Constructing an Efficient Undergraduate Scaffolding of Listening-Speaking in English

การสร้างเสริมประสิทธิภาพด้านทักษะการฟัง-พูดภาษาอังกฤษ

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative research aims to improve students' language competency, focusing on the skills of listening, pronunciation, stressing, and speaking. Four different areas focus tools: "True Calling" (pronunciation), "Drop Me Off" (stressing), "Pick Me Up" (listening comprehension), and "Speak It Out" (speaking) were used to help students mitigate their weak learning areas and strengthen both receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) skills. Sixty-seven students in the Conversational English classes were chosen to be participants in this research. The first quarter of this research began with the pronunciation and stressing tools. Listening comprehension and speaking tools were stressed in the other three quarters. Prior to the experiment, TOEIC test were used as a pretest and post test to measure the participants' listening comprehension competence and detect their progress after the experiment. Moreover, three different interviews to three American educators, who have had experience teaching and training English second language students from various corners of the world, were made at different times. The methodological aspects from the educators indicate successful concepts of teaching and also strategies for teachers to change/adjust/apply to their teaching. In addition, the questionnaire helped the researchers understand the participants' background language

competency and individual interests towards listening and speaking skills, including stressing and pronunciation. The results show the participants performed better in some areas, while there was less progress using certain tools. Yet, the participants still needed more time to concentrate on developing their language abilities. In further research, some factors should be focused more on the background environment, with native English speakers (as peers) and on more demanding immersion situations.

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อพัฒนาความสามารถทางภาษาของนักศึกษาโดยการเน้นทักษะการฟัง การออกเสียง การเน้นเสียงหนัก-เบา และการพูดโดยใช้เครื่องมือ 4 ชนิด คือ "True Calling" (การออกเสียง) "Drop Me Off" (การเน้นเสียงหนัก-เบา) "Pick Me Up" (การฟัง) และ "Speak It Out" (การพูด) เครื่องมือเหล่านี้จะช่วยลดจุดอ่อนในการเรียนของนักศึกษา และช่วยพัฒนาทักษะเชิงรับ(การฟัง) และทักษะเชิงปฏิบัติ (การพูด)อีกด้วย กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยนี้คือนักศึกษาจำนวน67คน ที่เรียนในรายวิชาสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษ (The Conversational English)ในช่วงแรกของงานวิจัยเป็นการใช้เครื่องมือในการออกเสียง และการเน้นเสียงหนัก-เบา เครื่องมือในการฟังและการพูดนำมาใช้ในสามช่วงหลัง ก่อนการวิจัยมีการสอบ pre-test และ post-test โดยใช้ข้อสอบ TOEIC เพื่อวัดความสามารถด้านการฟังพูดของนักศึกษาก่อนการทดลอง และวัดความก้าวหน้าของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง หลังจากการใช้เครื่องมือทั้งหมดแล้ว มีการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ให้การศึกษาชาวอเมริกัน 3ท่านที่มีประสบการณ์ในการสอน และการฝึกอบรมนักศึกษาที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ เป็นภาษาที่สองในหลายๆแห่งทั่วโลก แนวคิดด้านระเบียบวิธีของผู้ให้การศึกษาเหล่านี้บ่งบอกถึงแนวความคิดที่ประสบความสำเร็จของการสอนและวิธีการสำหรับผู้สอนในการเปลี่ยน/ปรับ/ประยุกต์การสอนของตนเอง นอกจากนี้แบบสอบถามยังช่วยให้ผู้วิจัยรู้ภูมิหลังด้านความสามารถทางภาษา และความสนใจส่วนบุคคลของกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่

มีต่อทักษะการฟังและการพูดรวมทั้งการเน้นเสียงหนักเบาและการออกเสียง ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่ากลุ่ม
ตัวอย่างมีพัฒนาการในบางทักษะ แต่ในขณะเดียวกันก็มีความก้าวหน้าน้อยในการใช้เครื่องมือบางอย่าง แต่
ถึงกระนั้นกลุ่มตัวอย่างต้องการเวลามากกว่านี้ เพื่อพัฒนาทักษะทางภาษาของตนเองในการศึกษาครั้งต่อไป
ควรมีการพิจารณาปัจจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสิ่งแวดล้อมภูมิหลังโดยผู้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาแม่(เป็นผู้ประเมิน)
และใช้สถานการณ์ที่ทำให้กลุ่มตัวอย่างตั้งใจปฏิบัติมากขึ้น

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and Significance

Some Thai students indicated that they did not understand when listening in English and could not speak the language because they felt their high school teachers never taught in the same ways as English native teachers did. Some students stated that they wanted to know how to pronounce syllables and words correctly; then they would be able to speak and write skillfully. The questions are raised: How can non-native English teachers solve these problems? What effective teaching methods will help solve the problems? Many theorists have suggested many ways to solve the problems. For example, Brown (2001) wrote that communicative competence should be the goal of a language classroom because it focuses on using language in "fluency, accuracy in authentic language and contexts, and real world" (p. 69). Because of inappropriate pronunciation, the problems of stressing, listening, and speaking have occurred in EFL students, and these problems seem to be part of a long process of solving, a multi-dimensional task in the EFL classroom teaching.

Accordingly, the problem is that some EFL students lack sufficient, proper listening and speaking skills needed to articulate the English language efficiently. The majority of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students basically have several problems in listening and speaking. First, EFL students began learning incorrect pronunciation from some local instructors at a fundamental level. At an early age, these EFL students started absorbing the deviant pronunciation/enunciation from some non-native English speakers. Actually, these students have never been exposed to the native sounds directly. Some theories postulate that young children have great advantages in learning languages, both in their classrooms and from their families and caretakers, as long as they have not reached puberty (normally at the age of 15) After puberty, their perceiving language skills gradually decline and almost never "sound like natives" (Brown. 2000: 59; O'Brien. 2004: 1) Nunan (1999) states, "The number of years of exposure contributes greatly to the overall communicative fluency of the learners; starting age determines the levels of accuracy achieved, particularly in pronunciation" (p. 41). As a result, the EFL students adopt as their norms the sounds and pronunciation/enunciation they have heard since beginning their first lessons of listening and speaking. It is very difficult for some EFL students to adjust/improve/achieve these skills at older ages. This also impacts other related skills, stressing

for instance. The second problem is the inadequate teaching of stressing at fundamental levels. Some EFL students have no clue on how to do word stressing (supra-segmental phonology) because they were taught to concentrate on other skills, such as grammar and vocabulary, through vivid memorization. Stressing skills are neglected because of unskilled teachers. A method that has been used is imitating the strong "mother-tongue" sounds of the teachers. Specifically, it is necessary to teach students how to stress properly by syllabic units, practicing stressing in ordinary listening-speaking classes. Weak skills of stressing also cause listeners to misunderstand the contents of the speaker. Nunan (1999) also refers to some other researchers, pointing out that "faulty stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns cause greater difficulty for hearers…" (p. 107) Apparently, these students pronounce words in monotone (no stressing) and stress at incorrect syllables of words. This can be found also in students from Asian countries.

Finally, since both pronunciation and stressing skills teaching have failed to succeed; some EFL students' listening comprehension has been hindered on the continuum. That is, the majority of EFL students may not recognize the correct sounds of words. Basic pronunciation has not been taught properly and in a technical manner. The students cannot divide words into syllabic units and do not know how to pronounce each syllable of the words correctly. As a result, when listening to an entire passage, these students will be confused and mix all sounds up. For example, the word "vine" becomes "wine" or "rice" becomes "lice." Furthermore, most EFL students have little experience in intercommunicating with English native speakers in an EFL environment. The students have few skills of pronunciation, stressing, listening comprehension, and speaking. This situation is a serious impediment to EFL students' learning the English language; their English competency reaches a plateau eventually.

Objectives

This research attempted to improve EFL students' pronunciation/enunciation, stressing, listening comprehension, and speaking and to strengthen them with related skills which support the phonetic progress. The objectives of this study were as follows.

1. To discover EFL students' strengths and weaknesses in skills.

2. To refresh their knowledge and improve their skills for their future progress in listening-speaking in English.

3. To find effective methods of teaching suitable for the students' learning abilities and competency.

Scope of the Research

This research targeted the groups of EFL students in the EG2133 classes (two sections). It is a listening-speaking course at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University (HCU). These students are at lower-intermediate levels of English competency. The number of participants was 67 students. They were taught in semester 2 of the academic years of 2010 and 2011.

Definitions of Terms

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL refers to all students and learners who are taught English in their own countries. Nunan (1999) defined EFL as "the teaching and learning of English in communities where English is not widely used for communication" (306).

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is the ability of using language fluently, accuracy in authentic language and contexts, and real world skillful usage.

First Language

First language is the language which a person was born with and communicates with during his/her growing process: Thai.

Natural Method

Natural method is the way children learn how to speak naturally in their first language.

Target Language

Target language is the other language which the student is concentrating on learning: English.

Immersion Classroom

An immersion classroom is organized totally in a target language (English) in a non-native English speaking country.

Syllabic Unit

Syllabic unit refers to each syllable, derived from dividing multi-syllable words, with a unique sound that can be combined to produce pronunciation of words.

Authentic Language

Authentic language is the language that EFL learners are focusing on, which includes all types of verbal and non-verbal teaching materials and media which contain native English speakers' sounds.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding implies a pathway, method, or strategy which helps learners achieve their goal of improving language skills.

Benefits of the Research

Besides helping the EFL students improve their pronunciation, stressing, and listening-speaking skills, the researcher's aim was for the students to be fluent, as the final goal, in those areas where they could apply the skills into higher English courses according to individual majors. The researcher also hoped this research would show another way for instructors to enhance the skills added in their teaching plan and also to encourage EFL students to practice verbal English communication inside and outside the language classrooms. Furthermore, the students would be able to integrate the skills into their final oral examinations before graduating from Huachiew Chalermprakiet University. Most importantly, the researchers' ultimate goal was that the students communicate with people in English skillfully and effectively in their workplaces and that they improve their skills steadily and constantly.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Real world content plays a major role in second language acquisition. It influences learners' acquiring the target language. Some second language students are addicted to foreign programs, for example, *Friends* or *CSI Miami*. Weyers (1999:340) indicated that the value of visual learning through video helps second language learners increase their comprehension and vocabulary. The contents are the models for the learners to absorb, and these contents can be articulated in the proper situations. The learners habitually duplicate expressions from drama, especially when the contents reflect their interests. At a certain level of comprehension, they would be able to project the ideas for different purposes. Weyers also believed that the comprehensible input should match in a similar way to output, both "quantity and quality"—the amount of contents which learners receive from the original model and authentic message or "communicative competence" should be equal to skill in getting the message across to native speakers respectively.

Like Weyers, believing in communicative competence, Saville-Troike (2006:100) agreed with Hymes in terms of "indiscrimination" in the concept of communicative competence. She clarified that learners need to have a mind-set of cultural knowledge. This acceptance is the priority key to success in communication. She referred to, "what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular language community." In other words, the learners have to open their minds, be ready to know a variety of concepts in the target society which have to do with words, sounds, and structure of the language. Consequently, the learners of the second language are able to articulate and interpret the language contents fluently and accurately. Lightbown and Spada (2003:212) set an example of the tests of communicative competence. They included measures of fluency, the ability to understand and transmit information in discussion with native speakers, interviews, reported activities, and descriptions of ongoing activities. However, a contrary point of view is found in Savignon who interpreted the results to say that communicative competence supported only on form and accuracy, not giving students opportunities to improve their communication skills in a second language.

Theoretically, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Richards and Rodgers.2001:182; Saville-Troike.2006:45; Brown.2000:278; 2001:361; Lightbown and Spada.2003:39; Rost. 2008:8-9) focuses on the production of a language. There are several stages of acquiring of second

language. First, learners perceive all types of information (which many practitioners call *input*) they are exposed to. The more input the learners perceive, the better understanding as they interpret the data for themselves. Second, all data are recorded and internalized. This is the stage of learners' acquiring the language, also called *intake* (Grove.1999:819) when they understand the message that is advanced, compared to their competencies. Finally, the learners are able to produce the language fluently at the moment they feel comfortable projecting the target language. Brown (2000:278) pointed out that the language that learners are exposed to could be far from their competencies. He believed that this could possibly be expressed as *i+2* or *i+0* because languages may be overwhelming or totally not challenging. The highlight of the hypothesis is at the emergence of the learners who assimilate the comprehensible input. In language teaching, Brown (2001:361) referred to Rod Ellis, a linguist, who labeled the input hypothesis as "zero option" without form-focused instruction within communicative areas that concentrate on "consciousness-raising." This would work best depending on the learners' purposes and the meaningful learning for instance. However, Lightbown and Spada (2003:35) advance a deviant concept of the input hypothesis in that the language may concentrate on "forms and structures," which will result in comprehension and acquisition.

Some linguists also indicated their support for Krashen's hypothesis that "there is little doubt that communicative language teaching, with its primary focus on using language for meaningful interaction and for accomplishing tasks" has been popularized among teachers and learners (Lightbown and Spada. 2003:40)

O'Brien (2004:1) pointed out that second language learners, referring to "foreign accent," who start learning a second language after 12 years old, have minimal chances of sounding like native speakers. This also refers to language classrooms that never focus enough on pronunciation and sound systems (Elliott.1997:95) In the classrooms, some teachers found teaching difficulty in the "technical nature of the subject matter." The researcher raised three areas of concern in teaching pronunciation regarding "the effect of language environment," "stress, rhythm, and intonation focuses," and "promoted factors of native-like global pronunciation." The important skills the researcher concentrated on were stressing, rhythm, and intonation because these skills improve communicative skills with native speakers rather than those with grammar, regarding "native-likeness," as she believed. She also concluded that age is a major critical issue for learners to enunciate in the target language with natural speaking.

Especially in adult learners, correct pronunciation is more difficult for the learners to achieve than other skills in the target language (Elliot.1997:96). In addition, the researcher also cited Celce-Murcia and Goodwin's concept that "there is a threshold level of pronunciation." If a non-native speaker's pronunciation is under this threshold level, he is unable to have skillful verbal communication even though he is good at other skills, such as grammar and vocabulary. Also a reason to focus on grammar and vocabulary is that, as Elliot (1997:95) firmly pointed out, "Teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills...and sacrifice teaching pronunciation...on other areas of the language."

Tananuraksakul (2013:105,112) believed that power distance (PD) and positive reinforcement affect directly in promoting students' listening-speaking skills in her research. PD, developed by Hofstede in 1970, refers to "the degree a society accepts differences in power" which is divided into high PD, authoritative position, and low PD, the self-governing and personal responsibilities. The researcher found that the high PD influenced specifically the students' confidence in their oral skills. At a low level of high PD together with positive reinforcement, it evidently builds up students' positive beliefs in their phonetic skills reaching to speaking English competency eventually.

The other recent research in improving listening skills was on radio challenges to ESL/EFL listeners. Moore & Carreon (2011:7) concentrated on listening and comprehension through radio broadcasts (DJ Talk) that focused on speech rate, false starts, and idiomatic language we encounter in our everyday lives. The researchers pointed out two sets of issues: the scriptedness of DJ Talk includes recited, read aloud, and fresh talk. On the other hand, the voice behind the message (animator, author, and principal) is also significant to bring out connotation through listeners' skills. These two areas of phenomena are based in real life. Nevertheless, radio listeners have to face disadvantages with scriptedness as DJ Talk is not being seen and the voice in DJ Talk is monologues form of communication, no everyday-life interaction. DJ Talk as supported source of listening and comprehension remains providing natural spoken text to learners.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework of this research consisted of two interrelated specific topics:

EFL Students Need to Improve Phonetic and Conversational Skills in Native-like Classroom Settings.

The Communicative Competence teaching method was employed to improve the students' skills of sounds and intercommunication between interlocutors—conversation partners. The students needed to build/refresh their strong phonetic skills in order to articulate sounds properly—the concept of segmental and supra-segmental phonology. In doing so, the students learned to distinguish familiar sounds and pronounced them one at a time. After this practice, the students worked on phonetic tools which are created by the researcher. In addition, the students were taught to recognize the vocabulary through the sounds and understand it through verbal communication. As a result, the students were exposed to specific context (word choice) in each conversational situation. On the other hand, the students were gradually encouraged to communicate with their instructor and classmates in English as if in an immersion classroom. Sound and intercommunication were the focuses.

EFL Students Perceive and Practice Strategies of Listening Comprehension to Strengthen Listening and Speaking Skills.

The Top-down, bottom-up method helps instructors explain segmental and supra-segmental phonology in phonemic decoding. The students began with bottom-up—"phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, words… to phrases, phrases… to utterances, utterances…to meaningful contexts" (Nunan.1999:200). In contrast, the students could use their background knowledge of context to make individual sense in listening (Top-down) to achieve tasks. On the other hand, the students also focused on comprehension rather than forced production. That is, they were allowed to internalize contexts and demonstrate it when ready. This method helped the students feel comfortable and under no pressure in the process. In order to succeed in the listening and speaking skills, the students had to learn how to associate the language with things in their environment, and they demonstrated their comprehension, gained from listening, through speaking presentations.

Chapter 3
Methodology

Library research basically included reviewing textbooks and journal articles, such as TESOL Quarterly and Journal of Education. These types of sources provided concrete information to strengthen theories and methods used in this research. The research methodology focused on the following items:

1. Research population and sample were taken from the students in EG 2133 Conversational English (67 students were taught in semester 2 of the academic years of 2010 and 2011).

2. Research instruments were as follows:

   2.1 Tool construction

   The four tools: "True Calling," "Drop Me Off," "Pick Me Up," and "Speak It Out" were used in different periods of time in this research. The tools "True Calling" and "Drop Me Off" were to be used in the first quarter of the research. The two latter tools were to be used in the last three quarters. The proper English pronunciation form was the primary source of pronunciation; the researcher's verbal communication was provided in the classrooms.

Tool Creativity

Non-native English teachers may be searching for a way to solve the problems of students' language learning in listening-speaking classrooms. Many of these teachers may choose creative solutions, either experimenting using educational strategies, learning how to select authentic materials, combining teaching methods and approaches, or applying effective tools. This research demonstrated the use of certain tools to impact students' language learning, and student competency, as the end of the course would show the progress. We look at the tools as scaffolding which is helpful for participants in this research in improving their language competency at their level of development (zone of proximal development [ZPD]) (Ko, Schallert and Walters. 2003:303; Lightbown and Spada, 2003:65; Saville-Troike. 2006:72). These tools aim to alleviate the problems as well as to develop the students' learning: the combination of pronunciation and stressing tools "True Calling-Drop Me Off," listening comprehension "Pick Me Up," and speaking "Speak It Out."

"True Calling-Drop Me Off"

This tool is designed to focus on the combination concept of Natural Approach and Communicative Competence in terms of accuracy (Elliott. 1997: 95; Weyers. 1999: 340). The tool is in the form of a vocabulary sheet with unfamiliar words in real life situations, selected from *Apartment Problems*, *Hardly a Loser, Grandfather at the Art Museum, My Brother's Mental Illness, and A Get-Rich-Quick Scam* written by Goodman D.J. et al in *Advancing Vocabulary Skills*. The list is divided into items. Each item contains a word and multiple choices which show separated syllables of the word differently. All participants listen to their instructor's pronunciation of each word three times. Then they repeat the word and draw a stressing sign on top of the syllable of the word where they hear the stressing sound. This approach helps second language learners to be exposed to the strategy that the learners "hear before they try to produce language" (Richards and Rogers. 2001:179). At the same time, "the learners know how to say it appropriately and accurately in any given situation" (Brown. 2001: 24; Saville-Troike. 2006: 55). This tool also adopts the concept of how an American child learns the language in terms of imitation from parents or caretakers.

In real life, Christian, of Fountain City, Wisconsin, USA, whose father is a policeman; whose mother teaches English and French at universities in Minnesota and Wisconsin; and whose grandmother is a master tutor at a university in Minnesota, is a perfect example. When he was three years old, he knew how to say the word "issue" perfectly, with proper stressing heard from his parents and caretaker (his grandmother). He had heard his parents and caretaker say the word frequently without understanding the meaning in proper situations. Nevertheless, he could imitate the sound and stressing naturally. This is not a word that a child of this age would normally use.

This familiar sound was heard repeatedly and became Christian's habit of pronunciation "attending to a phonological code" (Pinker.1994:156). The codes are the sound units which correspond to the English alphabets, which are pronounced in an exact way. Different sounds are combined, creating syllables and words finally. As a result, imitation from correct pronunciation helps learners improve in how to pronounce unfamiliar words, even though they may not understand the meaning (Brown. 2000: 38).

"Pick Me Up"

The "Pick Me Up" tool design was based on the real-life situations of a native English speaker and a graduate non-native English student of a university in Minnesota. The information was created in terms of messages sent back and forth through electronic mail between them. In this research, ten questions for listening comprehension were raised. The participants had to answer the questions after hearing a message read, and the correct answers were calculated for scores. The major focus was on the comprehensible contents, with expressions and idioms, including vocabulary. Unfamiliar vocabulary was clarified at the beginning of the first few messages. Key words played another major role in order for students to be ready for the listening practice and to use "content schema" (Jung. 2003: 563) to help master the tasks. Teachers "must do the ground work and work with vocabulary before introducing this listening comprehension lesson" (Gannaway. 2011: 7). The students should be able to comprehend new words throughout the message they hear. Then, they can improve and elevate their listening skills in the later listening sets.

This tool was created basically from the communicative approach that is involved with grammatical abilities, understanding the relationships of interlocutors, meaningful contents, and communicative circumstances (Brown. 2000: 78; Richards and Rodgers. 2001: 35; Saville-Troike. 2006: 44; Taguchi. 2005:5). The tool allowed the participants to become familiar with common vocabulary, grammar use, and social interaction situations in American English that the participants have never experienced. Pronunciation and stressing practices are merged with listening comprehension, and students project the output in responding to questions. The participants had to complete eight sets of this listening comprehension altogether.

"Speak It Out"

After experiencing and understanding the concept of the pronunciation-stressing and listening tools, the participants had to demonstrate the progress of their speaking skills with proper pronunciation, stressing, and listening comprehension. This required proper pronouncing, accurate academic speaking, and fluency with meaningful contents, according to the speaking evaluation used in this research. It was comprised of

pronunciation/enunciation, accurate generalizations based on outside sources, support of generalizations, clear understanding of the elements of academic speaking, and clarity of expressions.

To decrease the anxiety of the participants, they were given freedom of choice to select topics to present in the classrooms. Brown (2000: 151) states that it is helpful for language teachers to ascertain the anxiety levels of their learners. That is, the learners may be concerned about different issues, either attempting to do the actual speaking or being worried about lack of knowledge about a topic to present. Those selected topics by the participants were under the categories: adventure, stories, travel, people, learning, careers, and culture shock. The contents of these topics could be derived from on-line public media, cable, and commercial documentary programs approved by the researcher. As that time, the participants had already experienced documentary programs which the researcher had selected and used in the classroom in recognition of the fact that the learning style is different for each individual learner. Visual learning style was selected (Ceo-DiFrancesco. 2003: 125; Kwai. 2011: 90; Gannaway. 2011: 53) and note-taking practice was the key element to successfully using this style (Ferris. 1998: 290; Ferris and Tagg. 1996: 300).

Besides the aforementioned tools, the pivotal data collection has been conducted in order to present points of view provided by educators who have been experiencing teaching, tutoring, and socializing with English second language learners and who live in the United States. This provided a background of better understanding for the researcher in analyzing the data properly. The researcher obtained interview sections from three Americans at the beginning of this research. These educators have been dealing with many second language learners academically for many years at Winona State University and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, USA.

Yet, background education and language experiences of participants, derived from the questionnaire, shed light for the researcher on the history of learning the English language of the participants individually. This questionnaire was used for all participants. The purpose of using this questionnaire was to understand the background education and exposure to the English language of the participants in order to highlight relevant information to be analyzed hand-in-hand with the research outcomes.

In terms of calculation, the tally sheet was used to compute all the scores of the tools. The program provided the grades, maximum, minimum, average, and standard deviation. These measurements interpreted the scores and evaluated the potential of the tools, providing the outcomes precisely and accurately.   The statistical data addressed the level of improvement of the students, the quality of the tools, and directions of future research as well.

2.2 TOEIC

The listening sections of the aptitude test were used for pretest and post test. The scores of the tests detected the ability of the participants before and after the experiment, this showed the progress of the participants' English competency.

3. Data Collection

The participants took the pretest of TOEIC. Later, the "True Calling" and "Drop Me Off" tools were used in the research. Then, "Pick Me Up" and "Speak It Out" tools were used after the first quarter until the end of this research. These tools were used on all participants in this research.   Finally, the post test of TOEIC was given to the participants to evaluate their progress after the three months of training.

4. Data Analysis

The comparison between pretest and post test scores, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking scores evaluated the progress of the participants in this research. Each evaluation was presented in the form of graphs.

All English major students are required to take EG 2133 Conversational English as a basic listening-speaking course in order to improve their skills for higher level courses in the major. This course is offered once a week—two hours lecture and two hours lab in a non-English speaking community. Earlier, these students were required to take the institutional placement test, basically based on the integrated skills of the English language. Later, some of these students may register for remedial courses, communication I, and II respectively to be exposed to the language before taking the first level of English courses at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University (HCU).

During the freshmen year, the English major students have to take English courses. From the beginning to the end of the program, they must take an aptitude test, TOEIC, to

verify their progress periodically, again in the sophomore and senior years, each test being a language threshold level before moving up to higher levels. Their graduation involves the same test type. In addition, senior English major students must take the "oral test" (spoken test) with three English instructors, both domestic and foreign, in the English Department of HCU. The students have to score at 2.5 or above (out of a score of 5) to pass the test, or they are unable to finish the program.

In this research, the language tools aimed to develop and improve the participants' listening and speaking skills through authentic materials. The difficulties of the contents were arranged properly and challenging enough at the participants' levels for them to follow and achieve as in the first course of the English major.

Participants

All 67 students were English major students who had a background of English knowledge from classrooms for more than 10 years in the school system in Thailand. They were freshmen at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University (HCU). According to the primary survey, the majority of students (43.75%) intentionally wanted to focus on all language skills in order to have decent future careers. 37.5% of the students concentrated only on listening and speaking skills, and almost half of the participants realized that pronunciation, vocabulary, and stressing are the factors that have hindered their listening comprehension progress and needed to be improved. They believed that socializing in a foreign classmate environment (32.5%) and watching movies and cartoons (52.2%) would help improve their pronunciation skills.

Procedures and Analysis

Prior to experiencing the tools of the research, participants took the pretest of the TOEIC aptitude test which consisted of the listening section containing pictures, questions to answer, short conversations, and short talks—altogether 64 items. The scores were allocated and kept confidential. The test analysis of each item was never clarified with the students because the same contents on the test were reused for the post test. The process of using the research tools began after the regular lesson of each week.

In the first week, the "True Calling-Drop Me Off" tools were used in the pronunciation section. The participants had the vocabulary sheets with multiple choices of syllabic division, and it was explained that they have to concentrate on the *sound only* without attempting to figure out the word connotations/definitions. The objective of this syllabic unit training is for participants to distinguish sounds on a regular basis. Then they can apply their "sound segregating skills" to other different words. Therefore, the syllabic unit training, for all types of learners, must be taught at a relatively slow pace. Carruthers (1987: 193) points out, "Pronunciation …should be isolated and taught one at a time…attention paid to voicing…will result in immediate improvement in the pronunciation." To avoid anxiety on the part of the participants, the researcher announced the entire class needed to relax and not be judgmental about the participants' answers. The researcher pronounced each word carefully, at a proper speed, in pronunciation-stressing of Set I (40 items). The participants chose their best choice and marked the stressing sign on top of the target-pronounced syllable. In the second week, in place of comprehending how to divide syllables, the participants themselves had to divide the words into syllables on the pronunciation-stressing Set II (40 items) and again mark the stressing sign on stressed syllables in the words.

From week 3-10, the participants were experiencing listening comprehension. In these eight weeks, they listened to different true stories of a native English speaker and a graduate non-English speaker, using electronic mail messages, one message a week read by the researcher. The researcher created ten questions from the message each week. Each participant had only a blank paper to respond to questions 1-10 and to answer the questions briefly but to the point. Throughout the semester, the participants also experienced the documentary programs the researcher prepared every week. At this point, taking notes was introduced and highly recommended to the participants as a way to get information from the listening. (The note-taking was used in both regular class lessons and in the research programs as well). The participants were required to practice the note-taking throughout the 12 weeks.

Arnold (2000: 778) states that speaking skills can be achieved by developing the proficiency in listening comprehension because listening is the core of language acquisition in terms of gaining comprehensive input as "raw materials" necessary for the speaking process to begin. In the contents of the electronic mail, the participants basically experienced

new vocabulary, proper names, phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, special holidays, city names, and cultural context in authentic utterances from the daily life of the native English speaker. These are key elements to strengthen the participants' comprehension when listening, besides vocabulary. They help make the contents comprehensible. The length of each listening session was around five minutes. The participants heard it twice.

During the first couple weeks of the listening comprehension practice, the participants felt stressed. The participants had the feelings they were unable to do the tasks. The researcher guided them to use the skills of pronunciation and stressing to perceive the key words and capture the main ideas in the listening and the note-taking skills from watching the documentary programs. All were allowed to take notes while listening to the stories. One of the key elements to achieve listening comprehension is to focus on "key words," usually nouns, which bring out the contents needed to respond to the questions. However, the participants sometimes forgot to listen for key words because of being nervous.

Arnold (2000: 779,784) also suggests a solution to cope such anxiety as "state fright and snake phobias" through "systematic desensitization" meaning that the participants have to experience the tasks until reaching their familiarity. The only thing that the participants were concerned about was understanding the contents, and therefore there was a lack of full concentration on key words. In the interviews, Kwai (2011: 78); Gannaway (2011: 9) believed that one of the keys to success for language learners is to "pay attention" to what they are focusing on at the moment in the learning process.

At the end of the semester, a couple of weeks were reserved for speaking. This speaking focused on monitoring the participants' oral skills and having them control "stage fright" emotions. Freshmen needed plenty of time to prepare not only the listening part but also the presentation. Each participant individually made his own speech according to certain categories, which offered a wide range of subject matter related to the Conversational English course. The subject matter included adventure, stories, travel, people, learning, careers, and culture shock, which was derived from commercials of the participants' choices. The duration of each documentary program had to be 20 minutes at the minimum. While watching the selected program, the participant had to take notes which focused on different areas of learning, including attempting to listen for information to find the answers primarily on "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how" implied in the program. The participants

could watch the programs as many times as they wished. Later, each participant composed his own script and had the notes as the guideline of speaking. The evaluation used to measure the progress basically concentrated on grammar, pronunciation, proper word choice, and speaking techniques. Questions could be raised to the participants when the researcher needed any part of the speaking clarified because "the listener had a task to perform and could not do so without clarity on the part of the speaker" (Salaberry and Lopez-Ortega. 1998: 518). Apparently, this gives the participant an opportunity to project ideas and "express meaning spontaneously creating language (Grove. 1999: 826).
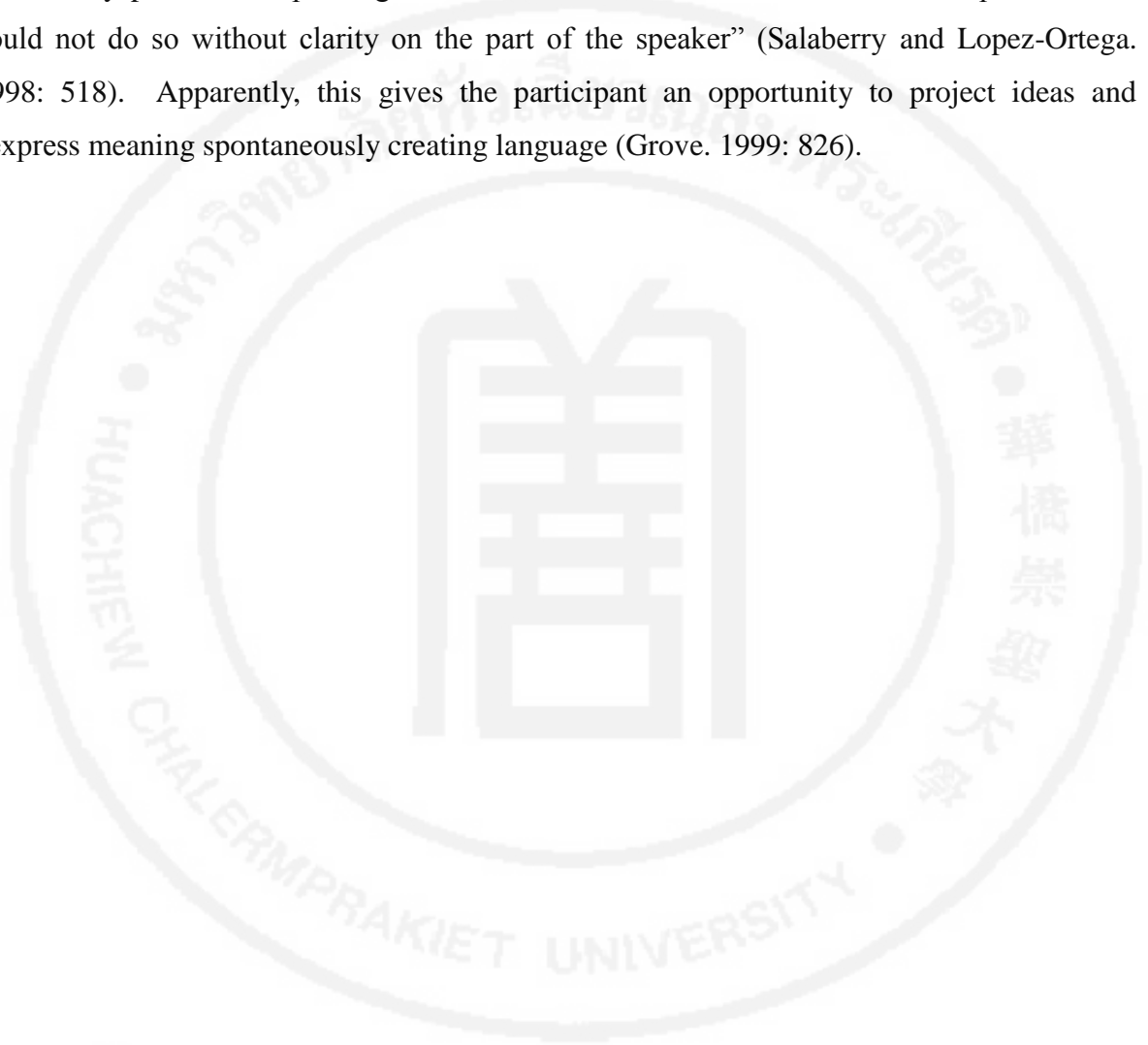
Chapter 4

Results

Results and Findings

The outcome of this research was on the positive side on the continuum. It was an indication that the four phonological scaffolding tools can have an impact within a semester (about twelve weeks). The results are at the level where the researcher was satisfied because the tools were designed based on a temperate format and common sense. Yet, there still were some participants ready for pursuing higher English competency. At this point, the results and findings will be analyzed in different organizational formats, based on pronunciation, listening, speaking, pretest-post test, and statistical grade results and their summary.

Figure A
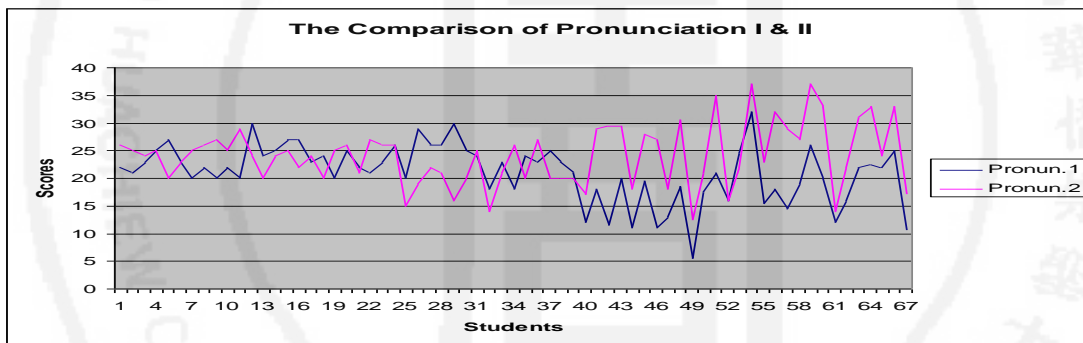
The syllabic units were unfamiliar to the majority of these participants when they began working on the pronunciation tasks. Three interesting issues must be analyzed, based on the above graph. The pronunciation I and II (*True Calling-Drop Me Off*) consisted of 40 items. Both test I and II had exactly the same items. A score of 24 items correct was passing. On pronunciation test I, 23 students scored at or above 24 (60% or more). On pronunciation test II, 37 students scored at or above 24 for a percent of 60%. A comparison between test I and test II showed a gain of 14 students passing, for a percent gain of 20.9%. The majority of participants' scores under 24 points may be attributed to three different factors in the matter of new unknown words, liaison, and background syllabic unit experience.

First, the participants were nervous working on the pronunciation because they had to encounter unknown vocabulary. The main objective of this tool was to lead the participants to concentrate on the sounds only, instead of attempting to find the words'

connotations/definitions. That is, this tool was designed to assist students to block out other issues relating to the vocabulary skills, such as morphemes, semantics, and discourse. It seems it was frightening for the participants when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary, causing anxious attitudes and bringing low scores of achievement.

Second, the pronunciation with liaison (the linking of sounds within a word) caused the participants to become confused or hesitated because of not knowing how to divide syllables, even though the vocabulary in the tool was derived from those words at their university levels. Liaison is normally found within sentences. Nevertheless, it can be found within three, four, or five syllables of words with regular speed of pronunciation. Severino (2001: 202) mentioned that she "learned how to slow down." Inevitably, in pronouncing a word, each syllable is linked together to be pronounced as one word.

The last factor was the participants' lack of proper syllabic training as to how to pronounce by syllables at lower levels in language classrooms and how to use this training on a regular basis. They begin to study phonetics when they are at a college level. They can apply the knowledge into their life only at a certain level, not deep down to the core of the contents in different tasks in language learning.

Figure B
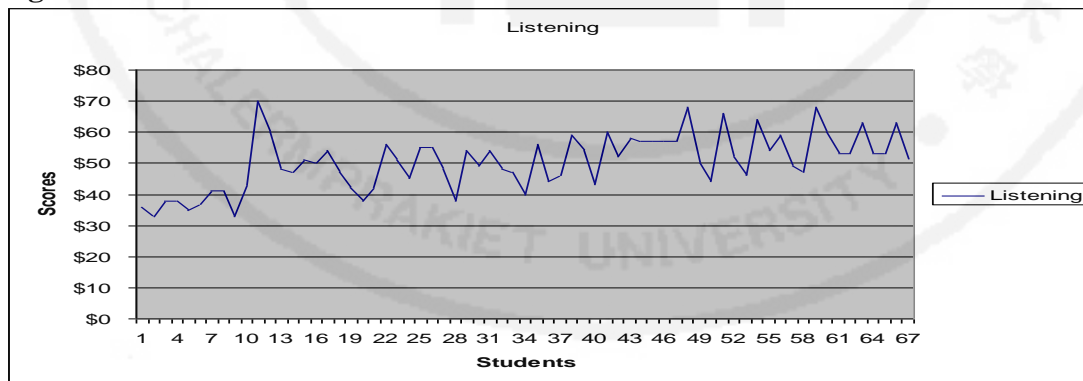
On listening tool (*Pick Me Up*) consisted of eight formal tests of one total score of 80. A score of 40 points correct was passing. 58 students (86.56%) scored ≥ 40 (50% or more), showing a good level of listening comprehension. This revealed that the majority of the participants understood the contents and answered the questions satisfactorily. This is matched to question 11 on the questionnaire in that participants (42.5% (34) of all

participants) paid close attention to pronunciation, stressing, and vocabulary when listening. And 41.25% of the participants (33) preferred jotting down key words while listening as well. Richards (1987: 162) explained that listeners generally focus on prepositions when expressing and making use of knowledge to decode the meaning. Listeners use the knowledge of syntax in the target language and "real world knowledge" to construct their own comprehension. The knowledge of syntax helps the listener divide clusters of information. Grammatical skills help explain the relationships between the clusters. Yet, both syntax and grammatical skills are complicated for some listeners. Hence, listeners may apply the knowledge of the real world as "bypass" to help them understand incoming discourse. In reality, the participants still struggled with new vocabulary, especially the native English expressions. This hindrance was resolved by the explanation of the expressions on the first few listening comprehension tests. Later, these expressions were used by the participants, with some guessing, to bring out the meaning. This helped and guided the participants to work through the tasks in listening comprehension.

Figure C
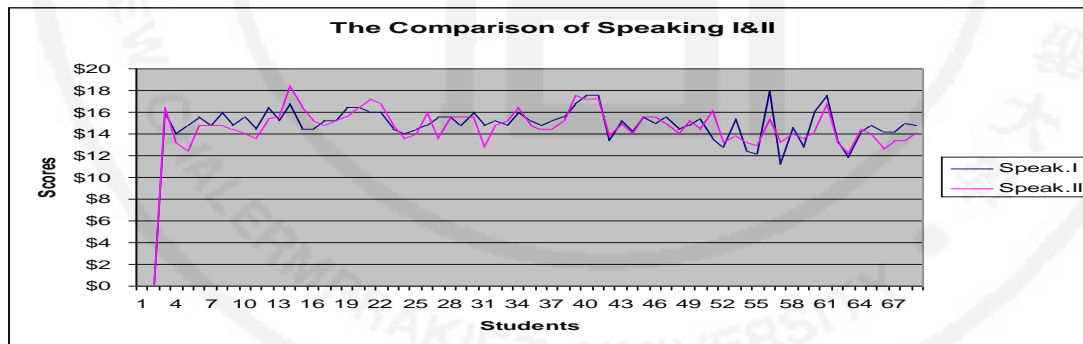
The speaking test (*Speak It Out*) I and II each total score was 20. A score of 15 (75%) was passing. On speaking test I, 34 (50.75%) students scored at or above 15 (75% or more). On speaking test II, 29 students scored at or above 15 for a percent of 43.28%. A comparison between test I and test II showed a loss of 5 students, for a percent loss of -7.46%. Interestingly, a few participants showed small progress in 2-3 scores—the participants at 12th, 24th, and 49th. 16.4% difference between these two groups can be analyzed in that the gap of speaking competency is significant but reveals the readiness of participants to improve their speeches. That is, some participants chose the topics they preferred to explore as stories

which they were curious about. Considering the categories of speaking, the topics were general and of wide choice for the participants. Also these topics were relevant to their interests. This would give more self-confidence for the participants when they spoke.

In oral production, "the most effective manner to measure such skills was to allow students the opportunity and freedom to use their second language in an open-ended setting…the directions were purposefully open and vague…to elicit the greatest amount of speech production." (Weyers. 1999: 342)

The participants whose speaking scores were above the average still need time to keep on practicing their speaking skills. On the other hand, the other group of participants has to work harder to reduce their language barriers through social interaction especially with native English speakers. As Gannaway (2011: 50) mentioned in the interview, Scarcella (1987: 208-209) also suggested that the possible activity that promotes social interaction of language learners is through "social-drama." It may help the learners to develop "vocabulary, grammar, discourse strategies, and strategies for social interaction, to promote cultural understanding, and to elicit oral production." The special feature of "socio-drama" is that it is student-centered, which improves learners' competency in creativity. All participants must remember to search for other sources that help them gain speaking skills "to emancipate the language barrier," besides learning the language in regular classrooms.

Figure D
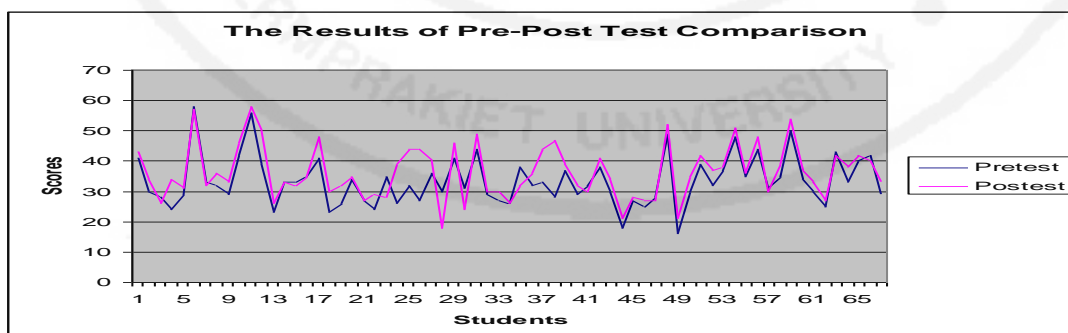
The pretest and post test consisted of 64 items. Both tests had exactly the same items. A score of 32 (50%) correct was passing. On the pretest, 37 (55.22%) students scored at or above 32 (50% or more). On the post test, 47 students scored at or above 32 for a percent 70.15%. A comparison between pretest and post test showed a gain of 10 students passing,

for a percent gain of 14.93%. The graph shows three different aspects of the scores: the participants' language improvement at 50% and above, the wide range of improved scores of a few participants, and the recessed scores of a couple participants. This percentage implies that most participants comprehend and know how to apply the skills they have practiced in pronunciation, stressing, and listening comprehension into the post test. Specifically listening comprehension, real-life situations, idiomatic expressions, and routine vocabulary from the native English speaker used in the tool, play a major role in the language improvement in second language learners.

Similar to these participants' language improvement, the graph displays the 24th-27th and 37th-38th participants' large scores of nine to fourteen scores improvement on the post test (14-20%). 7.5% of participants showed elevation of language competency. Statistically, these scores reveal that the tools helped the participants improve their language competency. These participants showed enthusiasm in their classes. Historically, these participants were in the group which began learning English when they were younger than seven years old, focusing on all of the English skills and socializing with native English speakers, according to the questionnaire. The result confirms that this group of participants' language background was built properly, including their interests in the English language field.

Unfortunately, there were two (the 28th and 30th) participants, (around 3% of 67 participants) who showed recessed scores at eight to twelve scores (10.9% and 18.75%) respectively on the post test. This signifies that the two participants may need extra hours to be exposed to the English language consistently. In the classroom, these participants always attended the class, but participated infrequently. This was possibly the hindrance that impeded their improvement in a language classroom.

The four major tools helped students improve their English skills. Finding showed that 70.15% of the participants achieved 50% of all the items on the TOEIC test (64 items). This positive result confirmed the value the researcher's concentrating on the proper track of teaching language. Yet, the tools have to be readjusted more on various models. The participants need to be exposed to the target language consistently.

Figure E
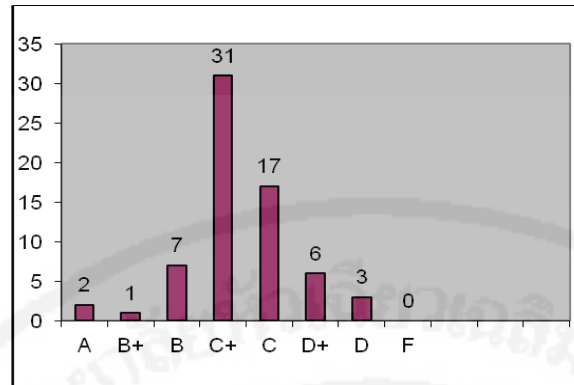
This statistic shows the total number of participants who received different grades, calculated from the entire scores of all tools in this research. Each tool, for some extent, reveals each participant's language background and the skills received from being trained of each participant on a regular basis.   The statistic also indicates that these 67 participants are classified in various levels of English competencies according to their English exposure background, individual interests, and convictional skills (from training in this research). The majority of grades is C+. The critical group of participants are the ones who received grades: C, D+, and D. Hypothetically, it can possibly be inferred that the rational factors of proper channels of their language improvement in terms of listening and speaking including other related skills basically are socializing with foreign classmates (32.5%) with listening to pronunciation from native instructors (40%), at items number 5and 6 respectively on the questionnaire.

Figure F   The summary of participants 'scores

Maximum	84
Minimum	50
Average (Mean)	65.2
Standard Deviation	6.3
The Total number of Students (Valid Cases)	67

This chart summarizes the scores of max., min., mean, and SD values.   The range between maximum and minimum scores is wide designating that these participants' English skills have to be tested and classified because their language competencies are too various in the same classroom. Grouping congruent skills of participants possibly helps them boost up

their learning progress. The mean score of 65.2 and SD of 6.3 signify a satisfactory level of the listening-speaking skills. There are rooms for the participants to make their progress.

Implications

During the experiment of using the tools to ameliorate the language learning impediments, the researcher observed the participants' attitudes and mentality toward the contents. A number of generalizations emerged in the process. These generalizations benefit, for instance, educators, practitioners, and researchers for the purpose of creating, adjusting, or designing relevant legitimate materials.

The Participants Needed Help with Pronunciation and Stressing

Participants hesitated to divide new words into syllables while practicing the pronunciation. Some participants did not know how to break up words into syllabic units because those were peculiar words and sounds. That is because the participants have been inconsistently exposed to native English speakers' pronunciation. The participants have had very limited hours for pronunciation lessons in classrooms at lower levels of the pronunciation training. After the first 40-item set of pronunciation tool, the participants admitted that they can divide only the words with a few syllables. It was confusing for them to listen to tones and intonations in syllables from native English speakers. They implored their instructor to have extra pronunciation practices attached to the regular lessons in the listening-speaking classes. In addition, they have never had language mentors to monitor and analyze their pronunciation skills; their interlocutors in their social environments are Thais who prefer speaking the Thai language in daily life.

In terms of stressing, "suprasegmental organization is stressed and unstressed,

> Stressed syllables are pronounced with greater energy…through extra vowel length. It is crucial for intelligibility, closely connected with the articulation of individual sound segments,…and understanding which sounds in a language are the distinctive ones because they express differences in meaning."
> (Seidlhofer. 2008: 59)

The participants never learned to hear the correct stressing as "strong syllable standing out" (Seidlhofer. 2008: 59). The participants revealed that they had no clue how to stress on syllables. They depended on the oral examples from their teachers (Some teachers had very

little genuine stressing naturally in their own English pronunciation or rarely socialized with native English speakers).

Liaison is one of the major sources of confusion to the participants in pronunciation. Commonly, native English speakers pronounce the sound of the last letter. At the same time, they are already pronouncing the next word in the same sentence. This liaison produces a different sound within one or two words for non-native English speakers. When the liaison sounds occur between words, as clarified by some participants, the pronunciations of the words are anomalous for them in dividing the syllables. For example, the word "jurisdiction--/joor-is-dik-shen/" (Goodman et all. 1990: 70) the liaison of the 'r' is connected to the sound of /is/, then the participants misunderstood the word to be divided as /ju-ris-dic-shen/. Participants had no clue when it came to distinguishing the stressing syllable. As a result of liaison, the participants will never distinguish the syllables of the word 'jurisdiction' from the pronunciation unless their instructor adds it in the regular classrooms.

The Participants Lack Self-Confidence in Exploring New Words

Participants felt frightened of new vocabulary, which can be difficult to cope with in a short listening session. During the listening practice with the tool, the participants were anxious and lost their concentration. They tried to consult with their classmates, who were in the same situation. This would have an impact on the accuracy of the pretest and post test results. The researcher reminded them to relax, stay focused on the key words, and see if any key words answered the questions beginning with 'what,' 'when,' 'where,' 'why,' and 'how' from the listening session. Some questions required more analysis, and the participants could not find the answers in the exact words from listening. Thereafter they started being nervous. On the other hand, some were not sure whether the answers, they believed were correct, were the right choice. They hesitated to write the answers or ignored the items.

Some participants could not comprehend holistic contents of information to bring out the facts. While listening, they lost their general attention in order to focus on specific details in an attempt to internalize the information in the listening session. Lightbrown and Spada (2003: 133) indicate that learners have to pay attention to the language forms used in the listening pieces. Hence, they would be able to better internalize the meaning. Basically, when the details of a listening piece began piling up, lack of sophistication of language forms

and inexperienced vocabulary, caused the participants to have no idea how to cope with the details as "small packets" in their comprehension. They finally ended up failing to achieve the goals of listening comprehension.

The Participants Ignored Note-taking while Listening

Unfamiliar vocabulary intimidated participants, causing significant content loss. The participants conceded that new words threatened them and caused them to lose the necessary meanings in sentences. Thus, it produced a "chain reaction" in that not understanding unfamiliar vocabulary caused them to lose word meaning, leading to failure to understand entire contents and turning to comprehensible failure. Unfamiliar words totally impeded their learning progress. Rost (2008: 7) suggested the "parallel processing model: bottom-up and top-down" to mitigate this deterioration paradigm, either capturing incoming speech signals or utilizing prior knowledge to create meaning. Altogether, the participants in this research were at a lower level of receptive skills specific to listening only.

Besides, it was a strenuous task for these participants to take notes derived from the listening sessions. The participants must have a variety of skills to support note-taking. They attempt to pay close attention to specific ideas, word connotations, language forms, and note-taking skills (simplified forms and key words) for instance in academic classrooms. However, the participants hardly used these note-taking skills for support in listening comprehension practice. A different type of mentality, for example the states of being anxious, frightened, nervous, and lost shifted into their minds causing them to disregard the related skills in the process of taking notes. The majority of the participants mainly focused specifically on the words to answer the questions, while some questions called for higher-thinking analysis.

Documentary Programs Help Participants Elevate Their Listening-Speaking Skills with Long-term Exposure

In this research in the EG 2133 Conversational English course, the documentary programs were geared to the participants to append the listening-speaking activities in terms of input and output. The participants took part in the documentary activities with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm because they considered the programs boring. The

participants stated that the documentary programs were dry, unlike movies or cartoons. Yet, about 12 weeks of watching these programs was a short-term period for the participants to improve in English listening-speaking. Weyers (1999: 340) points out that the authentic materials provide quality results in "long-term exposure." In fact, the participants were in these activities only once a week, according to the class schedule. This shows that the exposure to the target language is interrupted and disconnected periodically, different from the ESL students who have been exposed to the target language in an ongoing process, both in the classrooms and the community.

The Participants Felt Comfortable with Memorizing Rather than Understanding Their Topics in Speaking Examinations

Rarely experiencing speaking English in daily life, the participants had a difficult time articulating in verbal communication. They were often threatened by academic speaking tasks because they felt "insecure about linguistic competency" (Ferris & Tagg. 1996: 298) Their documentary programs had been selected to prepare them for individual speaking. Transcribing, which was prohibited during the programs seemed to be the only alternative solution for some of them. Peers were involved in preparing and proof-reading in these speech examinations, a few participants admitted. As a consequence, most participants had to redo the speaking and follow the researcher's directions. Thereafter, they started seriously watching the programs, taking notes, writing the scripts (in their own words), and practicing the presentation. They also learned to check on the correct completion of contents, pronunciation, stressing, and comprehension.

While the participants were presenting, parroting occurred from some participants in this speaking examination. Some felt more comfortable reciting from memorization. They were allowed to use notes to guide their speaking. One participant stated that even though she had a note in her hand, she was unable to compose what she had to speak within a short time, five minutes, spontaneously. She felt that all the required skills: pronunciation, stressing, comprehension, vocabulary, and structure were too distracting to think about all at once, and this fact hindered their articulation. Goulden (1998: 91) points that "…oral reading, acting, and reciting are not technically "speaking" and…to not assume that…limiting to these oral activities fulfills speaking standards." "Interaction routine" or

"information routine" (Bygate. 2008: 18) could help participants develop their speaking. That is, speaking from Thai, students must transform their speech according to the requirements of the speaking standards, which are aforementioned elements, suitable for improving levels of competency.

English as a Second Language Learners Need Social Interaction as Part of Exposure to the Language.

Within a semester, forty-five hours of regular classroom lecture and thirty hours of lab in the Conversational English class are inadequate to improve students' listening and speaking skills. Such a limited time allows students to learn the concepts of the skills only theoretically. These students may have little practice interacting with classmates orally in English. In the conventional role of learning listening-speaking, social interaction promotes language acquisition. Social interaction occurs between non-native and native English speakers or simply between non-native speakers. Some theorists believe that language acquisition take place when both learners and interlocutors exchange information (Lightbown and Spada. 2003: 44), with authentic linguistic materials (Brown. 2001: 165), and with "input and interaction"—where native English speakers clarify their information in communicating with non-native speakers (Savillle-Troike. 2006: 102). This modification with the native speakers is associated with "scaffolding" in the learning process (Saville-Troike. 2006: 109).

In the questionnaire, question 5, 26 (32.5%) out of 67 participants believed that socializing with foreign classmates would help them improve their pronunciation skills the most. Twenty-one participants (26.25%) prefer English speaking classes where the lecturer uses English in teaching. This implies that the demands of English social interaction in the EFL environment, verbal communication with native English speakers, is an excellent key to success in communication.

The positive model of interaction has been found to be highly successful in the study of interaction and second language development. Lightbown and Spada (2003: 126-7) note that when learners interacted with native speakers, they produced "more advanced question forms" compared with other learners who never experienced such conversational interactions. As a consequence, social interaction with native speakers absolutely elevates

second language learners' verbal communication skills gradually at above levels of former language abilities.

The English Immersion Environment is Currently Needed.

From the questionnaire, 25 participants (31.25%) strongly believed that a native English speaking environment in Thailand (immersion) would be a creative, suitable situation for them to absorb English skills and articulate well. 32.5% (26 participants) prefer socializing with foreign classmates because they believed that it would help them improve their pronunciation skills. Unfortunately, the participants' environment has never been transformed to the immersion paradigm. Indeed, the institution has adequate facilities to support an immersion program. The only plan the institution may need to work on is to recruit a number of native English speakers in terms of exchange students from foreign institutions. This immersion idea may provide the participants advantages in verbal communication, support them to be more sophisticated in target language verbal activities, and decrease the 55% of the participants who like to speak English with native English speakers but sometimes cannot come up with the right vocabulary. Lightbown and Spada (2003: 130) indicate that in a study of immersion programs, "learners develop fluency, functional abilities, and confidence in using their second language."

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Students at HCU need the basic skills of pronunciation and stressing, listening, and speaking with the assisted environment of an English-speaking, immersion program. They need interlocutors of the target language, English. These are ultimately necessary key elements to strengthen the students' foundation of their English competency and eradicate types of language barriers. It is expected that this concrete foundation helps elevate their language progress in both real-life intercommunication and in advanced skills in higher education, which reward the students when they begin their professions. At this point, the findings will be summarized, and conclusions will be drawn from research based on the four scaffolding tools that had been used throughout. From the results, there will be suggestions of pathways for students' language development.

First of all, using the pronunciation and stressing tools, "*True Calling-Drop Me Off*," the syllabic unit was an unfamiliar tool for the participants. According to the results, they had a difficult time dividing words into units. The lack of this skill in pronunciation caused the majority of the students' scores to fall below average. From the comparison of pronunciation I and II, a gain of 14 students or 20.9% was satisfactory. Nevertheless, nervous feelings with lack of phonological training of the sounds of syllables, stressing, and liaison still were the "fear factors" for the students.

Second, 58 students (86.56%) received 50% or above scores on the listening tool "Pick Me Up" because they concentrated on pronunciation, stressing, and key words for note-taking, used real world knowledge, and guessed words in the process of listening.

Third, the speaking I and II tests on the "Speak It Out" tool showed little difference in scores. Almost half of participants received an above-average score of 20 (total score) on both I and II. Nonetheless, a few participants showed more progress.

Last, according to the results, 47 participants (70.15%) showed progress on the TOEIC scores from pretest to post test. A few participants demonstrated a scaffolding curve of scores. Two students' scores recessed on the post test.

In conclusion, the four scaffolding tools played some significant roles in these participants' learning progress. Yet, practice, time, and environment settings are the

bottom line of learning impediments of the participants in the language skills. Specifically, participants must cultivate new vocabulary through literary resources, such as magazines, newspapers, or TV/internet news in order to decrease stress when encountering pronunciation of new words. At the same time, some of these resources also familiarize the participants with liaison—linking sounds of words—which are projected differently in different corners of the world. Moreover, syllabic training must be provided periodically in listening-speaking classes. The more sounds are repeated, the more skills of syllabic units improve. In addition, the participants must continue to challenge themselves with different new words.

Similar to pronunciation, new vocabulary caused the participants to struggle in listening, in terms of understanding the contents. Checking word definitions from reference sources always impedes improvement of listening skills in second language learners in real life. In regular language classrooms, instructors must provide a lecture based on the strategies of word guessing and based on context to the learners (as in practical training of native English speakers). Besides formal training in classrooms, learners absolutely absorb real-world knowledge (treat it as a center of their world) from their environment. This background knowledge can be ready and used at all times in the learning process in both verbal and non-verbal communication.

In verbal communication, the participants were eager for more practice. Practice is the key to success in learning language, both in classrooms and the real world (Kwai. 2011:76 and Gannaway 2011:43). When speaking, the participants felt more relaxed with freedom of choice in speaking about any topics of interest. This freedom-of-choice option built the participants' self-confidence in formal speaking, even though they spoke with some nervous feelings. In order to have practice discipline in speaking, social interaction is needed in the participants' learning environment inside and outside of classrooms. Social drama is also a proper, enjoyable format of communication.

The results of this research revealed that the scaffolding tools helped the participants to improve their language progress, even over a short period of time. Syllabic units, stressing, liaison, word guessing, note-taking, key words, for example, were the primary factors which brought success in language learning. Age does matter. The earlier the participants were exposed to the target language, the better their English competency. In addition, social interaction with native English speakers promotes fluency in verbal communication, together with the strong support of immersion settings.

As a consequence, this research specifically responded to the objectives in discovering the students' competencies, refreshing knowledge and improving the students' skills, and searching for effective methods of teaching the second language learners:

1. The scaffolding tools helped find individual's target language ingenuity and pinpointed precise levels of the skills: syllabic units, pronunciation, stressing, listening comprehension, and speaking that the students primarily need in order to enhance their language learning reaching individual ultimate goals.

2. The scaffolding tools allowed the students to revive/practice/improve how to distinguish syllabic sounds, word pronunciation, and stressing through vocabulary to explore the main contents in listening practices and utterances.

3. The scaffolding tools were creative methods to rectify such skills' barriers, even though it takes times to cultivate and improve. The results elicit earning progress of the students. Hence, the students enable to apply the skills to deal with a bewilderment of pragmatic, phonetics, and semantics in complicated academic contents at a higher level of language competency.

Research Limitation

While conducting this research, the researcher found some obstacles in this research process. Time was a major problem in the step of data collection. At the time, some tools could not be used for adequate periods. Nevertheless, the data provided a decent result to the point where the researcher could discover how accurately the tools affected the outcomes. Besides, obstacles came from the participants themselves in terms of language competency. The limitations can be focused on the following items.

1. Data Collection in the Classroom

Collecting data in this research depended on the factor of time. Throughout the semesters, the researcher had to collect the information in a regular classroom, together with a regular schedule of teaching the course (Conversational English). All of the materials of each week had to be covered according to the lesson plan of the course within the semesters. Moreover, all of the tools and tests had to be conducted within proper hours. Time management was occasionally critical in some periods. Also, some tools were used unequally compared to others. For example, the "True Calling-Drop Me Off" tool was used twice to assess the improvement of the

participants' pronunciation. However, the "Pick Me Up," listening comprehension tool was set as priority because it was created for the participants to experience the English language in different situations in real life communication.

2. The Course Assigned by the English Department

One of the main limitations which delayed this research was that the Conversational English course (offered yearly) assigned to the researcher to teach was in different academic years. The researcher was never able to collect total data from the same participant every time the tools were used in the couple sections due to the absence of participants. As a consequence, the data collection never matched the number of participants (60 participants) required in the research proposal, within a single semester. The obstacle of data collection re-occurred when the researcher was assigned to teach in different courses in the next semester. Therefore, the data collection was delayed. The last section of data collecting began again in the course of the following academic year.

3. Cooperation of the Participants

Around 55% of 120 participants consistently contributed time and data to this research. These 67 participants passed through the entire process of each tool. They intentionally joined this research for different purposes. Some primarily wanted to improve their English skills within a semester. Others believed that this experience would bring some progress. The remaining 45% (53 participants) missed being trained with some tools. All of these factors made it difficult for the researcher to follow and collect the data after the semesters were completed. Eventually, the numbers of participants who did not complete all tools had to be dropped off the list.

4. The Participants' English Background

The English background of participants was not a significant factor in their performance of providing data. Their levels of English competency were set aside in evaluating their language progress. Instead, they had to use the skills from being trained in each tool to master the tasks, listening comprehension and speaking. In answering all questions, these participants had no clues on some items because the contents contained some English expressions which were new to them. Some students duplicated the answers from classmates. Monitoring the participants had to be done frequently for the accuracy of the results in this research. Otherwise, the results of this research could have been affected in terms of score accuracy and interpretation.

These few limitations were experienced during this research. These key hindrances caused the research delays and inaccuracies which could possibly influence the research outcome as a whole.

Further Research

In the light of a second language learning progress, educators have to realize the needs of learners as a whole and endeavor to help them ameliorate their English competency by creating related programs and learning environments. In the case of the participants in this research, they knew what they really needed to assimilate into their language skill environment. These key elements are, for example, native English speakers (native English teachers and peers), an English-speaking environment, and facilities accessing the target language. That is, the participants have to communicate with native English speakers through reading and writing and also verbally in natural context. In other words, they must interact with these interlocutors in their daily lives. This also means that the institution the participants are attending is solicitous about students' target learning by supporting an exchange program with a group of educational institutions with native English instructors and students. Gannaway shared an experience when she tutored a Taiwanese student at Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota, USA. The student spent one year as an exchange student, coping with language barriers. During the year, the student was involved in many activities with a number of American clubs on campus, besides his regular courses. In addition, he also found challenging English materials on his own and asked for clarification from Gannaway. After the program finished, Gannaway commented that the student's English comprehension and speaking competency had progressed almost to the level of a native English-speakers' undergraduate level.

On the other hand, an immersion setting in which community members articulate the target language routinely, may accelerate the participants' language learning progress. Arndt et al. (2000: 62) pointed out that one way to acquire a target language is immersion in daily life and culture. It may not be easy, but "feasible, cost-effective or context-appropriate learning is possible in most L2 teaching/learning situations." This suggests that the participants must be in such an environment that promotes authentic language and culture. It is dysfunctional when a second language learner uses a target language without the natural connotations of the words

which people in the target society use regularly. An ESL student's case can illustrate this situation in that she imitated her native English roommate, who cursed in frustrating situations. The ESL student was eager to acquire the way the native- speaker roommate talked during the time the ESL student was still adjusting to a foreign country. Because of her innocence about the culture in the country, the ESL student shared the cursing with people when she socialized, both in her residence and in public. This drew immediate attention from the public because the student was obviously naïve about the culture. Therefore, it is crucial for second language learners to learn both the target language and culture as the core concept of immersion.

In the interviews with American educators, both Kwai and Gannaway agreed on the value of the immersion setting. Kwai saw it as an "English Zone, International Campus, or International Building" where everything is in an English environment. In general, Kwai believed that immersion would help second language learners to acquire "enunciation of pronunciation that is actually very native, very local to English." On the other hand, Gannaway focused mainly on the instructional aspect. She believed that immersion is the key to helping students' language improvement, especially when it is implemented through regular classroom teaching—the target language used in the instruction. Also, students must feel at ease in order to articulate the target language without being mocked by their classmates. However, Vogel (2009) concentrated on low-English-competency students, insisting that there must be moments when the students can use their first language to assist their target language learning—immersion with some usage of a first language in clarifying in the learning process.

For further research, it would be interesting to concentrate on an immersion setting in our institution. The institution may consider positive outcomes (and also risk factors) which can contribute to and enhance the effective domain in language teaching through immersion education. Yet, the feedback from learners must be a part of the further research. The response to the feedback must address the needs of the learners. The institution must continue to focus on learners' progress in the target language. This strengthens the institution's curriculum in the current competitive world of education.

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Appendix

**Constructing the Efficient Undergraduate Scaffolding of Listening-Speaking
in English
Huachiew Chalermprakiet University
Questionnaire**

1. How old were you when starting learning English?
   - ○ less than 7 yrs. **(45%)**
   - ○ 7-10 yrs. **(10%)**
   - ○ 11-15 **(17.5%)**
   - ○ more than 15 yrs. **(27.5%)**

2. What is your major concern in the English communication?
   - ○ Pronunciation **(20%)**
   - ○ Accent **(16.25%)**
   - ○ Vocabulary **(27.5%)**
   - ○ Grammar **(33.75%)**

3. Which English skills do you intensively want to focus on?
   - ○ Listening-speaking **(37.5%)**
   - ○ Reading-writing **(7.5%)**
   - ○ Listening-writing **(10%)**
   - ○ All of the above **(43.75%)**

4. From your answer in item 3, why do you focus on it?
   - ○ Future job **(78.75%)**
   - ○ My classes **(13.75%)**
   - ○ Personal preference **(7.5%)**
   - ○ Others…………… **(n/a)**

5. In which environment do you think it would help you improve your pronunciation skills
   at the most?
   - ○ English speaking class **(26.25%)**
   - ○ English speaking environment **(21.25%)**
   - ○ Classes with foreign instructors **(18.75%)**
   - ○ Socializing with foreign classmates **(32.5%)**

6. Which of the following is the most efficient way of learning pronunciation?
   - ○ Practice pronouncing syllable by syllable **(21.25%)**
   - ○ Learning signs and symbols of phonetics **(8.75%)**
   - ○ Listening to pronunciation from native instructors **(40%)**
   - ○ Learning pronunciation through commercial programs**(30%)**

7. Which are critical sounds in the English pronunciation?
   - ○ /r/, /l/ **(31.25%)**
   - ○ /v/, /w/ **(18.75%)**
   - ○ /th/, /ge/ **(40%)**
   - ○ Others…… **(8.75%)**

8. What type(s) of media would support learning pronunciation?
   - ○ Songs **(12.5%)**
   - ○ Speeches **(21.25%)**
   - ○ Documentary program **(13.75%)**
   - ○ Movies, cartoons,… **(52.5%)**

9. How do you mark stressing sign (ḱ)?
   - ◯ The second last syllable of words **(21.25%)**
   - ◯ The second syllable of words **(37.5%)**
   - ◯ The middle syllable of words **(17.5%)**
   - ◯ An instructor's pronunciation **(22.5%)**

10. When you cannot mark the stressing sign on a syllable of a word, what do you do?
   - ◯ Asking an instructor for the stressing **(21.25%)**
   - ◯ Looking up in a dictionary **(32.5%)**
   - ◯ Listening to the pronunciation repeatedly from media **(40%)**
   - ◯ Others……………… **(5%)**

11. What factor(s) does it hinder your listening comprehension?
   - ◯ Pronunciation **(22.5%)**
   - ◯ Stressing **(15%)**
   - ◯ Vocabulary **(20%)**
   - ◯ All of the above **(42.5%)**

12. While listening, what do you concentrate on?
   - ◯ Contents **(5%)**
   - ◯ Key words **(60%)**
   - ◯ Vocabulary **(27.5%)**
   - ◯ Word definitions **(6.25)**

13. What do you do while listening to a reading?
   - ◯ Memorizing words **(20%)**
   - ◯ Note taking **(41.25%)**
   - ◯ Jotting down only key words **(23.75%)**
   - ◯ Copying exact words as much as possible **(13.75%)**

14. What kind of media would help you improve listening skills?
   - ◯ Documentary programs **(16.25%)**
   - ◯ News **(8.75%)**
   - ◯ Movies **(68.75%)**
   - ◯ Others………….. **(3.75%)**

15. What type of environment do you think it would help you improve your English?
   - ◯ Thai environment where some people can speak English **(16.25%)**
   - ◯ Native English speaking environment in Thailand **(31.25%)**
   - ◯ English speaking countries **(33.75%)**
   - ◯ Both Thai and English environment **(17.5%)**

16. When listening for comprehension, what strategy would help you to understand the content?
   - ◯ A teacher should explain any word students are going to hear. **(48.75%)**
   - ◯ Students should study certain English expressions. **(25%)**
   - ◯ A teacher should summarize the entire story. **(7.5%)**
   - ◯ Students should be challenged by exploring the content by themselves. **(17.5%)**

17. What type of English instructor will probably help you to improve your stressing?
   - ◯ English native speakers **(50%)**
   - ◯ Thai instructors whose English is second language and outstanding **(47.5%)**

18. While speaking, what method would help you to get message across, if you get stuck?
    - ⭕ attempting to explain the target words **(20%)**
    - ⭕ asking a teacher **(27.5%)**
    - ⭕ guessing words **(25%)**
    - ⭕ checking words from a bilingual dictionary **(25%)**

19. When you are assigned to take a speaking exam, what do you prepare yourself for it?
    - ⭕ I write a script and memorize it. **(16.25%)**
    - ⭕ I write a script from my point of view and memorize it. **(33.75%)**
    - ⭕ I write a script and speak it from my understanding. **(43.75%)**
    - ⭕ I copy from original paper and memorize it. **(5%)**

20. How do you like to communicate in English?
    - ⭕ I like to speak English with native English speakers and my English teachers.
      (32.5%)
    - ⭕ I like to speak English with native speakers but sometimes I get stuck with words.
      (55%)
    - ⭕ I don't like to speak English much because I am afraid to say word words.
      (5%)
    - ⭕ I don't like to speak English at all.
      (6.25%)

**Constructing the Efficient Undergraduate Scaffolding of Listening-Speaking
in English
Interview: Susan Gannaway
Master Tutor, Advising and Retention Office
Winona State University
Winona, Minnesota, USA
October 20, 2011**

Nutsakolpach:	This interview will be based on pronunciation, stressing, listening, comprehension, and speaking. These skills are linked to listening and speaking skills. Good morning, would you please introduce yourself and tell us about your job position and type of job and experience.
Susan:	My name is Susan Gannaway, and I'm working as a Master Tutor in the Department of Advising and Retention at Winona State University. My work experiences are a long history in education, including having ESL children in my classrooms.
Nutsakolpach:	Which countries have been represented in your work with Asian students?
Susan:	I have worked with students from Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Korea, Sri Lanka, and India. I think that's about it.
Nutsakolpach:	Generally, what do think of Thai students' English competency in terms of pronunciation, stressing, listening, and speaking skills based on your experiences working with them. Please rate as good, satisfactory, or poor.
Susan:	I would say "satisfactory." I worked with them only when they were here a short time, and good English skills need time to develop.
Nutsakolpach:	Now, we move to the pronunciation. First, which sound of English pronunciation do you think Thai students struggle with?
Susan:	In common with some other Asian students, they mostly struggle with the /l/ pronunciation and the /r/ pronunciation.

	It depends on the placement of this consonant in the word, either in the front, or in the back, or in the middle.
Nutsakolpach:	And then, they probably have problems with other things too, like the /th/ sound.
Susan:	Yes, some of consonant digraphs.
Nutsakolpach:	What are your strategies to help students with these problems?
Susan:	Well, I usually try to show them the correct pronunciation and have them practice over and over. If it's more difficult, then I will give them lists of words with a beginning, intermediate, and a final consonant to work on. Sometimes, I even draw diagrams of the mouth showing where the tongue should be, or I press a finger on a certain part of the throat. Or sometimes, we even do it with…just making sounds to practice…making sounds like animal sounds, silly sounds.
Nutsakolpach:	Basically, let them pronounce it, let them talk.
Susan:	Yes.
Nutsakolpach:	In terms of ending sounds, there are sound endings in the form of –ed for example, /t/, /d/, /id/, /ed/. What kind of practice would you suggest for Thai students in order to improve their pronunciation?
Susan:	First, I practice with lists where they repeat these types of words over and over. And then, it has been helpful to make up sentences. The word is used in the natural sentences…in a natural conversation, but the sentences include a lot of these words. In other words, it can also become a nonsense sentence emphasizing these words, these sounds.
Nutsakolpach:	Do you know any sources that they can check for pronunciation?
Susan:	Well, I told them to use the dictionary, and I will write it out in syllables too and show the stress mark, the pronunciation. I find that the "shwa" is a kind of puzzling

	thing for them. And the "shwa" can actually be fun because it is a grunting sound.
Nutsakolpach:	So in writing "shwa," what do you teach?
Susan:	Well, "shwa" is the /u/ sound, the unaccented syllable, like about--/a-bout'/.
Nutsakolpach:	Oh! I see. OK. In order to decrease the problems, do you feel that college students should take a linguistics course and focus on phonetics?
Susan:	This depends on the individual. I would say I don't think it should be mandated, but somebody should screen them and listen to them, and if they think they need a linguistics or phonetics course, they should have to take it. There are some students who would not need to take it, who can correct pronunciation quite quickly.
Nutsakolpach:	So basically, they need somebody who can correct them.
Susan:	They need somebody to correct them, but they also need somebody to screen them at the beginning and say "This person, I have heard how this person speaks. They need to take phonetics."
Nutsakolpach:	I see. So it should be an individual case.
Susan:	Individual case.
Nutsakolpach:	What would be a short cut process of improving students' pronunciation?
Susan:	Well, just giving them opportunities where they have to read certain words or say certain words over and over. There must be some drill but also like a chance to read a script from a play with the teacher, a chance to use natural conversation over and over.
Nutsakolpach:	I see. So they should have time to socialize with native speakers.
Susan:	Oh yes! This is so important.
Nutsakolpach:	What kind of environment do teachers need to create in language classrooms? Most teachers who teach English

courses at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University (HCU) use the English language in teaching.

Susan: Well, if you always use the language in your teaching, of course it becomes immersion. It's much more helpful to have it constantly around you, even in the instruction that you gave. But I think you need to create a climate that put students at ease, that makes them feel comfortable. If you make mistakes, I won't criticize you; I won't laugh at you. I just want you to do better, and I want you to feel comfortable doing it. I think humor…if you can create materials with humor, this helps a classroom situation.

Nutsakolpach: So, immersion is the key too.

Susan: Yes.

Nutsakolpach: What is your opinion of teaching pronunciation by syllabic unit?

Susan: I think it works. I do it; I write it out. I show the stress. I show the sound of the vowels. Sometimes, not all of us learn well by hearing. I myself have to see it in writing. That's my best way, and I think it's the best way for some students.

Nutsakolpach: So…depends on students' learning style.

Susan: It depends on students.

Nutsakolpach: So, learning syllabic units is helpful.

Susan: It's helpful. It's been helpful to me when I work with students.

Nutsakolpach: Now, for stressing. I have experienced talking with some of the international students here. Sometimes they don't know how to stress, especially Thai students. When talking with Asian students, especially Thai students, do you notice any problems of stressing?

Susan: Yes, not consistently again, but with the individual students. You do notice it. And they tend to emphasize the last syllable, probably more, like the ed in the word "interested." We would say "in'-ter-est-ed," but sometimes

it comes out incorrectly, and this is not only Thai but some other students. It comes out more "in-ter-est-ted'."

Nutsakolpach: What should a teacher do to solve the problem?

Susan: Just model it, model how it should be done. And write it out showing where the stress mark is and have the students practice it. After you do that, practice again with the sentences.

Nutsakolpach: So, let them practice to see and hear which syllable on the word should be stressed and let them follow. What kind of stressing lesson should a teacher use?

Susan: Well, as I said before, give a list to practice orally, see it in the written form, dividing it into the syllables, marking stress, and hearing it over and over. And then using it. For instance let them read something that uses that word, and they must read it correctly.   Ask them to use the word orally in a sentence. To me, just use it over and over with much review.

Nutsakolpach: Let them do it frequently until it becomes their habit.

Susan: Oh! Yes. Much review!

Nutsakolpach: And they should be conscientious too.   What extra learning…I mean what outside classroom activities, should students look for…to improve their stressing skill?

Susan: Well, it's conversation. Look for every opportunity to talk to American people. I'm just using this as an example because I'm sitting in America. But Americans anywhere will usually talk to you easily. It is very acceptable to make a conversation with a person who is serving you in a restaurant, a person who is serving you in a store, for example. Many of the students in a language classroom come to tutoring with us for extra conversation, for hearing certain words spoken over and over.

Nutsakolpach: That's a very excellent example. And in the case of HCU where the environment is for EFL students, classes have

been taught by using English but the environment outside of the classroom is Thai. So what would you suggest?

Susan: I would suggest that a student find an English speaker, a tutor. That's probably the best way that you can hear it. Have the tutor practice with you outside of the classroom.

Nutsakolpach: Do you think read aloud lessons would help students to speak with proper stressing? Any suggestion?

Susan: Yeah, I do think that does help. I would suggest you pick contemporary materials, something that students like to read, maybe for example the graphic novels that look like comic books. I'm sure you're familiar with that. It is something that is light and easy and is very good practice. I have helped ESL students read from a textbook, and I look for the key words. For instance, if someone comes in with biology reading, I look for the key words and have them practice those especially.

Nutsakolpach: What kind of materials would you suggest teachers use to practice proper stressing?

Susan: Well, as I said, probably you should look at their coursework to see what they need to know for the courses they're taking that semester, but then, if you can, supplement it with something contemporary and light and humorous.

Nutsakolpach: Now, we move to speaking. In your opinion, when should Thai college students be required to study English in an English speaking country?

Susan: I would say that when their English skills are excellent, they should not be required to do this. But when skills are still developing, I think a good student would want to assess their own ability and try to get as much help and practice as possible while they are living in a foreign country. I would suggest that most Thai students sign up for English even when they think that their English skills are quite competent.

Nutsakolpach:	So they try to be challenged.
Susan:	Well, they don't know the latest slang. They don't know the latest figurative language. Sometimes it's being used commonly.
Nutsakolpach:	Expressions.
Susan:	Yes.
Nutsakolpach:	When English skills are at a lower level, does the concept of classroom immersion work in an EFL environment?
Susan:	Yes, I think this is valuable. Most people who came to America one time as immigrants, were not speaking the language,and were thrown into the culture. Many did not volunteer to sign up as students, so they had to learn English on their own. And learning English in the "marketplace" was effective.
Nutsakolpach:	So, the environment is the key too.
Susan:	It is. It's very helpful
Nutsakolpach:	So, under pressure, students will learn.
Susan:	Under pressure of economics. For instance, the Hmong women who came to America did not speak English, did not go to school to learn it. But they learned it because they could sell their products in a market place. And they learned money words first, just as an example.
Nutsakolpach:	And also their children had to be put into schools where nobody spoke the Hmong Language.
Susan:	Yes…yes.
Nutsakolpach:	They had to speak English.
Susan:	At first, these women had their children standing by them at the market place to help translate, and now they don't need their children. They do it all alone. There is nothing like money to motivate.
Nutsakolpach:	What technique would be helpful for Thai teachers to use in listening-speaking classes?
Susan:	Well, I think things that I found valuable in the classroom are plays. Students love to do plays, to do role-playing

situations. There are game when they are forced to ask each other questions or guess some secrets parts of the games. They love these types of things.

Nutsakolpach: What is the best way for Thai students to improve their English skills inside the classrooms?

Susan: Pay attention…while the teacher's teaching…pay attention. Students should not be talking while the teacher is teaching. I think that sometimes they need to be reminded that learning is a task that they may not always enjoy, but paying attention now is going to be good for their future.

Nutsakolpach: And block out some other things that are not related to the classroom lessons.

Susan: Definitely.

Nutsakolpach: How do you feel about the value of students' learning focusing on real materials in the real world, as opposed to major concentration on textbook learning? The real world is defined as teaching with such materials as newspapers, popular magazines, field trips, classroom guests, computer websites.

Susan: I think it needs to be a blend. I think students love the contemporary materials, but I think there are also a place in the classroom where you need to be very structured, with disciplined drill approach time. There is no other way to learn it. In casual conversation, you don't always pick up the basics of proper grammar.

Nutsakolpach: So these examples of real world materials, you found them helpful.

Susan: They are helpful. They're glamorous, but they are not the only thing. You still need some practice.

Nutsakolpach: It should be a combination. What would be the best way for students to practice verbal communication in an EFL environment where English is not the common language?

Susan: Ideally, the teacher would have time to sit down and have a one-on-one exchange conversation. This is not happening

in the classroom. Probably, the best way would be working with partners one-on-one. However, in this environment each partner is really not perfect in English. So I think sometimes use a script you read to each other. You're using the proper English because it's written out on the script. You are not experimenting or trying to extemporize. You don't make errors as you speak to each other. It's written out, and sometimes they can memorize also to speak to each other. But I think a script. I'm looking back to the time when many of my students would bring in a script from Friends, that famous TV series. I don't know if that TV program would be familiar in every country, but they loved to read these scripts. And I would read with them. I would take one part, and they would take the other parts.

Nutsakolpach: That adds humor in there too.

Susan: Oh…yes. It adds humor and sex appeal.

Nutsakolpach: The students enjoy watching and listening to it. Besides pronunciation, stressing, and speaking, there is the other thing that's been a problem in EFL students, especially Thai students. It's listening comprehension. How can EFL students be prepared for a listening comprehension lesson?

Susan: I think that (and I've done this,) the teacher would put key words up on the board and explain the key words, saying, "This is what you will be hearing. This is what the meaning is. And you probably know already, but we're going to be working at a normal conversation pace. Fast. This is good preparation, those key words up there on the board or the screen.

Nutsakolpach: Let them be familiar with the key words they're going to hear in listening comprehension lesson.

Susan: Definitely, the teacher has to do some ground work. You don't just switch the sound on and say, "Oh…listen to this." You just tell them, "This is what you're going to hear especially; listen for it."

Nutsakolpach:	Based on your experiences, what is the general ability of Thai students in listening comprehension? Please rate as good, satisfactory, or poor.
Susan:	I would say "satisfactory" in connection with all students that I've tutored. The important thing is that they should let you know when they don't understand. And very often a student is too proud to tell you, "I don't understand what you're saying." They try to muddle through and get it on their own, and this doesn't work. I think all students have to be taught to say, "Wait, please stop. It's too fast. I don't understand."
Nutsakolpach:	When they don't understand anything, even during the conversation, they let it go and pretend that they understand. And then they don't have the correct comprehension.
Susan:	They fake it!
Nutsakolpach:	They should change that habit.
Susan:	Definitely.
Nutsakolpach:	What do you consider major serious impediments to EFL students in improving listening comprehension?
Susan:	Well, first, they have to be motivated. They have to say…they have to sort of psych themselves into saying, "This is valuable to me, this type of lesson. I really need to concentrate." Then, also, I think that they need to admit when they don't really understand. As I just said, they have to admit it.
Nutsakolpach:	Accepting the skills that they have to improve has been a problem for them.
Susan:	And pay attention!
Nutsakolpach:	College Thai students frequently complain that they do not know enough vocabulary or how to use proper vocabulary in an appropriate situation. What strategies would help them with this problem?

| Susan: | Well, in the classroom, of course, the teacher must do the ground work and work with vocabulary before you introduce this listening comprehension lesson. Make sure that they know the vocabulary. But if you're talking about outside situations, they have to ask, and the vocabulary that is easiest to learn is what's connected with your life situations and interests. Here's where a student must get out in the community. If I'm in Thailand, and I don't understand Thai, I will ask about the menu. What does this mean? I'll try to pronounce it in Thai. You have to ask…you have to let down your pride. Just say "I need to know this," and you need to be humble and ask. |

Nutsakolpach: This is the process of learning too.

Susan: Yes. You don't learn unless you admit to yourself that you don't know it.

Nutsakolpach: When students are asked to listen to news, for example, what do they need to focus on? Because news keeps being repeated on TV or cable TV, and then they just keep reporting one event after another. As to proper speed, I believe it is too fast for EFL students. But…what do they need to focus on?

Susan: Well, the vocabulary is important. But what I would do if I were going to listen to the US news might be this. Lets say I were a Thai student, for example, I might try to go on the Internet first,…go to a Thai source. Maybe read a little bit quickly. The Internet shows reporting from a Thai newspaper. And then go to a newscast that is in English, listening for key words that you saw on a Thai paper. For instance, if there is a problem with Laos or something like that, you could expect that to be shown to you on American television. And by knowing the Thai words first, you look for the equivalent words in English. It's too fast sometimes. I think body language when you're watching television news helps you learn a little bit.

Nutsakolpach:	Yes. And I think watching news on TV, we can see their emotions while they're reporting and then that helps to understand what they're reporting too, more or less.
Susan:	Yes. But I do think you should do a little bit of ground work first and for example if these words should come up now on this English news broadcast. I'll look for those because those are the words that the Thai papers stressed.
Nutsakolpach:	Oh…good. What strategy do you think is most effective in note-taking while listening for comprehension. I created this question because I have one class Academic Listening-Speaking in English, and note-taking is one of the requirements in the class. And it seems like Thai students struggle with that at the lower-intermediate level of their English competency.
Susan:	Well, I would say that first of all when students take notes they write unnecessary words. And one thing you can do that I do with my students is that I teach them a shorthand…a few symbols, very fast, small symbols will take the place of common words. I tell them don't even write the a, or and in your notes. Just write basic verbs, basic nouns and leave the space on your paper where you can go back later and fill in more words to round out the comprehension.
Nutsakolpach:	In the note-taking, do you think they need to learn how to do the simplified forms?
Susan:	Yes. That's what I'm saying. They need to learn a simple way to make…the word "and." You should never write it out. You're wasting time. The lecture is going on, and you're still writing a simple word. Just basic verbs and basic nouns to begin with, and they can flesh out the ideas with more words later.
Nutsakolpach:	Or like the word "classroom." They should go by "clrm."
Susan:	Yes. Or even just "cl." because when they read it afterwards, they should know that it stands for classroom. I

think it comes naturally to you. So don't bother with writing all the words. You can go back and fill in the rest of the words later; just give yourself enough of the clues to do it.

Nutsakolpach: For listening practice, teachers may use either native or non-native speakers' recordings. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both techniques?

Susan: Well, I suppose the advantages of a native speaker is that you get absolutely clear pronunciation. However, I can qualify that and say you might have a native speaker with an accent too. That would throw off the pronunciation just a little bit. However, native speakers tend to speak fast. They speak at their normal rate ,or sometimes a native speaker speaks at a fast rate naturally. That's hard to listen to.

Nutsakolpach: So we have to select proper pronunciation from a native speaker.

Susan: Yes. I would say one that doesn't speak too fast. Even though I'm an English speaker, but sometimes when I listen to people speaking English I think, "Slow down, slow down. I have trouble understanding you." Students might think a non-native speaker probably feels is little more comfortable because that person's talking the way they (the students) talk. Their accent and the stress is a little bit more like the students are using themselves. So sometimes a non-native speaker is a good model for them. Look, this person studied and struggled the way I'm struggling now. And they are speaking very fluently on the recording.

Nutsakolpach: Thank you very much for your time, and I'm very appreciative of this interview.

Susan: Thank you.

Constructing the Efficient Undergraduate Scaffolding of Listening-Speaking
in English
Interview: Becky Vogel
Director of the De La Salle Language Institution
St. Mary's University of Minnesota
Winona, Minnesota, USA
October 21, 2011

Nutsakolpach: Please introduce yourself and tell us about your job position, type of job, and your experience.

Becky: My name is Becky Vogel. I'm the director of the De La Salle Language Institute which includes the ESL program and the ELB program. And I also teach in both programs.

Nutsakolpach: What is the ELB program?

Becky: The ELB program is Early Admission into the university. Normally, admission into the undergraduate program is 550 paper TOEFL. With the ELB program, they can enter the undergraduate program with the 495. So they will be taking regular undergraduate classes. But the first semester, they will take two special English classes and the second semester, one special class. But all three of those credits transfer to undergraduate credits.

Nutsakolpach: Oh! OK

Becky: So if they have 495, they are undergrad students. But they take these three special classes. They have me and Molly Lones as advisors. We track their progress and help them with everything.

Nutsakolpach: Sounds like a very awesome program.

Becky: It's great.

Nutsakolpach: OK. And this is also different from ESL.

Becky: Very different, right. In fact, the students right now who are ESL are working to get 495, so they can enter the ELB program, the bridging program, because most of the ESL students now want to get their undergraduate degree at St. Mary's.

Nutsakolpach:	I see. Which countries have been represented in your work with Asian students?
Becky:	A lot! But right now, mostly Chinese and in the recent past a few were Japanese. Recently, all of them are Chinese.
Nutsakolpach:	Any Latin American students lately?
Becky:	In ESL? Last year, there were some in the bridging program. Yes they were also.
Nutsakolpach:	In general, what do you think of Thai students' English competency, in terms of pronunciation, stressing, speaking and listening skills based on your experience working with them? Please rate as good, satisfactory, or poor.
Becky:	That's hard for me to do that because I couldn't lump them all together. It's all individual for me. I had Asian students who had really poor pronunciation, but I had students who were satisfactory to good. I guess it all depends on whether they were first starting or when they were undergrad students. So if I have to lump everybody together, satisfactory.
Nutsakolpach:	OK. And you have had experience teaching Thai students too.
Becky:	Yeah, a few, but now it's mainly Chinese.
Nutsakolpach:	Now, we move to pronunciation. Which sounds of English pronunciation do you think Thai students struggle with or Asian students struggle with?
Becky:	The /l/, the /r/, the /b/, the /v/, the /th/, the /ch/, or word endings like ed, /t/, even sometimes the /s/.
Nutsakolpach:	It's like there is no /s/ there but still pronounced /s/.
Becky:	Right, or they pronounce /s/, but it should be /z/ sound.
Nutsakolpach:	Right, the /z/ sound.
Becky:	But they pronounce /s/ instead of /z/.
Nutsakolpach:	What are your strategies to help these students with this problem?
Becky:	Honestly, the more context, real context, they have with the language, the better. I mean they can study in the classroom, but unless they actually get to practice it and use it in real life, it's not going to stick as well. So you know, speaking with

native speakers, joining activities with native speakers, watching television with native speakers in speaking.

Nutsakolpach: Also real world materials? Magazines, newspapers?

Becky: Yeah, I mean. And this program is kind of nice because you have the classroom, but really the importance of the classroom is what they do outside. You know, if we can get students to mix with Americans, those are the students who succeed faster than all the rest.

Nutsakolpach: Because they absorb the expressions?

Becky: Exactly!

Nutsakolpach: And then, practice to speaking a lot.

Becky: Right, in real situations. So they take what they learn in the classroom, and then they use it or modify it based on what they're interacting with.

Nutsakolpach: We come to the ending sounds, as you mentioned earlier. There are sound endings in the form of ed for example, /t/, /d/, /id/, /ded/. What kind of practice would you suggest for Thai students in order to improve their pronunciation?

Becky: Practice…practice with native speakers. Native tapes, also I found out, and it's been a long time since I taught pronunciation, and music. You know if you can put words and sounds to music or rhythm, it helps it stick in their brains easier than just saying it. Dance. No, but you put these sounds in the rhymes or beats they can hear. It seems to work well. You know, taking music and pronunciation and combining them.

Nutsakolpach: Good idea!

Becky: Yeah!

Nutsakolpach: In order to decrease the problem, do you feel that college Thai students should take a linguistics course and focus on phonetics?

Becky: It certainly can't hurt. I don't know what other courses they are required to take or what their goals are with language. I mean, is it just to pass the class or is the goal going out and teaching English? What is the general goal?

Nutsakolpach:	Basically, they have to take basic English courses, and those basic English skills: listening, speaking, or even grammar too. Reading and writing are also included. And these will get them prepared for higher courses toward their graduation. Then they normally go for the job that…for example, their major is English. And then, first thing they want to look for is a flight attendant job, working with foreign companies or going for graduate school, either in Thailand or in the United Sates.
Becky:	Yeah, if their goal is to use their English, yeah…it definitely does not hurt.
Nutsakolpach:	So phonetics would help.
Becky:	I think so if it's done right, and it's not boring, like grammar can be boring. Phonetics can be boring. But if it's made interesting, then it will be useful.
Nutsakolpach:	The way to transfer from students to teachers would be to work harder. Absolutely, there would not be a short cut. There must be practice in order to learn phonics..
Becky:	I don't see any short cut. In 20 years I haven't found a short cut.
Nutsakolpach:	Have to go into the process, and then teachers have to work harder to find the ways to teach.
Becky:	Yeah, the only short cut I found is like I said. You know, a student who can find a balance between studying in the book and using the language for real, combining those two, is the student who succeeds. That's more true than the other.
Nutsakolpach:	That reminds me about the communicative competence approach because they are learning in the real world situations and with real world materials--- practice outside of the classroom basically.
Becky:	Exactly, I mean you can't learn just only from the book. You just can't learn it correctly, just from mixing with other speakers. But when you combine those successfully, there you go!
Nutsakolpach:	So a textbook should be some kind of reference source?

Becky: Yeah, but not the only source.

Nutsakolpach: Right, OK. Now, we are going to talk about environment. What kind of environment does a teacher need to create in a language classroom? Most teachers who teach English courses at HCU (Huachiew Chalermprakiet University) use the English language in teaching.

Becky: From my experience, if you can build a sense of community with students, it makes the classroom…I don't know how to say it…a safe environment for them because learning a language and practicing that language is kind of scary. No one wants to make mistakes. No one wants to be laughed at. So you have students get to know one another and feel comfortable about experimenting in front of one another.

Nutsakolpach: And don't feel fear about making mistakes!

Becky: Exactly, a mistake is how you learn. So if you can get students to support one another, great.

Nutsakolpach: Well, I can say those years I've been in Winona, I have made a lot of mistakes.

Becky: That's how you learned, right? And think about if you've been in a classroom where the teacher and students laugh at you. "Oh! That's just stupid." You know you can't succeed in that kind of environment.

Nutsakolpach: And can't feel uncomfortable to speak out, because of mistakes.

Becky: Yeah! Comfortable to ask questions, to experiment, exactly.

Nutsakolpach: What is your opinion of teaching pronunciation by syllabic units? You know, when we have a word or a vocabulary list, and of course, some students may not know how to pronounce them. They don't know how to divide syllables. Would you think that it would help them learn by syllabic units?

Becky: It doesn't. That's kind of where my music comes in because you give a kind of rhythm. Figuring it out by syllables is hard. You know you have probably seen the teacher who makes (pounding sound) and claps out the syllables. But they can't

clap it out if they don't know the word. You know, if they see it's divided on paper into units, it's still hard. But if you have that plus some kind of rhythm you know what I mean, it works.

Nutsakolpach: Basically, if we adopt a song, and then we pull out some words.

Becky: Yeah! It doesn't need to be a song, something with a beat so they can learn what the beat means and how it transfers to the words that you're trying to teach.

Nutsakolpach: I see. I think I can see the whole picture now.

Becky: Because I have seen students…you know…try, even one word's divided up, and it does not work. It's so obvious like that all the time.

Nutsakolpach: Now, we move to stressing. When talking with Asian students especially Thai students, do you notice any problem with their stressing?

Becky: Yes, but I notice that in our students who were studying English as the second language. What syllable do you stress? It's normal…until they are familiar with the words.

Nutsakolpach: And don't speak in a monotone.

Becky: Get them to open their mouths.

Nutsakolpach: If you have noticed, which you have, what do you think it is derived from?

Becky: Other than that they don't know the word, I mean I'm not sure what you're asking.

Nutsakolpach: Because like …for Japanese for example, but not all Japanese students, I notice that some Japanese students speak in a monotone, and that is because of their language, their own language. I don't see much in Vietnamese students because they have five or more intonations in their language. And it seems like they can adapt those intonations into or apply the skills into English, the stressing in English.

Becky: Yeah! I agree but you know, the Chinese have seven stresses, right? And they get a sing-song pattern. And I can't really say about Thai. It's been so long since I worked with the students.

But even the Chinese students, their seven syllables, you know that sing-song pattern is carried over to English. So…for Thai, I don't know…sorry.

Nutsakolpach: That's OK. What can a teacher do to solve the problem?

Becky: Stressing practice

Nutsakolpach: What kind of practice?

Becky: Real-life practice, conversation partners, or you know what works well too is mimicking. You have a tape recorder, and you listen to a tape. They record their own voice and listen to playback. So mimicking, recording those types of things works..

Nutsakolpach: And let them listen to their own voice.

Becky: And keep track so they can go back to listen to their first attempt. The end of the semester compares their last attempt to the first attempt.

Nutsakolpach: That's a very good lesson to opt for. Basically, talking about the outside classroom, the real world you mentioned, that would improve their stressing too. Now, do you think read-aloud lessons would help students to speak with proper stressing? And suggestions?

Becky: Yeah! Especially mimicking native speakers.

Nutsakolpach: And there must be a native speaker to correct them?

Becky: Not to correct them, no. But I mean for example, your pronunciation is great. So when I say a native speaker, I'm talking about somebody who knows the correct stressing patterns, the pronunciation patterns. And when I say "mimicking," they're mimicking that authentic language, you know. You can do it, too. You can tape. You know what I mean.

Nutsakolpach: Like reading something and recording the sound.

Becky: They can compare, like yours to theirs. You know what I mean

Nutsakolpach: Like have a model.

Becky:	Yeah, you can read aloud, and the teacher can say "no." It's this way. That's useful. They can go back and "Oh! I forgot. How did he say it?"
Nutsakolpach:	That can be a comparison between the non-native speaker and their own speaking.
Becky:	Yeah! Modeling, be able to model.
Nutsakolpach:	Now, speaking. In your opinion, when should Thai college students be required to study English in an English-speaking country?
Becky:	When should they? Like for their degree?
Nutsakolpach:	In this case, it should focus on ESL courses language competencies. For example, a Thai student... she knows herself that she needs to improve her English skills for whatever the purpose would be. Then, this question would be relevant at the proper time. Should she start at a young age, or high school, or college, something like that?
Becky:	So, you mean age, not so much English ability.
Nutsakolpach:	Kind of…what's the suitable age for ESL students to come and improve their English skills?
Becky:	Well, the younger you are, the easier you're going to learn a second language. But at the same time, if you're talking about like a high school, they'll be in a boarding school, right? Living in the dorm, that kind of thing, can be hard for a young person too who's away from home for the first time. No connections to their parents. You know they might want to have fun. You know what I mean.
Nutsakolpach:	And it's hard to adjust themselves or their lives to a new environment.
Becky:	Exactly.
Nutsakolpach:	So that would be hard for high school age.
Becky:	You worked for the Cotter High School students. What would you think about that?
Nutsakolpach:	Some of them adjust well in a new environment, but they just need a little time at the beginning, probably a month. These

	students are enjoying the new environment. They have similar purposes in coming.
Becky:	Yeah. And age is just the tough thing because I have a student who is the same age. Some of them will be here for four years. Some of them will be out of here in a semester because of their focus.
Nutsakolpach:	That reminds me of one student here.
Becky:	Yeah, so …you know how it can be. I've had a student during a summer who was eight years old, eight years old!
Nutsakolpach:	From a Latin country? I remember that one.
Becky:	Eight years old, and I don't know, sometimes I think they do better than some of our eighteen-year-olds.
Nutsakolpach:	That one reminds me about the boy whom I picked up at the Minneapolis Airport. There were the other two boys who came with him too. The parents sent them on the plane.
Becky:	The two brothers, those two?
Nutsakolpach:	Yeah, one told me that his mother, when he was little, put on the English cartoons and let him sit in front of the TV. He kept listening to it.
Becky:	It's incredible at that age. They pick up a second language. My friend's children are very young, and they watched, you know, "Dora the Explorer." It's a cartoon which is spoken in Spanish. And this little three-year-old was speaking in Spanish already.
Nutsakolpach:	How old are the girls now?
Becky:	They are three and five years old now.
Nutsakolpach:	Oh. They're still young.
Becky:	They learned Spanish because of just watching TV. It's incredible how fast they picked up the language.
Nutsakolpach:	And that links back to your answer at the beginning, that the real world is very important and helps improve English skills faster. When English skills are at a lower level, does the concept of immersion work in an EFL environment, from your own opinion?

Becky:	Explain what you mean by this!
Nutsakolpach:	I mean at a lower level of English competency. Do you think the immersion environment…
Becky:	Like you were to send students over here who spoke barely spoke English?
Nutsakolpach:	It would be in Thailand, Thai people speaking Thai outside the classroom. But we try to make it to be English in the EFL environment.
Becky:	Oh! In Thailand.
Nutsakolpach:	Not in English-speaking countries.
Becky:	Got you! So English in the classroom but Thai outside. And you're talking low, low level. Honestly, I have to say "Yes." And I'll tell you why. We have students who are low…low…low. And they're here now. And they all speak Chinese. But who are the students, if I have to gauge how much their English has improved?. Would that be lower level or higher level? I'll tell you right now. It's the lower level. And pretty much they don't have a choice.
Nutsakolpach:	Limited!
Becky:	Exactly, now I know that there is a theory that says, "Oh! That shouldn't be that way." But I'm saying that I don't speak Chinese, but I allow them to speak Chinese somewhat in the classroom. You know what I mean.
Nutsakolpach:	Limited to their learning.
Becky:	Right, I don't forbid…English only…English only at that low level. But it does work. I sound really mean, but…
Nutsakolpach:	It's related to this question too about the technique that you think would be helpful for Thai teachers to use in the listening-speaking class. It would be like…
Becky:	50 students?
Nutsakolpach:	That's only one class for 50 students. Basically, I normally get over 20.
Becky:	Yeah, how can you teach a speaking class of 50 students?
Nutsakolpach:	Well, work hard! I have to work hard.

Becky:	I guess I mean use a lot of tape recordings.. You know that you can evaluate that way.
Nutsakolpach:	This situation is rare, especially for the lucky teacher.
Becky:	For lucky really good teachers.
Nutsakolpach:	I work harder than the others
Becky:	Yes, tape recorders, partners, pairs, speech.
Nutsakolpach:	In that situation, it would be English only, must be English only, because whenever they are paired up or grouped, they normally go back to their original mother language.
Becky:	Yeah, when they are that level, that's different than the low, low, low level. But it's not easy to make them speak English is it?
Nutsakolpach:	And then how can or what is the best way for Thai college students to improve their English speaking skills inside the classroom? That would be forcing them a little bit, right? For college, we try to let them speak English only. And then, that's related to your answer earlier that there are many ways to encourage them to speak English.
Becky:	Yeah. Are there many English-speaking television channels or radio stations? They can listen to, give reports on that, that kind of thing. Are there those types of resources?
Nutsakolpach:	One of those.
Becky:	Is there an English channel on your TV?
Nutsakolpach:	On cable.
Becky:	Maybe you can assign…you know…watch the news and report back.
Nutsakolpach:	But I have to decide on many channels because I don't want the same homework coming back with the same details.
Becky:	Yes, that's a program for everybody.
Nutsakolpach:	Even radio. They don't all need to do TV. They can be on the radio too. Those programs are great for listening. That's a good idea too to let them report what they learn from listening to those things and let them speak up in class about it.
Becky:	And that'll be good for vocabulary and…

Nutsakolpach:	OK. How do you feel about the value of student learning that focuses on real materials in the real world as opposed to major concentration to textbook learning? You explained that textbooks can be a reference source, right? And then we should focus on the real world materials.
Becky:	I think it's a good combination. I don't think it should focus on either one to give good balance. I mean, it has to be balanced.
Nutsakolpach:	For listening comprehension, how can EFL students be prepared for a listening comprehension lesson?
Becky:	You know I wish I had all the answers like this (snapping fingers).
Nutsakolpach:	That's OK. From your experience, you taught listening before, right?
Becky:	Oh…yeah! TOEFL yeah!
Nutsakolpach:	What did you prepare for listening to that?
Becky:	Oh…man! You know you use your regular teaching skills, like start with predicting. OK today we are going to listen to a science lecture, for example, TOEFL. What would you expect to hear in the science lecture?
Nutsakolpach:	In terms of vocabulary?
Becky:	Vocabulary, information…you know that kind of thing…
Nutsakolpach:	Let them predict.
Becky:	Prediction first and then maybe review some vocabulary words, and then listen to the lecture. But then after that, you just give them materials cold…and see what's happened. And you know what I've been doing now is having students sitting in real classes.
Nutsakolpach:	From here?
Becky:	That's great listening practice because you know, number one, they get to see…OK…I want to be in the business major. This is the kind of English I've got to know before taking classes like this. Or some them were worried about taking the TOEFL, so they'll get vocabulary. Maybe they wouldn't get similar scientific vocabulary here. Things like that, plus

listening skills. I don't think I talk slowly, but I know I do. While professors over there, they don't care if you are ESL or not. They're speaking as fast as they want to speak, using idioms, slang, or whatever. They're not trying to be careful.

Nutsakolpach: A student may not understand anything, but it is time for them to adjust their listening.

Becky: Exactly, they give you the chance to hear somebody besides their teachers here, plus they start picking up vocabulary and that type of thing.

Nutsakolpach: That reminds me of when I was here at the beginning of my schooling back in 1998. I started in De La Salle.

Becky: 1998?

Nutsakolpach: Yeah, at the time…when I listened to the radio, I didn't understand what they talked about. I tried to concentrate on that. I tried to figure out what they were talking about on the radio, but they went fast. After three months or four months, all a sudden I had something starting in my brain function, and I started to pick up and understand right away. I think that's a good thing, to listen to the radio, even the first time. Even if they cannot understand anything, they need to be familiar with the sounds, and expressions can be learned later.

Becky: Yeah, radio is a lot more difficult than television or speaking to somebody face to face.

Nutsakolpach: I know that I concentrated on listening to the radio until I got a headache. Then, I finished. I said, "Good enough for today." Based on your experiences, what is the general ability of Thai students' listening comprehension? Please rate as good, satisfactory, and poor.

Becky: Satisfactory.

Nutsakolpach: Medium.

Becky: Yeah!

Nutsakolpach: They have some room to…

Becky: But again, it depends on what level of English ability they have. Right now, if I were meeting you, I'll say "hi." But if I base it on somebody with the TOEFL of 387, I wouldn't.

Nutsakolpach: That would be hard for them to respond back.

Becky: Exactly. So it depends on how long they've been studying English.

Nutsakolpach: And then you'll get the format of greeting "Hello, how are you?" "I'm fine, thank you and you?" all the time from them. Wait until they improve. What do you consider major serious impediments to EFL students in improving their listening comprehension?

Becky: Lack of real examples or real experience, honestly, You're teaching English in the country where everybody is speaking Thai, right? So, once they step out of their classrooms, how much exposure to English do they have?

Nutsakolpach: Very low.

Becky: There you go! And I think honestly, it's just like if I were studying French here, once I leave the classroom, how much exposure I am going to have?

Nutsakolpach: Yes, exactly, except if you walk up to somebody who speaks French or who wanted to speak French; then the conversation starts.

Becky: Yeah, if you have a student who is determined enough to look out for those resources. You know, you said radio or television or somebody else who speaks French. Those students are going to succeed. But it's so easy for a student who is sitting in a class for three hours to learn the lessons, do the homework, and then go home and forget about it.

Nutsakolpach: Nothing that they can keep in their memory.

Becky: Right, because their friends and families speak Thai. So even though they might want to learn English, maybe they are going to have to take it a step further.

Nutsakolpach: Right, exactly. When students are asked to listen to news for example, what do they need to focus on, because it's hard and

quick?   For example, the student's competency is at an intermediate level, and then at the intermediate level, they can pick up some things but not completely well.

Becky: So, I guess it depends on the point of why they are listening. I mean…for pronunciation or for new vocabulary or it's for comprehension.

Nutsakolpach: Let's say practice for…for example, my class, Academic Listening-Speaking. I always ask them to listen to academic lectures because I have to follow the course syllabus. Then some of the students came to me and asked, "Teacher, what should I do to understand this?" But I added this lecture as a practice, like other classroom activities, one of those. And I don't grade on it because I think this is a part of practicing. The more they practice, the better their listening skills would be.

Becky: I guess, I break it down…you know comprehension. Can they get the main idea, vocabulary in context, can they get that? So, rather than focusing on the whole, break it down into parts, main ideas, themes, vocabulary. And eventually, it'll come together as a whole. But I think at that level, focusing on something so big is number one, overwhelming, and number two, their English isn't at that level. So, break it down in smaller chunks, specific things they're looking for. Instead of summarizing the whole lecture…"Tell me what do you think the main idea was." You know what I mean, things like that.

Nutsakolpach: And there should be enough time to practice, to reserve time for them to practice, quite often.

Becky: Oh! Yeah.

Nutsakolpach: How long would it be for the intermediate levels?

Becky: You mean the length?

Nutsakolpach: Yeah, the time.

Becky: You mean, the time of the speech they're listening to?

Nutsakolpach: Yeah, would one semester be enough to depend on the English competency?

Becky:	It depends. Do they have to take a standardized test to prove their levels at any point, or is it just pass the class?
Nutsakolpach:	They have to take a lower level first, those courses, starting from Communication I. Then they move to Communication II, and if their majors are not English, they go for their own fields.
Becky:	So they don't have to take TOEFL or IELT.
Nutsakolpach:	No, and then those students who major in English or English-Chinese, they have to move up to Conversation English. And when they move to a higher level; it would be English. I remember the code, EG 2143. It's about listening-speaking in English too, but a higher level, more advanced than academic.
Becky:	But you know, even in that class, you could have students whose TOEFL scores are 100 points apart. I mean in our classes, we do. And their grade in their class is one thing, but their grade does not necessarily translate to their English ability. So, wow, you've got a tough job.
Nutsakolpach:	Yes, all mixed up in there, a variety of levels.
Becky:	All mixed up in there. That makes it a lot more difficult. But I know how that is because we're dealing with the same thing.
Nutsakolpach:	So, here students, may…I mean, your idea is if we have a TOEFL test or any kind of aptitude test that matches to their English competency, that would be helpful to sort them out.
Becky:	It's helpful for me as a teacher. Because then I can see what that range is. And then I can…you know, use that knowledge in the classroom, like even it's like partner work. It will pair a higher level to a lower level, things like that.
Nutsakolpach:	Referring to the Academic Listening and Speaking, here is a part of what is a requirement of the course. Students have to do note-taking. What strategy do you think is most effective in note-taking while listening?
Becky:	Oh my goodness! I would like to come to one of your classes. It seems like it has to cover a lot.
Nutsakolpach:	That's quite right.

Becky:	Wow! Oh…strategy for note-taking. Yeah, it's hard. They don't even know what they are listening to…I mean
Nutsakolpach:	Do you think it would be easier for them or a proper way for a teacher to tell them that…"OK, what we are going to listen to is this kind of topic, this kind of theme, and here's what you need to do when you're listening?
Becky:	Yeah…you need to start out that way, but then eventually, you have to…
Nutsakolpach:	To leave that role.
Becky:	Exactly, you have to give them the skills to recognize somehow, "Oh! This is going to be the speech on business, or it's going to be the speech on math." You know, just like a reading. You look at the title, the clues like that, and just start doing that stuff on your own.
Nutsakolpach:	The last one. For listening practice, teachers may use their native speaker or non-native speaker recordings. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both techniques?
Becky:	I firmly believe a native speaker because when I learned French, I learned it to start off with a non-native speaker, and I learned a lot. But I also then decided…I had to go to Paris and study because I knew what I was getting here in Minnesota was not what I was getting in Paris. But at the same time, I could understand an American speaking French. I couldn't understand a Parisian because I never listened to a native speaker before. But if I'm only going to be working and speaking French in the United States, I don't need to have the authentic accent, right? So, again…what's the purpose…what's the student's goal?
Nutsakolpach:	Basically, for their school and for their future jobs.
Becky:	I know it's not always possible. But again, I, even for myself, always want a native speaker. But that's just me.
Nutsakolpach:	Also when we mention the United States, there are a variety of pronunciations. Then we come to the point of which one, right?
Becky:	Right.

Nutsakolpach:	In my opinion, I think that upper Midwest is the most suitable.
Becky:	It is. We have what is called "standard accent." So I mean you listen to everybody on TV.
Nutsakolpach:	They speak the way people do here in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.
Becky:	Exactly. You know people down south like maybe in Alabama, Texas, they want to be on the same national news, as a reporter. They have speech lessons to get rid of their accents. I mean…well, it's good or bad. I don't know.
Nutsakolpach:	I think people in the upper Midwest are lucky to have a standard pattern of speaking, pronunciation... stressing included.
Becky:	Yeah, and everybody can understand this accent. I've been to the South and I've been in the East, and I've met people. I don't know what they're saying because their accents are just so heavy. They can understand me, but I have trouble understanding them, but not everybody. I'm talking about some people who have that really heavy, heavy accent.
Nutsakolpach:	Native speakers with standard pronunciation, like the national pronunciation, would be the best.
Becky:	It would be really cute if they spoke like Texans because you know…that involves slang and idioms too and vocabulary choices. You know you are going to teach them southern idioms, eastern idioms.
Nutsakolpach:	"Over yonder"
Becky:	Yes.
Nutsakolpach:	It's like a few miles away. I experienced that too in summer in Georgia.
Becky:	Oh my goodness, I bet you did. Could you understand them?
Nutsakolpach:	At the beginning, it was hard to understand. For example, in a Chinese restaurant, I heard an old man who wanted to get a cup of ice. I was lost by the way he spoke, in terms of pronunciation. He asked a waitress, "May I have a curb of eyes?" I thought that he was talking about his eyes having a

curb or something. And I just repeated "a curb of eyes." I just adjusted back to standard pronunciation like news people report on the news program. "A curb," and I looked at him. Then oh, a curb, it would be a cup. Eyes, I knew that southern people have a drawling sound and try to make it shorter sound. OK. It makes sense that he needed some ice in his cup. It took me awhile.

Becky: You're like your students though. You're using those clues to figure out the language.

Nutsakolpach: I agree with you to about learning with native speakers for the correct pronunciation.

Becky: I'm not saying that should be the only way, no. But if I had a choice, that was what I would choose.

Nutsakolpach: For example, now, I'm a teacher. Then I have to follow the native way too.

Becky: Yeah, and I think you're a great teacher. In the United States, especially in Minnesota, how many people who are native speakers in French am I going to come across? Hardly any!

Nutsakolpach: Hard to find!

Becky: But I want to learn the language.

Nutsakolpach: A good accent in French is hard to find.

Becky: Yeah, it's very hard. I mean…in the years I've been here, I think I told you that I had two students who spoke French. So my French had gone down the toilet because I don't have a place to practice it.

Nutsakolpach: Thank you very much for your time. I enjoyed it very much.

Becky: I enjoyed it as well.

Constructing the Efficient Undergraduate Scaffolding of Listening-Speaking in English
Interviews: CK Kwai
Assistant Director of International Student Service Office
Winona State University
Winona, Minnesota, USA
October 21, 2011

Nutsakolpach:	Hello…CK. This interview will be based on pronunciation, stressing, listening comprehension, and speaking. These skills are linked to listening and speaking skills. First, please introduce yourself and tell us about your job position, type of job and work experience.
CK:	I am CK Kwai. I'm the Director of Study Abroad at Winona State University. I've been with Winona State for more than ten years now. I deal with both domestic students and a study abroad or plan to study abroad program and also international students that are studying abroad at Winona State.
Nutsakolpach:	OK. Which countries have been represented in your work with Asian students?
CK:	Asian students…wow…most of all the popular Asian countries from China to India, South East Asia…all of South East Asian countries. I would say probably all Asian countries in general.
Nutsakolpach:	OK. In general, what do you think of Thai students' English competency in terms of pronunciation, stressing, speaking, and listening skills based on your experience working with them. Please rate as good, satisfactory, or poor and explain your ideas.
CK:	I would say in general satisfactory. I would not say that…because when you say "students in general' I mean most of the English-colonized countries' students or countries that were formerly a colony of the British Empire. Those students tend to have a better command of English as compared to the norm than the countries that were not

colonized by the British Empire before. So Thailand falls under the second category, countries that were never colonized by the British Empire. Therefore I think, in general, the people's command of English is not as fluent as…say countries like India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia where these were former colonies of the British Empire.

Nutsakolpach: So, we can assume that these…for example, Thai students, have some problems, or they need more time to learn English to improve their English skills. What are your strategies to help the students with these problems in case you have an opportunity to advise one student from Thailand?

CK: Work hard! There is no short cut to learning a language. I usually say that to improve in a language, there are three things that students can do in general that are generally free. Number one, they can always listen to English news rather than a local dialect news or local language news. They can read an English newspaper instead of a local newspaper. And of course, they can always interact with others…not necessarily only English speaking people…others could be from different countries where they don't share a similar language. Then, they are forced to use English because I always say that in order to articulate in English, you have to be able to think in English. If you are constantly translating in your mind…you know…every time you hear something or you say something, you try to translate to a local language, a native tongue into English, then you are not going to become as articulate as fast as a native speaker is going to be.

Nutsakolpach: So, in other words, it means if they have a chance to be exposed to use their English competency in the environment where they cannot use their native language, that would be helpful.

CK: Yes. It's always helpful when they are…I use the word "pushed against the wall," where they don't have a choice but to use English.

Nutsakolpach: So in struggling, circumstances will help them succeed in a direct or indirect way.

CK: Most students that …there are very few students from my experience that are very self-disciplined that they spend hours each day improving in a foreign language. Most students are only able to do that when they are kind of pushed against the wall. They don't have an option.

Nutsakolpach: Yeah! I experienced that before too. OK. In terms of pronunciation, you know…ending sounds are very important too. There are sounds in forms of /ed/, for example /t/, /d/, /id/, /did/, something like that. What kind of practice would you suggest for Thai students to improve their pronunciation?

CK: I think…I mentioned it before. There is no short cut. So…therefore I have to say "practice." You just have to catch yourself all the time. It is not necessarily just endings. Ending…what I call "swallowing" a word or not completely enunciating a particular word sometimes is from laziness in really preparing yourself in listening or in practicing it. Also it's coming from not being familiar with the sounds, which probably happens in a lot of other languages. Their native tongue may not have that type of sound. For example, in English, the sound of "the." It's not found in a lot of other languages. So, that's for example, usually a dominant issue for Asian students where they cannot distinguish between "*tree*" and "*three*." Something like that you know, means they will have to pay a lot more attention to the actual sound. Once they realize it, they just have to keep practicing and keep working at improving or changing that sound.

Nutsakolpach: Basically, they have to be conscious of pronunciation and follow the proper form…OK.

CK: And that is the part where I would say…it's helpful to interact with a native speaker. That will be the benefit of having interaction with a native speaker because the non-native speaker will be able to actually imitate correctly from a native speaker as compared to a non-native speaker. Otherwise they may just continue to perpetuate that error. That's kind of continuing to promote that error that they have acquired or they have learned.

Nutsakolpach: In thinking of decreasing the problems, it seems impossible to eliminate the problems about pronunciation in second language learners. Do you feel that college Thai students should take a linguistic course and focus on phonetics?

CK: Only if they are really going to put it into practice. There should be no years of taking the course for the sake of taking it and not putting what they learned into practice. It's worthless then. I always say that they should take a class only if they are really going to put it into practice, make it a requirement. If they are taking it just to fulfill a requirement, then that's not going to help the issue.

Nutsakolpach: So, basically, if they need to take it for the regular purpose of adding to their familiarity with phonetics and then improve, it would just help them to be conscious of their speaking.

CK: Well, yeah. It's one of those "six of one and and a half dozen of the other." You can say that…you know…by forcing something, by requiring something like that, then they will get to learn the mistakes that they have been making. Or they are able to learn better phonics, the better way, or the more accurate phonics. But if they don't practice…put it into practice, it's still worthless. It's no use if it's not put into practice, they're not willing to practice, or

there's no opportunity to practice. Then, it is a waste of time and waste of money.

Nutsakolpach: And it's a continuing process.

CK: Yes. It's not one class, and you're done.

Nutsakolpach: So, practice is the key.

CK: Yes.

Nutsakolpach: And no short cut anyway.

CK: Yes.

Nutsakolpach: OK. No shortcut for improving students' pronunciation except practice…keep practicing.

CK: This is a way of practice making it perfect. It's really in order.

Nutsakolpach: What kind of environment do teachers need to create in language classrooms? Most teachers who teach English courses at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University, or HCU, use the English language in teaching.

CK: Well, to me the best way to learn another language or foreign language or keep it to English, for the sake of this conversation here... it's immersion. You have to immerse yourself in the language. Yes…you can teach the entire class in English, but if the students are not responding then, it's a one-sided conversation.

Nutsakolpach: Do you think it's possible to have an immersion idea in an EFL environment?

CK: It's possible. I mean it has to come down from the top administration, where they are going to impose that, what's going to happen. So, for example, I know there are foreign universities in different parts of the world where they have what they call "An English zone." It's an area where they speak English. Everything is in English…signs, everything is in English.

Nutsakolpach: In the university community?

CK: Yes. It's like a zone. Some people may call it "international campus" or "international building" or

whatever it is. So everything there is in English or whatever language. For example, there are schools in the United States where there are strong foreign language departments. So, they may have, for example, a French house where the entire building, everything, the signs steps into the building--- French is the only language that is spoken.

Nutsakolpach: OK.

CK: You build the immersion. You build the environment where students are expected to speak only a certain language, and they know that, that's an expectation. That's the way they would go if they want to improve spoken English, for example.

Nutsakolpach: So, immersion is one of the key success elements to learning English. I know that you have met many types of students from many countries, and when talking with Asian students, especially Thai students, do you notice any problems with their stressing?

CK: No. I have to say that I don't in general. It's really not what I pay attention to. So, I would say "no," not anything in particular. To me, most of the time, problems are quite common in general, general enunciation of pronunciation that is actually very native, very local to English. You know, like the /th/ sound, the /sh/, another example /sch/ where a lot of times I think students have an issue with saying the words *shoe*, *school*. You know…but sch sounds more German than English. Some of the more, I guess, the more western language sounds, you know, where they are not familiar with them. Or their native language does not have that particular sound.

Nutsakolpach: OK. So, you still understand talking to them even if they are slightly off from proper pronunciation or stressing.

CK: Yeah. I do know this because I deal with international students all the time. So, I've learned to…

Nutsakolpach:	Find the correct form.
CK:	Not necessarily. I've learned how to interpret most of it based on the sentence and not on individual words. I've learned how to listen to the entire sentence and try to understand the gist of the conversations rather than an individual word. So, I tend not to have any problem. Then, again if I am not sure, that's when I always ask. I always clarify. I want to make sure that I understand what they are saying. So, in that sense, I don't have a lot of problems, but every now and then, if I find a problem, I always clarify.
Nutsakolpach:	And then, it's inevitable. Some students have to talk in a monotone, right? Some of them are not familiar with stressing, pronunciation. And this problem has occurred in HCU too. What can teachers do to solve the problem?
CK:	That's the tough issue because even within the United States, I mean the north and the south, words are differently pronounced. You know…/po-ta'-to/ › /pa-ta'-to/ , /to-mae'-toes/ › /to-ma'-toes/. You know…/ec-co-nom'-ics/ › /ac-co-nom'-ics/. It's something I always say depends on how you learn it. Once you learn it and say /po-ta'-toes/, then it will be /po-ta'-toes/. That's how it is going to be. If you learn to say /pa-ta'-toes/, then it's how it will be. So, that's something hard to teach because I think a lot of it has a cultural tone to it. Like I say, you are going to use the northern part of the United States' accent, or you are going to the south, or you are going to use west coast, or you are going to use east coast accent. I mean it's a different accent in each part of the United States. That's going to be tough to find a standard approach, I guess. But there are certain words that are more standard than others.
Nutsakolpach:	OK. So, let's focus on the upper Midwest like Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Of course, students have this kind of problem because maybe ESL students just come here to take ESL courses. Of course their English

competency and the number of years they have been exposed to the language are not adequate. In their own countries they learn English in a proper way or just understanding at a certain level. Then, what kind of pronunciation and stressing would a teacher use? We focus on only the upper Midwest because we think that all people here talk like those news reporters on the national channels.

CK: I'll go back to "practice,"you know, "hard work," and "self discipline." I'm sure students hear it all the time. They know native speakers. For example, if you are here in Winona State, here in the US, studying English, you hear native English speakers all the time. Well, my question then is this: How often or how disciplined are students, after hearing how a native speaker says a particular word, that they actually practice saying it that way? Or do they just close one eye and say, "Well, how I speak is how it's going to be." It really comes down to how much discipline and how much individual students want to improve. How much do they really want to improve pronunciation? If they don't want to, they can hear 24/7 a day. But if they don't want to change, if they don't want to correct themselves, nothing will happen. Nothing will change. So to me the best way to improve in this pronunciation or stressing is really listening, really paying attention to English news. A lot of times, it's free, listening to songs, listening to the radio. I mean basically, you want to listen to a native speaker, and you need to pay attention, not just listen for the content, but also listen and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the individual words.

Nutsakolpach: And that's a good example of outside classroom activities. Do you think reading aloud would help students to speak with proper stressing? Any suggestions?

CK: Well, of course any forms of exercises or methods that will get them to open their mouths are good. If you can get

them to talk and then get them to read out loud, that means any time you can get them to open their mouths to say the words it's good. I mean I will not say it's always good. It's not very effective if they continue making the same mistake over and over again and read the same passage over and over again. But again to me it is better than zero. Yes，it's better than nothing.

Nutsakolpach: And on top of that there would be somebody who is an expert in the language to guide them whenever they mispronounce it, misspell it.

CK: Maybe have them repeat those words to make sure that they get it. Because if it's just correct it and move on, I mean, there is no real correction.

Nutsakolpach: Also, there is the keyword of practice.

CK: Practice…practice makes progress!

Nutsakolpach: Now, we move to speaking. In your opinion, when should Thai college students be required to study English in an English speaking country?

CK: My opinion would be the earlier, the better. Honestly, the earlier, the better because habits are hard to change.

Nutsakolpach: How early?

CK: To me as I say, as early as possible. Is it too late at a senior year? No，it's never too late. But the earlier, the better because that bad habit is hard to kick. Once you acquire a bad habit like a lazy way of pronouncing words or swallowing words, sounds, it's hard to change. It's very difficult to change. So therefore, the earlier they can immerse themselves into the native language speaking environment, the better it will be.

Nutsakolpach: And that is starting at a lower level. Then, we go back a little to the immersion you mentioned earlier. That would work well too.

CK: Yes, immersion actually works very well, either from a very basic level or at a higher level. It works very well across

the spectrum. Because if you talk about learning for example, look at young immigrants to the United States. They have learned English from a very young age. They speak very fluent English. It's because they have a very firm base as compared to people who just started to learn English in their 50s. For example, if they may not, it is because they have acquired along the way some bad habits, and it's hard to kick those bad habits. So again in the United States, we have a lot of linguists in English who were former students in the United States. They speak very well too, because it's based on practice that makes perfect. The more you practice, the more willing you are to put effort into it, the better the outcome is going to be.

Nutsakolpach: What technique would be helpful for Thai teachers to use in listening-speaking classes? Advice please, besides practicing. I mean some other key elements.

CK: I would say that it's tough for me to give you very specific examples because it is not something that I teach. But in general, I believe that to improve or to be better in a foreign language or in a second or third language, whichever the language that they will be learning, the key is really to pay attention and listen to news, listen to radio. But pay attention, not just listening for the sake of listening. For example, learning one new word a day, if you have that kind of attitude, that kind of discipline, then you at least make sure that you learn a word a day. That will be very helpful. They start when they are, say 10 years old, learning one word a day and learning it well, learning how to enunciate it correctly, how to stress the words correctly. One new word a day, my gosh, when they hit the word 20, they are probably becoming fluent. So it's a matter of putting forth the effort, and there is not a shortcut to it besides putting in the effort.

Nutsakolpach:	And then, it terms of speaking in classrooms, they also have to speak a lot, respond to the teacher.
CK:	As I said, the more they speak, the better they will get. It's because they will be more comfortable, and once they're comfortable, they are more willing to explore new words. And they probably have to push themselves further. Again the way they articulate is the ability to be able to think in English and not have to translate constantly. Because if they try to translate constantly in their heads when they hear something in English, translate it into Thai formally to answer, and then translate that back into English, I'd say "back out."
Nutsakolpach:	That would be a long process.
CK:	That's the reason why I've seen a lot of students hesitate to answer questions. It's not necessarily that they don't know how to answer. But it's because they're trying to translate and trying to figure out how to say it in English.
Nutsakolpach:	That process created proper English.
CK:	Yes.
Nutsakolpach:	How do you feel about the value of students' learning that focuses on world materials in the real world, as opposed to major concentration on textbook learning? The word "real" is defined as teaching tools, such as newspapers, popular magazines, field trips, classroom guests, computer sites, and texting.
CK:	Texting is not a good way of learning a language.
Nutsakolpach:	Because it's a short form?
CK:	Yes, it actually encourages bad habits. So I disagree. Texting is not something that is a way to learn, not a language. I definitely will not classify that because you know the amount of abuse that they have in terms of grammatical mistakes and things like that. Try to read the message. It's not proper English. So I disagree with texting. But other than that, newspaper is fine. Many times

I think, it depends on individual students. Newspapers, magazines, or novels and things like that may many times be more interesting to particular students than textbooks. Again, it depends on the use of the textbook, depending on the mix of the class. You may have a majority of the class that is not interested in reading very dry materials of the textbooks. So, to me, a good teacher is someone who truly understands the learning styles of the students. How does a student learn best? What motivates them? What are they interested in? And then use materials that are of interest to students, because if the students are interested, then they will read it. So, for example, you have a big group of female students in a class, and all are interested in fashion. Well, let them read fashion magazines because it's something they're interested in. They'll read it because they're interested.

Nutsakolpach: Because they won't feel bored.

CK: Yes. Therefore, you get them to read right away. You may have to redirect your syllabus and have them create questions. Maybe have two teams, one will ask a question, and the other will answer all about fashion, for example. They automatically will create these interests because they want to participate. They're interested in the topics, interested in the subjects.

Nutsakolpach: So, we should treat textbooks as a reference source.

CK: Yes. Textbooks should be reference.

Nutsakolpach: From those skills: pronunciation, stressing, speaking, now it comes to listening comprehension. When listening to news or documentary programs, students consider those as dry sources that they try to push away. How can EFL students be prepared for listening comprehension lessons?

CK: Well, again it comes down to interest. What are they interested in? What do they like? So if they like to travel, or if they like to know about other countries, there are all

kinds of travel documentaries: traveling in Europe, traveling in the United States. So if they're interested in traveling, then have them go through all the travel documentaries. I would say make them listen to them more than once. You can create events and activities out of it where they may be required to reproduce, summarize that particular travel documentary or produce it in different forms. So, that way they will have probably really listened to it multiple times. They will get that information, absorb that information, translate that information into different formats and present it. So you would have listening; you probably also have some reading. They have to do some research and verbalize in terms of a presentation. Again, it comes down to students' interests. Also, for example, if you have a class where there are a variety of interests, then it could be classroom projects that you pick. They can pick any subjects they're interested in.   Then, they have to explore, do the research and present it. It could be a 10 minute short presentation in their own words. Make sure they bring their sources, and that way I think once they're interested in something, then they're willing to work on it.

Nutsakolpach: Based on your experiences, what is the general ability of Thai students in listening comprehension? Please rate as good, satisfactory or poor.

CK: I would say in my experiences, I'm satisfied with it. I will not classify it as poor.

Nutsakolpach: And not good either!

CK: The reason why I will not classify it as good is because it's not necessary because I haven't done any evaluation. It's more from the standpoint that I don't get a lot of feedback, so I don't really know when they truly understood or not. Therefore, I'm saying satisfactory and not good, in that sense. I don't know for sure they truly understand.

Nutsakolpach: There's still some room for them to improve more.

CK: Sure, there is always room to improve for anybody, even for me as a native speaker.

Nutsakolpach: What do you consider major serious impediments to EFL students in improving listening comprehension?

CK: I think it has to do with the environment that they're in, their opportunities. They may not have the opportunity to really practice what they have learned, and probably it is also the lack of English resources that are available to them. I think it has a lot to do with, to be very honest and I don't know the actual source, particular cultural aspects. It's the same for Thai students, but in general also when I deal with Asian students, especially students from China and Hong Kong. It isn't that they are not culturally taught, but doing personal research is not something that is a cultural norm in that population. When they're not sure of something, they're not prepared to just go and investigate it for themselves, to figure things out, to do their own research like most American students are trained to do from elementary school. And because of that too, they tend to just depend on teachers to provide them with all the information that they need. And unfortunately, if teachers start off introducing all the wrong pronunciation, the bad habits of learning a foreign language, students are just going to take that at face value and continue basically promoting the errors from then on, without knowing the correct forms.

Nutsakolpach: They're gradually absorbing it and they keep doing it until it becomes their habit.

CK: And believing that it's the right approach. In many ways, we cannot blame them.

Nutsakolpach: Exactly.

CK: So if there is any blame, we have to blame the system.

Nutsakolpach: Or the English teachers have to work harder on that and make sure they teach the right things.

CK: As to the system, it's the system where the emphasis is not at the younger age. When an investment is not done at the very beginning, at the most basic levels, then it's going to be tough.

Nutsakolpach: And it goes back to the part where you said that starting earlier is better. And also concerning the next question, I think I got the answer from you earlier too, because you mentioned about studying "a word a day," making sure that the word is understood, and using the word correctly, properly, effectively.

CK: And make sure that you know how to enunciate the word correctly, not just be able to read it, but you must be able to verbalize the words correctly.

Nutsakolpach: When students are asked to listen to news for example, what do they need to focus on?

CK: A lot of things. Comprehension is one, of course, because we talk about pronunciation, how important articulation is. They need to learn how to truly listen to the actual pronunciation of those individual words, where to stress, how to pronounce certain vowels in it, and when not to stress a particular vowel. There are things that I think from the very beginning, from the first week or so, that they're going to listen to in English news. They're not going to pay attention to all listening information. They're probably just struggling to comprehend what is being said. That's OK. But eventually, as they get better in understanding the news, then they can actually pay more attention to the actual pronunciation of words. It's progress. It's not that the minute they sit down the first time they're listening to English news that they can catch everything, comprehend all the information, digest all the information, and get all the pronunciation all nailed down. Maybe they can if they are geniuses..

Nutsakolpach:	So it doesn't matter if they start listening to news for example, and they don't understand anything. But they just need to keep listening to it until there's something…something in their learning process to trigger their comprehension skills.
CK:	If they're afraid, then what they might want to do is either record it or listen to it again and again. Sometimes, they might have to do that. Or maybe the institution, the university, might do that. They might decide to record the English news and make it available to students so that they can listen to it again and again. Sometimes, at the beginning, they might have to listen to it a few times to comprehend what is being said. That could be another exercise too, a methodology for teaching English. You know there are students listening to news, and the following day, they report what they heard.
Nutsakolpach:	They just listen and tell the class what's going on in the real world.
CK:	The bottom line is to find methods that always interest students. If they're not interested, they're not going to go extra hours, to push themselves and to put in effort. Learning a foreign language requires a lot of effort.
Nutsakolpach:	What strategy do you think is the most effective in note-taking while doing listening comprehension?
CK:	Well, That's tough. That comes out of the individual students' learning styles. What's their most comfortable style? It's for a visual student. Students learn visually. Of course taking notes is great because that way they need the visualization to remember. Then, I would highly recommend that either they not just listen to the news, but especially that they use close captioning. That would be great. If not, they have to have a notepad and then hurry to write it down repeatedly. Maybe they have to listen to it five or six times to get everything down. But for students

who are very comfortable with learning by just listening, they're fine. They don't need notes. In fact, notes would be distracting to them. It depends on what type of learning styles that they're better at. I will not say that one is going to be better than the others. It's going to come down to the individuals.

Nutsakolpach: I asked this question because I have one class which is Academic Listening-Speaking. One of the activities in the class which is required throughout the semester is note-taking. And I have done a lot every single period. It seems like students need something more than that to do it well, some other things to support their abilities, to improve their abilities in the note-taking process.

CK: If you have a class that is just struggling in terms of taking notes, maybe they are not very good visual learners. Note-taking is usually associated with a visual learner. If you're forcing an oral learner to take notes, it's like "pulling teeth." It's very difficult for them, because it requires something that they're not comfortable with and something they cannot easily comprehend. Why should I do this? It's not helpful to them at all. I don't understand that, especially in Asia, a syllabus   requires this. That's going to be a tough thing to overcome.

Nutsakolpach: Honestly, I do this part of the activities in my class and never grade it. But if the students talk about something that they heard from the listening, it's good evidence enough to see that they understood the lesson.   Because of big numbers in one class for Academic Listening-Speaking, it is hard to evaluate every single one in every single class to see their improvement. But this is just what I added as part of activities. At least they're familiar with it. And then I just test them in the exams, "Because we don't know what fish we can catch." For listening practice, teachers may use

native speakers and non-native speakers in recording. What are advantages and disadvantages of both techniques?

CK: Well, I would say personally I don't have a problem with either a native speaker or non-native speaker. Again, it depends on what you are going to teach. If you're trying to teach pronunciation, then it doesn't matter if it's a native speaker or a non-native speaker as long as the person they're recording is accurate. The key is that it needs to be accurate. If it's not accurate, then you are only promoting the same kind of problems, and they're going to go on and on forever. To me, it doesn't really matter. So it doesn't matter to me whether it's a native speaker or a non-native speaker. The important thing is that the pronunciation is accurate.

Nutsakolpach: So, the key word in these types of problem like pronunciation, stressing, listening comprehension, and speaking is practice basically. And then it's good if they have an immersion environment, especially in EFL classrooms. And the best thing is if we set up a university or an institution with the target language. If they start early, it's better.

CK: Of course, "the earlier, the better." For example, if you introduce an immersion program in the first year in college, it's going to be much better than introducing it in the second or third year. You say that the first year you have a longer period of time to become totally immersed into the particular language, learning that language sooner, rather than for two years or three years or whatever.

Nutsakolpach: It's never too late to start.

CK: No, I don't believe that it's ever too late. Again, there is no shortcut unfortunately. I mean I wish there was a magic pill. I'd take it too. There's no magic pill here.

Nutsakolpach: What is a way students can become better at the skills?

CK: The learning styles are important if you truly want your students to learn. You've got to be able to catch it, their learning styles. There is no right or wrong way. It's just how people are made up, and it's really the individual learning and how students process theirs. Either they learn visually, orally, or kinesthetically. It really helps to process data. If you are able to get the information to them to the best way, they can process. Then, they can retain it much better.

Nutsakolpach: Thank you very much for your time and to give me an opportunity to interview you. This information will be very useful for my own research, focusing on those problems that I encounter with Thai students in classes for this coming semester. The information will be useful in this research in terms of reference from a person who has had experience in this matter. Thank you very much

CK: You're welcome.

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