of Thai EFL learners, it is found out that the use of meaning negotiation strategies while chatting helps promote language learning towards both linguistic and communicative competence.

4.3.1 Signs of Language Learning Towards Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence is a competence that Thai EFL learners possess for producing output correctly in terms of grammar. The signs of language learning towards linguistic competence were apparent when participants employed self-repetition and other repetition strategies, and received feedback from their chat partners. While chatting, participants showed the signs of language learning towards linguistic competence as described below.

4.3.1.1 Signs of Language Learning From Using Other Repetition

Based on the evidence found in the extracted chat transcripts, participants noticing forms on their partners' messages helped those participants initiate sentences in the correct forms that conveyed a better understanding to their partners. This usually appears in the forms of other repetition as shown in Example 6 and 7.

Example 6 Participant 12

Example 6.1 Time Period 3

NNS2: i really envy your eyes.

you have really cute double eyelid. i want to have that!!

NNS1: haha~ u want big eyes double eyelid??

i want to have skin skin same u haha

NNS2: Yep, my eyes little bit big but I don't have double eyelid like yours: 3

Let's change lol Just kidding.

NNS1: hahaha~ okay let's change ~ > <!

From Example 6.1, the participant seemed to notice the word choice 'double eyelid' created by her chat partner in line 2 from the sentence "you have really cute double eyelid". Looking through her previous chat history, I think that she just learned the word 'double eyelid' from this conversation because she had never used this word before when people talked about her eyes. In this conversation, she tried to

use the word choice she just saw from her chat partner to create her next turn by saying “u want big eyes double eyelid??” as shown in line 3. Also, when her chat partner said that she wanted to have the participant’s eyes by saying “Let’s change”, the participant noticed the structure of the statement. Again, she used the exact same structure, repeating the whole sentence of her partner’s to express that she agreed with her by saying “Okay let’s change”

Example 6.2 Time Period 4

NNS2: Are you a college student?

NNS1: Yess and I very hate physics and u?

NNS2: physics?? Awwww....i did hate that so much!

But I learn about society ;)

Society is better than science ;P

NNS1: hahaha I think same u

Society is better than science ~

NNS2: yep, you are right lol

Based on Example 6.2, it appears that the participant noticed a comparative sentence on her partner’s messages, so she created her next turns using the exact same structure and vocabulary. From the example, the participant learned to say the comparative sentence ‘Society is better than science’ in line 5, so she created her next turn using the exact same sentence structure as shown in line 7

Example 6.3 Time Period 5

NS: Have you been out of Thailand?

NNS: No~ I not been out of Thailand~

And u? have u been out of Australia?

NS: I live in New Zealand which is near Australia,

NNS: Sorry okay New Zealand ><~

NS: Ive been to Australia though

Ive also been to Fiji and Tonga and next year plan to go to Japan :)

Based on Example 6.3, the participant seemed to notice the sentence structure ‘Have you been out of ... (motherland/ the name of the country)..?’ when her chat partner asked her the question “Have you been out of Thailand?” (line 1). Then

she asked him back using the exact same structure but with different country, saying “have u been out of Australia?” as shown in line 3.

From observing participant 12’s previous chat history before the study, it appeared that she produced several sentences with grammatical errors. For example, she used the sentence structure “Have you ever go abroad?” or “Have you go abroad?” most of the time when asking her chat partners if they had visited any foreign countries. She also said “I want to go London” to express about her dream country. All three sentences are not grammatically correct. Most of the time she could not see the signals of her grammatical errors in which her chat partners sent her through their replies, until she was once given a strong corrective feedback by an English native speaker. The English native speaker corrected her ungrammatically correct sentences she used with him into “Have you ever been abroad?” and “I want to go to London”. He also corrected every of her sentence containing grammatical errors in every chat. Since then, she appears to have to repeat her other chat partners’ utterances to reduce grammatical errors. It appears that this process helps her produce more accurate structures through chat through other repetition strategy. Chatting during chat period 5, for example, was probably her first time that she used the sentence structure “Have you been out of ... (motherland/ the name of the country)..?” instead of “Have you ever go abroad?” or “Have you go abroad?”

Example 7 Participant 13

Example 7.1 Time Period 1

NNS2: I see your favorite K pop group is SHINee !! haha

But My favorite group is Bigbang hehe

NNS1: yesssss !!XD Bigbang I like them too^^

NNS2: Who is your favorite member?

NNS1: I love all > < hahaha

Who is your favorite member in bigbang?

NNS2: All haha! >_<

From Example 7.1, the participant noticed that his chat partner asked the question ‘Who is your favorite member?’ in line 4, using the word choice ‘member’ instead of ‘singer’ or other word choices. Noticing that, he then asked her back using the exact same structure with the same word choice but adapting a little bit

of the partner's utterance by adding the name of the band; saying "Who is your favorite member in bigbang?", as shown in line 6.

Example 7.2 Time Period 3

NNS2: I'm interested in cooking! But my mom doesn't like I'll be a cook.

NNS1: yes me too! I'm interested in cooking!

I cook good > <

NNS2: wow!! I want to eat food u made!!!

It must be yummy!!! +_+

NNS1: hahah It's yummy I confirm > <

From Example 7.2, the participant noticed that his chat partner created a sentence structure 'I'm interested in cooking' using the word choice 'interested in' (line 1), so he tried to use the exact same statement with the exact same structure and word choice for his next turn saying "yes me too! I'm interested in cooking!", as shown in line 2. Again, the participant noticed in line 5 that his chat partner used the word choice "yummy" saying "It must be yummy!!!" to state the taste of the food. The participant, then, used the word "yummy" for his next turn as shown in line 6 by saying "hahah It's yummy I confirm > <".

Example 7.3 Time Period 4

NNS2: What is the typical food in your country?

NNS1: oh I things many people say about Tom-yam-kung.

NNS2: I have to try it one day!

NNS1: hahah welldone! And what is the typical food in your country?

NNS2: Tortilla, Jamón, Chorizo, croquetas, morcilla...

NNS1: wow ! look like yummy. I have to try it one day ! haha

NNS2: yes! you have to try it one day :D

Based on Example 7.3, it shows that the participant noticed some sentence structures and vocabulary on his partner's messages, so he tried to create his next turns using the same structures and vocabulary. From the example, the participant noticed and learned to ask the question 'What is the typical food in your country?' and use the word choice 'typical food' (line 1), so he asked her back using

the exact same question and word choice as shown in line 4. Also, when his chat partner said that she had to try Thai food by saying “I have to try it one day!” as shown in line 3, the participant noticed the sentence structure with the word choice “try”. Again, he repeated the partner’s whole sentence to express that he had to try Mexican food as well as shown in line 6, by saying “I have to try it one day!”.

Looking through participant 13’s previous chat history, it appeared that before the study he used the question “Who is your favorite in (name of the band)?” or “Who do you like in (name of the band)?” most of the time to ask his chat partners about the most favorite members in Korean bands. Chatting during the time period 1 (Example 7.1) was probably his first time that he used the word “member” to talk about favorite people in a band. It seems that from this chat period; he just realized that he could also use the word “member” to produce a better question: “Who is your favorite member in (name of the band)?” Similarly, chatting during the chat period 3 from Example 7.2 could be his first time that he used the sentence structure “I’m interested in cooking”. Before that when talking about cooking, he usually said “I like cooking” or “I love cooking”. This chat period taught him another sentence structure to use when talking about his favorite activity. As well, he usually used the word “delicious” and sometimes “tasty” to state about the taste of food earlier. After seeing his chat partners using the word “yummy” to talk about food several times, he started to use the word “yummy” as shown in the chat transcripts in chat period 3. Since then, he used the word “yummy” more often as you could see that he used it again in chat period 4 (Example 7.3). He kept using it even after the data collection of this study was done. The data collection from this participant revealed that chat appears to help promote his language learning towards linguistic competence in the target language.

The findings indicated that through other repetition, participants noticed sentence structures and vocabulary on their partners’ messages, so they tried to create their next turns using the same structures or vocabulary. This process of noticing forms on chat partners’ messages helped language learners compose sentences in the correct forms that conveyed a better understanding to their partners in which promote linguistic competence (Lengluan, 2008). This promotes

comprehensible input and comprehensible output according to second language acquisition theory (Gass, 1997).

4.3.1.2 Signs of Language Learning from Using Self-Repetition

Sometimes self-repetition helps promote language learning towards linguistic competence. Examples 8 and 9 show that when some participants realized that the message transmitted was incorrect with wrong vocabulary, grammar, or spelling, they tried to correct it in their next turns.

Example 8 Participant 5

Example 8.1 Chat Period 1

NNS1: I'm boring my class ☹

NNS2: School?

Tomorrow, are you going to school?

NNS1: No no I just bored the school ☹

From Example 8.1, self-repetition via chat offered the participant chance to produce more proper word choice from “boring” into “bored” despite the fact that the sentence was still ungrammatical.

Example 8.2 Chat Period 2

NNS1: When do you sleep?

NNS2: Just... at any time :D Because I live alone.

NNS1: Oh want me come with u ?

Hahaaaaaaaaa just kiding ;p

*just kidding

NNS2: Its okay =.=.=.=.=. >.<

From Example 8.2, the participant used self-correction strategy to correct an error she made from a previous turn, which in this case is misspelling. She corrected her misspelled word from “kiding” into “kidding” as shown in line 4 and 5.

Example 8.3 Chat Period 4

NNS: In 8 days that I stay in SG (Singapore).

I have chance to sightsee at St.francis methodist schhol u know?

* school

NS: i think ive heard of it before. Haha.

So its a study trip?

How do you find Singapore school and students? ^^

NNS: I don't find by myself but collaborator find for us

I don't have chance to talk to St.francis's student

it's so sad for me TT

The participant from Example 8.3 used self-correction strategy to correct her spelling error. She misspelled a word from her previous turn in line 2, so she corrected the word from "schhol" into "school" for her next turn as shown in line 3.

Example 9 Participant 7

Example 9.1 Chat Period 1

NNS: My university has kindergarten – university

..middle school and high school have no boy ☺

NS: Ohh Lucky! No boys!! Haha

NNS: Thai school as many rules, we don't do anything with our hair but cut

'as >> has

NS: Oh! I see

From Example 9.1, the participant used self-correction strategy to correct an error she made from a previous turn, which in this case is mistyping. She corrected her mistyped word from "as" into "has" as shown in line 6.

Example 9.2 Chat Period 4

NNS1: Hahahaha Sawadeeka ~ :D

NNS2: hahaaa btw what's the meaning of sawadeeka?

NNS1: it mean "hello" sawadee is hello but we say ka becuz it's more polite ..

'it means

A man have to say krub :: Sawadeekrub ☺

A girl have to say Sawadeeka ☺ got it? Hahaha :D

NNS2: aahh I got it, it's the tradition there right? Cool xD

NNS1: Sure ☺ and don't forget to smile ~

From Example 9.2, the participant used self-repetition strategy while chatting to correct her grammatical error from 'it mean' into 'it means' as shown in line 3 and 4.

Example 9.3 Chat Period 4

NNS: How about your school? I think it will be like 'school gyrls' film ;)

gyrls >> girls

I mean change room when class end, have locker. Thai school isn't like that

NS: I'm actually homeschooled but I went to public school for a while...

yeah it is kind of like that. They usually have lockers and switch classes.

The participant from Example 9.3 used self-correction strategy to correct her spelling error. She misspelled a word from her previous turn in line 1, so she corrected the word from "gyrls" into "girls" for her next turn as shown in line 2.

The findings suggested that self-repetition also helps promote language learning towards linguistic competence. Lengluan (2008) pointed out that language learners had the opportunity to monitor their replies as well as those of their partners. The interaction was text-based, so they had time for self-monitoring when typing and reading. From the extracted chat transcripts, participants noticed that their previous submitted message contained wrong word choices, grammatical structures, or spellings, so they repaired their word choice in their next message in the form of self-repetition or self-correction. This process helped them convey their messages more appropriately and promoted language learning towards forms or linguistic competence. Regarding misspelling, however, most of the participants usually ignored to retype to correct their misspelled words. This is probably because misspelling does not usually cause communication problems or affect the overall understanding of the conversations.

4.3.1.3 Signs of Learning from Chat Partners' Feedback

Besides other repetition and self-repletion, corrective feedback from chat partners also helps promote language learning towards linguistic competence for Thai EFL as shown in Example 10.

Example 10 Participant 12

NNS: I want to go study in England when I be woman ^o^

NS: *When I am a woman.

Okay, I'll correct you if you make any mistakes.

NNS: Ok if I write wrong you will tell me.

NS: That's cool, I want to study in Germany.

NNS: What you want to be? I want to be scientists cause I love biology ~>o<

NS: * I want to be a scientist.

I want to be a writer. I want to go to Germany to get away from my family.

NNS: why? It's not good you will lonely hahaha ☺

NS: *It's not good for you, you will be lonely.

I need a break from them though haha.

However as not all chat partners were English native speakers and the conversations were mostly focused on meaning, corrective feedback on word choices and syntax was rarely provided for participants by their chat partners. Regarding chat partner's feedback, signs of language learning towards linguistic competence can slightly appear. Chu (2003) explained that the participants produced negotiations by content and lexical items. This is the reasons why no negotiations employed in terms of grammar and syntax in his study. Therefore, he recommended that CMC of online chat can be an effective tool for enhancing interactive competence, but the effectiveness of it on the development of grammatical competence is questionable.

4.3.2 Signs of Language Learning Towards Communicative Competence

In addition to promoting language learning towards linguistic competence, the use of meaning negotiation strategies while chatting helps promote language learning towards communicative competence, which includes the ability to express, interpret and negotiate meanings (Kramsch, 1986; cited in Cheon, 2003). While

chatting, participants enhance their language learning towards communicative competence by generating clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks as described below.

4.3.2.1 Signs of Language Learning From Using Clarification Requests

During the chatting process, the participants' partners elaborated new or ambiguous vocabulary, phrases and sentences that the participants had never known or used before. This encourages the partners to employ clarification requests in order to understand their partners' messages and keep the conversation going. According to the study, the participants produced clarification requests by asking their partners for meaning or clarification of the new or ambiguous vocabulary, phrases, or sentences made by their partners. They used the statements such as "I don't understand," wh-question, yes/no questions and tag questions. This process helps them understand the messages sent by their partner and solve communication problems. It shows the signs of language learning that helps promote communicative competence.

Example 11 Participant 15

NNS2: Your English is pretty good, I can understand you ok :)

NNS1: hahahaha thanks Peter ☺ and where do you study?? xDD

NNS2: Well I'm homeschooled ☺

NNS1: Woww! Cool! And do you study alone or have friends?

NNS2: Well I study at home so I don't have any friends with me

while I'm

But I have friends at my trampoline club :)

NNS1: Oh, hhahaha and your mom teaches you? :)

what is trampoline club? :D

NNS2: Nah my dad teaches me. My mum works

Trampoline club is just that. Trampolines

We practice a certain series of moves on a trampoline

(Front sommersault ect)...

NNS1: Wahhhhhhhh! That's cool! you can do somersault?><

>< cool man! Hhaha

Oh, your dad is very diligence lol :DD

From Example 11, it shows that the participant did not understand the word 'trampoline club' from line 6, so she asked for the meaning of it using the clarification request strategy as shown in line 8 saying "what is trampoline club? :D". After her partner explained it by giving the example of how to practice trampoline which in this case playing a certain series of move like Front Somersault, the participant understood more about the word 'trampoline club' and was able to keep the conversation going. As well, when her chat partner mentioned that he was homeschooled (line 3), she asked for the clarification of the word 'homeschooled' by asking the question "your mom teaches you?" for better understanding about her partner's messages. This process helps the participant learn how to negotiate for meaning in order to have successful communication with her partner and it helps promote her language learning towards communicative competence.

4.3.2.2 Signs of Language Learning From Using Confirmation Checks

Besides clarification requests, employing confirmation checks also helps the participants promote their language learning towards communicative competence as shown in Example 12 below.

Example 12 Participant 2

NS: Yesterday I even forgot what "kai dao" meant in the restaurant: D

NNS: "Kai dao"?!

Kai dao dessert that looks like a little ball, right? haha^o^

NS: I mean the egg :D the "egg star" – don't know how to write it another problem with learning thai ;_)

NNS: Aww I see now!! Haha^o^ ไ้ด้า

At first I think you mention about ไ้ด้า kai-tao (maybe I spell wrong)

Sorry for my poor English T^T

NS: And once again, your English is very good

From Example 12, NS was talking about food called "kai dao". NNS wanted to understand her partner's message correctly. To make sure that it was the same food and prevent misunderstanding, she asked NS "Kai doa?" and "Kai dao

dessert that looks like a little ball, right?” for confirmation by using repetition of NS’ previous utterance and a yes/no question. By producing the confirmation checks, her chat partner let her know that it was a different type of food she thought it was. Lijuan (2010) revealed that language learners used strategies like confirmation checks to arrive message comprehension, prevent conversational troubles and overcome communication breakdown.

4.3.2.3 Signs of Language Learning From Using Comprehension Checks

According to the findings, the Thai EFL learners and their chat partners created meaning negotiation strategies using comprehension checks in order to check if the other person understood what was said or written so that they could resolve communication breakdowns and keep the conversations flow as shown in Example 13.

Example 13 Participant 18

NNS1: Can are you help to teach English me?

NNS2: Yes, of course!!

NNS1: thanks you very much. I love you so much x)

NNS2: Oh thank you!!! ^^

If you need help, tell me please!!

NNS1: only talk with me that as help me has already

NNS2: Sorry, I don’t understand you!! :S

NNS1: I mean if you help me. Talk to me I will have fluent English. You know?

NNS2: Oh ok!! Hehehehe!!! XD

From Example 13, the participant firstly produced the sentence “only talk with me that as help me has already” but her partner did not understand the message sent by her so he let her know that he did not understand it by saying “sorry, I don’t understand you!” This offered the participant opportunities to explain her thoughts, trying to make her previous message clearer so that the communication can keep going. After the explanation, she employed comprehension check strategy to check if her partner understand what she was trying to convey overall by saying “you know?” When her partner said “oh! Ok!!”, the communication problems were solved

and they could keep the conversation going. Generating comprehension check help promote language learning towards communicative competence.

It appears from the extracted chat transcripts above that despite their grammatical errors, the participants managed to understand their partners' messages and get their own messages across by employing clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehensions checks. It is, therefore, suggested that text-based CMC in the form of chat can be an effective tool to promote language learning towards communicative competence as it provides learners with the opportunity to generate different kinds of meaning negotiations.

In summary, the findings show that chat encouraged the Thai EFL learners to employ meaning negotiations which were various in terms of strategy types. This is consistent with Worajittipol's (2010) study in that using chat provides an opportunity for Thai speakers to produce a second language in a meaningful context. It also agrees with Lengluan's (2008) study that chat could offer Thai students more opportunities to engage in meaning negotiation in the target language. The findings also showed signs of language learning of the participants. The participants' use of meaning negotiation strategies during chat helps promote language learning towards both linguistic and communicative competence. The process of noticing forms on chat partners' messages helped participants compose sentences in the correct forms that conveyed a better understanding to their partners in which help promote their linguistic competence (Lengluan, 2008). With text-based CMC like chat, language learners can take more charge of topics they would like to chat and take more risks while chatting, which help promote communicative competence (Kelm, 1992). This agrees with Cheon's (2003) study that language learners activities of asking and answering questions, giving feedback to others, requesting clarification, checking comprehension, starting and ending conversations with appropriate greetings and leave takings help promote communicative competence. Overall, the noticing process while chatting helps promote second language learning towards comprehensible input and modified output according to second language acquisition theory (Gass, 1997).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter evaluates the findings shown in the previous chapter. It also provides the conclusion of the research study, the limitations of the study, the pedagogical implications and the recommendations for further study.

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how text-based CMC or chat can provide Thai EFL learners opportunities to be exposed to English language and engage in meaningful negotiation. I aimed to examine meaning negotiation strategies employed by Thai EFL learners while chatting, as well as to find out if online chat helps facilitate English language learning. The randomly selected participants were 20 intermediate Thai EFL undergraduate university students who had been using *interpals.net* website to practice English for over a year. 100 chat extracts on free topics were needed and the study was conducted during April 2014 – January 2015.

The findings indicated that the participants contributed several meaningful sentences during conversational exchanges via chat, which include five meaning negotiation strategies namely clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self-repetition and other repetition. The findings revealed that the participants produced 342 obvious meaning negotiations and tended to increase the number of negotiations across time both in general and in each participant. It is apparent that chat encouraged the Thai EFL learners to employ meaning negotiations which were various in terms of strategy types. This supports Worajittipol's (2010) study in that using chat is as an opportunity for Thai speakers to produce a second language in a meaningful context. It also agrees with Lengluan's (2008) study in that chat could offer Thai students more opportunities to engage in meaning negotiation in the target language.

The findings revealed that through other repetition strategy, self repetition strategy and corrective feedback from chat partners, participants showed the signs of

language learning in which helped promote linguistic competence. They also showed the signs of language learning towards communicative competence by generating clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks. These findings support Samani and Noordin (2014) in that using meaning negotiation strategies like clarification, confirmation, elaboration, reply clarification, reply confirmation and reply elaboration can help students build on their scaffolding in the process of second language learning.

In summary, meaning negotiation is considered a crucial feature of chat that helps enhance language learning (Sykes, 2005). Pinweha (2010) stated that chat permits its users opportunities to engage meaningfully in negotiated interaction and notice the gaps between their interlanguage ability and that of skilled peers. The noticing process during meaning negotiation helps language learners expose to comprehensible input and produce modified output (Swain, 1985). Eventually, the exposure to comprehensible input and modified output helps facilitate second language acquisition (Gass, 1997).

5.2 Limitations

At the beginning of the study, a semi-structured interview was created to examine the participants' opinions towards using online chat as an instrument to improve their English language. However, the interview could not be completed because I could not ask all participants to participate the interview and answer the questions. Besides, some participants closed their accounts even before I could interview them. Unfortunately, I had to delete the semi-structured interview part in order to finish the study.

Additionally, the investigation of online chat interaction in this study is limited to those Thai EFL university students who use *interpals.net* website, so the results cannot be generalized to all Thai EFL learners and to all other educational levels.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

This study revealed that participants produced several meaningful sentences during chat, which include five meaning negotiation strategies according to the analytical framework used in this study. It also appears that chat encouraged them to

contribute numerous meaning negotiation strategies which helps facilitate language learning (Sykes, 2005). Then, it is recommended that EFL teachers may consider implementing online chat in their language teaching, inside and outside classroom. Chu (2003) suggested that CMC of online chat can be an effective tool for language learning for students, especially in enhancing interactional competence.

Regarding the implementation inside classroom, EFL teachers may adopt online chat by generating study topics and let students chat either freely about the topics or as a post-activity using the patterns learned earlier about the topics. Deciding which one to use depends on students' language proficiency levels and teaching and learning purposes. However, they need the classroom with computers and internet access in order to implement chat for in-class teaching.

Concerning the implementation outside classroom, teachers may assign students to chat with classmates or English-speaking foreigners on a website and submit the chat extracts to them. They may assign them to chat freely on any topics or on assigned topics depending on the teachers' purposes. Importantly, teachers should make sure that students do the chatting by themselves and do not ask somebody else to do it for them.

No matter the implementation is for inside or outside classroom, both ways should more or less help facilitate English language learning for Thai EFL learners.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Study

It is recommended for future studies that online chat be examined among participants from other educational levels, such as high school or secondary school, or other language proficiency levels, such as beginners or advanced learners. Topics for chatting may also be assigned for further studies.

Additionally, semi-structured interview should be conducted in order to examine participants' attitudes towards practicing English via online chat. Each participant may be asked open-ended questions designed to encourage them to share about their learning experience through online chatting. With the interview part, researchers may be able to identify more benefits or concerns of online chat in language learning.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Blake, R. "Computer mediated communication: A window on L2 Spanish interlanguage", **Language Learning and Technology**. 4(1): 120–136, 2000.
- Blake, R. J. **Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language Learning**. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008.
- Bosch, T.E. "Using Online Social Networking for Teaching and Learning: Facebook Use at the University of Cape Town", **Communication**. 35(2): 185 – 200, 2009.
- Braine, G. "Teaching Second and Foreign Language Writing on LANs." In S. Fotos and C.M. Browne (Eds.). **New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms**. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.
- Cheon, H. "The Viability of Computer Mediated Communication in the Korean Secondary EFL Classroom", **Asian EFL Journal**. 5(1): 15-51, 2003.
- Chu, H. "A study of negotiation of meaning in synchronous computer-mediated communication between non-native speakers of Japanese and Korean", **Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics**. 8(1): 64-75, 2004.
- Chun, D. M. "Using Computer Networking to Facilitate the Acquisition of Interactive Competence", **System**. 22(1), 17-31, 1994.
- Cummins, J. "E-lective language learning: Design of a computer-assisted text-based ESL/EFL learning system", **TESOL Journal**. 33(1): 18-21, 1998.
- Davidson, D. **Capabilities and outputs of the U.S. education system: Proficiency outputs**. www.nlconference.org/docs/NLC_Commentary_Davidson.doc, 2004. November 14th, 2014.
- Dehghanian, A. & Azizi, M. "English language acquisition and intercultural learning in computer mediated communication", **International Journal of Information and Education Technology**. 1(4): 309-314, 2011.
- Ferrara, K., Brunner, H., Whittemore G. "Interactive written discourse as an emergent register", **Written communication**. 8(1): 8-34, 1991.

REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

- Gass, S. M. **Input, interaction, and the second language learner**. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997.
- Hansen, E.A. "Comparison of Online and Traditional Interaction of Students", **2001 Online Conference on Teaching Online in Higher Education (TOHE)**, 2001.
- Herring, S. **Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social and Cross-Cultural Perspectives**. Amsterdam: John Benjamins., 1996.
- Higgins, R. **Computer-mediated cooperative learning: Synchronous and asynchronous communication between students learning nursing diagnosis**. Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Toronto, 1991.
- Ho M. L.C. "Computer-Mediated Communication: Practice, Project and Purposes", **The Journal of Teaching English with Technology**. 4(1): 6-20, 2004.
- Hubbard, P. "Learner Training for Effective Use of CALL", In S. Fotos and C.M.Browne (Eds.). **New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms**. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.
- _____. **Computer Assisted Language Learning: Critical Concepts in Linguistics, Volumes I-IV**. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Kelm, O. "The use of synchronous computer networks in second language instruction, A preliminary report", **Foreign language annals**. 25(5): 441-454, 1992.
- Larsari, V. N. "Computer Mediated Communication: The Use of CMC to Promote Learners' Communicative Competence", **The Criterion: An International Journal in English**. 2(2): 1-10, 2011.
- Lengluan, N. **An Analysis of Conversational Exchanges between Grade 12 Thai Students and Native English Speakers via a Chat Program: Strategies of Negotiation for Meaning**. Master's thesis: Srinakharinwirot University, 2008.
- Lijuan, Q. "An Empirical Study of Meaning Negotiation from the Perspective of Task Characteristics – Task Difficulty and Task Complexity", **Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics**. 33(4): 45-63, 2010.

REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

- Metz, M. "Computer-mediated Communication: Literature Review of a New Context, Interpersonal Computing and Technology", **An Electronic Journal for the 21st Century**. 2(2), 31-49, 1994.
- Murray, D.E. "Protean communication: The language of computer-mediated communication", **TESOL Quarterly**. 34(3): 397-421, 2000.
- Okuyama, Y. "Distance Language Learning via Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC): Eight Factors Affecting NS-NNS Chat Interaction", **The JALT CALL Journal**. 1(2): 3-20, 2005.
- Oliver, R. "Negotiation of Meaning in Child Interactions", **The Modern Language Journal**. 82(3): 372-382, 1998.
- Patterson & Trablado. "Negotiating for Meaning across Borders with CMC", **The Journal of Teaching English with Technology**. 6(2): 24-48, 2006.
- Paulus, T. M. "CMC modes for learning tasks at a distance", **Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication**. 12(4): 1322-1345, 2007.
- Payne, J. S., & Whitney, P. J. "Developing L2 Oral Proficiency through Synchronous CMC: Output, Working Memory, and Interlanguage Development", **CALICO Journal**. 20(1): 7-32., 2002.
- Pennington, M.C. "Electronic Media in Second Language Writing: An Overview of Tools and Research Findings", In S. Fotos and C.M. Browne (Eds.). **New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms**. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.
- Pica, T. "Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second language learning conditions, processes, and outcomes?", **Language Learning**. 44(3): 493-527, 1994.
- Pinweha, S. **The effects of differentiated speaking instruction using computer-mediated communication and project work on Thai undergraduate students' English speaking proficiency and communication strategies**. Doctoral Dissertation: Chulalongkorn University, 2010.

REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

- Samani, E. & Noordin, N. "Discourse Analysis of Students' Interactions in Terms of Negotiation of Meaning in the Malaysian Context", **Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research**. 19(1): 112-118, 2014.
- Shumin, K. "Factors to Consider: Development Adult EFL Students' Speaking Abilities", **English Teaching Forum Online**. 35(3): 8, 1997.
- Sleesongsom, W. and Suppasetsree, S. "Chatting for Improving English Speaking Skills in a Thai Context", **Learn Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network**. 1(2): 106-123, 2012.
- Sotillo, S. "Discourse functions and syntactic complexity in synchronous and asynchronous communication", **Language Learning and Technology**. 4(1): 82-119, 2000.
- Spencer, H. D., & Hiltz, S. R. "A field study of use of synchronous chat in online courses", **Proceedings of 36th, Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences**, 2001.
- Swain, M. Communicative Competence: Some roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), **Input in second language acquisition**. pp. 235-253. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
- Sykes, J. M. "Synchronous CMC and Pragmatic Development: Effects of Oral and Written Chat", **CALICO Journal**. 22(3): 399-431, 2005.
- Warschauer, M. *Electronic literacies: Language, culture and power in on line education*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1999.
- Worajittipol, K. "Online interaction between Thai EFL learners and English speaking chat partners: An exploration of negotiation for meaning and developing relationships", **Dissertation Abstracts International**. 71(9): A, 2010.
- Yuan, Y. "The use of chat rooms in an ESL setting", **Journal of Computers and Composition**. 20(1): 194-206, 2003.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME Miss Suthasinee Piakam

INSTITUTE ATTENDED Bachelor of Education (English)
Mahasarakham University
Thailand

POSITION HELD May 2009 - May 2013
English teacher at
Huaykhayungwittaya School,
Warin Chamrap,
Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

March 2014 – December 2014
Child and Youth Program Assistant
Child Development Center, US Navy Base
Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan

