

**A Study of Problems in Developing Thai Conversation in 01363132 Thai
Conversation in Everyday Life I: With Special Reference to the Students
in Kasetsart University Student Exchange Program (KUSEP)**

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Abstract

Throughout a study of problems in developing Thai conversation in 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I: with special reference to the students in Kasetsart University Student Exchange Program (KUSEP), the objectives of this research were to survey the problems in learning Thai conversation in 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of those KUSEP students and to find the way to solve the problems in learning Thai conversation in such the subject. It was carried out through the qualitative and quantitative research methods. There are populations totally 96 KUSEP students studying 01363132; 82 students from the first semester and 14 students from the second semester in academic year 2014. The research tools used in this study were; 1) rating-scale questionnaire 2) structural in-depth interview and 3) participatory observation. It was found that Thai conversation problems of KUSEP students were; 1) a lack of confidence 2) inadequate knowledge of Thai vocabulary 3) being worried while having the practical Thai conversation with their own pairs due to inadequate knowledge and a lack of Thai conversation skill 4) a lack of practical conversation with others after class and 5) the development of Thai conversation that mostly used among the students was done by following of the practical examples of a good Thai conversation via YouTube, movies and television. Moreover, the KUSEP students' serious practices of Thai conversation in class under feedback supervised individually

made the students feel more confident and improve their Thai conversation. Furthermore, field trip that brought KUSEP students to have the cultural exploration and experience including the practical conversation with native Thais through such the field trip was also a good way that helped KUSEP students improve their Thai conversation skill.

Keywords: problems, Thai conversation, KUSEP students

Introduction

Generally, subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I is regarded as one of the core subjects in Bachelor of Arts Program in Communicative Thai Language for Foreigners (International Program) Kasetsart University (KU) from 2008 till the present time. Actually, the objective in opening this subject is to help foreign students practice Thai conversation in the basic level. The foreign students who have enrolled in this subject come from Bachelor of Arts Program in Communicative Thai Language for Foreigners (International Program) of Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities and from those KUSEP students who were studying Bachelor's degree and Master's degree for one or two semesters under management of International Studies Center (ISC), Kasetsart University. Focusing on the latter, there have been an increase in the number of KUSEP students who enrolled in class of Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I every year since 2008 through the thorough bilateral internal cooperation between International Studies Center and Department of Thai language, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University. As an important strategy in order to build up, develop practical Thai Conversation skill and increase numbers of international students from foreign countries to enroll in Kasetsart University, International Thai Class through subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I has been opened every semester of academic years in order to serve all the KUSEP students who needed language psycho-motor domain challenge at Kasetsart University where language practices prove skills. Especially, it has reasonable reason to open this subject that KUSEP students while or after learning this subject will be able to make the basic Thai conversation in classes during period of

study in Kasetsart University. In particular, they will survive in Thailand by employing this very basic Thai conversation with other Thai people while staying in Thailand.

As observed generally, Thai class through subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I conducted by an instructor and KUSEP students has been managed successfully and continually. However, there seem to be some problem points regarding the learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I and, truly speaking, the same should be solved, improved and it should be uplifted to the better level in the Thai conversation learning management. Therefore, the researcher has focused on a study of problems regarding learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students and it is strongly believed that after study, such the concerned problems will meet with the good solution and development for learning of such the subject as mentioned earlier. Most importantly, the prior classroom research works in Kasetsart University were only focused on a study of other subjects, but classroom research about this subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I was not found (Pimpuang, 2016). Therefore, it is premise of this classroom research work to make an analytical study of the contents of this profound problems and find viable means to rectify this situation through a thorough study of the problems in developing Thai conversation in learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students. By doing so, it will bear advantages for Thai conversation class management and development that International Studies Center managed and took care of KUSEP students in Kasetsart University every year.

Research Objectives

1. To survey the problems of learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students managed and taken care by International Studies Center, Kasetsart University
2. To find and suggest the good way to solve the problems of learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students managed and taken care by International Studies Center, Kasetsart University

Materials and Research Methodology

This study is a classroom research focused on a study of problems in developing Thai conversation in learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I: with special reference to the students in Kasetsart University Student Exchange Program (KUSEP). Regarding the scope of the concerned data, it is collected from 96 KUSEP students, as the research population, who were studying subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I in the first and second semester of the academic year 2014 in Kasetsart University. The research was conducted by a qualitative method within an overall inductive framework. The research tools are obviously employed in this study namely; 1) rating-scale questionnaire by using of Likert Scale 2) structural in-depth interview and 3) participatory observation. The methodology used in this study is as follows:

1. Surveying and collecting the documents concerning the problems learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students
2. Classifying the collected documents into groups and categories for analysis and explanation
3. Making the descriptive and analytical writing on the problems of learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I of KUSEP students
4. Presenting the results of the research, concluding remarks and discussion

Research Results

Regarding the results of classroom research as mentioned in the above, they are divided into three parts namely; results of questionnaire analysis, structural in-depth analysis and participatory observation analysis. They are as follows:

1. Results of Questionnaire Analysis

According to the results of questionnaire analysis as given in the classroom research, it was undoubtedly found and all issues concerned were revealed that:

1.1 About the ages of population concerned in the research, most KUSEP students are between 20 years of ages and 26 years of ages. All the KUSEP students have the international experiences in Thailand 10.00 %. They have ever experienced Thai Conversation learning before entering Thailand 2.00 % and the earlier specified percentage of those KUSEP students who have experienced Thai conversation learning before entering Thailand, as observed generally, is low.

1.2 For population's viewpoint towards Thai conversation learning, there are as follows; firstly, they strongly believed that subject 01363132 Thai conversation in Everyday Life I is useful very much for them while spending time to stay and study Bachelor's degree or Master's degree in Kasetsart University, and it is regarded as the very necessary communicative tool for KUSEP students to let them survive in Thailand before leaving Thailand and after completion of the period of exchange program.

1.3 According to the expression of feelings of population used in the research who are assigned to prepare dialogues and make a practical Thai conversation in front of class, some KUSEP students felt shy while speaking out Thai sentences and pronouncing Thai vocabularies.

1.4 For the problems of Thai conversation in everyday life in front of class for those KUSEP students who prepared dialogues themselves and for those students who did not prepare dialogues themselves, it was obviously found that for the group of KUSEP students who prepared dialogues themselves before speaking in front of class, they thought that most of their problems are slow speaking followed by wrong speaking. On the contrary, for those KUSEP students who did not prepare dialogues themselves for speaking in front of class, they also thought that most of their problems are poor vocabularies followed by slow speaking and word order mistakes in speaking.

1.5 According to the useful suggestions given in the questionnaire, population explicitly viewed that their important problems of Thai conversation is that there was the incapability in order to remember all the vocabularies as employed in different dialogues including slow speaking etc. For the strategic way to solve the concerned problems and provide the right solution are to let them practice Thai conversation in everyday life for many times, and encouraged and push them to

speak in Thai with native Thais through several media examples of a good Thai conversation available in internet.

2. Results of Structural In-depth Interview Analysis

For the results of structural in-depth interview analysis as given in the classroom research, it was undoubtedly found and all issues concerned were showed that:

2.1 Numbers of KUSEP students who liked to learn Thai Conversation had more than numbers of those KUSEP students who did not like to learn Thai conversation, and the important reason of those KUSEP students who liked to learn Thai conversation is obviously expressed that Thai conversation in everyday life is held as the necessary tool in order to use in everyday life during the period of study in Kasetsart Universtiy. Especially, Thai conversation in everyday life is also useful to communicate with native Thai people in different situations, and it can help them survive till the end of exchange program and leaving Thailand. However, for those KUSEP students who did not like to learn Thai conversation in everyday life gave the essential reason that they did not feel confident and, at the same time, they also felt shy while speaking Thai language with mistakes.

2.2 KUSEP students more than 90 % clearly viewed that instructor, several media examples via internet such as YouTube, Television and online media etc. including Thai friends were the important factors to let them enhance Thai Conversation.

2.3 Not only that, KUSEP students more than 90 % also agreed that field trip before the end of Thai class is also regarded as the important one of the learning methods in order to bring KUSEP students Thai culture experience and realization. It is strongly believed that it can help KUSEP students understand Thai language after their practical conversation was done with native Thai people through the field trip.

2.4 Throughout learning subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I, KUSEP students had most of their problems about vocabulary and vocabulary use followed by Thai grammar mistakes such as word order etc.

3. Results of Participatory Observation Analysis

According to the results of participatory observation analysis as given in the classroom research, there are results as follows:

3.1 Regarding the making the practical Thai conversation in front class without KUSEP students' preparation, it was clearly found that at the first learning hour, instructor gave Thai dialogue, demonstrated how to make a Thai conversation and then let KUSEP students make a practical Thai conversation with instructor along with the dialogue given.

For the learning of Thai conversation in everyday life in week 1-2, some KUSEP students, as observed generally, felt shy and then they felt more confident to speak out. Furthermore, most of KUSEP students felt shy and spoke Thai with the problems of unclear Thai pronunciation and vocabulary number's limitation.

According to the learning of Thai conversation in everyday life in week 3-14, there are many practical Thai conversational activities without KUSEP students' preparation in front of class, it was absolutely found that in the third time of the practical Thai conversation, most KUSEP students felt more confident and relaxed, and at the last week of learning hour, KUSEP students had good behavior to show that they were good at confidence and ability in making Thai Conversation in everyday life. Even if some of them were not good at confidence and speaking skill, but they were able to make a Thai conversation comfortably.

3.2 According to the behavior of those KUSEP students who were assigned to prepare their dialogues to be spoken in front of class before 1 week, it was explicitly found that during 1-3 week, KUSEP students more than 80% were able to make a friend's greeting in Thai, tell about numbers and Thai money, introduce themselves and ask the names of other friends, and they were able to ask about ages as well as the different belongings available in the classroom. In week 4-9, they felt more comfortable in Thai conversation in everyday life and they can speak out fairly according to the dialogues as given by instructor. As observed generally, in week 4-9 they can speak naturally and properly, but vocabulary pronunciation still was a significant problem and it needed to get the improvement. Then, instructor practiced them to pronounce Thai vocabulary and

push them to speak Thai out through the thorough native students' demonstration of Thai conversation that was provided in class.

Finally, in week 10-15 most of KUSEP students were able to make a Thai conversation properly and naturally. In particularly, their accents, truly was similar to that of native Thai students very much.

Conclusion and Discussion

To sum up, the general information regarding the population used in this classroom research obviously showed that there are 96 KUSEP students who were studying subject 01363132 Thai Conversation in Everyday Life I in the first and second semester of the academic year 2014 at International Studies Center, Kasetsart University. According to results of the study, it was obviously found that the problems of KUSEP students on Thai conversation in everyday life are as follows; 1) they had a lack of confidence in Thai conversation 2) they had an inadequate knowledge of Thai vocabulary for Thai conversation 3) they felt shy and worried while making the practical Thai conversation with their own pairs/friends due to the inadequate knowledge and a lack of Thai conversation skill 4) they had a lack of practical conversation with others after class. As considered another result of research as mentioned in the above, it seems to accord with viewpoint of Pongpanich (2011), whose research clearly revealed that most of problems in English speaking of students are; a lack of confidence which was resulted from their inadequate knowledge of English language, insufficient amount of vocabulary, and a lack of English communicative skills in real world communication. Especially, the research also showed that the additional way in developing Thai conversation skill mostly used among KUSEP students was done by following of the practical examples of a good Thai conversation via YouTube, movies and television.

Furthermore, the important result was also found that the students' serious practices of Thai conversation in class under feedback supervised individually made the students feel more confident and improve their Thai conversation. This viewpoint is also similar to that of Pongpanich (2011), whose research undoubtedly revealed that the students' serious and persistent

practices under feedback given and supervised individually made the students feel confident and improve their speaking skill.

To uplift KUSEP students to skilful ability of Thai conversation in everyday life and cultural experience, a field trip before the end of Thai class that brought students to have the outside cultural exploration including the practical conversation with native Thais was also held as a good way not only to help students improved their Thai conversation skill, but also let them experienced Thai culture that is strongly believed that Thai language can be a bridge for cultural communication and culture also helped them gain the better understanding of Thai language for conversation.

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KUSEP students G14 relevant to the research

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