Using Non-Scripted Role-Play to Teach Speaking Skills: A Study of English Conversation of Thai College Students at Yala Rajabhat University

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts Degree in Teaching English as an International Language
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ปีการศึกษา   2555

<div align="center">**บทคัดย่อ**</div>

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลของการใช้กิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูดในการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาไทย มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏยะลา ที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษแตกต่างกัน โดยการเปรียบเทียบทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาก่อนและหลังการเรียนการสอนด้วยกิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูด ซึ่งการศึกษาครั้งนี้มุ่งตอบคำถามวิจัยดังต่อไปนี้ 1. กิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูดสามารถช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการพูดของนักศึกษาให้ดีขึ้นได้หรือไม่ 2.ลักษณะการพูดของนักศึกษาด้านใดบ้างที่มีพัฒนาการดีขึ้นจากการฝึกฝนด้วยบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูด 3. กิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูดมีผลอย่างไรในการพัฒนาทักษะการพูดของนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษแตกต่างกัน โดยข้อมูลที่นำมาศึกษาประกอบด้วยบทสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาจากกิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติที่ได้บันทึกเสียงและถอดเทปไว้ตามหลักการของ Conversation Analysis (CA) ซึ่งนักศึกษากลุ่มดังกล่าวทั้ง 16 คน ไม่ใช่นักศึกษาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ทั้งนี้ได้มีการแบ่งนักศึกษาเป็น 2 กลุ่มๆละ 8 คนตามระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษ

ผลการศึกษาพบว่ากิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูดช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาให้ดีขึ้นได้ อีกทั้งยังช่วยให้นักศึกษาใช้ภาษาในการสนทนาได้อย่างเป็นธรรมชาติมากขึ้น จากการเปรียบเทียบคะแนนการสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่างก่อนและหลังการฝึกในชั้นเรียนพบว่านักศึกษาทั้งหมดมีทักษะการสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษที่พัฒนาขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.00 โดยนักศึกษากลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษต่ำกว่ามีพัฒนาการทางการพูดในด้านการแสดงออกทางภาษา(manner of expression)และ การโต้ตอบ

(ability to interact)ดีขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.04 และ 0.02 ตามลำดับ ส่วนนักศึกษา
กลุ่มที่มีระดับความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษสูงกว่ายังมีพัฒนาการด้านความคล่องในการใช้ภาษา
(fluency)ดีขึ้นอีกด้วยโดยมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.02 นอกจากนั้นผลการวิเคราะห์บทสนทนา
อย่างละเอียดยืนยันเพิ่มเติมว่านักศึกษาทั้งหมดที่ผ่านการฝึกฝนด้วยกิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มี
บทพูดสามารถใช้ภาษาตามหน้าที่(function)ในการสนทนาได้เป็นธรรมชาติขึ้นอย่างเห็นได้ชัด
ถึงแม้ว่าจะได้รับการเรียนการสอนเป็นแบบดั้งเดิมที่เน้นเฉพาะรูปและความหมาย   (form   and
meaning)   ก็ตามทั้งนี้ผลการศึกษาชี้ให้เห็นว่าครูผู้สอนควรใช้รูปแบบการสอนที่เน้นทั้งหน้าที่และ
รูปแบบของภาษาที่ใช้ในการแสดงหน้าที่ในการสนทนาและให้ความสำคัญกับการฝึกเฉพาะอย่าง
(focused   training)   เพื่อให้การใช้กิจกรรมบทบาทสมมติแบบไม่มีบทพูดในการพัฒนาทักษะการ
สนทนาภาษาอังกฤษช่วยพัฒนาให้ผู้เรียนสามารถใช้ภาษาในการสนทนาได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ
มากยิ่งขึ้น

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Academic	2013

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of non-scripted role-play activities to improve the oral performance of Thai college students with different English proficiency. It attempted to address the following questions: a) Can non-scripted role-play enhance the students' speaking skills? b) What speech features can be enhanced through the role-play training? c) How can non-scripted role-play enhance speaking skills of students with high and low English proficiency? The data were obtained from tape recorded role-plays of 16 non-English majors (8 students each group) during their pre- and post- tests at Yala Rajabhat University in Southern Thailand. The students' role-play conversations were transcribed and analyzed followingthe Conversation Analysis (CA) framework.

The findings indicated that non-scripted role-play activities helped improve the students' speaking skills and develop their ability to naturally use the target language in conversation.The study showed that the post-test scores of both groups were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. It also revealed that the lower-proficiency students exhibited a significant degree of speaking improvement in terms of manner of expression and ability to interact at the level of 0.04 and 0.02 respectively. On the other hand, while improving on the same aspects, the high proficiency students also showed significant improvement in terms of fluency (sig = 0.02). Close analysis of the recorded conversations additionally revealed that despite being traditionally taught conversation lessons with more focus on form and meaning, the participants trained with non-scripted role-play noticeably improved on the language functions in genuine conversation. It was suggested that

while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play, teachers emphasize forms used to perform particular conversational functions, and try to enhance the production of the forms via more focused training for more effective communication of the students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. Non-scripted role-play: A better practice for Thai EFL college students' speaking skills

2. Using non-scripted role-play to teach speaking skills: A study of English conversation of Thai college students at Yala Rajabhat University

From: **English Australia Journal Editor** <journal@englishaustralia.com.au>
Date: Mon, Sep 9, 2013 at 9:06 AM
Subject: Re: Article Submission
To: Nuchanan Naksevee<nuchanan.n@gmail.com>

Dear Nuchanan

Overall, I think your article has potential. It is a relevant topic for many teachers and researchers in a variety of contexts. Therefore, I have provided some pre-review comments to help you rework the article for a second submission. For the section of the journal that you have chosen, you might want to emphasise the classroom practice a little more and cut down on the reporting of quantitative data. I've made some comments and suggestions in the article (attached) that I would like to see you address before I send out for peer review. Also, the article is too long (3555) and will you will need to try to revise it to 3000 words (incl. tables but excluding abstract, references and appendices).

Please let me know if you would like to proceed to a second submission, and a rough timeline for the resubmission.

Thanks again for submitting your paper to the English Australia Journal.

Kind regards

Phil Chappell

Editor
English Australia Journal
ISSN 1444-4496
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April 22, 2013

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Dear Nuchanan Naksevee

On behalf of King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, we are pleased to inform you that your paper on **USING NON-SCRIPTED ROLE-PLAY TO TEACH SPEAKING SKILLS: A STUDY OF ENGLISH CONVERSATION OF THAI COLLEGE STUDENTS AT YALA RAJBHAT UNIVERSITY** has been accepted. We would like to invite you to present your paper at the 11th International Conference on Developing Real-Life Learning Experiences: Learning Innovation for ASEAN (DRLE2013) that will be held in Bangkok, Thailand on the 3rd of May, 2013.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Bangkok. Your participation in this event is cordially appreciated. Please contact the Secretariat of the Conference for registration at
Email: drle2013inter@gmail.com or Tel +668-5260-7966, Fax +66-2329-8435

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Yours Sincerely,
Assoc. Prof. Peerawut Suwanjan
Dean, Faculty of Industrial Education,
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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of English as a global language has long been recognized in the Thai education system. The Ministry of Education of Thailand has established the 2001 Basic Education Curriculum, according to which the core curriculum for foreign language learning would be English and the language is required to be taught to students from primary, secondary school to university level(*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006). Subsequently, the education reform in 2006 emphasized the English language as one component to improve teaching and learning together with communication skills. Increasingly English Programs in schools and education institutions in Thailand have clearly shown that the country aims to embrace itself for the age of globalization (*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006).

To prepare English for tertiary students to compete in the job market, Thai university curricula need to be enhanced by promoting the development of English language skills through communicative teaching approaches (*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006).

Today, the trend of teaching English in Thailand has been shifted from the Grammar-Translation Method towards the Communicative Approach. The former was blamed for its failure to produce students with adequate English communication skills even at the graduate level. Many studies have shown that Thai students have been strongly taught vocabulary, grammar and structure without applying them in a communicative way. They generally use passive learning strategies by memorizing words spelling and meaning. Consequently, they cannot use English to interact with foreigners in their real life (Wiriyachitra, 2002; Punthumasen, 2007; Khuvasanond, Sildus, Hurford& Lipka, 2010).

In communicative language teaching (CLT), teachers place emphasis on developing learners' communicative competence by engaging them in meaningful communicative activities. The primary goal of the language classroom is to create authentic opportunities for the learners to learn how to use the target language

appropriately and effectively according to a wide range of settings and purposes. To improve learners' oral communication skills, role-play seems to be one of the most popular choices of communicative activities among English language teachers (Freeman, 2001; Littlewood, 1992; Livingstone, 1983; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1983; Spada, 2007).

Frequently practicing role-play activities can help proficiency-deficient students to improve their speaking skills. Role-plays give students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social roles, mainly focusing on the language learning as a natural process. In role-play activities, the students will receive the language through role-play performance without formal instruction (Littlewood, 1992). Several studies have shown the effectiveness of role- play activities in improving EFL learners' speaking ability (Alwahibee, 2004; Chotirat, 2011; Kaur, 2011; Krish, 2001; Liu, 2010; Ding & Liu, 2009; Okada, 2010; Shen& Suwanthep, 2011).

According to Freeman (2001), role-play used in a language classroom can be classified into two types, i.e., scripted and non-scripted. Scripted role-play refers to the type of conversational exchange that is modeled from a dialogue in the textbook. The learners are put in pairs or groups and exchange the roles by using the conversational model in the textbook. They are allowed to prepare the script and they can rehearse before carrying out the role-play in class. Scripted role-play illustrates language structure, vocabulary, language function and pronunciation. Another type is non-scripted role-play, which engages the learners in the roles and situations that are provided by the teacher without scripts. The learners need to understand their given roles and make a decision on what they will say.

In Thai EFL contexts, scripted role-plays are often chosen because it is easy to implement. Moreover, scripted role-play seems to put less pressure on the students because they have time to prepare the script and rehearse, while non-scripted role-plays require them to perform the conversation immediately with little preparation. However, scripted role-play activities do not quite provide the opportunities for students to deal with problems in real-life communication. Often,

students have to memorize the dialogue without any struggle to speak in their own words. Chotirat (2011) maintains that non-scripted role- plays prepare students to handle problems in real-life conversation better than scripted ones.

Non-scripted role-plays have therefore been recommended by more recent studies as a better alternative. According to Freeman (2001), non-scripted role-play is one of the CLT activities that gives more choice in speaking. It is also similar to natural conversation and provides problem-solving elements to the learning activity.

However, there have been only a few studies directly examining the outcome of using non-scripted role-play activities among students with different levels of proficiency. This study is therefore designed to fill this gap by investigating the use of this type of role-play with high- and low-English proficiency students. It additionally explores the conversational practices that can really be enhanced through the non-scripted role-play training.

1.1 Definition of Key Terms

1.1.1 **Scripted role-play** in this research refers to role-play activities that allow students to prepare a script in advance and to rehearse it before performing.

1.1.2 **Non-scripted role-play** refers to role-play without script preparation. Students perform their role-play conversation immediately after being assigned a situation by the teacher.

1.1.3 **Speech features** refer to such conversational features as *turn-taking, overlaps, sequences, sequential actions, repair,* and *fillers.*

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1 To examine whether non-scripted role-play can enhance the students' speaking skills

2.2 To investigate what speech features can be enhanced through the role-play training

2.3 To examine whether high- and low- proficiency students perform differently in non-scripted role-play

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 Can non-scripted role-play enhance the students' speaking skills?

3.2 What speech features can be enhanced by the role-play training?

3.3 How can non-scripted role-play enhance speaking skills of students with different proficiency levels?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part provides a brief review of the literature pertinent to the investigation. There are four relevant aspects discussed in order: Communicative Language Teaching, role-play activities, Conversation Analysis and turn-taking organization.

4.1 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a well-known ESL/EFL teaching approach the goal of which is the development of the learner's communicative competence in the target language. Richards (2006) stated "CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom".

Communicative competence includes four aspects of language knowledge: linguistic, functional, discourse and sociolinguistic. In order to have the communicative ability, learners need to know how to use language for different purposes and functions, be able to use language appropriately according to the setting and participants, produce and understand different types of texts, as well as have good communication strategies (Richards,2006).

The most obvious characteristic of CLT is related to communicative intent. Students are encouraged to use the language through language activities such as games, role-plays and problem-solving tasks. Another primary characteristic is the use of authentic materials to provide the students an opportunity to develop their language as actual use, e.g., a real newspaper article, a magazine, and a live radio or television broadcast.

Johnson and Morrow (1981 as cited in Freeman, 2001) identified three features of communicative activities including information gap, choice and feedback. In general communication, there must be gaps. For example, the speaker A in an exchange knows something the other speaker B does not; thus, there is an information gap for them to exchange.   Also, the speaker has a choice of what he/she is going to say and how. If the activity is so tightly controlled that the student can speak only in one way with no choice, such an activity is not communicative. True communication must also be purposeful; the speaker must receive feedback from the listener. If the listener does not have an opportunity to provide the speaker with feedback, the exchange is not really communicative.

The role of learner and teacher is another distinctive point of CLT. A CLT curriculum will be built from learners' information. The learners build the learning process by participating in classroom activities based on the cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. The learning task is the social interaction in which interpersonal relationships between the participants are constructed and maintained. Learners in CLT classrooms learn through group work or pair work tasks rather than depend on the teacher for a model.   Besides, the teachers' roles have been changed from *manager of materials* to *facilitator* or *counselor*. The

teachers facilitate communication in the classroom. Their major responsibility is to establish situations and promote communication among students. Teachers act as an adviser, answering students' questions and monitoring their performance.

CLT classroom activities are concerned more with fluency, which is one of the primary goals of CLT. Fluency can be developed by creating classroom activities and engaging the students in meaningful interaction while maintaining comprehensibility despite their limited communicative competence. Students must use communication strategies, negotiate meaning, correct misunderstanding and avoid communication breakdowns (Richard, 2006).

4.2 Role-Plays

Role-play activities underline the CLT approach in that they involve meaningful interaction. The learners can "learn by doing," which means they can practice the language use similar to real situations. According to Livingstone (1983), role-play is a classroom activity which gives students the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of behavior, and the actual roles they need outside the classroom. Role-play activities not only create the atmosphere of communicative learning in EFL classrooms, but also allow learners the opportunity to work with different abilities of classmates (Livingstone; 1983, Littlewood; 1992, Freeman; 2001). Role-play can therefore be an effective way to help the learners develop linguistic awareness.

Savignon (1983) divided role-play into two types: scripted role-play and non-scripted role-play. Scripted role-play is modeled on dialogues appearing in English textbooks. The learners are assigned to work in pairs or groups and exchange the roles by using the conversational model in the textbook. The learners are allowed to write down their own scripts and they can rehearse before carrying out a role-play conversation to class. In contrast, non-scripted role-play is less structured and more in line with CLT. The learners are engaged in the roles assigned by the teacher. Also, the teacher should tell what the situation is, and what they are talking about. The learners however need to decide what they will say by themselves.

In this study, the non-scripted role-play is the focus because it underlines the important aspect in CLT, particularly the notion of information gaps, choice and feedback. Non-scripted role-play gives learners more choice in speaking and provides information gaps. Students are unable to completely predict what is going to happen or to be said, which is close to natural conversation.

4.3 Conversation Analysis (CA)

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a sociological approach to the study of natural conversation with the aim particularly at determining social participants' methods of turn-taking, constructing sequences of utterances across turns, identifying and repairing problems, and employing gaze and movement in interaction. CA analysis aims to investigate how conversation works in different conventional settings, e.g., interviews, telephone conversation, card games (Seedhouse, 2004; Schegloff, 2007).

4.4 Turn Taking

Taking turns in speaking is a fundamental aspect of human conversation, as well as other speech-exchange systems. Turn-taking is the skill of knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation. There are two components of the turn-taking system: turn-constructional component and turn-allocation component (Sack et al, 1974, cited in Sinwongsuwat, 2007). Regarding the turn-constructional component, the speaker may set out to construct a turn in various unit-types: a sentence, clause, phrase or even a single word. The turn-allocation component, on the other hand, is the technique in talk-in-interaction which can be distributed in two major types. The first is the turn that is allocated by the current speaker's selecting next speaker. The next is the one allocated by self-selection.

Sacks, Scheloff and Jefferson (1974) captured the organization of turns through the concept of *turn constructional units*, or TCUs. In English and many other languages, grammar is one key organizational resource in building and recognizing TCUs. The next organizational resource is grounded in phonetic realization of the talk. Also, TCUs are concerned with a recognizable action in context.

4.5 Related Research on Role-play Activities in EFL Class

Role-play activities are widely used in ELT. Many studies have researched the effectiveness of using role-play and one of the most obvious benefits that most researchers found is the improvement in communicative skills. Alwahibee (2004) investigated the effectiveness of role-play activities in learning English as a foreign language of Saudi college students. The results showed that role-play activities were able to enhance oral proficiency of the students. Furthermore, through role-play activities, Ding & Liu (2009) found improvement in students' vocabulary skills. The students were able to apply the vocabulary learned in the role-play, unlike in word recitation. Eighty percent of students became communicatively more fluent. However, the accuracy and appropriateness in the use of sentences still needed to be improved.

Liu (2010) additionally contended that role-play activities can motivate colleague students to speak English. Students experimenting with role-play became more interested in language learning rather than those in the control group which focused on textbook grammar.

Having the students practice both scripted and non-scripted role-play really helped to significantly improve their overall speaking performance. Rodpradit (2012) revealed that non-scripted role-plays produced significantly better result than scripted ones in terms of discrete aspects; namely, accent, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, while the latter improved only the participants' vocabulary.

Role-play not only helps in the development of linguistic competence but also enhances learners' conversational competence, improving their ability to converse naturally in real-life situations. Chotirat (2011) researched repair organization of students trained with scripted and non-scripted role-play activities; the findings revealed more frequent organization of self-initiated self-repair repair in non-scripted role-plays, which better simulated a genuine feature of natural conversation.

To sum up based on the literature review, role-playing seems to be a useful educational tool for students to improve their speaking skills since it provides

opportunities to deal with problems and practice relevant features of language use in actual interactions.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part discusses the research methodology employed in this study. The research participants engaged in this study are firstly explained. Then the teaching instruments, research instruments, the process of data collection and data analysis are respectively described.

5.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were 35 second-year non-English majors at Yala Rajabhat University in Southern Thailand. The ages of the students ranged from 19 to 20 years old. These students had never been trained to perform non-scripted role-play in class. The participants took the English for Communication II course at the university. They were divided into two groups: the high- and low- level groups according to the average scores they obtained from compulsory English courses taken during the first year of their studies. All of the students in the class participated in role-play activities but only eight students from each group were selected for data collection and analysis. Before given conversation lessons with the role-play training, these students were paired up for an oral pre-test in the form of non-scripted role-play with high- proficiency students being matched with low-proficiency ones. Their role-play performance, which was tape-recorded, was first scored by the class teacher using the rubric adapted from Mohtar (2005), which was oriented to communicative language features including pronunciation, fluency in speaking, grammatical accuracy, style of expression, appropriate choice of words, manner of expression and ability to interact.

5.2 Teaching Instruments

Teaching instruments employed in this study consist of teaching texts, lesson plans and role-play activities.

5.2.1 Teaching texts

The course book used in the class is the commercial textbook named "Top Notch", provided by Yala Rajabhat University. The book consisted of ten units. The first five units were set for English for Communication I, and the last five units on which this research was based were chosen for English for Communication II. The chapters taught included *Eating Well, Psychology and Personality, Enjoying the Arts, Living with Computers* and *Ethics and Values*.

5.2.2 Lesson Plans

Eight lesson plans were written and taught to the target groups by the researcher. Each lesson was designed by mainly focusing on form, meaning, vocabulary and expressions. In each lesson, the students were engaged in role-play activities involving the situations from the unit in the coursebook.

5.2.3 Role-Play Activities

The researcher created situation cards in order to elicit the students' conversation performance. The situations were designed in accordance with the contents taught in the coursebook. Students performed role-play according to the assigned events without any model dialogue.

5.3 Research Instruments

5.3.1 Rubric of the oral assessment

The rubric of oral assessment was used to evaluate students' performance in pre- and post- tests. The calculated scores from both tests were compared to measure the development of students' speaking skill by using a *t*-test. The assessment was oriented to the CLT approach, focusing on features of communicative competence which include pronunciation, fluency in speaking,

grammatical accuracy, style of expression, appropriate choice of words, manner of expression and ability to interact. The rubric of oral assessment and rating scale were adapted from Mohtar (2005; see Appendix C). Each topic was divided into a five-point scale, ranging from 5 (excellent), 4(very good), 3(good), 2(fair) to 1 (poor).

5.4 Data Collection

Data was collected during the first semester of the 2012 academic year, from June to September. The study was conducted in the class of English for Communication II, which took place two consecutive hours a week.

The first set of data was scores from the pre- and post-oral test in the form of role-play. Low- and high-English proficiency students were matched up before being asked to perform the role-play conversation.

During the training, the participants were given lessons based on the chosen conversation textbook. In the warm-up, the students were engaged in a discussion on the theme of the lesson. In the presentation stage, the teacher introduced conversations featured in the textbook, helping them understand their content by focusing primarily on forms and meanings of vocabulary and expressions used. After the content was presented, students were randomly asked related questions about the conversations to check their understanding. Subsequently, in the production stage, high- and low-proficiency students were paired up and given two situation cards for their non-scripted role-play performance, i.e., cards A and B, both of which shared the same lesson theme. The students who played A and B acted out their own roles in the situation to the class without any model conversation. Only the role-plays of the top eight high-proficiency students and the bottom eight low-proficiency students were selected for video recording and subsequent close conversation analysis. After the completion of the course, the students were engaged in the role-play post-test following the same procedures as in the pre-test. The conversations were transcribed and analyzed using the transcription convention adopted by Seedhouse (2004) and Schegloff (2007).

Table 1: Topics and the frequency of role-play activities

Units	Topics	Numbers of role-plays
6	Eating Well	1
7	Psychology Care and Appearance	2
8	Enjoying the Arts	2
9	Living with Computers	2
10	Ethics and Values	1

5.5 Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the overall scores obtained from the pre- and post- test were compared in order to determine performance differences through the non-scripted role-play training. Additionally, the transcribed data were closely examined to identify the main features of talk enhanced by the training. Moreover, the scores of the students with different proficiency from the pre- and post-test were compared to find out which group performed better by using non-scripted role-play.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 The Effectiveness of Non-Scripted Role-Play

Table 1 aims to answer Research Question 1 as to whether non-scripted role-play can enhance the students' speaking skills. In order to answer the question, the scores obtained from the pre- and post-test were compared in order to find out the different performance outcome.

As shown in Table 2, it was found that the English speaking performance of both low-and high-proficiency students significantly improved through the non-scripted role-play training.

Table 2: Comparison between non-scripted role-play performance in pre- and post- test

Scores	Pre-test (Total = 35)		Post-test (Total = 35)		Paired-sample-t-test		
Groups	X	SD	X	SD	-t	Df	Sig
Low (n=4)	12.875	4.73	21.00	7.62	-3.569*	3	0.038
High (n=4)	15.0	4.93	25.25	4.99	-8.20**	3	0.004
Overall (n=8)	13.94	4.62	23.13	6.38	-7.248**	7	0.00

* significant at 0.05 level

** significant at 0.01 level

As shown in table 2, the result of the *t*-test shows that the eight participants' post-test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. The high-proficiency students improved significantly at 0.004 level, whereas low-proficiency students at 0.038 with the *P* values being less than 0.05 and 0.01 respectively. This significant difference indicates that non-scripted role-play activities helped both groups of students to improve their speaking performance.

6.2 Speech Features Enhanced through Non-Scripted Role-Play

The purpose of this section aims to answer Research Question 2 as to what speech features can be enhanced through the role-play training.

Regarding the speaking performance significantly improved in both groups of the students, close analysis of the videotaped role-play conversations

elicited through non-scripted role-play revealed that despite not being taught interactional functions of language in talk, the participants were able to communicate more naturally with more genuine, conversation-like language.

The following features of naturally-occurring everyday conversation either emerged or showed improvement in the post-test conversation of both groups of the students after the role-play training: turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlap, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair and the use of turn holding devices.

6.2.1 Turn-taking and sequence-organizing

The role-play training allowed both high- and low-proficiency students to improve their turn-taking and sequence-organizing in natural conversation. Concerning the turn-taking system, after the training, seen in Excerpt 2, the students were able to take turns at transition-relevance places without gaps or prefacing fillers such as "er". Additionally, they evidently were able to construct more complicated turn-constructional units. As seen in the same excerpt, most of the turns produced by A become more grammatically complex, developing from phrases in Excerpt 1 to simple and compound clauses, in lines 3 and 5 respectively.

(1) Pre-test

1   A: hello

2   B: hi

3   A: e:r free? Tuesday after school?

4   B: e::r I want to meet you this evening (0.5) but I have to finish some

5   homework.

6   A: e:r what you would like to do tonight?

7   B: OK. if I free time bye

8   A: bye.

(2) Post-test

1	A:	hello what are you doing?

2   B: I'm reading cartoon at home.

3   A: are you free time?

4   B: no, I'm not free time I have homework.

5   A: Oh, OK if tonight you free time I want to go eat at Swensen and see

6   movie at Colisium but I don't have my friend, do you want to go with

7   me?

8   B: OK. let's go after my homework finish.

9   A: OK. bye

After the training, the students were also able to organize multi-unit turns and successfully bring sequences to a close. Shown in Excerpt 2, Student A smoothly delivered an actionally-complex, multi-unit turn, not only showing an acknowledgement of new information through "Oh, OK" in line 5, but also prefacing and making an invitation, in lines 5-7. Likewise, in the same excerpt Student B was also able to respond to the invitation made by A, accepting it and successfully bringing the invitation sequence to a close. This is in stark contrast with Excerpt 1, where he was unable to pertinently answer his partner's pre-invitation at line 3. Before the training, A, on the other hand, failed to fix the problem but opted to initiate a different sequence with a new question in line 5, which both parties were again unable to bring it to a preferred close, given B's irrelevant, rushing through response in line 6.

6.2.2 Overlaps

The role-play training also helped the students become more fluent in conversation as overlaps at the transition-relevance place are noticeably more frequent in post-training conversation.

As shown in Excerpt (3) from the pre-training, gaps between turns are frequent, in lines 2, 5 and 7. The students apparently cannot offer prompt responses to the first pair-part of an adjacency-pair sequence, indicated by the pauses at lines 2 and 5.

(3) Pre-test

1 A: hello baby, what are you cry?

2   (0.1)

3 B: my cat is [ded]

4 A: oh really?

5   (0.3)

6 B: yes

7   (0.3)

8 A: you suggest to play game

9 B: yes I go ( )

In Excerpt (4), taken from the post-training conversation, both A and B produce more latching, overlapping talk, lines 2-3 and 8-9, producing almost no gaps between turns.

(4) Post-test

1 A: hello=

2 B: hi. Welcome to the gift shop. What do you [want

3 A: [oh I interest the cat doll

4   from Philippines. What is cat doll made of?

5 B: It is made of wood

6   A: really?

7   B: (.) yes=

8   A: how much the price (.) [of the cat doll?

9   B: [it's price five (.) thousand (0.2) five

10   thousand

9   A: oh it is very (.) expensive

6.2.3 Reciprocal greeting

As can be seen in Excerpts (5) and (6) below, taken from the pre- and the post-tests respectively, while absent in the pre-test, a reciprocal, extended greeting can be found in line 9 in the post-test through "…and you, Nureeyah?".

(5) Pre-test

1   A: hello Miss Nureesan.=

2   B: =hello Miss Nureeyah.

3   A: e:r, how are you?

4   B: it's OK.

Seen in Excerpt (6), after the inquiry greeting increment "How are you?" in line 4, B returns the extended greeting with "…and you, Nureeyah?," which, according to Hopper (1992), was crucial for setting the direction for the emerging conversation.

(6) Post-test

      [Telephone rings]

1   A: hello

2   B: hello excuse me I want to calling Nureesan.

3   A: yes Nureesan speaking.

4   B: hi Nureesan how are you?

5   A: I'm fine thank you and you, Nureeyah?

6   B: I'm so so.

6.2.4 Third-turn assessment

The role-play training also allows the students to improve their third-turn assessment, which is a common feature of naturally-occurring L1 conversation (Schegloff, 2007). As seen in Excerpt (7) below, after B's response to the weather question initiating a small talk in line 1, A abruptly switches to a new sequence inviting B to dinner, without commenting on the response in line 2.

(7) Pre-test

1   A: how on the weather today?

2   B: not OK. it is raining.

3   A: I want to invite to dinner on [weekench] OK?

However, the improvement of the student's third-turn assessment can be seen in the post-test, line 3, in which B comments on A's response in the third turn in line 1, drawing the weather sequence to a close.

(8) Post test

1   B: how is ( ) today?

2   A: today is raining.

3   B: bad.

4   A: hi Nureesan can you (0.2) can you dinner with me?

6.2.5 Self-initiated self-repair

Through the non-scripted role-play training, the participants also resorted to self-initiated, self-repair to deal with conversational problems, which simulates the feature of naturally-occurring conversation, and they were able to accomplish the repair within a single turn. Seen in Excerpt (9) from the pre-test, A is unable to fix the problem in the turn initiated in line 1 in one go. Notice that through B's turn in line 2 and the following pause in line 3, A's turn in line 1 gets treated by B as problematic, thus requiring a repair. In line 2, A attempts the first repair but still fails to elicit B's uptake, thus making a second attempt in line 6, to which B successfully responds.

(9) Pre-test

1   A: I have ( ) to Bangkok.

2   B: e::r

3   (0.5)

4   A: what time?

5   B: (0.5)

6   A: ha::? what time to plan come?

7   B: turn to Bangkok and arrive twelve fifteen from platform six arrive e:r

8   at e:r Bangkok.

However, the improvement of A's self-initiated self-repair can be observed in Excerpt (10) in the turn at line 3. Without any script, A was able to formulate the question as to the time to arrive in Bangkok in only one turn with self-initiated, self-repair.

(10) Post test

1   A: where platform?

2	B:	platform sixteen

3	A:	where e:r when arrive to Bangkok?

4	B:	arrive at Bangkok fifty-fifty fifteen-fifty

6.2.6 Turn-holding fillers

The turn-holding fillers such as *er* can be found in most of the conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play, both in the pre- and the post-tests. According to Park (2007), the use of these devices is essential for the completion of an ongoing turn. However, in the post-test, it was noticeable that the students relied on them less, being more fluent in their turn delivery.

(11) Pre-test

1	A:	hello (laughing)

2	B:	*koyak la* ((.:speak!)) welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.

3	A:	e::::r, are you::: are you a::r have resident room?

4	B:	yes, I have. Do you want a single room or double room?

5	A:	e:::r I want single room.

(12) Post test

1	A:	welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.

2	B:	oh (0.5) I want to e:rr book a room

3	A:	how do you want the room? single room or double room?

4	B:	how much e:rr single room and double room?

In short, aside from the statistical results, close analysis of conversation practices also underscores the capacity of non-scripted role-play to enhance the Thai college students' speaking skills. Through the training, several conversational practices have obviously improved. Nevertheless, for better

improvement, focused teaching and awareness raising of appropriate features of language use in conversation should be embedded in speaking lessons.

6.3 Effectiveness of Non-Scripted Role-Play in Low-and High-Proficiency Groups

This section aims at answering the third research question as to whether high- and low-proficiency students performed differently in non-scripted role-play.

The scores of the low-proficiency group on discrete items of the speaking performance are examined in detail below.

Table 3: Comparison between pre- and post-test scores of low-proficiency students

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	$-t$	df	Sig
Pronunciation	2.88	1.18	3.50	1.29	-1.13	3	0.34
Fluency	2.00	1.41	3.50	1.73	-3.00	3	0.06
Grammatical accuracy	1.75	0.50	3.00	1.15	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.25	0.50	1.50	0.58	-1.00	3	0.39
Appropriate choice of words	1.50	0.58	1.75	0.96	-1.00	3	0.39
Manner of expression	1.75	1.50	3.50	1.29	-3.66*	3	0.04
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.25	0.96	-4.37*	3	0.02

* significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 presents the *t*- test results of the speaking-performance assessment on discrete aspects of the low- proficiency students. The results reveal that the performance of the low-proficiency students did not significantly improve as far as pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression and appropriate choice of words are concerned. However, a significant degree of speaking improvement was noticeable in their manner of expression (sig=0.04) and ability to interact (sig=0.02). Unlike the latter, the former features of speaking, especially pronunciation, style of expression and appropriate choice of words, seem to take more time to acquire and may require more controlled practice.

As shown in Table 4, the high-proficiency students also showed significant degrees of improvement in the same areas as the low-proficiency ones. However, unlike the latter, the significant improvement could also be observed in terms of fluency (sig=0.02)

Table 4: Comparison between pre- and post-test scores of high-proficiency students

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	-*t*	df	Sig
Pronunciation	3.75	0.87	4.00	0.82	-0.77	3	0.50
Fluency	2.63	1.25	4.25	1.50	-4.33*	3	0.02
Grammatical accuracy	2.25	1.26	3.50	1.00	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.38	0.48	1.50	0.58	-0.40	3	0.72
Appropriate choice of words	1.75	0.50	3.00	0.82	-2.61	3	0.08
Manner of expression	1.75	0.96	4.25	0.96	-5.00*	3	0.02
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.75	0.50	-13.00**	3	0.00

* significant at 0.05 level

** significant at 0.01 level

Based on the statistical results, it can therefore be argued that non-scripted role-play can enhance the Thai EFL students' speaking skills regardless of their proficiency level. With lower pre-test scores, low-proficiency students were left with more room for improvement, thus exhibiting more significant difference in the degree of improvement in most of the features compared to high-proficiency students. It was noticeable that through non-scripted role-play practice, the students' ability to interact, their manner of expression, and fluency improved considerably, whereas in other areas, namely grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and style of expression, there was more resistance to improvement, thus seemingly requiring more focused training and awareness raising.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This current study has attempted to determine whether and how speaking performance of students is improved through regular practices of non-scripted role-play. The study showed that both low- and high-proficiency participants exhibited significant improvement in their overall speaking performance. Single-case analyses additionally revealed that the students were able to converse more naturally, exhibiting speech features of naturally-occurring conversation. These include turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlaps, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair and turn-holding fillers. Although the students were traditionally taught conversation lessons with more focus on form and meaning, they noticeably improved on language functions of genuine conversation through non-scripted role-play training.

When students with high and low proficiency were compared, it was revealed that the speaking performance of both groups was enhanced through role-play activities, especially in terms of manner of expression and ability to interact. However, unlike the low-proficiency students, the high-proficient ones also showed the improvement in fluency. The other linguistic features such as pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, styles of expression and appropriate choice of words, however,

appeared to be more challenging for both groups to improve without more focused teaching.

Although the findings of this study have shed some light on the significance of speaking training with non-scripted role-plays, some limitations yield suggestions for future research. It was recommended that to maximize the outcome while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play, teachers in similar studies focus on forms used to perform particular interactional functions such as initiating, maintaining and closing different types of sequences, as well as fixing conversation problems, and attempt to enhance the production of those forms via more focused training.

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APPENDIX A

Sample Lesson Plan

LESSON PLAN 1: ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION

Lesson plan unit 6   Time: 2 periods/ 100 minutes

Topic: Eating Well   Level: All general education

Semester: 1   Academic year: 2012

_____

Contents

- Conversation about making an excuse to decline food

- Vocabulary; excuses for not eating something

- Classroom activity; role-play conversation about decline food

Terminal objectives

1. Students will be able to interact with another person appropriately and accurately according to each situation.

Enabling objectives

1. Students will be able to comprehend the conversation.

2. Students will be able to pronounce the word accurately from the conversation.

3. Students will be able to answer the questions according to the conversation.

Procedures

Presentation

1. Students look at the food items in their books, then, group the food items in different categories. *(Dairy: yogurt/ cheese/ milk/, Seafood: fish, shrimp, clams)*

2. Have students list the foods they ate for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for past two or three days and compare with a partner. Then, bring the class together and ask:

- What category of food you eat most --- for example, fruits, meat, dairy?

- Are you surprised by the amounts of different foods you eat?

3. Before students read and listen, have them look at the photos. Ask:

- Where are the two women? (in cafeteria)

- In the second picture, what is the woman in the blue shirt doing? (offering some chocolate cake to the women in the striped shirt)

- Does the woman in the stripe shirt want any cake? (no)

4. Have the students listen to the conversation with their books closed. Then ask *What the women talking about? (dieting, eating chocolate cake)*

5. To check comprehension, ask:

- Is Terri on diet now? (no)

- Was she on diet before? (yes)

- Why was she on a diet? (to lose weight)

- Why did she stop diet? (It was   too much trouble.)

- Does Iris always eat dessert? (no, not anymore)

5. The teacher focuses on some expression from the conversation.

- What in the world   (It is an exaggerate way of asking 'What?')

- Want to try some?   (It is a typical in spoken English as a way to offer someone food.)

- You only live once   (It is the way to suggest that a person should take advantage of opportunities and enjoy the pleasures of life.)

Practice

1. The teacher calls on students and asks what foods people won't eat. Write them on the board. Ask:

- Why won't you eat certain food?

- Why can't you eat certain food?

2. Guide students to answer by using the vocabulary to excuse for not eating something.

- I don't care for broccoli.

- Coffee doesn't agree with me.

- I'm a vegetarian.

- I'm diet.

- I'm avoiding sugar.

- I'm allergic to chocolate

Production

1. The teacher gives a role-play situation to students without dialogue.

Situation: During dinner…

A: You are the house owner. You invited your friends to have dinner at your house. You ask your friend to take chicken.

B: You are invited to have dinner at A's house. Your friend asks you to take chicken but you are vegetarian. Make an excuse to decline food. Tell the reason to your friend.

2. The pairs are matched and are asked to role-play a conversation, using greetings, small talk topics, and other expressions presented in this unit.

3. Ask volunteers to present their role plays to the class.

Materials

      1. CD

      2. Coursebook

      3. Situation card

Evaluation

      Terminal objective and enabling objective (1) through (3) are evaluated based on activities or class participation. These activities- based will be observed by the teacher.

APPENDIX B

Sample Role-Play Situation Card

Situation: Imagine your friend and you are having dinner.

A	B
You are the house owner. You invited your friends to have dinner at your house. You ask your friend to take chicken.	You are invited to have dinner at A's house. Your friend asks you to take chicken but you are vegetarian. Make an excuse to decline food. Tell the reason to your friend.

APPENDIX C

Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Proficiency

	Excellent: 5 marks	Very good: 4 marks	Good: 3 marks	Fair: 2 marks	Poor: 1 mark
1. Pronunciation	All words are clearly and correctly pronounced. Articulation of final consonants e.g. 's' and 't' is correct	One or two words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected	A few words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected	One or two words which are mispronounced cause meaning to be affected	Most of the words are not correctly pronounced
2. Fluency in speaking	Able to speak without any hesitation or break in a sentence	Hesitates or pauses at a few places in a few sentences but fluency is not seriously effect	Hesitation is shown in almost every sentence. Uses a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.	Hesitates a lot that message is not very clear. A lot of repetition of sentences.	Shows a lot of hesitation that speech is not clear
3. Grammatical accuracy	Grammar is correct	A few minor grammatical errors. Meaning is not affected.	One or two major errors which affect meaning	Almost every sentence contains a grammatical error	A lot of grammatical errors are made that meaning is not clear
4. Style of expression	Uses a variety of sentence patterns and a variety of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions	Uses a variety of sentence patterns and a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions	Uses mostly simple sentences and a few complex and compound sentences. Uses a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.	Uses mostly simple sentences and one or two complex and compound sentences. Conjunctions are limited to simple ones such as 'and', 'or' and 'but'	Uses mostly simple sentences.
5. Appropriate choice of words	A wide range of words is appropriately and correctly used.	A fairly wide range of words is used. A few contents words (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) are repeated. Words are used appropriately and correctly.	A fairly wide range of words is used. Some content words are repeated a number of times. One or two words are not correctly used.	Range of words used is fairly narrow. Some words in the student's language (Thai, Melayu) are used.	Range of words used is limited and hardly sufficient to express an idea.

6. Manner of expression	Speak confidently with proper intonation to show feelings	Speak quite confidently and able to show emotion appropriately at times	Show some signs of nervousness and hence speech becomes fairly monotonous.	Lacks confidence. Speech is monotonous.	Nervous and unable to speak coherently at times .
7. Ability to interact (response/ ask questions)	Responds excellently to all questions asked. Asks questions appropriate to the content	Responds well to most of the questions asked. Asks questions appropriate to the context.	Responds fairly well to some Wh questions asked. Able to ask yes/no questions and a few short Wh questions	Responds very briefly to questions asked. Responds well to yes/no questions but not to Wh questions. Asks very short Wh questions.	Responds mostly to yes/no questions. Can answer very few Wh questions. Can hardly ask question.

APPENDIX D

Role-play Situation Card for Pre- and Post-Tests

No.	A	B
1	Phone up B. Ask how he/she is. Comment on the weather (it is raining). Invite B for dinner at the weekend. Find a suitable day. You have a new address, so tell B how to get there	A phones you up. You are well. It is raining. You would like to have dinner with A. You are going to the theatre on Friday. A has just moved to a new house. Ask him/her how to get there.
2	You work at the station. Help the customer. *The next train to Bangkok* *leaves at 12.15* *from platform 6* *arrives in Bangkok at 15.15* *single ticket 700 baht* *Return ticket 1300 baht*	You want to go to Bangkok. Ask about the next train, the platform. Ask about the price of a ticket, and buy one.
3	It is a Tuesday after school. You phone your friend. Find something you would both like to do tonight. Agree on a time and place to meet. Say goodbye.	It is a Tuesday after school. Your friend phones you. You would like to meet him/her this evening, but have some homework to do first. Find something you would like to do. Agree on a time and place to meet. Say goodbye.

4	You work at the Lee Garden Hotel. Help the customer. You have no double rooms with bath vacant for tonight.	You are at the Lee Garden Hotel. Ask about the prices of rooms and book one for tonight. You are hungry, thirsty, and would like to swim.
	One night with bath without bath	
	Single room 750B. 600B.	
	Double room 850B. 700B.	
	Restaurant- ground floor, top floor	
	Bar- ground floor, 3rd floor	
	Nightclub- top floor	
	Swimming pool- 2nd floor	
	Car park- basement	

APPENDIX E

Transcription Convention

[Point of overlap onset

] Point of overlap termination

= (a) Turn continues below, at the next identical symbol

(b) If inserted at the end of one speaker's adjacent turn indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns

(3.2) Interval between utterances (in seconds)

(.) Very short untimed pause

e:r the::: Lengthening of the preceding sound

__ Abrupt cutoff

( ) Empty parenthesis indicates that is being said, but no hearing

(guess) Indicate the transcriber's doubt about a word

[gibee] In the case of inaccurate pronunciation of an English word, an approximation of the sound is given in square brackets

Ja((.: yes)) Non-English words are italicized and followed by an English translation in double parentheses

⟶ Mark features of special interest

PAPER 1

Non-scripted role-play: A better practice for Thai EFL college students' speaking
skills

Non-scripted role-play: A better practice for Thai EFL college students' speaking skills

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Abstract

This paper highlights the results from a study investigating the effectiveness in using non-scripted role-play to improve speaking skills of Thai EFL college students. It shows that the role-play of this type can especially well enhance both high- and low-proficiency students' conversation skills. Frequently being engaged in non-scripted role-play conversations, the students could improve not only their overall oral

performance but also conversational practices as appeared in naturally-occurring conversation. The improvement was particularly evident in such practices as turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlap, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, repair, and the use of turn-holding devices. It was additionally suggested that while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play, teachers emphasize forms used to perform particular conversational functions, and try to enhance the production of the forms via more focused training for more effective communication of the students.

Keywords: non-scripted role-play, Thai EFL college students, speaking skills, conversational practices, Conversation Analysis

Introduction

Recognized as a vital global language in the Thai education system, English has been the core subject taught in Thai schools for decades. According to Thailand's education reform in 2006, the English language was underlined as one component to improve in teaching and learning with the primary focus on communication skills ("Developing Language and Communication Skills", 2006). Subsequently, in 2012 the Thai government even established the English Speaking Year and set the goal of encouraging students to converse in English every Monday ("English Speaking Year 2012", 2011), hoping to reduce their fear of speaking English and make them more active language learners (Saiyasombut, 2012).

In fact, the Grammar-Translation Method, often adopted in traditional language classrooms, was usually blamed for the failure to produce Thai students with adequate English communication skills. Even at the graduate level, many students are still unable to speak English in real-life situations partly because they rarely had the opportunities to do so in class in which they were strongly taught vocabulary, grammar and structure without applying them in communication. Consequently, the students are not confident enough to communicate in the language in their real life (Khuvasanond, Sildus, Hurford, &Lipka, 2010; Punthumasen, 2007; Wiriyachitra, 2002). When studying an international program in Thailand or going to an English-speaking country for their further studies, Thai students having received such traditional English education reportedly experienced difficulties when communicating in English (Liu, 1993). To promote English for communication among tertiary students, The Ministry of Education ("Developing Language and Communication Skills", 2006) thus set to enhance the Thai university curriculum by promoting the communicative language teaching approach in the English classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the best-known teaching approaches whose goal is to develop learners' communicative competence in the target language. CLT requires classroom activities to engage the learners in such comprehensible and meaningful interaction that their limitations in grammatical competence can be disregarded as long as they can keep the conversation going and appropriately finish it. To develop such oral communication skills, role-play seems to be a popular choice among English language teachers (Freeman, 2001; Littlewood, 1992; Livingstone, 1983; Lucantoni, 2002; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1983; Spada, 2007).

Role-play activities used in CLT engage learners in learning by doing, which means the learners are allowed to practice using the language approximating real-life situations. The activities give them opportunity to practice the language, aspects of behavior, and the actual roles needed outside the classroom (Livingstone, 1983). Its effectiveness in developing learners' speaking skills has in fact been confirmed in several studies (Alwahibee, 2004; Chotirat, 2010; Kaur, 2011; Krish, 2001; Liu, 2010; Ding & Liu, 2009; Okada, 2010; Shen &Suwanthep, 2011).

Often the role-play used in a language classroom is of two types, i.e., scripted and non-scripted role-play (Freeman, 2001). Scripted role-play refers to the type of conversational exchange modeled from a dialogue in the textbook. The learners are put in pairs or groups and exchange the roles by using the conversation model in the textbook. They have the opportunities to interpret the meaning in the dialogue while practicing pronunciation and being trained appropriate intonation, facial expression and gesture. Non-scripted role-play, on the other hand, is the role-play in which the learners are engaged in the roles provided by the teacher without any scripts prepared. They need to understand their given roles and decide what to say in real time as the conversation develops (Savignon, 1983).

Scripted role-play is often chosen as a classroom activity among Thai teachers because it is easy to implement. Additionally, it seems to put less pressure on the low-proficiency students because they have time to prepare the script and rehearse. This group of students often find the role-play of this type easier to handle without any efforts to put their thoughts into words (Sinwongsuwat, 2012). In contrast, non-scripted role-play requires the students to perform the conversation immediately with little preparation. Chotirat (2010), as well as Rodpradit and Sinwongsuwat (2012),

argues that scripted role-play activities fail to prepare students to deal with problems in real-life communication. Often, students performing this type of role-play memorize the conversation turn-by-turn without any struggle to think and speak in their own words; problems mainly occur when they forget their turns and try to recall them, making their conversation appear unnatural. Accordingly, non-scripted role-plays seem to be a more appropriate choice in the classroom apart from recorded naturally-occurring English conversation model if our aim is to enhance the students' skills in unscripted, real-life conversation and get rid of their speaking fear in the long run.

However, there have been only a few studies directly examining the outcome of using non-scripted role-play activities to improve speaking skills among university students. This paper therefore aims at showcasing the results from a study by the authors to investigate the effectiveness in using this type of role-play with high- and low-English proficiency students at a university in Thailand. Arguing that non-scripted role-play can well enhance the students' conversation skills, it additionally illustrates the conversational practices that can really be improved through non-scripted role-play training. The following questions are addressed in order: 1) can non-scripted role-play really enhance the students' speaking skills?; and 2) what conversational practices can be enhanced through the role-play training?

Can non-scripted role-play really enhance Thai students' speaking skills?

The results from our study of second-year non-English major students at YalaRajbhat University in southern Thailand (Naksevee&Sinwongsuwat, 2013) confirmed that non-scripted role-play really helped both high- and low-proficiency

students to improve their speaking performance. In the study, 35 participants attending the English for Communication course at the university were divided into two groups according to the average scores obtained from compulsory English courses during their first year of study. Before given conversation lessons with the role-play training, these students were paired up for an oral pre-test in the form of non-scripted role-play with high-proficiency students being matched with low-proficiency ones. Their tape-recorded role-play performance was first scored by the class teacher using the rubric adapted from Mohtar (2005), oriented to communicative language features including pronunciation, speaking fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression, appropriate choice of words, manner of expression, and ability to interact. Each item on the rubric was rated on the five-point scale ranging from 5 (excellent), 4(very good), 3(good), 2(fair) to 1 (poor). The pre-test role-play performance was subsequently scored again by other two raters for inter-rater reliability using the same rubric.

During the training, the student participants were given lessons based on a commercial conversation textbook, whereby in the warm-up they were engaged in a discussion on the theme of the lesson and in the presentation stage the teacher introduced conversations featured in the textbook, helping them understand conversation content by focusing primarily on forms and meanings of vocabulary and expressions used. After the content was presented, students were randomly asked related questions about the conversations to check their understanding. Subsequently, in the production stage, high- and low-proficiency students were paired up and given situation cards sharing the theme of the lesson for their non-scripted role-play performance. The students acted out their own roles in the situation to the class

without any model conversation. Only the role-plays of the top eight high- and the bottom eight low-proficiency students were selected for video recording and subsequent close conversation analysis. After the completion of the course, the students were engaged in the role-play post-test following the same procedures as in the pre-test.

As shown in Table 1 below, the t-test results show that the participants' role-play post-test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. The high-proficiency students improved significantly at 0.004 level, whereas the low-proficiency ones at 0.038 with the p values being less than 0.05 and 0.01 respectively.

Table 1: Participants' overall speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-play

	Pre-test score		Post-test score		Paired-sample-t-test		
Groups	X	SD	X	SD	-t	Df	Sig
Low (n=4)	12.875	4.73	21.00	7.62	-3.569*	3	0.038
High (n=4)	15.0	4.93	25.25	4.99	-8.20**	3	0.004
Overall (n=8)	13.94	4.62	23.13	6.38	-7.248**	7	0.00

 * significant at 0.05 level

** significant at 0.01 level

Such significant differences between the overall test scores indicate that non-scripted role-play activities indeed helped to improve the overall speaking performance of both high- and low-proficiency students.

Regarding discrete items, although the results, shown in Table 2, reveal that the performance of the low-proficiency students did not significantly improve with respect to pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression and appropriate choice of words, these students noticeably improved in their manner of expression (sig=0.04) and ability to interact (sig=0.02). Unlike the latter, the former set of speaking features apparently takes more time to master and require more focused practice.

Table 2: Low-proficiency students' speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-plays

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	-t	df	Sig
Pronunciation	2.88	1.18	3.50	1.29	-1.13	3	0.34
Fluency	2.00	1.41	3.50	1.73	-3.00	3	0.06
Grammatical accuracy	1.75	0.50	3.00	1.15	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.25	0.50	1.50	0.58	-1.00	3	0.39
Appropriate choice of words	1.50	0.58	1.75	0.96	-1.00	3	0.39
Manner of expression	1.75	1.50	3.50	1.29	-3.66*	3	0.04
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.25	0.96	-4.37*	3	0.02

* significant at 0.05 level

While showing significant degrees of improvement in the same aspects as the low-proficiency students, through non-scripted role-play training the high-proficiency

ones also improved considerably in their speaking fluency (sig=0.02), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: High-proficiency students' speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-plays

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	*-t*	df	Sig
Pronunciation	3.75	0.87	4.00	0.82	-0.77	3	0.50
Fluency	2.63	1.25	4.25	1.50	-4.33*	3	0.02
Grammatical accuracy	2.25	1.26	3.50	1.00	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.38	0.48	1.50	0.58	-0.40	3	0.72
Appropriate choice of words	1.75	0.50	3.00	0.82	-2.61	3	0.08
Manner of expression	1.75	0.96	4.25	0.96	-5.00*	3	0.02
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.75	0.50	-13.00**	3	0.00

* significant at 0.05 level

** significant at 0.01 level

Based on the statistical results, it can therefore be affirmed that non-scripted role-play can really enhance the Thai college students' speaking skills regardless of their proficiency level. Through the training, the students' ability to interact, their manner of expression, and fluency can particularly improve, while such aspects of speaking performance as grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and style of expression may be more resistant to improvement, thus requiring more focused training and awareness raising during the lesson.

Pertinent to the discrete features of speaking performance significantly improved in both groups as statistically shown, close analysis of practices in the videotaped conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play additionally underscores the capacity of non-scripted role-play to enhance the Thai university students' speaking skills. It was revealed that despite not being explicitly taught interactional functions of naturally-occurring language in talk, the participants were able to converse more naturally with several conversational practices being obviously improved.

What conversational practices can be enhanced through non-scripted role-play training?

The following features of naturally-occurring everyday conversation either emerged or showed improvement in the post-test conversation of both groups of students after the role-play training: turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlap, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair and the use of turn holding devices.

Turn-taking and sequence-organizing

The role-play training allows both high- and low-proficiency students to improve their turn-taking and sequence-organizing in natural conversation. Concerning the turn-taking system, after the training, the students in Excerpt 2 were able to take turns at transition-relevance places without gaps or prefacing fillers such as "er". Additionally, they evidently were able to construct more complicated turn-constructional units. As seen in the same excerpt, most of the turns produced by A

become more grammatically complex, developing from phrases in Excerpt 1 to simple and compound clauses, lines 3 and 5 respectively.

(1) Pre-test

1   A: hello

2   B: hi

3   A: e:r free? Tuesday after school?

4   B: e::r I want to meet you this evening (0.5) but I have to finish some homework.

5   A: e:r what you would like to do tonight?

6   B: OK. if I free time bye

7   A: bye.

(2) Post-test

1   A: hello what are you doing?

2   B: I'm reading cartoon at home.

3   A: are you free time?

4   B: no, I'm not free time I have homework.

5   A: Oh, OK if tonight you free time I want to go eat at Swensen and see movie at

6   Colisium but I don't have my friend, do you want to go with me?

7   B: OK. let's go after my homework finish.

8   A: OK. bye

After the training, the students were also able to organize multi-unit turns and successfully bring sequences to a close. Shown in Excerpt 2, Student A smoothly delivered an actionally-complex, multi-unit turn, not only showing an acknowledgement of new information through "Oh, OK" in line 5, but also prefacing and making an invitation, in lines 5-6. Likewise, in the same excerpt Student B was also able to respond to the invitation made by A, accepting it and successfully bringing the invitation sequence to a close. This is in stark contrast with Excerpt 1, where he was unable to pertinently answer his partner's pre-invitation at line 3. Before the training, A, on the other hand, failed to fix the problem but opted to initiate a different sequence with a new question in line 5, which both parties were again unable to bring it to a preferred close given B's irrelevant, rushing-through response in line 6.

Overlaps

The role-play training also helps the students become more fluent in conversation as overlaps at the transition-relevance place are noticeably more frequent in post-training conversation.

As shown in Excerpt (3) from the pre-training, gaps between turns are frequent, lines 2, 5 and 7.The students apparently cannot offer prompt responses to the first pair-part of an adjacency-pair sequence, indicated by the pauses at lines 2 and 5.

(3) Pre-test

1   A: hello baby, what are you cry?

2   (0.1)

3   B: my cat is [ded]

4   A: oh really?

5   (0.3)

6   B: yes

7   (0.3)

8   A: you suggest to play game

9   B: yes I go ( )

In Excerpt (4), taken from the post-training conversation, both A and B produce more latching, overlapping talk, lines 2-4 and 8-9, producing almost no gaps between turns.

(4) Post-test

1   A: hello=

2   B: hi. Welcome to the gift shop. What do you [want

3   A: [oh I interest the cat doll
          from

4   Philippines. What is cat doll made of?

5   B: It is made of wood

6   A: really?

7   B: (.) yes=

8   A: how much the price (.) [of the cat doll?

9   B: [it's price five (.) thousand (0.2) five thousand

10   A: oh it is very (.) expensive

Reciprocal greeting

As can be seen in Excerpts (5) and (6) below, taken from the pre- and the post-tests respectively, while absent in the pre-test, a reciprocal, extended greeting can be found in line 5 in the post-test through "…and you, Nureeyah?".

(5) Pre-test

1   A: hello Miss Nureesan.=

2   B: =hello Miss Nureeyah.

3   A: e:r, how are you?

4   B: it's OK.

Seen in Excerpt (6), after the inquiry greeting increment "How are you?" in line 4, B returns the extended greeting with "…and you, Nureeyah?," which, according to Hopper (1992), was crucial for setting the direction for the emerging conversation.

(6) Post-test

[Telephone rings]

1   A: hello

2   B: hello excuse me I want to calling Nureesan.

3   A: yes Nureesan speaking.

4   B: hi Nureesan how are you?

5   A: I'm fine thank you and you, Nureeyah?

6   B: I'm so so.

Third-turn assessment

The role-play training also allows the students to improve their third-turn assessment, which is a common feature of naturally-occurring L1 conversation (Schegloff, 2007). As seen in Excerpt (7) below, after B's response to the weather question initiating a small talk in line 1, A abruptly switches to a new sequence inviting B to dinner, without commenting on the response in line 2.

(7) Pre-test

1   A: how on the weather today?

2   B: not OK. it is raining.

3   A: I want to invite to dinner on [weekench] OK?

However, the improvement of the student's third-turn assessment can be seen in the post-test, line 3, in which B comments on A's response in the third turn in line 1, drawing the weather sequence to a close.

(8) Post test

1   B: how is ( ) today?

2   A: today is raining.

3   B: bad.

4   A: hi Nureesan can you (0.2) can you dinner with me?

Self-initiated self-repair

Through the non-scripted role-play training, the participants also resorted to self-initiated, self-repair to deal with conversational problems, which simulates the feature of naturally-occurring conversation, and were able to accomplish it within a single turn. Seen in Excerpt (9) from the pre-test, A is unable to fix the problem in the turn initiated in line 1 in one go. Notice that through B's turn in line 2 and the following pause in line 3, A's turn in line 18 gets treated by B as problematic, thus requiring a repair. In line 21, A attempts the first repair but still fails to elicit B's uptake, thus making a second attempt in line 6, to which B successfully responds.

(9) Pre-test

1   A: I have ( ) to Bangkok.

2   B: e::r

3   (0.5)

4   A: what time?

5   B: (0.5)

6   A: ha::?what time to plan come?

7   B: turn to Bangkok and arrive twelve fifteen from platform six arrive e:r

          at e:r

8   Bangkok.

However, the improvement of A's self-initiated self-repair can be observed in Excerpt (10) in the turn at line 3. Without any script, A was able to formulate the question as to the time to arrive in Bangkok in only one turn with self-initiated, self-repair.

(10) Post test

1   A: where platform?

2   B: platform sixteen

3   A: where e:r when arrive to Bangkok?

4   B: arrive at Bangkok fifty-fifty fifteen-fifty

Turn-holding fillers

The turn-holding fillers, particularly delay devices, such as *er* can be found in most of the conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play, both in the pre- and the post-tests. According to Park (2007), the use of these devices is essential for the completion of an ongoing turn. However, in the post-test, it was noticeable that the students relied on them less, being more fluent in their turn delivery.

(11) Pre-test

1   A: hello (laughing)

2   B: koyak la ((.:speak!)) welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.

3   A: e::::r, are you::: are you a::r have resident room?

4   B: yes, I have. Do you want a single room or double room?

5   A: e:::r I want single room.

(12) Post test

1   A: welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.

2   B: oh (0.5) I want to e:rr book a room

3   A: how do you want the room? single room or double room?

4   B: how much e:rr single room and double room?

Conclusion

This study has attempted to determine whether and how speaking performance of Thai university students gets improved through regular practice of non-scripted role-play. It has shown that both low- and high-proficiency participants exhibited significant improvement in their overall speaking performance as well as in the genuine features of naturally-occurring conversation. The improvement can be observed in such conversation practices as turn-taking and sequence organizing, overlaps, reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair, and the use of turn-holding, delay devices. Although traditionally taught conversation lessons with more focus on form and meaning, the students noticeably improved on language functions of genuine conversation through non-scripted role-play training.

When students with high and low proficiency were compared, it was revealed that the speaking performance of both groups was enhanced especially in terms of manner of expression and ability to interact. However, unlike the low-proficiency students, the high-proficient ones also showed the improvement in fluency. The other linguistic features such as pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, styles of expression and appropriate choice of words, however, appeared to be more challenging for both groups to improve without more focused teaching.

It is therefore recommended that to maximize the outcome while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play to EFL students in similar contexts, teachers focus on forms used to perform particular interactional functions such as initiating, maintaining and closing different types of sequences, and fixing

conversation problems, and try to enhance the production of those forms via more focused training for more meaningful and effective communication.

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Appendix A

Transcription Convention

[	Point of overlap onset
]	Point of overlap termination
=	(a) Turn continues below, at the next identical symbol
	(b) If inserted at the end of one speaker's adjacent turn indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns
(3.2)	Interval between utterances (in seconds)
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[gibee]	In the case of inaccurate pronunciation of an English word, an approximation of the sound is given in square brackets
Ja((.: yes))	Non-English words are italicized and followed by an English translation in double parentheses
⟶	Marks features of special interest

PAPER 2

Using non-scripted role-play to teach speaking skills: A study of English conversation
of Thai college students at Yala Rajabhat University

USING NON-SCRIPTED ROLE-PLAY TO TEACH SPEAKING SKILLS: A STUDY OF ENGLISH CONVERSATION OF THAI COLLEGE STUDENTS AT YALA RAJBHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of the non-scripted role-play activities to improve the oral performance of Thai college students with high and low English proficiency. It attempted to address the following questions: a) Do high and low proficiency students perform differently in non-scripted role-play based on scores obtained from pre- and post tests? If so, how? ; and b) Can non-scripted role-play enhance the students' speaking skills? Which group of students performs better in the non-scripted role-play? The data examined were obtained from tape recorded role-play of 16 non-English-major students (8 each proficiency level) during their pre- and post tests at Yala Rajabhat University in Southern Thailand. The role-play conversations were transcribed and analyzed following the Conversation Analysis (CA) framework. The study found that the post test scores of both groups were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. The t-test result also revealed that the low proficiency students showed a significant degree of speaking improvement in terms of manner of expression and ability to interact at the level of 0.04 and 0.02 respectively. On the other hand, while improving on the same aspects, the high proficiency students also showed significant improvement in terms of fluency (sig = 0.02). The findings indicated that non-scripted role-play activities helped improve the students' speaking skills and develop their ability to use the language naturally. Close single-case analyses additionally revealed that despite being traditionally taught conversation lessons with more focus on form and meaning, the participants trained with role-play noticeably improved on the language functions of genuine conversation. It was recommended that role-play activities be used in company with function-focused conversation lessons for the learners' greater benefits.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, speaking skills, non-scripted role-play**,** Thai college students

INTRODUCTION

The importance of English as a global language has long been recognized in the Thai education system. The Ministry of Education reported that the 2001 Basic Education Curriculum has established the core curriculum for foreign language learning would be English and required to students from primary school, secondary school and university (*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006). Subsequently, the education reform in 2006 emphasized English language as one component to improve teaching and learning together with communication skills. Increasingly English Program in schools and education institutions in Thailand has clearly shown that the country aims to embrace itself for the age of globalization (*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006).

To prepare tertiary students for competition in the job market, Thai university curricula need to be enhanced by promoting the development of English language skills through communicative teaching approaches (*"Developing Language and Communication Skills"*, 2006).

Today, the trend of teaching English in Thailand has been shifted from the Grammar-Translation Method towards the Communicative Approach. The former was blamed for its failure to produce students with adequate English communication skills even at the graduate level. Many studies have shown that Thai students have been strongly taught vocabulary, grammar and structure without applying them in a communicative way. They generally use passive learning strategies by memorizing words spelling and meaning. Consequently, they cannot use English to interact with foreigners in their real life (Wiriyachitra, 2002; Punthumasen, 2007; Khuvasanond, Sildus, Hurford&Lipka, 2010).

In communicative language teaching (CLT), teachers place emphasis on developing learners' communicative competence by engaging them in meaningful communicative activities. The primary goal of the language classroom is to create authentic opportunities for the learners to learn how to use the target language appropriately and effectively according to a wide range of settings and purposes. To improve learners' oral communication skills, role-play seems to be one of the most popular choices of communicative activities among English language teachers (Freeman, 2001; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1983; Spada, 2007; Littlewood, 1992; Livingstone, 1983).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Frequently practicing role-play activities can help proficiency deficient students to improve their speaking skills. Since role-plays give students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social roles, it is mainly focusing on the language learning as a natural process, the students will receive the language through performing role-play without formal instruction (Littlewood, 1992). Several studies have shown the effectiveness of role-play activities in improving EFL learners' speaking ability (Krish, 2001; Alwahibee, 2004; Liu & Ding, 2009; Okada, 2010; Liu, 2010; Kaur, 2011; Shen&Suwanthep, 2011 and Chotirat, 2011).

Role-play used in a language classroom can be classified into two types, i.e., scripted and non-scripted, according to Freeman (2001). Scripted role-play refers to the type of conversational exchange that is modeled from a dialogue in the textbook. The learners are put in pairs or groups and exchange the roles by using the conversational model in the textbook. They are allowed to prepare the script and they can rehearse before carry out a role-play to

the class. Scripted role-play illustrates language structure, vocabulary, language function and pronunciation. Another type is non-scripted role-play which engages the learners to the roles and situations that are provided by teacher without scripts. The learners need to understand their given roles and make a decision on what they will say.

In Thai EFL contexts, scripted role-plays are often chosen because it is easy to implement. Moreover, scripted role-play seems to put less pressure on the students because they have time to prepare the script and rehearse while non-scripted role-plays require them to perform immediately with little preparation. However, according to scripted role-play activities, it does not provide the opportunities for students to deal with problems in real-life communication. Often, students memorize the dialogue of conversation without any struggle to speak in their own words. A study from Chotirat (2011) supports that non-scripted role-plays prepare students to work with problems rather than scripted role-plays.

Non-scripted role-plays have therefore been recommended by more recent studies as a better alternative. According to Freeman (2001), the non-scripted role-play is one of CLT activities because it gives more choice in speaking. Also, this type of role-play is similar to the natural conversation and also provides the element of problem-solving to the activity.

However, there have been only a few studies directly examining the outcome of using non-scripted role-play activities among students with different proficiency. This study is therefore designed to fill this gap by investigating the use of this type of role-play with high- and low-English proficiency students. It additionally examines the main features of talk elicited by this type of role-play after a series of role-play-embedded lessons.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do high and low proficiency students perform differently in non-scripted role-play based on scores obtained from pre- and post tests? How?
2. Can non-scripted role-play enhance the students' speaking skills? Which group of students performs better in the non-scripted role-play?

RESEARCH PROCESS

In this research, the participants were divided into two groups and attended the English for Communication II course. Total 32 hours were given once a week. At the end of each unit the students were paired up to perform non-scripted role-play and the teacher recorded the conversation only the sampling.

Participants
The participants were 35 second year non English major students at Yala Rajabhat University in southern Thailand. They were divided into two groups; low-and high- level English proficiency. All of the students participated in role-play activities but only eight from high- and eight from low-level of English proficiency were selected for data collection and analysis.

Instruments
The lesson plans were written and taught to the target groups by the researcher. Each lesson was designed by mainly focusing on form, meaning, vocabulary and expressions. Each lesson

consisted of role-play activities which involved situations from all five units in the coursebook.

The texts used in the class was the commercial textbook, "Top Notch", that was provided by Yala Rajabhat University. The coursebook contained ten units. The first five units were set for English for Communication I, and another last five units were in English for Communication II. In this research, the last five units were employed based on English for Communication II.

The researcher designed situation cards in order to draw out students' conversations. The situations were selected to relate with the contents taught from the coursebook. Students performed role-play according to the events without conversation model dialogue.

Data Collection
The rubric of oral assessment was used to evaluate students' pre- and post tests. The calculated scores from pre- and post tests were compared to measure the development of students' speaking skill. The assessment was engaged with communicative approach which concerned the participants' communicative strategies. Therefore, the criterion of the rubric focused on communicative competence which included pronunciation, fluency in speaking, grammatical accuracy, style of expression, appropriate choice of words, manner of expression and ability to interact. The rubric of oral assessment and rating scale were adapted from Mohtar (2005; see Appendix A). Each topic was divided to five point scales and range from 5 (excellent), 4(very good), 3(good), 2(fair) and 1 (poor).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
As shown in Table 1, the English speaking performance of both low and high proficiency students significantly improved through the non-scripted role-play training.

Table 1 Participants' overall scores of speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-play

Scores Groups	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	*-t*	Df	Sig
Low (n=4)	12.875	4.73	21.00	7.62	-3.569*	3	0.038
High (n=4)	15.0	4.93	25.25	4.99	-8.20**	3	0.004
Overall (n=8)	13.94	4.62	23.13	6.38	-7.248**	7	0.00

* significant at 0.05 level
** significant at 0.01 level

As can be seen, the result of the *t*-test shows that the eight participants' post-test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the level of 0.00. The high-proficiency students improved significantly at 0.004 level, whereas low-proficiency students at 0.038 with the P values being less than 0.05 and 0.01 respectively. This significant difference indicates that non-scripted role-play activities helped both groups of the students to improve their speaking performance.

In the following, the scores of each group on discrete items of the speaking performance are examined in detail.

Table 2 Low-proficiency students' scores on different aspects of speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-plays

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	-t	df	Sig
Pronunciation	2.88	1.18	3.50	1.29	-1.13	3	0.34
Fluency	2.00	1.41	3.50	1.73	-3.00	3	0.06
Grammatical accuracy	1.75	0.50	3.00	1.15	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.25	0.50	1.50	0.58	-1.00	3	0.39
Appropriate choice of words	1.50	0.58	1.75	0.96	-1.00	3	0.39
Manner of expression	1.75	1.50	3.50	1.29	-3.66*	3	0.04
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.25	0.96	-4.37*	3	0.02

* significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 presents the *t*- test results of the speaking-performance assessment on discrete aspects of the low- proficiency students. The results reveal that the performance of the low proficiency students did not significantly improve as far as pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, style of expression and appropriate choice of words are concerned. However, a significant degree of speaking improvement was noticeable in their manner of expression (sig=0.04) and ability to interact (sig=0.02). Unlike the latter, the former features of speaking, especially pronunciation, style of expression and appropriate choice of words, seem to take more time to acquire and may require more controlled practice.

As shown in Table 3, the high-proficiency students also showed significant degrees of improvement in the same aspects as the low-proficiency ones. However, unlike the latter, the significant improvement could also be observed in terms of fluency (sig=0.02).

Table 3 High-proficiency students' scores on different aspects of speaking performance before and after receiving training with non-scripted role-plays

Items	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired-sample-t-test		
	X	SD	X	SD	-t	df	Sig
Pronunciation	3.75	0.87	4.00	0.82	-0.77	3	0.50
Fluency	2.63	1.25	4.25	1.50	-4.33*	3	0.02
Grammatical accuracy	2.25	1.26	3.50	1.00	-2.61	3	0.08
Style of expression	1.38	0.48	1.50	0.58	-0.40	3	0.72
Appropriate choice of words	1.75	0.50	3.00	0.82	-2.61	3	0.08
Manner of expression	1.75	0.96	4.25	0.96	-5.00*	3	0.02
Ability to interact	1.50	0.58	4.75	0.50	-13.00**	3	0.00

* significant at 0.05 level
** significant at 0.01 level

Based on the statistical results, it can therefore be argued that non-scripted role-play can enhance the Thai EFL students' speaking skills regardless of their proficiency level. With lower pre-test scores, low-proficiency students were left with bigger room for improvement, thus exhibiting more significant difference in the degree of improvement in most of the features than high-proficiency ones. It was noticeable that through non-scripted role-play practice, the students' ability to interact, their manner of expression, and fluency improved considerably whereas the other aspects, namely grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and

style of expression, exhibited more resistance to improvement, thus seemingly requiring more focused training and awareness raising.

Pertinent to the features significantly improved in both groups, closed analyses of the videotaped role-play conversations additionally revealed that despite not being taught interactional functions of language in talk, in the conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play, the participants were able to communicate more naturally with more genuine, conversation-like language. As discussed below, the following features of everyday naturally-occurring conversation either occurred or showed improvement in the post-test conversation through the role-play training: reciprocal greeting, third-turn assessment, self-initiated self-repair and the use of turn holding devices.

As can be seen in Excerpts 1 and 2 below, taken from the pre- and the post-tests respectively, while absent in the pre-test, the reciprocal, extended greeting can be found in line 9 in the post-test through "…and you, Nureeyah?".

(1) Pre-test
1   A: hello Miss Nureesan.=
2   B: =hello Miss Nureeyah.
3   A: e:r, how are you?
4   B: it's OK.
(2) Post-test
     [Telephone rings]
5   A: hello
6   B: hello excuse me I want to calling Nureesan.
7   A: yes Nureesan speaking.
8   B: hi Nureesan how are you?
9   A: I'm fine thank you and you, Nureeyah?
10   B: I'm so so.

As seen in Excerpt (2), after the inquiry greeting increment "How are you?" in line 8, B returns the extended greeting with "…and you, Nureeyah?," which, according to Hopper (1992), was crucial for setting the direction for the conversation.

The role-play training also allows the students to improve their third-turn assessment, which is a common feature of naturally-occurring L1 conversation (Scheloff, 2007). As seen in Excerpt (3) below, after B's response to the weather question initiating a small talk in line 11, A abruptly switches to a new sequence inviting B to dinner, without commenting on the response in line 12.

(3) Pre-test
11   A: how on the weather today?
12   B: not OK. it is raining.
13   A: I want to invite to dinner on [weekench] OK?
However, the improvement of the student's third-turn assessment can be seen in the post test, line 16.
(4) Post test
14   B: how is ( ) today?
15   A: today is raining.
16   B: bad.

17   A: hi Nureesan can you (0.2) can you dinner with me?

Additionally, through the non-scripted role-play, the participants resorted to self-initiate self repair to deal with conversational problems, which simulates the feature of naturally-occurring conversation. Seen in Excerpt (5) from the pre-test, A is unable to fix the problem in the turn initiated in line 18 in one go. Notice that through B's turn in line 19 and the following pause in line 20, A's turn in line 18 gets treated by B as problematic, thus requiring a repair. In line 21, A attempts the first repair but still fails to elicit B's uptake, thus making a second attempt in line 23, to which B successfully responds.

(5) Pre-test
18   A: I have ( ) to Bangkok.
19   B: e::r
20   (0.5)
21   A: what time?
22   B: (0.5)
23   A: ha::? what time to plan come?
24   B: turn to Bangkok and arrive twelve fifteen from platform six arrive e:r at e:r Bangkok.

However, the improvement of A's self-initiated self-repair can be observed in Excerpt (6) in the turn at line 26.

(6) Post test
24   A: where platform?
25   B: platform sixteen
26   A: where e:r when arrive to Bangkok?
27   B: arrive at Bangkok fifty-fifty fifteen-fifty

The turn-holding fillers such as *er* can be found in most of the conversations elicited through non-scripted role-play, both in the pre- and the post-tests. According to Park (2007), the use of these devices is essential for the completion of an ongoing turn.

(6) Pre-test
28   A: hello (laughing)
29   B: koyak la ((.:speak!)) welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.
30   A: e::::r, are you::: are you a::r have resident room?
31   B: yes, I have. Do you want a single room or double room?
32   A: e:::r I want single room.
(7) Post test
33   A: welcome to the Lee Garden Hotel.
34   B: oh (0.5) I want to e:rr book a room
35   A: how do you want the room? single room or double room?
36   B: how much e:rr single room and double room?

The sample excerpts seem to indicate that non-scripted role-plays provide the participants with more opportunity to deal with a problem. The participants can also contribute to the turn construction similar to the real conversation.

CONCLUSION

This current study has attempted to determine whether and how speaking performance of the students gets improved through regular practices of non-scripted role-play. It has shown that both low- and high-proficiency participants exhibited significant improvement in their overall speaking performance as well as in the genuine interaction-oriented features of naturally-occurring conversation. Discrete features such as pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, styles of expression and appropriate choice of words, however, appeared to be challenging for both groups to improve without more focused teaching. It is therefore recommended that while teaching English conversation with non-scripted role-play, teachers focus on forms used to perform particular interactional functions such as initiating, maintaining and closing different types of sequences, and fixing conversation problems, and try to enhance the production of those forms via more focused training for more meaningful and effective communication.

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APPENDIX A

Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Proficiency

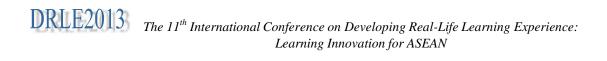|	Excellent: 5 marks	Very good: 4 marks	Good: 3 marks	Fair: 2 marks	Poor: 1 mark
1. Pronunciation	All words are clearly and correctly pronounced. Articulation of final consonants e.g. 's' and 't' is correct	One or two words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected	A few words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected	One or two words which are mispronounced cause meaning to be affected	Most of the words are not correctly pronounced
2. Fluency in speaking	Able to speak without any hesitation or break in a sentence	Hesitates or pauses at a few places in a few sentences but fluency is not seriously effect	Hesitation is shown in almost every sentence. Uses a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.	Hesitates a lot that message is not very clear. A lot of repetition of sentences.	Shows a lot of hesitation that speech is not clear
3. Grammatical accuracy	Grammar is correct	A few minor grammatical errors. Meaning is not affected.	One or two major errors which affect meaning	Almost every sentence contains a grammatical error	A lot of grammatical errors are made that meaning is not clear
4. Style of expression	Uses a variety of sentence patterns and a variety of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions	Uses a variety of sentence patterns and a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions	Uses mostly simple sentences and a few complex and compound sentences. Uses a few coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.	Uses mostly simple sentences and one or two complex and compound sentences. Conjunctions are limited to simple ones such as 'and', 'or' and 'but'	Uses mostly simple sentences.
5. Appropriate choice of words	A wide range of words is appropriately and correctly used.	A fairly wide range of words is used. A few contents words (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) are repeated. Words are used appropriately and correctly.	A fairly wide range of words is used. Some content words are repeated a number of times. One or two words are not correctly used.	Range of words used is fairly narrow. Some words in the student's language (Thai, Melayu) are used.	Range of words used is limited and hardly sufficient to express an idea.
6. Manner of expression	Speak confidently with proper intonation to show feelings	Speak quite confidently and able to show emotion appropriately at times	Show some signs of nervousness and hence speech becomes fairly monotonous.	Lacks confidence. Speech is monotonous.	Nervous and unable to speak coherently at times.
7. Ability to interact	Responds excellently to all	Responds well to most of the	Responds fairly well to some	Responds very briefly to	Responds mostly to

(response/ ask questions)	questions asked. Asks questions appropriate to the content	questions asked. Asks questions appropriate to th context.	Wh questions asked. Able to ask yes/no questions and a few short Wh questions	questions asked. Responds well to yes/no questions but not th Wh questions. Asks very short Wh questions.	yes/no questions. Can answer very few Wh questions. Can hardly ask question.

APPENDIX B

Transcription Convention

[	Point of overlap onset
]	Point of overlap termination
=	(a) Turn continues below, at the next identical symbol
	(b) If inserted at the end of one speaker's adjacent turn indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns
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e:r the:::	Lengthening of the preceding sound
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⟶	Mark features of special interest

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    Yala Rajabhat University. *Proceeding of the 11th International Conference on
    Developing Real-Life Learning Experiences: Learning Innovation for ASEAN.*
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