ISSN 2408-1809
Rangsit Journal of Educational Studies, Vol.2, No.1, pp.85-114, January – June 2015

doi:10.14456/rjes.2015.6

Oral Discourse Performance of Bilingual Learners at the Primary and Secondary Levels

Ruja Pholsward
Supatra Pradubpongse
Faculty of Education, Rangsit University, Thailand
ruja@rsu.ac.th, supatra@rsu.ac.th

Abstract

This paper reports oral discourse performed by bilingual learners at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University. The purpose was to find out the extent to which learners at these levels were able to perform on oral discourse to communicate their ideas about themselves and their school life.

The subjects were 34 Primary 6 students and 18 Secondary 3 students. All subjects were individually interviewed by two bilingual researchers of Thai and English—one Thai and one American. A set of ten questions was used in a 15-minute interview in English to secure oral discourse data from each subject. Oral discourse was assessed via communication skills at five levels in the use of conversational turns regarding relevance and appropriateness: (1) Full control, (2) Functional control, (3) Moderate control, (4) Sufficient control, (5) Marginal control.
All interviews were recorded with consent of the subjects. During each interview, two more bilingual researchers of Thai and English were present to collect the subjects' oral discourse data containing their conversational turns in responding to the interviewers' questions.

The results on communication skill levels indicate that the primary 6 subjects performed at five levels with a majority at level 2; the secondary 3 subjects performed at three levels (1-3) with a majority at levels 1 and 2, and there was none at level 4 or 5. As for oral discourse performance, the primary 6 and secondary 3 subjects at Levels 1 and 2 showed their conversational turns in natural, relevant and appropriate manners. For those who were less proficient at levels 3-5, their conversational turns reflected irrelevancy and inappropriateness.

Keywords: *oral discourse, conversational turns, conversational relevancy and appropriateness, English communication skills levels, bilingual learners*

1. Rationale of the Study

Language education is of prime importance in the curriculum of Thailand's Basic Education. One of its purposes is to enable learners to communicate in the mother tongue and the second language or in this study, English. The Ministry of Education has emphasized effective communication skills of learners and this goal has prompted quite a large number of Thai schools at the primary and secondary levels to attempt at their English Program in major subject strands: mathematics, science, social studies and English. Some other schools that have highly qualified teachers who are native speakers of English have opted for a bilingual program that requires partial or full immersion.

It should be noted that a full immersion, though difficult in staffing qualified teachers for its operations, yields good results in language performance via natural language acquisition. This is because a target second language is naturally acquired by learners through interactions rather than by direct instruction. Bilingual learners have ample opportunities to acquire lexis (words), syntax (sentence structures) and discourse (conversational turns) in

their interactions with native English-speaking teachers. As for oral discourse performance, bilingual learners show their conversational turns between the speaker and the hearer with relevance and appropriateness to mark specific levels of communication skills.

In this paper, the researchers examined oral discourse with conversational turns between the speaker and the hearer in terms of relevancy between the speaker's and the hearer's speech products. Besides relevancy in speech products, it is important to consider appropriateness of conversational turns in spontaneous speech data. Discoursal performance is evaluated as the speaker's control of the use of oral discourse in Full [Level 1], Functional [Level 2], Moderate [Level 3], Sufficient [Level 4], or Marginal [Level 5].

It is important to study oral discourse as a tool for bilingual learners in developing their proficiency at a higher level. Once both conversational turns are examined, it is possible to remedy their relevancy and appropriateness in less proficient speakers as well as further develop them in those more proficient. As reported in this paper, this was the case of research into learners' oral discourse of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 bilingual students at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University (SBS).

2. Background of the study

The background of this study deals with a general perspective of Thailand language education, a brief profile of Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University (SBS) and literature review on earlier research as pertinent to the study.

2.1 General Perspective of Thailand Language Education

Bilingual Education has been well recognized as a major part of Thailand Education Reform in rendering learners competent in the mother tongue as well as English which is a language of wider communication in business, science and technology (Office of National Education Commission 2009, 2011). Its significance lies in its support for academic and intellectual development of learners. As a result, a number of English Programs known as EPs, as part of the Ministry of Education Curriculum on a medium scale, and bilingual schools on a relatively small scale have been on the rise in the last decade in the country. The main purpose is to support Thai students to become competent in English communication skills in response to the far-from-satisfactory O-Net scores in English on the national test. It should be noted that in 2011, the O-Net English scores of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 at the national level were 38.37 (SD 17.77) and 30.09 (SD 10.79), respectively. Two years later in 2013, the English O-Net national scores still did not improve: Primary 6 at 33.82 (SD 15.20), and Secondary 3 at 30.05 (SD 10.59) (Office of National Assessment, 2011-2013).

It is obvious that evidence of relevancy and success of bilingual school operations definitely relies on English language performance of students who have gone through the language acquisition process for a number of years (Pholsward, 2006a, 2006b). Urgency for language assessment at specific levels was apparent in quite a few local studies (Sukket 2007, Panti 2007, Kittitherawat 2008). It is important for language practitioners to assess language mastery of students after a period of three years' language exposure, especially at specific

levels: Primary 3/ 6 and Secondary 3/ 6. This is to ensure that students' language performance be at the target level of functional competency and to enable the school to remedy language limitations of those learners identified as in need of a support language program.

In this perspective, the researchers felt an acute need to assess student language performance on oral discourse with conversational turns being acquired after a period of three years, i.e., Primary 3-6 and Secondary 1-3. This was to secure oral discourse information on the linguistic and nonlinguistic features that mark bilingual students' proficiency in communicating about themselves and their school life.

2.2. A Profile of Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University

Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University is a co-ed school of Kindergarten 1-Grade 12, with enrolment of over 900. One of its academic policies is to conduct educational research in bilingual education. This type of research serves as a tool to investigate whether learners can attain target English language skills, academic achievements in mathematics, and bilingual-bicultural mastery. The School has been assisted by the Faculty of Education Rangsit University in conducting research in bilingual education in the following areas: (1) Language acquisition of Kindergarten students in 2006, (2) English Language Proficiency of Secondary 3 students in 2006, (3) Assessment of Analytical Thinking Skills via problem-solving tasks in mathematics in 2006-2007, (4) A Study of Thai Writing Skills of Primary 1-Secondary 3 Students in 2008-2010, followed by (5) Teaching Methods Used by Social Studies Teachers in 2011 (Pholsward 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008, 2009, Pholsward et al. 2010, 2011). In 2012-2013, a planned research project focused on a study on English Communication skills of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 Students in order to assess their levels of language mastery after the period of language immersion for three years. This was to identify strengths and limitations in students' language performance at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3.

2.3. Literature Review

The study reports selected literature as background of the study in four areas: (1) Significance of bilingual education, (2) Significance of ICT literacy and communication skills, (3) Language acquisition, and (4) Language performance assessment.

Significance of Bilingual Education

Bilingual education has undoubtedly become a focus of educational practices in Thailand as seen in the increasing number of bilingual schools in different parts of the country. There has been some concern for the quality of educational practices in these schools which are now monitored by the Office of Educational Quality Assurance. Most bilingual schools tend to identify language proportion of Thai and English as a matter of preference; some schools repeat instruction in Thai for the subjects taught in English while others like Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University or SBS advocate to full immersion. Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University is a good example of bilingual education practices in

Thailand; the school has adopted the curriculum of the Thai Ministry of Education and modified it with major components of international curricula [Ourairat 2011]. Besides concern for curriculum development and implementation, quite a few earlier researchers paid attention to the importance of culture in the language for natural performance of learners (Levine and Adelman 1993, Ziesing 2001, Tan 2006).

Significance of ICT Literacy and Communication Skills

Documents by the Ministry of Education Thailand and Office of National Education Commission point to the significance of ICT and communication skills in English as tools to acquire new knowledge via information search and transfer to support continuous and lifelong learning (Ministry of Education 2008, Office of National Education Commission 2009, 2011). All schools at the primary and secondary levels in Thailand have attentively followed the guidelines of the Ministry of Education in devising ICT and English communication skills as essential requirements in their school curriculum.

Language Acquisition

There have been many studies in second language acquisition especially in the theoretical aspects and practices of second language acquisition (Babrakzai 2006, Pholsward 2006a, Ellis 2008), and the use of language activities and model instruction to support development of speaking skills (Sangamuang 2002, Boonsue 2003, and Boonsompan 2008). Other research issues in second language acquisition deal with the age factor (Fougere 2001), students' achievements and second language acquisition proficiency (Huda 1998, Dean 2006), vocabulary acquisition (Sukket 2007, Asbeck 2008, Ellis 2008), to name but a few. As seen in these studies, language acquisition has been considered a current issue of attention for quite a few researchers in language education.

In particular, the literature in 2013-2015 regarding language acquisition deals with oral performance and its conveyed meaning or semantic features. Four exemplified studies reflect such a trend. As for more proficient learners, Booth (2014) found out that they tend to display less repetition of words and greater lexical diversity in language use. Braun, Galts, and Kabak (2014) found out that speakers of tonal languages are more sensitive to prosodic features of L 2 than those speakers of word-stress languages. As for studies on meanings and semantic features, Kang and Chang (2014) examined semantic misinterpretation of Korean lexical items in the speech products of beginner-intermediate American college students. Bronshteyn and Gustafson (2015) examined the use of phrasal verbs by L 2 learners with emphasis on understanding of phrasal meanings.

Language Performance Assessment

Bilingual Schools need to identify effective ways to assess students' language performance for the reason that a higher degree of language mastery can occur after a specific period of language exposure or immersion. There have been some studies dealing with the use of language activities to develop and assess vocabulary knowledge and speaking ability (Pholsward 2006b, Sukket 2007, Panti 2007, Kittitherawat 2008). As for international literature, researchers worked on assessment of knowledge and skills (Roberts 2008), students' language achievements (Evans 2009), language performance with the approach of second language acquisition (Yanyan 2009), to name but the major ones. Language performance assessment has always been a challenge for many researchers to find ways to assess learners' language performance effectively and authentically.

3. Research Objectives

The study used Satit Bilingual of Rangsit University as a case to investigate oral discourse regarding relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns performed by bilingual students at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 with consent of their parents or guardians.

The study had two objectives:

1. To examine oral discourse in the use of relevant and appropriate conversational turns by means of assessing English communication skills of Thai bilingual students at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3.

2. To identify strengths and limitations in relevancy and appropriateness in the learners' use of oral discourse or conversational turns as shown in the assessment of their language communication skills.

It was expected that the obtained data on oral discourse via communication skills assessment of students at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 can shed light on specific language performance levels that carry relevant and appropriate conversational turns. These identified features can in turn reflect both strengths and limitations of language communication skills shown in the oral discourse domain. Such information can be used in support of a remedial program for oral discourse repair, as seen appropriate in a particular school context. It can also be used in an enhancement program to generate relevant and appropriate conversational turns in stronger or more proficient students. In addition, the assessment tool and procedure used to secure oral discourse data in the study can serve as guidelines for bilingual schools to examine or assess their students' oral discourse performance as required after a target period of language exposure.

4. Research Methodology

This section describes the subjects and the research instruments used in the study.

4.1 Subjects

The subjects were from Satit Bilingual of Rangsit University, participating in the study on a voluntary basis with consent from their parents or guardians. The number of Primary 6 subjects was 34 and that of Secondary 3 subjects was 18. These subjects presumably had at least three years' immersion or exposure to the English language in the school context. However, it was found in the data collection stage that some subjects had language exposure of less than three years at SBS. Given such a circumstance, it was expected that the number of years in language exposure could have impact on the subjects' language performance.

4.2 Research Instruments

Two tools were constructed by one researcher and validated for content relevancy by four language specialists in group discussion and interview simulations to ensure users' clear-cut understanding and accuracy of interpretation of all listed items. Later on, four researchers had a meeting to recheck the obtained feedback from the specialists prior to the use of both instruments in actual data collection on learners' English communication skills.

Communication Skills Assessment

Instrument 1: A List of Guiding Questions for a 15-minute oral interview:

- Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?
- How did you or your parents find about the school?
- What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?
- What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?
- What about your favorite subjects?
- What about some interesting school activities?
- What about your teachers?
- What about your friends/ your good friends?
- What is your plan for the future?
- Is there any question you would like to ask us?

Instrument 2: Assessment Criteria of English Communication Skills

Each subject was assigned to a fifteen-minute timeslot for an oral interview with two interviewers--one bilingual Thai speaker and one native speaker of English. Each interviewee's language performance at the lexical, syntactical, and discoursal, together with interactions, strategic competence were holistically evaluated by two interviewers on a five-point scale from 1 (high) to 5 (low) with the following meanings: 1 = Proficient, 2 = Highly functional, 3 =Functional, 4 = Sufficient, and 5 = Marginal. In addition, two observer-researchers--two bilingual Thai speakers--were present at the interviews to observe interactions and collect spontaneous speech data in five areas: (1) lexis, (2) syntax, (3)

discourse, (4) interactions, and (5) strategic competence or detectable communicative strategies.

It should be noted that the learners' communication skills levels were holistically assessed in the first place to make an oral discourse analysis at specific communication skills levels possible. Linguistic data in all five domains were obtained but this paper is to report only the analyzed oral discourse data to reveal the extent to which individual learners have acquired relevant and appropriate conversational turns in communicating about themselves and their school life.

Specifications of Criteria

Lexical Use

Level 1 Full control of the use of vocabulary
Level 2 Functional control of the use of vocabulary
Level 3 Moderate control of the use of vocabulary
Level 4 Sufficient control of the use of vocabulary
Level 5 Marginal control of the use of vocabulary

Syntactical Use

Level 1 Full control of the use of structures
Level 2 Functional control of the use of structures
Level 3 Moderate control of the use of structures
Level 4 Sufficient control of the use of structures
Level 5 Marginal control of the use of structures

Discoursal Use

Level 1 Full control of the use of oral discourse (relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns)
Level 2 Functional control of the use of oral discourse (relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns)
Level 3 Moderate control of the use of oral discourse (relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns)
Level 4 Sufficient control of the use of oral discourse (relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns)
Level 5 Marginal control of the use of oral discourse (relevance and appropriateness of conversational turns)

Interactions

Level 1 Fully appropriate verbal and nonverbal interactions
Level 2 Functionally appropriate verbal and nonverbal interactions
Level 3 Moderately appropriate verbal and nonverbal interactions
Level 4 Sufficiently appropriate verbal and nonverbal interactions
Level 5 Marginally appropriate verbal and nonverbal interactions

Strategic competence
Level 1 Fully competent in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies
Level 2 Functionally competent in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies
Level 3 Moderately competent in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies
Level 4 Sufficiently competent in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies
Level 5 Marginally competent in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies

All these criteria were designed to guide bilingual interviewers to assess holistically English communication skills of the subjects by taking into consideration classified language features (lexis, syntax, discourse) as well as verbal/ non-verbal interactions/ strategies.

5. Data collection

Data collection by oral interview of 34 Primary 6 subjects was completed in March 2013 whereas that of the Secondary 3 subjects in August of the same year. It was noted that access to Secondary 3 subjects was somewhat difficult because almost all were engaged in seeking admission into a new secondary school or extra study programs after the second semester--typically in the period of March to May. With assistance of one staff member at SBS in making contacts with parents of the subjects for their cooperation, the researchers were able to have access to 18 students at the secondary 3 level.

The data collection procedure required a fifteen-minute timeslot for an oral interview for each subject. Two interviewers--one bilingual Thai speaker and one native speaker of English—assessed each interviewee's language performance at the lexical, syntactical, and discoursal levels, together with interactions and strategic competence. These features were holistically evaluated by two interviewers on a five-point scale from 1 (high) to 5 (low) with the following meanings: 1 = Proficient, 2 = Highly functional, 3 =Functional, 4 = Sufficient, and 5 = Marginal. Also present at each interview were two observer-researchers--two bilingual Thai speakers, who also evaluated the subjects' communication skills, observed their interactions with two interviewers, and collected spontaneous speech data in five domains: (1) lexis, (2) syntax, (3) discourse, (4) interactions, and (5) strategic competence or detectable verbal and nonverbal strategies.

All interviews were recorded with consent of the subjects and transcribed later by a research assistant. Transcribed data were meant to countercheck accuracy of spontaneous speech products collected by two observer-researchers.

6. Data Analysis

The obtained data were language performance or communication skill levels as assessed by two interviewers and supplemented by the two bilingual observer-researchers. These data were analyzed in frequency to establish communication skills at five levels: 1 = Proficient, 2 = Highly functional, 3 =Functional, 4 = Sufficient, and 5 = Marginal.

All language features in the lexical domain were analyzed in frequency and listed alphabetically. Those in the domains of syntax and discourse were analyzed in occurrence at specific communication skills with typical examples for illustration. The other two domains—interactions and strategic competence--were analyzed in terms of patterns of occurrence and their typical examples.

This paper only focus on the results on communication skill levels and oral discourse performance in terms of relevant and appropriate conversational turns as shown by the subjects in the study.

7. Results of the Study

This section reports the researchers' remarks on the learners' years of language exposure, their communication skill levels and oral discourse features by level.

7.1 Years of Language Exposure

It was found that communication skill levels were related to the years of the subjects' language exposure as follows:

- The subjects with 3 or more years at SBS performed at the highly functional level (level 2) to Proficient level (level 1) in their communication skills. There were no limitations in listening skills or speech production.
- The subjects with 1-2 years at SBS performed at the functional level (level 3) to the sufficient/ marginal level (level 4/ 5). The subjects appeared to possess functional listening skills though with some limitations in speech production. Only one Primary 6 subject at the marginal level showed great difficulty in communicating with the interviewers.

7.2 Communication Skill Levels

Communication skill levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 subjects are reported in tables 1-2 shown below.

Table 1: Communication Skill Levels of Primary 6 Students (N=34)

Level 1: Proficient= 4 of 34 (11.77%)
Level 2: Highly functional= 16 of 34 (47.06%)
Level 3: Functional= 11 of 34 (29.41)
Level 4: Sufficient= 3 of 34 (8.82)
Level 5: Marginal= 1 of 34 (2.94)

As seen in Table 1, the primary 6 subjects were dominantly at level 2 of communication skills. It should be noted that evaluation among four evaluators appeared consistent.

Table 2: Communication Skill Levels of Secondary 3 Students (N=18)

Level 1: Proficient= 9 of 18 (50.00%)
Level 2: Highly functional= 8 of 18 (44.44%)
Level 3: Functional= 1 of 18 (5.56)
Level 4: Sufficient= NIL
Level 5: Marginal= NIL

As seen in Table 2, the secondary 3 subjects were dominant at levels 1 and 2 of communication skills. It should be noted that evaluation among four evaluators appeared consistent.

7.3 Discourse

The subjects' discoursal performance refers to their conversational turns in terms of relevance between the speaker's and the hearer's speech products. Besides relevancy in speech products in conversational turns between the speaker and the hearer [respondent], it is important to consider appropriateness of conversational turns in spontaneous speech data. Discoursal performance is evaluated as the speaker's control of the use of oral discourse in Full [Level 1], Functional [Level 2], Moderate [Level 3], Sufficient [Level 4], or Marginal [Level 5].

Primary 6 Discourse

Tables 3 and 4 present data on selected examples of relevant and appropriate conversational turns of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 subjects. It was found that conversational turns performed by those subjects at levels 1 [full control] and 2 [functional control] were relevant and appropriate. Relevancy and appropriateness of conversational turns declined in the oral discourse performance of those subjects at level 3 [moderate control], level 4 [sufficient control] and level 5 [marginal control], respectively. Tables 3 and 4 also show examples of irrelevant and inappropriate examples of conversational turns performed by the subjects at the levels other than level 1 [full control].

Table 3: Discoursal Features of Primary 6 Students at Five Levels of Communication Skills Established after Assessment with the Use of Instruments 1 and 2

Primary 6 Discourse Level 1 Full control [N=4]

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1.Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- I'm fine today/ My nickname… This year in June … K 1 to P 2.. my teachers.. Teacher Kaew. I have many friends….
- Nick name [name]../ I'm twelve year [s not heard]../ I'm from Satit Rangsit…/ nine years…/ three years [old at K 1]…/ … Teacher John …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 2
2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

- She think that this should be my school because it is bilingual… she said she saw some advertisement and she came to the school/
- I don't know this much. My parents have information about the school from the internet … new activities/ it's a little bit. ../ my last school is phonics… /In this school use sentence…/ I want science English…/ other school in Thai and English/ it be translated so that we understand more clearly/ Teacher Noi and Teacher Pascal teach the same topic at the same time/

Conversational turns generated by Question 3
3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- I like about the projects …. I like friends because my friends have … are good and helping and sometimes friends play and teachers [tell them to stop] …. My best friend is [name] … but he is always play in class… sometimes he sleeps [in class] … play cards under the desk.. [his friend can understand English well] … Teacher Lin she teach us very easy … she will let us read and Chinese words change to Thai… [the student can read Chinese] …sometimes they ask me about … [before the Chinese school] I stay in Rainbow Nursery…

Conversational turns generated by Question 4
4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

- About science../ to have more experiments in science…/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Teacher love the students very much…/ the thing … white [uniform? school building?] like / warming up suit…/ …look like black sheep and white sheep [uniform design different]…/
- [okay—nodding]

Conversational turns generated by Question 5
5. What about your favorite subjects?

- Science because my teacher let me do experiment …. He has snake as a pet… he put a plastic cup ... put the soap in… the ice around it [the glass covered with ice]….

Conversational turns generated by Question 6
6. What about some interesting school activities?

- I like to play cards with friends every morning.. in the afternoon… some of them [losing games] cry …/ Teacher Chris let us play [cards] but only in class…/ sometimes I play [basketball] with my friends…/

Conversational turns generated by Question 7
7. What about your teachers?

- I enjoy teacher... if I do anything wrong they will say don't do it again. The English education is very good. But the Thai education at the school not very good. That's about it… / I like my teachers because they are like my parents… sometimes they are harsh… they punish us… that's it…./

Conversational turns generated by Question 8
8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- My friends are always energized ... they walk around in the classroom… I have three best friends… just play games…

Conversational turns generated by Question 9
9. What is your plan for the future?

- I want to something about alien… about the universe… changing the surface of the sun… we didn't explore yet…/ … give the name to the star…/ [the interviewer asked how to improve English] book … more improvement… I can speak very early….
- … leave school after M 6../ I think … Mor-Rangsit [after M 6].../ [chosen area my father sell ... I will do like … [him]…/
- About science…/ to have more experiments in science…/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- [will stay at Satit at M 1].../ [pet] a dog [called Ma-Kheua]/… big dog../ play football [with the dog] …/ Thoo-pa-the-mee… [a play area]. [Rather not relevant]

Conversational turns generated by Question 10
10. Is there any question would you like to ask us?

- I think I don't have any …/ [waving hand]… see you later.
- What's the time?
- Don't have…/
- What's your name? Do you teach?
- What subject do you like in P 6 [when you were in P6]?

Primary 6 Discourse Level 2 Functional Control [N=18]

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- Nickname [name] …/ I'm eleven year(s) old… / I have no brother or sister … I live in Pathumthani… I like Science [sai-an]…./ basic science … /
- My name is [name]… I study at Satit Rangsit/ Now I'm twelve years old/ [clear and good pronunciation]/ I move from …/ this school near my house…/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I come from nine years/ I came here for nine years ago/ My Thai teacher is Teacher [name]/ Teacher [name] teach [no es] social [pronunciation with near native speech flow]/ because I like … / He is very strict.

Conversational turns generated by Question 2
2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

- I don't know because … / I remember… I'm in SBS already …/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Not sure …
- Dad and mum stay with me in the school [on the first day in P 1] … not in this school… near my house…. Good teachers… good friends.

Conversational turns generated by Question 3
3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- Enjoy classes..

Conversational turns generated by Question 4
4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

- I like to have the school to have playground [will stay for M 1 at SBS] …/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- It's hard [question]… don't know.. some people don't want to learn Thai…/
- I like when we do activities…./ [no improvement she wants now]

Conversational turns generated by Question 5
5. What about your favorite subjects?

- I like Science and Sport …/ it's fun and help experiment… / like when we use medicine for vitamin C [vi-ta-min]…/ [soft voice]
- Like Science/ because Science … has many activities/ to test some chemical or magnetic
- I think English second… first math… I think I like math English because it is easier than math Thai…./ [math] volume of liquid and solid… different shapes … sometimes have a cube and hundred of cube …

Conversational turns generated by Question 6
6. What about some interesting school activities?

- I can play sport … soccer… after school…/ I think …. Weekend have two teams … more than twenty [players] …/ a person [winner of shooting goals] can pick the first player [and so on] …. / I like table tennis … [need] good table and good racquet [SBS don't have good table] / … the table was left in the rain…./

- Again please…/ Sport Day…/ in January …/ In sport day we have cheer … sing song… we have sport … / I sing song …/ have run and have two people [tied together] to move [in one]… [in a bag?]/

Conversational turns generated by Question 7
7. What about your teachers?

- In Primary Teacher [name] … he likes to do many activities in class…/ I like Kru [name] … because she makes us do many activities in career …. Experiment with … in home … recycling …/ I like when teachers have activities … not stress… teachers ask about … / I like ICT … I like about computer and program… Teacher Carlos… [Thai teacher for ICT] in P 1 P2 and P 3 Teacher [name] …

Conversational turns generated by Question 8
8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- Thirty friends/ from Kiondergarten have only seven… eight people/ play sport/
- I have very best friend … we have played together … I went to friend's house and we have fun together.
- I play with my friends … sometimes [meet] after school…/ [don't see friends on weekend] / sometimes late sometimes fast [mathayom class closed late]…/ they check where the home is and they check where our home [my house] is …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 9
9. What is your plan for the future?

- Stay at SBS in M 1…/ My dad said that I must go to one of the universities …. [did not have the university name yet]… I want to be a scientist… an astronomy [Astro physics]
- Move to Bangkok/ because it is near my parent …/ yes I will go to Bangkok tomorrow [to Satit Prasarmitr]/ my friend.. two move …/ I want to go to Chula/ I like to be [a scientist?]
- I want to be Chef../ I think cook is fun …. In the future if I be chef…/ [moving chair left and right]/ …[cook] Thai food.
- Go to England for one month [study] … study in April and return in May … [return to SBS] … stay with host family [outside London] ….

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- … I can play piano… for four years. I learn Piano at Watcharapol ../ …[piano] competition]… song in Christmas ….

Conversational turns generated by Question 10
10.Is there any question would you like to ask us?

- I want to ask about the fashion designer learning … is it hard?
- What do you like to play? …
- [asked the interviewer] Why you like to speak English?

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- What do you want in the future? What happen if the world gone? If not with money? … I don't help you.. I don't know who you are…/

Primary 6 Discourse Level 3 Moderate Control [N=10]

It is observed that most P 6 subjects at Level 3 tended to give rather brief answers in one or two words without elaboration. Often the interviewers had to interpret what was heard for full meaning.

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- …Can you say that again? / five year [s not heard]/ Teacher … Teacher [name] … Teacher [name], Teacher [name]/ [now] Teacher [name] and Teacher [name] …./

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Again… [when hearing a question from Oct]/ I like to play computer/ I like to program… game…/
- I like draw a picture… I like to take photo …. [started at SBS] P 1…/ I like it [SBS] / Teacher Victor … P 6/ [from Baan Ploy School] …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 2
2.How did you or your parents find about the school?

- Friend … Internet …
- [the father] drive a car ….

Conversational turns generated by Question 3
3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- I like music and art…/ ICT…/ photo shop…[in ICT class]…/

Conversational turns generated by Question 4
4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

- ... food
- Eat food in the class [?] …/ … no change [happy now] …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 5
5. What about your favorite subjects?

- [English] Teacher Victor ….
- English.../ social and Career…/ house clean…/ Science [sai-an] with Thai pronunciation, e.g., paper] finish [no ending sound]/ three forty five.../
- Thai… /

Conversational turns generated by Question 6
6. What about some interesting school activities?

- Maak Horse… / the same as Maak Rook in Thailand [with hand gestures on the table]/ [use full YES, not “ya” or “yeah”/ I go to play in Muangthong…/ [being asked about computer] I want to build… [something like FIREWALL]
- Music …/ I like to play guitar…/ Pop .../ guitar / I think Yamaha …/ I think about five or six year [no s]/

Conversational turns generated by Question 7
7. What about your teachers?

- English teacher … Teacher [name] … sometimes he play with students…/ sport teacher … Teacher [name] … [rather dark] …. Teacher [name] … fair …. Gold [blond] …. ICT … Teacher [name] … make animation ….

- …Teacher [name] and Teacher [name/ Teacher [name] teach [no "s"] social and That/ she… fun/

Conversational turns generated by Question 8
8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- My good friend …/ take picture ../ use telephone…/ … easy time../ teacher would give easy time …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 9
9. What is your plan for the future?

- computer programming …. Animation… [no idea the place to study animation yet] … / don't know yet [whether to stay at SBS …/
- I like to be a doctor…. / … help people…/
- Want to be a doctor …it will make you feel a good people in Thailand have a good doctor like this ….

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Design …/ building…/ [tend to have word or two-word answers]/ yes… [laugh] / … Thammasat [when asked about the university she may want to go to] [NOTE: Hearer need to interpret for full meaning, like a career as a designer]
- … my mum sell food in the seven [7-eleven]/ ... Thai food/ [nodding as meaning YES]

Conversational turns generated by Question 10
10. Is there any question would you like to ask us?

- No
- Do you like the school? [SBS or Rangsit University]
- What thing you would like to do? [asked one interviewer]

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I want to know what you do….

Primary 6 Discourse Level 4 Sufficient Control [N=3]

It is observed from data obtained from P 6 subjects at Level 4 that the subjects tended to give brief answers in one or two words, without elaboration. There were traces of broken English and some answers were prompted for YES or NO by one of the interviewers.

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- [Spoke softly] English [ending with s] / … I champion GO CART/ … Football I like Barcelona / Italy/ Malaysia/ Italy number 2/ Go CART I … /
- Nickname [name] …/ [sitting hunching a bit]…/ five years…/ My name is [name] ... twelve years old…/ play card …/ P 2 [started SBS] I remember my teacher from P 2 [to] P 5 and P 6.

Conversational turns generated by Question 2
2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

- Not sure [weaker students tend to use "not sure" as a typical response, like "I don't know"]

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Teacher good/ one year/ go Satit/

Conversational turns generated by Question 3

3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?
    - ... and teachers …/ … everybody like to study …/ [soft voice] [The interviewer asked CHOICE questions—the student answered with one word or two words]../ [question about what she learned in social] … like…/

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I don't speak English

Conversational turns generated by Question 4

4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- [swiping face as NO] [non-verbal]

Conversational turns generated by Question 5

5. What about your favorite subjects?
    - P 5 / … I like EP English/ Not good [at math]/ [using a lot of hand gestures when communicating]
    - Science [sai-an] [student appeared not confident, hunching a little…]../math…/ … area of a circle …/ PE… I play basketball… in term 1… Sunday…/

Conversational turns generated by Question 6

6. What about some interesting school activities?
    - …./ [mumbling with soft voice/ incomprehensible]

Conversational turns generated by Question 7

7. What about your teachers?
    - [no favorite teacher] Teacher [name] … tall… [broken English]

Conversational turns generated by Question 8

8. What about your friends/ your good friends?
    - I have only one friend / … not much homework …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 9

9. What is your plan for the future?
    - … [mumbling] [try to use Thai]
    - Business…/ [asked about plan this summer] ….
    - [nil]… / [soft voice] [asked about holiday] No …/ [asked about what to do at home] play games…/

Conversational turns generated by Question 10

10. Is there any question would you like to ask us?
    - No [swiping face as No]

Primary 6 Discourse Level 5 Marginal control [N=1]

It was observed that the only one Primary 6 subject at level 5 [marginal control] could hardly communicate. The interviewers had to go back to simplification by asking the subject different parts of the body, going to the wall and pointing the level of height of the teacher [name mentioned]. This is typical of a learner at the early stage of language acquisition; that is, the learner can understand but still cannot produce the language. It is a natural process that listening precedes language production in speaking.

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- [scratching head and forehead] [first year at Satit] [hunching over, scratching head and forehead]

Question 2: No speech product
Question 3: No speech product
Question 4: No speech product
Question 5: No speech product
Question 6: No speech product

Conversational turns generated by Question 7
7. What about your teachers?

- Teacher [name]. (The interviewee described his appearance) tall, small, brown (hair).

Question 8: No speech product
Question 9: No speech product
Question 10: No speech product

Secondary 3 Discourse

It is observed from data obtained from Secondary 3 subjects that most of the subjects could handle conversational turns relevantly and appropriately. However, even at Level 1, it was found that a few subjects produced irrelevant and inappropriate conversational turns. Such irrelevancy and inappropriateness was more apparent in the speech products of some subjects at Levels 2 [Functional] and 3 [Moderate]. At level 3, the subject gave rather brief answers in one or two words without elaboration.

Table 4: Discoursal Features of Secondary 3 Students at Five Levels of Communication Skills Established after Assessment with the Use of Instruments 1 and 2

Secondary 3 Discourse Level 1 Full Control [N=9]

Conversational turns generated by Question 1
1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- … sixteen years old … at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University … I'm in grade 10…; seven years at SBS … started at Grade 4 .; I live in Pathumthani …;
- My name is [name] … real name [name] …. study at SBS in M 4 [starterd at P 6] I have one sister [seven years older] … my parents own two resorts in Samui …. I like

playing football and games [clear plural S] [cousin of Ma Muang from Samui] … two resorts pretty near … [neighbor Ma Muang's resorts]

- My name is [name] …. I studied in at the school [SBS] for about ten years…. I spend my time watching TV. ; chat on FACEBOOK …

Conversational turns generated by Question 2

2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

- Beautiful school … like the gym … in my old school it doesn't have a gym like this …. I play basketball after school …. ; Teacher [name] play cricket …. ; when we study … Thai curriculum is better than Koh samui …. [at Koh Samui teachers hit students]
- First I studied at Primary one … my mum thought the school should be good … good for my future …. At first in my first year was a bit hard …. Teacher [name] …..

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I like air conditioning at SBS [Samui doesn't have air-conditioned classrooms]

Conversational turns generated by Question 3

3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- When they have like SBS Fair ...; we can play basketball both at the school and … [place].
- The way they teach … more English … ; [No English speaking when he first came to SBS]
- Like activities …. A lot of activities …. Play … one month [good th sound]… in English I like … songs …

Conversational turns generated by Question 4

4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

- LCD projector screen not fixed; teacher cannot write on the board… ; [give advice to report to marketing]
- School lunch … should be better [when I was in Primary it was better]
- Everything is okay …. Buildings a little bit old … yah… experiments [want more]… ; science class very old …. the stuff we used in science class ….[rather old … same old thing]

Conversational turns generated by Question 5

5. What about your favorite subjects?

- I like art because I love drawing … ; I like Chemistry but it is also hard to understand.
- I study science in Thai and English …; favorite Thai teachers … I talk to them Thai teachers [not because I don't like foreign teachers]; … like every week I call my mom and my dad…; I go home every month … ; I go out watch movies … hang out with friends … [you can go out on Sundays] if you have good reasons ….

Conversational turns generated by Question 6

6. What about some interesting school activities?

- Nothing special … I like to draw … [by himself] …. [EXPRESSION]
- Play basketball [slippery floor],

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I don't like science [sai-an] very much

Conversational turns generated by Question 7

7. What about your teachers?

- He's been my homeroom teacher …. He care about teaching … he make sure that the students are learning … he teach economics ….. [the student-subject likes this teacher Teacher [name]? From Africa] …/
- Teacher John English teacher …. Pretty fun …. He usually give us time …. To watch movies …. He talks and makes funny jokes…; [teacher he remembers] Teacher [name] in ICT … he taught … I like him because he is very kind … his [ICT] class is very interesting ….[sometimes has to figure hard about words he wants to say]..; … I like Art … I like to draw …; right now I don't like ICT [in Secondary 4] because … change teacher [Teacher [name] in Secondary 1 and 2]

Conversational turns generated by Question 8

8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- Play football with my friends …. We play sometimes at weekend or after school … sometimes watch movies with my Mum] …. I live in Nontaburi … Rattanathibet Road … ; not difficult to come to school….
- Play computer game … on line game … I like to stay at home.

Conversational turns generated by Question 9

9. What is your plan for the future?

- I'm not sure whether it is good or bad [mature EXPRESSION]…. Study in Japan … My dad wants me to study architecture in Japan but I don't want to study in Japan because I don't want to learn Japanese …. Been to Hong Kong, Japan, …./
- Computer engineering …. Go to Chula…. [can go to Chula easily to Chula] … come to SBS by car [his father's].
- I want to work in PPT …. I just want to know about [traveling] … ; Thammasat … I don't want to go away from my mom and my dad….

Conversational turns generated by Question 10

10. Is there any question would you like to ask us?

- Why do you have to ask [this type of] questions?
- What would use our information [data collection]?
- Today why interview me?

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- It's quite difficult … I have to check ….

Secondary 3 Discourse Level 2 Functional Control [N=8]

Conversational turns generated by Question 1

1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

- I study in M 4 … I live with my uncle [my home place is far] my parents do business with food for Japanese …. ; we do the lab … no experiments … very old …. I think I do in math very well other subjects so so; I study with my father and sister .../

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- [hesitant speech] ….if don't speak Thai in English subjects; studied at SBS for five years….

Conversational turns generated by Question 2

2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

- My dad pass the school [live in Ramintra] …. [leave home at 7 AM]…. [go home about 5 PM]
- My sister heard about the school… he learn here [SBS] for one year …I not good in English; teacher teach me good; he explain [no ks sound]… he help me when I speak wrong … Teacher [name] and Teacher [name] …. Teacher … I don't know the name.

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Free time … I read book.. listen to music ….

Ten years ago …. My old school near this place … at SBS for 10 years; my school has buildings …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 3

3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- I like basketball …. For the school I want lunch water back …. We have to buy bottled water ….public water yes … but you need a container …. I want a new basketball field [the one we have now] …;]the current one is air-conditioned] but they don't want to turn it [the aircon] on …. [Slippery floor] the floor make me slip …. ; play on the school team …; play together with my friend … teacher [name], Teacher [name]
- Again please … like Halloween Day … have costumes …. Some [students] do… some don't. [EXPRESSION]
- I don't have activities because I have to go home …; sometimes I go to the gym to play badminton …; I learn and play piano … ; I enjoy to learn at SBS.

Conversational turns generated by Question 4

4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

- More activities… cooking club [very Thai in behavior—smiling and laughing in a Thai way] [asked the mother to be with her… showing lack of confidence] … hang out with friends …/
- Food … better food [the interviewer said more selection?] … steak …[Noodles … chicken rice …] … come to school [Dad drives him to school] ….

Conversational turns generated by Question 5

5. What about your favorite subjects?

- I like Chemistry if it has experiments …. ICT too … I like English more than Thai … the teacher is funny … [can follow instruction] ….

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- Enjoyed P 5 P 6… I enjoyed because of my friends and teachers …; I wouldn't be in club…; … Sometimes when teacher ask …. Sometimes [help with school work] …/
- English …. Teacher [name] [from Australia]; Chinese Teacher [name] …
- … when I returned I went to a bilingual school [SBS]; my father speaks English to me.

Conversational turns generated by Question 6

6. What about some interesting school activities?

- In free time we reading book… music ….
- [NOTE: Most subjects gave data to this question in their answers to other questions; as a result, the interviewers did not repeat this question because the data were obtained via answers to other questions.]

Conversational turns generated by Question 7

7. What about your teachers?

- They are funny … Teacher [name] …. English teacher very funny …. Equal [grammar and conversation]…/
- She's Thai teacher …. She explain [no ks sound] … she help me a lot …. Teacher [name] … homeroom teacher

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- [science] … she teach me so long time …/
- Teacher [name] … English … in M 1… [name].. [name] …/

Conversational turns generated by Question 8

8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- Some friends have problem with other friend; history or biology … cannot understand well…; I ask other English teacher …. I have to ask Thai teacher about biology …. They come to class, play computer, walk around [one or two teachers] ..; new teachers every year [those who do not teach well] …; we have the lab… but we can't do the lab…; [change topic]… we cannot have court to play … ; [my English pretty good now] I learn English at SBS …[not outside class] [HIGHLY ARTICULATE]
- Go out with friends sometimes … play computer games online … ; exciting game Roller Coaster …. Sometimes love to go on it.

Conversational turns generated by Question 9

9. What is your plan for the future?

- I with business of my parents …; study business to help with food business [food and vegetables, green chili, dog food as well …. [food brand] … have factories.
- Make a resort … bungalow …. I have land by the sea …. I go fishing with my friends … snorkeling, …/
- Go to university abroad… England [has been there before twice]… ; London … [Not sure what area you want to study] …. May be a translator … Monday and Friday we're in London … Stonehenge …. [favorite place in London] …. Brighton …. Colder in Thailand … in April …. 10 degree celcius..; …. [in Thailand go] Chiengmai ….

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I don't like to be a doctor…; I like singing … English and Thai … I don't know how to say …/
- Now I'm not good for Kemee [Chemistry—code switching to Thai] and Physics ; … want to be a dentist … go to eat with friends …. [INDIRECT ANSWER]

Conversational turns generated by Question 10

10. Is there any question would you like to ask us?

- How old are you [asked the interviewer]; How many years do you work at the … [school—this word is not recorded at the time of data collection]?
- Why you want to interview me? ….
- Most subjects answered "No."

Secondary 3 Discourse Level 3 Moderate Control [N=1]

Conversational turns generated by Question 1

1. Would you like to introduce yourself briefly?

NOT RELEVANT and NOT APPROPRIATE:

- I know English little. American football. Football…I like.. Barcelona.

Conversational turns generated by Question 2

2. How did you or your parents find about the school?

No data

Conversational turns generated by Question 3

3. What is the best part of the school you enjoy most?

- Teacher good.

Conversational turns generated by Question 4

Question 4

4. What is the part of the school you would like to suggest improvement?

No data

Conversational turns generated by Question 5

5. What about your favorite subjects?

- I like PE English, Math English, Performing Arts.

Conversational turns generated by Question 6

6. What about some interesting school activities?

- Sports, play football.

Conversational turns generated by Question 7

7. What about your teachers?

- Teacher [name] [Thai name], Teacher [name]. Teacher [name] is my favorite teacher. She help me English.

Conversational turns generated by Question 8

8. What about your friends/ your good friends?

- [name] [is my good friend].

Conversational turns generated by Question 9
9. What is your plan for the future?

- World Champion. I like good job. /suay/ [beautiful in Thai] [Working with beautiful things]

Question 10
10. Is there any question would you like to ask us

No data

---

8. Discussion of Major Findings

Proficiency in speaking skills can be seen in a speaker's performance in handling conversational turns. Quite a few researchers paid attention to the use of language activities and model instruction to support development of speaking skills (Sangamuang 2002, Boonsue 2003, and Boonsompan 2008). As seen in this study, data on speaking skills with a focus on conversational turns deserve a close examination regarding the subjects' ability in handling conversational turns naturally and effectively.

It was found that those proficient subjects were able to respond relevantly and appropriately to the interviewers' questions. On the contrary, those who were less proficient responded to the interviewers' questions with language limitations. As recorded in the interview data, the interviewers resorted to speech simplification or promptings for YES or NO answer from those subjects with severely limited speech products. It should be noted that competence in handling conversational turns can be refined through practices in speaking skills as emphasized in the work of quite a few researchers like Huda (1998), Boonsue (2003), Wrenhall (2005), Pholsward (2006b), Panti (2007), Kittitherawat (2008), and Kang and Chang (2014). Such competence is to emerge from interactions between the speaker and the conversational partner (Braun, Galts, and Kabak, 2014; Bronshteyn and Gustafson, 2015). Interactional opportunities provide speakers with understanding of social and cultural appropriateness required in carrying on conversation in a relevant manner; relevancy as such is naturally acquired via insights into cultural appropriateness, as studied in the work of Levine and Adelman (1993), Ziesing (2001) and Tan (2006).

9. Conclusion and Pedagogic Implications of the Study

The main study has its goal on assessment of English communication skills of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 students in five areas: (1) lexis or word (2) syntax or sentence structure (3) discourse or conversational turns, (4) interactions, and (5) strategic competence in the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies domains: Lexis, Syntax, Discourse, Interactions, and Strategic Competence. This paper reports only major findings in the area of discourse with conversational turns. As seen in the results of the study, those more proficient subjects [levels 1 and 2] at the levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 were able to handle their conversational turns relevantly and appropriately. Those who are less proficient [levels 3 - 5] showed

limitations in their oral discourse performance; they responded irrelevantly to the topic of conversation and some resorted to code switching or code mixing in English and Thai. Their discoursal performance data point to specific linguistic features that should deserve attention from those in charge of bilingual curriculum operations.

As for pedagogic implications of the results of the study, the obtained and exemplified data presented in the sections on Results and Discussion point to possible benchmarks for bilingual schools to consider adopting as criteria to assess their students' oral performance, especially those criteria at the proficient [Level 1] or functional level [Level 2]. It is important to assess bilingual students' communication skills to make sure the extent to which their proficiency can serve as an tool to support academic achievements in major subject strands as required in the core curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Thailand.

It should be noted that the identified limitations of language communication skills shown in learners' performance in the domain of discourse could serve as contents for an enhancement program to accelerate language mastery or acquisition in weaker students. In addition, the instruments constructed with specifications could also serve as guidelines for language performance assessment in different domains as seen appropriate in particular bilingual school contexts.

10. Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank Rangsit University Research Institute for providing a research fund for this research in 2013-2014. Very special thanks go to Dr Donrutai Boonprasitt, Ajarn John Gramling, and Ajarn Chidchamai Visuttakul for their assistance with data collection. The researchers also thank Dr Samnuan Kunpol for coordinating with the parents of the subjects in the study, and particularly all subjects for providing needed data.

11. The Authors

Ruja Pholsward, Ph. D. is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Rangsit University, Thailand. Her research interest covers the areas related of language education: communication skills, language functions, bilingual learners, testing, reading and English for Academic Purposes.

Supatra Pradubpongse, Ed. D. is on the academic staff of the Doctoral Program in Educational Studies at Rangsit University. Her past research dealt with Educational Technology, thinking skills development, and quality assurance at the primary and secondary school levels.

12. References

Asbeck, S.A. (2008). *English Language Learners' Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: Effectiveness of Bilingual Storybook Reading for Kindergarteners.* A doctoral dissertation, Raleigh, North Carolina State University.

Babrakzai, F. (2006). Practical Methodology: SLA Theories, practices and problems. *Proceedings of the 26th Annual Thailand TESOL International Conference*, 19-21 January, Chiang Mai, Thailand, p.76.

Boonsompan, O. (2008). *Using Brain-Based Learning Activities to Promote English Vocabulary knowledge and Reading Abilities of Prathom Suksa 3 Students*. An M. Ed. Thesis, Chiengmai University.

Boonsue, W. (2003). *Developing English Speaking Ability and Thai Culture Knowledge of International Students through the Adjunct Model Instruction.* An M. Ed. Thesis, Chiengmai University.

Booth, P. (2014). The variance of lexical diversity profiles and its relationship to learning style. *IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 52(4), 357-375. doi:10.1515/iral-2104-0015.

Braun, B., Galts, T., and Kabak, B. (2014). Lexical encoding of L2 tones: The role of L1 stress, pitch accent and intonation. *Second Language Research*, 30(3), 323-350. doi:10:1177/0267658313510926.

Bronshteyn, K. C., and Gustafson, T. (2015). The Acquisition of Phrasal Verbs in L2 English: A Literature Review. Linguistic Portfolios, 4(8), 92-98. Available at: http://repository.stcloudstate.edu/stcloud_ling/vol4/issl/8.

Dean, M. R. (2006). *Do Teacher Expectations and Behavior Influence Students' Academic Achievement and Acquisition of Second Language Proficiency in an Elementary Bilingual Two-Way Immersion Setting?* A doctoral dissertation, School of Education California Lutheran University.

Ellis, R. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, L. (2009). *Reflective Assessment and Student Achievement in High School English.* A doctoral dissertation, Graduate School of Education at Seattle Pacific University.

Fougère , S.C. (2011). *Impact of Adolescents' First Language Literacy on Second Language Acquisition.* A doctoral dissertation, School of Education, Capella University.

Huda, N. (1998). Relationship between Speaking Proficiency, Reflectivity-Impulsivity, and L2 Learning Strategies. In Renandya, W.A. and Jacobs G.M. *Learners and Language Learning.* Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, pp. 40-55.

Kang, M., & Chang, S. (2014). An Analysis of Lexical Errors of Korean Language Learners: Some American College Learners' Case. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics (PAAL),* 18(2), 93-110.

Kittitherawat, A. (2008). *Role Playing Activities to Develop Speaking Skills of Prathom Suksa 6 Students.* An Independent Study, M. Ed. In Education, Chiengmai University.

Levine, D.R. and Adelman, M.B. (1993). *Beyond Language: Cross-Cultural Communication.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *The Curriculum of Basic Education.* Bangkok: Ministry of Education, Thailand.

Office of National Assessment. (2011-2013). National O-Net Scores in English 2554-2556. Bangkok: ONA Website. [in Thai].

Office of National Education Commission. (2011). *Driving Education Reform in the Second Decade.* ONEC Document 48/ 2554. Bangkok: Office of National Education Commission. [in Thai]

Office of National Education Commission. (2009). *Potentials of Thai Education in the International Arena*. Bangkok: Office of National Education Commission. [in Thai]

Ourairat, A. (2011). *Development and Implementation of the Unified Bilingual Curriculum: A Case Study of Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University.* Doctoral Dissertation, Faculty of education, Rangsit University, Thailand.

Panti, S. (2007). *Story-Telling Activities to Promote Listening-Speaking Activities and Morality of Prathom Suksa 5 Students.* An M. Ed. Thesis, Chiengmai University.

Pholsward, R. (2006a). *A Report on Acquired Language Features of K 3 Students at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University*. Available: Archive, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University.

Pholsward, R. (2006b). *A Report on English Proficiency Assessment of Secondary 3 Students*. Available: Archive, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University.

Pholsward, R. (2008). *Thai Writing Skills of Primary 1-3 Students at at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University.* Available: Website <www.rsu.ac.th/education>, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University. [in Thai].

Pholsward, R. (2009). *Thai Writing Skills of Primary 3-6 Students at at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University.* Available: Website <www.rsu.ac.th/education>, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University. [in Thai].

Pholsward, R. et al. (2010). *Thai Writing Skills of Secondary 1-3 Students at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University.* Available: Website <www.rsu.ac.th/education>, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University. [in Thai].

Pholsward, R. et al. (2011). *Teaching Methods Used by Social Studies Teachers at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University*. Available: Website <www.rsu.ac.th/education>, Faculty of Education, Rangsit University.

Pholsward, R. (2014). *Research Project Report: Assessment of English Communication Skills of Primary 6 and Secondary 3 Students: A Case Study of Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University.* Pathumthani: Rangsit University Press.

Roberts, M.S. (2008). *Instructional Practices Conducive to the High Achievement of Hispanic Limited English Proficient Students on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills*. A doctoral dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin.

Sangamuang, R. (2002). *Promoting Prathom Suksa Students' English Language Skills by Using the concentrated Language Encounter Approach.* An M. Ed. Thesis, Chiengmai University.

Sukket, K. 2007. *Using Song activities to Promote English Ability and Vocabulary Knowledge of Grade Level 1 Students.* An M. Ed. Thesis, Chiengmai University.

Tan, M. (2006). Teaching Intercultural Awareness in the Language Classroom. *Proceedings of the 26th Annual Thailand TESOL International Conference*, 19-21 January, Chiang Mai, Thailand, p.129.

Wrenshall, J. (2005). Reflections on Assessing Oral Fluency. *Proceedings of the 25th Annual Thailand TESOL International Conference*, 20-22 January, Bangkok, Thailand, p. 176.

Yanyan, W. (2009). *Teachers' Performance Assessment Practices and Their Second Language Acquisition Approaches: the Case of English for International Business Programme in a Shanghai University*. A doctoral dissertation, School of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Ziesing, M. (2001). Cultural Literacy and Language Fluency. *A Collection of Academic Papers 2011*. Faculty of humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand, pp. 19-31.

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix

Sum-up Points of Language Features in Communication Skills of P 6 and M 3 Students

Lexis:	Variety of words used to convey meanings with varied conceptual complexity A mix of Thai words in the data of less proficient subjects
Syntax:	The use of three structures: Simple, Compound, Complex The use of each structure determined by conceptual complexity of the intended meanings conveyed by the subjects Evidence of broken English in less proficient subjects Evidence of transferred structure from the first language in less proficient subjects
Discourse:	Conversational turns appear natural in the data of proficient and functional subjects Conversational turns reflect irrelevancy and inappropriateness in less proficient subjects
Interactions	Verbal and non-verbal interactions appear appropriate in the data of proficient and functional subjects Verbal and non-verbal interactions appear limited and inappropriate in the data of less proficient subjects Evidence of cultural impact from the first language on verbal and non-verbal interactions in the data of less proficient subjects
Strategic Competence	Competency in the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies in the data of proficient and functional subjects Competency in the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies limited or missing in the data of less proficient subjects

13.2 Appendix 2

Interactions

Interactions in fact are part oral discourse in that they reveal how speeches of the speaker's and the speech flow in interaction emerge in conversational turns. Interactions can be examined in terms of verbal and non-verbal devices that support speech flows occurring between two conversational partners—each party taking turn to be the speaker and the hearer or respondent.

From the obtained data detected from oral discourse, the P 6 and S 3 subjects at Level 1 showed fully appropriate verbal and non-verbal interactions. The subjects used "ya," "yeah" and expressions in response to the interviewer to keep the conversation continued naturally. The P 6 and S 3 subjects at the other levels—Level 2 [Functionally appropriate], Level 3 [Moderately appropriate], Level 4 [Sufficiently appropriate], Level 5 [Marginally appropriate]—interacted with the two interviewers with relatively less appropriate in varied interactions. The lowest end of verbal variation is broken English or responses in one or two words.

One type of verbal interactions that reflects cultural inappropriateness should deserve attention regarding language development. One subject when prompted with Question 10 [Is there any question would you like to ask us?] asked "How old are you?" Such a response first shows less relevancy in conversational turns; it in fact reveals a cultural impact on the speech product in that Thai culture allows a speaker to ask personal information whereas English does not particularly in the first social encounter.

It was observed that non-verbal interactions took the form of voice control as soft and mumbling—somewhat difficult to hear or guess the meaning. Such soft voice or mumbling usually prompted the interviewer to repeat a guessed word with YES or NO from the interviewed subject. Those at less appropriate levels also uttered hesitant speeches in responding to the interviewers' questions.