

CHAPTER 5

TEACHERS' PROFILES ON GRAMMAR TEACHING

A case study was conducted in order to gather in-depth information about grammar teaching under the framework of the research questions. In order to answer the research questions, in addition to the questionnaire, a case study on four English language teachers was conducted to obtain their profiles. Each case included an in-depth questionnaire about their learning experiences, their views on the role of grammar, how they actually teach grammar in the classroom and the problems in teaching grammar using the communicative approach. The participants were four English language teachers from four schools : Dechapattanayanukul, Pattani Province; Kanaradsadornbumrung, Yala Province; Tanyongmas, Narathiwat Province; and Satunwittaya, Satun Province. Their classes were observed on one certain topic which took two to four periods. Each teacher was asked to complete the questionnaire after the class observation and the interview.

The questionnaire presents the data about general information, participants' learning experiences, their views on the role of grammar, their teaching of grammar in the classroom and their problems in teaching grammar using the communicative approach. Also, an interview was conducted in order to gain in-depth information about the participants' views of grammar teaching as well as to clarify what and why they did in the classroom during the observation. The observation presents data about how participants actually teach grammar in the classroom, which may reflect their views on the role of grammar as well as their learning experiences which may have influenced their teaching. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996: 29), what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, which provide the framework for the teachers' classroom actions.

The English language teachers have their own individual knowledge and beliefs which they base their teaching on. Johnson (: cited in Richard and Lockhart, 1996 : 37). found that ESL teachers with different dominant theoretical orientations provide strikingly different literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. ESL teachers teach in accordance with their theoretical beliefs, and differences in theoretical beliefs may result in differences in the nature of literacy instruction. In addition, the teacher's learning experience is one of the sources of the teachers' beliefs that helps in understanding the teachers' belief since all teachers were once students. and their beliefs about teaching are often a reflection of how they were taught.

Case One

1. General Information

The participant was a female teacher from Dechapattanayanukul, Pattani Province, about 50 years old. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Education in 1976. She has been teaching for more than ten years, and during her teaching, she has had an opportunity to attend a seminar at least once a year. The latest seminar was about translation, from which the participant seemed to gain a good attitude toward the use of translation in her teaching. She agreed that in order to speak or write English most Thai students or even teachers mostly think in Thai first, and translate into English. As a result, in the participant's opinion, the teacher cannot avoid using translation in teaching English. In addition, she also had an opportunity to attend a seminar overseas. The latest seminar is on multimedia.

2. Participant's Learning Experience

The participant's learning experience was based more on the traditional approach, in which the emphasis is on the study of the grammatical rules of language. For example, grammar was very often presented through pattern presentation (Subject + Verb + Object, for instance) together with a detailed explanation of all the rules and exceptions. The classroom attention is on memorization of grammatical rules. The participant, as a language student, was expected to be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules and exceptions that she learned. In order to do that the participant did quite a lot of exercises that provided an opportunity to memorize the rules and vocabulary. For example, dictation was mostly included in the examinations. According to the interview, the participant was impressed with this dictation activity.

At the secondary level when there was an English examination, every student at the same level had to sit in the classroom, waiting for the dictation. The school principal conducted the dictation for one level at a time through the intercom system. For example, every Matthayomsuksa 5 class did the dictation at the same time while others had to wait for their turn. The dictation was conducted in a short paragraph. I think dictation is useful in developing vocabulary which helps in communication.

Participant One (Interview), July 3, 2000

The participant rarely had an opportunity to communicate in English in the classroom. She did not have much chance to practice particular communicative activities such as transferring information, discussion, etc. Moreover, she rarely had an opportunity to be exposed to the real use of English in the classroom. For example, her teacher rarely spoke English in the classroom.

To sum up, the participant's learning experience was based more on the traditional approach, focusing on memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary.

3. Participant's Views on English Teaching and Learning Using the Communicative Approach

At the school where the participant was teaching, the English syllabus had been changed to the communicative approach for 10 years.

According to the responses to the questionnaire about her understanding of communicative teaching, she viewed communicative teaching as the approach that concentrates on the appropriate use of language in certain situations and that language must be understandable and acceptable to the English users. She believed that to use English appropriately, the students should be exposed to a variety of language so they can select what is suitable for a certain situation. To her understanding, communicative teaching involves the appropriate use of language to communicate in a real situation. The students should be able to communicate through four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

During the interview, the participant made an interesting point that even though the goal was set toward the ability to use appropriate language in a real communication (outside classroom context), what she really expected from her students was to achieve the objectives of each lesson and, by the end of the course, they would eventually be able to use English to communicate. The participant ranked the students' aims of learning English as follows:

Table 5.1 Participants' Views on the Students' Aims of Learning English (Case 1)

Order of Importance*	Aims of Learning English
1	To be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a certain situation
2	To understand and gain cultural knowledge of native speakers
3	To be able to use grammatically correct English
4	For higher education

*1=the most important

Table 5.2 Importance of the Language Components in Communication
(Case 1)

Order of Importance*	Components
1	Cultural knowledge
2	Grammar
3	Vocabulary
4	Pronunciation

*1=the most important

She believed that the most important component that helps students to communicate is cultural knowledge. In her opinion, cultural knowledge helps the students to understand what is happening at the moment and how to deal with the situation and what it really means within a certain context. For example, in the Thai context, น่าเกลียด (ugly) has a negative meaning and น่าชิง (detestable) also has a negative meaning. But sometimes when they are used together น่าเกลียดน่าชิง (lovely), in a certain context, the meaning can be positive. This may make some foreigners misunderstand because they don't understand น่าเกลียดน่าชิง in Thai, and to them this word may be negative. In addition, she thought that the second most important component that helps students to communicate is grammar. In her opinion, grammatical rules help students to communicate correctly and the knowledge of grammar shows the proficiency of the language user.

Without knowledge of grammar people are still able to communicate if they know only the vocabulary. However, it is impossible to communicate effectively by only saying word by word. Grammar then, plays a role in combining words together to convey meanings that people want to express. Moreover, the use of grammatically correct sentences would show the language user's knowledge.

Participant One (Interview), March 2, 2001

In addition, the participant believed that the third, vocabulary and the fourth, pronunciation were quite important in helping the students to communicate effectively. The students should know which words they should use in the situation and it is important to know how to pronounce the word in order to make the message understandable.

4. Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar

The participant was asked in the questionnaire about her views on the role of grammar, which are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar (Case 1)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The students should be able to appropriately use grammar that they have learned in order to do the exercises.	/				
2.	The students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences.		/			
3.	The students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules that they have learned correctly.			/		

Table 5.3 (cont.)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.	The students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly and appropriately.		/			
5.	The students should be able to appropriately use English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness.		/			
6.	Grammatical knowledge is one important component of language proficiency.		/			
7.	The students should learn grammar in order to use it as a tool for effective communication.	/				
8.	The importance of grammar depends on the situation, for example, grammatically correct sentences are required more in a formal meeting than in talking to friends.		/			

The participant's views on the role of grammar appeared to be based on both the traditional approach and the communicative approach. She agreed that it was necessary for the students to practice writing grammatically correct sentences. In addition, she strongly agreed that the students should be able to do exercises focusing on the target grammar. She also strongly agreed that grammar was considered a tool for communication. In her opinion, the students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate since grammatical knowledge is one important part of language proficiency.

In the communicative approach, she agreed that the importance of grammar varied according to situations, for example, grammatically correct sentences were required more in a formal meeting than talking with friends.

The participant seemed to view grammar as separate from actual communication. In some situations, grammar plays less role. The participant agreed that students should be able to appropriately use English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness. To clarify her opinion, she stated during the interview that the students may produce a sentence like "She goes home late last night." This is considered a grammatically incorrect sentence (she wents) but the past form of "go" (went) was used so it is appropriate.

According to the interview, she stated that, in the classroom context, she expected her students to achieve the objectives of each lesson rather than to be able to communicate in a real situation.

5. Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom

In order to see the influence of her views on the role of grammar as well as her learning experience on her teaching, the data from the questionnaire, **Table 5.4**, presents the participant's grammar teaching and activities in the classroom.

Table 5.4 Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom (Case 1)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
1	Grammar is taught through pattern presentation, for example, Subject + Verb + Object.		/			
2	Grammatical rules, grammatical structures and exceptions are presented with detailed explanation.				/	
3	Sample sentences which present the target grammatical item are provided after the grammar explanation.			/		
4	Grammar is presented in context through different types of material, for example, reading texts or listening materials. The students learn and deduce grammatical rules from those contexts. This may be guided by the teacher or teacher may summarize at the end of the lesson.	/				
5	Grammatical terms such as gerund and participle are used to explain grammar.			/		
6	English grammar is taught by comparing with Thai grammar.					/
7	The students translate words or sentences from Thai into English and/or English into Thai.		/			

Table 5.4 (cont.)

No	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
8	The students practice writing sentences using the grammatical items that they have just learned. For example, <u>Transformational drill</u> They walk to school. They don't walk to school. Do they walk to school? <u>Substitutional drill</u> I / We / She went home		/			
9	The students practice using appropriate language in a certain situation, for example, the students select the right tense to describe everyday activities such as greetings and telephone conversations.	/				
10	The students memorize grammatical rules.					/
11	The students practice transferring information, for example, transferring texts to diagrams or tables.			/		
12	The students do activities using English in exchanging information for communication such as group discussions, and role play.		/			
13	The students practice asking-answering questions and solving problems.	/				
14	The teacher speaks English in the classroom.	/				

According to **Table 5.4**, the participant based her teaching on both the traditional and the communicative approaches. In presenting grammar, she preferred to present it in context through different skills, for example, reading texts and/or listening materials. Her students are expected to deduce grammar rules from those contexts. This may be done with the participant's guidance or with her summary of the rules at the end of the lesson. According to the interview, the participant very often provided supplementary reading for her students. In order to prepare the students for what they were going to study, she let her students read and do some activities such as answering questions concerning what they had read. The supplementary reading would provide some vocabulary, structures or grammatical points that the students would face during the lesson.

The participant seemed to use more communicative activities in the classroom. She very often provided an activity for students to practice using appropriate language in a certain situation. For example, according to the interview after the observation, the participant would teach the students some structures and vocabulary used in a situation such as a telephone conversation. After that, the students practiced making some telephone conversations. In addition, her students practiced asking-answering questions and solving problems very often. Moreover, the students often used English in exchanging information such as group discussion and role play. The students would sometimes practice transferring information, i.e. transferring texts to a diagrams or a tables.

Based on the questionnaire, even though the participant preferred the communicative approach in presenting grammar, the traditional teaching style, i.e. pattern presentation, (Subject + Verb + Object, for instance) was often used. In addition, traditional activities such as translation were also practiced in the classroom. According to the interview, the participant believed that translation made it easier for the students to study English. She explained that in the Thai context, to produce English sentences, the students or even the participant herself would think in Thai first

and then translate into English. Thus, we can see that the participant often made use of translation to enhance the learning process. As she said:

Thinking in Thai and translating it into English can be useful in the classroom. Once the students know what they are talking about then they know how to respond. And translation can also be used to check their understanding.

Participant One (Interview), July 3, 2000

6. Classroom Observation

Four periods of observation were conducted in order to gather an overall picture of how the participant actually taught grammar in the classroom and how the influence of her learning experience and her views on the role of grammar were reflected in her teaching.

The lesson observed was on the topic "Pronouns". The observation took four periods, each period lasting for 40 minutes. There were 36 students in the classroom. Most of the students were girls who were very cooperative. The class was active as there were a lot of activities. The objective of the lesson was that the students should be able to use pronouns, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns correctly. Practically, she did not seem to worry much about the communicative use. Instead, after the lesson she simply expected her students to be able to understand and know the different types of pronouns, and to be able to form sentences using pronouns. However, she hoped that after her students have achieved the objective of each lesson, by the end of the course they would know how to use their knowledge in actual communication.

It was observed that the participant based her teaching more on the traditional approach, which was similar to her learning experience. Dictation was an outstanding example. At the beginning of the lesson, the participant conducted a dictation focusing on the vocabulary that the students had collected from previous lessons. According to the interview, she aimed to conduct the dictation as often as possible. She believed that it was necessary for the students to develop their vocabulary in order to use it to

communicate and to improve their study. At sentence level, the students sometimes write down the instructions that the participant would use in the lesson. Its purpose was for the students to understand and follow the instructions which would be used in the lesson. It is obvious that the participant's learning experience had an influence on her teaching. She explained, "The dictation used when I was a student was in a short paragraph. It was conducted as a part of the examination. I was impressed with this idea so I adopted it in my teaching..."

Not only her learning experience but also her views on the role of grammar had an influence on her teaching. The participant seemed to view grammar teaching as a separate part from actual communication, as could be seen from her teaching presentation. At the presentation stage, she first presented sample sentences containing the target grammar. Then, she asked the students to identify the target grammar from the sentences provided. For example, in presentation 1, students were asked to form sentences using words provided such as his, her, she, our, etc. These words were presented one at a time on a word card. In presentation 2, the participant aimed at introducing and reviewing the students' background knowledge about the target grammar "subject pronouns". At this stage, the students working in groups translated Thai into English and identified subject pronouns in the sentences.

For example,

Thai: พวกเขาทำงานหนัก → English: They are hard working.

Thai: เธอเป็นคนกระตือรือร้น → English: She is active.

From this presentation, it could be noticed that the participant's views towards the importance of vocabulary was also reflected in her teaching. After the students did the translation activity, the participant corrected those sentences and added more vocabulary, for example, "diligent", which is a synonym for "hard working", and "inert", which is an antonym of "active". It should be pointed out that the students did the translation activity without any communicative purposes. They translated sentences provided on cards.

In presentation 3, the participant asked the students to find what given phrases had in common in order to lead to the lesson topic "Possessive adjectives". The sample phrases were, for example, "Andrew's school", "Sarah's book", "My car", etc. Then the students were asked to identify possessive adjectives in the sample phrases.

In all three presentations, the classroom activities were out of context. The students were asked to do the activities without focusing on any communicative purposes. They did what the participant asked them to do. However, presentation 4 was different. The students listened to the conversation and identified possessive pronouns. At this stage the students did the activity which aimed only at word recognition.

After the fourth presentation, the students were able to tell which words were subject pronouns, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns. The students seemed to have background knowledge on sentence structure and pronouns as they were able to do the activities.

Next, the students did some exercises focusing on using the target grammar at the word and sentence levels, for example, filling in the gaps, paraphrasing and translation. To fill in the gaps, the students listened to a song and filled in the gaps with subject pronouns, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns. The participant checked the students' answers by reading every sentence and explaining the structure of the gaps filling sentences.

There were some points being considered. The objective of the activity was that the students practiced using the target grammar in the listening. However, the students seemed not to use what they had learned while they were asked to listen and then filled in the gaps. The focus was only on the word recognition not on the use of target grammar.

In addition, to teach possessive adjectives, a paraphrasing activity was conducted. The participant provided sentences for the students to form different sentences with the same meaning. The participant showed her sentences one at a time on a piece of paper. She read and translated some sentences before the students

paraphrased them, for example,

- Participant : This is your pen. It is not my pen.
 Students : It is yours. It is not mine.
 Participant : I drive my car to work but you don't drive your car to work.
 Students : I drive mine but you don't drive yours.

From the beginning of the lesson, translation was involved in almost every activity. For example, the participant sometimes translated instructions to her students to check their understanding, and the students sometimes translated sentences in the activity. There was a variety of activities, and the class was organized differently in each activity. The students did some activities in groups. But the participant appeared not to conduct the group work for a communicative purposes. According to the interview, her intention was to let her students practice working with other people. They were expected to share their knowledge and learn how to work with people who may think differently. As she clarified:

Some good students do not really try to accept others' opinions that differ from theirs. When they work together good students have a chance to learn to accept others' more suitable ideas. And the other advantage is that average or weak students have a good chance to share knowledge as well as to join the discussion. So I don't really mind if they speak Thai while doing the activity.

Participant One (Interview), March 2, 2001

According to the observation, the participant didn't seem to accomplish the communicative purposes. However, her students had achieved the objective of the lesson as they could identify the target grammar, produce sentences using the target grammar and do the exercises provided.

After the observation, the interview was conducted. The participant was quite satisfied with her teaching. She completed what she had planned and her students achieved the objective. She was impressed with some activities which she experienced during her study. Therefore, she decided to use them in other lessons such as dictation

and translation. However, she pointed out that her students mostly did what she asked them to do. This may block them from thinking creatively. In the future, she planned to provide an activity that gave students a chance to think and really make use of their knowledge. The focus would be more on creativity and the students' interests. In the participant's opinion, the teaching process was another point to consider in achieving the communicative activity. In planning the teaching, it is important to keep in mind that the goal is to develop communicative competence and that every teaching stage should lead to the communicative goals.

7. Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach

The participant was asked to rate and explain the importance of problems in teaching grammar using the communicative approach. The data from the questionnaire are presented in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5 Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach (Case 1)

Problems and Limitations	Rank*
1. Students	3
2. Teaching Aids	4
3. School Policy	5
4. Curriculum	1
5. Teaching Techniques	2
6. Evaluation	6

*1=the most important

From the participant's point of view, the most important problem was the curriculum. It had been changed too often and the focuses were different. This made it difficult for her to plan the lesson and get used to the content and the objectives of the curriculum.

The second most important was the teaching techniques. An inappropriate teaching technique may not lead the students to achieve the communicative goal. The participant suggested during the interview that it was important for the teachers to bear in mind that the objectives of the course in the communicative language teaching were communicative competence. Each teaching stage should lead to these objectives.

The third problem was the students. A lesson will not be successful without the students' cooperation. If the students do not realize the need for communication it is difficult to conduct a communicative activity. The participant stated in the interview that the students sometimes did not see the need to do such an activity. They would rather take notes which showed that they had learned something from the lesson.

The fourth important problem was teaching aids. The participant pointed out that there were a small number of listed books for teachers to choose from as a classroom book. Therefore, to solve this problem, the participant added some supplementary sheets which were collected from other materials such as magazines, newspapers, and the books that were not on the list, for instance. She suggested that the teachers should be free to select the books used in the classroom as they know what is suitable for their students.

The fifth problem was school policy, which sometimes did not support the teaching. For example, the school appeared not to realize the teachers' need of training or seminars and of the teaching aids to teach creatively.

And the sixth problem was evaluation. While the curriculum focused the teaching on the communicative purposes and the learners' centered approach, many tests did not seem to evaluate what had been taught. They mainly tested memorization and correctness but hardly evaluated the ability to communicate. In addition, she explained in the questionnaire that most students aim at preparing for the university entrance examination which focuses on form and memorization. The participant was expected to teach according to the students' aim.

8. Discussion (Case 1)

8.1 In her response to the questionnaire, the participant appeared to understand the goals of the communicative teaching. She expected that by the end of the course, after the students had completed the objectives of each lesson, they would be able to use English communicatively. However, in her actual teaching, she focused her grammar teaching on form more than the use of grammar for communication. According to the interview, she believed that after the students had mastered the form, they would eventually be able to use it in communication. It can be noticed that she occasionally taught grammar out of context, without focusing on the meaningful use of grammar in communication. The target grammar was presented one at a time and the focus was on the recognition of forms. In brief, she tended to see grammar teaching separately from communication. According to the study of Borg (1998 : 27), the teacher participating in the study seemed to believe that there was a possibility that formal language work did enhance students' ability to use the grammar learned in communicative speech. However, there has been a concern about the separation of the teaching of form and the communicative use. Xiaojun (1984 : 5) proposed:

Although learning the form of a language is necessary, it is not to be equated with learning its use. It is at best only a step towards learning use. After all is said and done, learning the use of language has to be achieved through use itself, that is, by communication.

8.2 The participant's learning experience has had an influence on her teaching. As can be seen that she often did dictation in her studying, she also used dictation in her teaching. Moreover, the seminars on translation also had an influence on her teaching, as the participant gained some positive attitudes toward translation activities and the use of the first language, Thai, in the classroom. She was convinced that translation could be useful in teaching English since, in doing the activity, most teachers and students usually think in Thai first and translate into English. Translation would help both teacher and students understand the activity.

Thus, training and seminars can be important strategies in developing the teacher's teaching. Uraiwan Saringkanun, (1984 : 98) proposed that in introducing the communicative teaching to the teacher of English, it is necessary for the teacher to attend a seminar on communicative teaching. In order to pursue effective communicative teaching, they must understand its principles clearly, or they would end up using an approach that does not serve the communicative purpose.

8.3 Since the curriculum focuses on the communicative purposes, the participant attempted to conduct communicative activities such as listening to songs and group works. However, they were not used to promote English communicative skills. For example, she intended to use group works to promote cooperation among the students with different ability levels.

8.4 In the participant's opinion, the students' most important aim in learning English was to be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a certain situation; however, most students aim their learning to attain the university level where they have to pass the entrance examination. They have to prepare themselves for this examination which emphasizes grammatical knowledge. The teacher is then expected to teach to serve the students' need for higher education. It seemed that, to the participant's understanding, communicative teaching could not serve the students' aims. Siriporn Chantanont (1989) and Li (1998) have pointed out in their studies that there are some teachers who feel that the communicative language teaching does not lead the students to master grammatical knowledge.

Case Two

1. General Information

The participant was a female teacher from Kanaradsadornbumrung school in Yala province. She was about forty years old and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts, 1978. She has been teaching for more than ten years. During her years of teaching, she had an opportunity to attend a seminar once in more than two years. Her latest seminar was on the topic of "Learning Integration", sponsored by the World Bank.

2. Participant's Learning Experience

At the time the participant graduated, in 1978, the communicative approach was just being introduced to Thailand. Accordingly, she seems to have an opportunity to experience both the traditional and the communicative approaches.

When she was a student, she had a chance to practice four skills. She often learned grammar through reading texts, listening materials or activities that provided a chance to deduce grammatical rules from the context. Grammar was not very often taught through pattern presentation (Subject + Verb + Object) and there was little detailed explanation of the grammatical structures and exceptions. In addition, grammatical terms were not often used in the explanation. Her teacher tended to use sample sentences to present the target grammatical structures. In the classroom, she practiced memorizing the grammatical rules. However she did not have much chance to practice using language for communication. In her classroom, her teacher sometimes conducted the lesson in English.

3. Participant's Views on English Teaching and Learning Using the Communicative Approach

The communicative approach had been introduced in the English syllabus used in the participant's school for 10 years. According to her response to the questionnaire about her understanding of communicative teaching, she viewed it as an approach that concentrates on the appropriate use of language in certain situations and that language must be understandable and acceptable among the English users.

She believed that in the communicative teaching, learning how to use language in different situations is more important than learning grammar, and it is necessary for the students to be exposed to a variety of language styles in order to select the most suitable one to use in a given situation.

Since she viewed the learning of grammatical rules as less important than using language in different situations, she expected her students to be able to use question words that had been taught in her class to communicate through four skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening. This view appears to be consistent with her expectation about the students' aims of learning English and her ranking of the importance of language components that help the students to communicate (Table 5.6 and Table 5.7).

Table 5.6 Participant's Views on the Students' Aims of Learning English (Case 2)

Order of Importance*	Aims of Learning English
1	To be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a certain situation
2	To be able to use grammatically correct English
3	For higher education
4	To understand and gain cultural knowledge of the native speakers

*1= the most important

Table 5.7 Importance of the Language Components in Communication (Case 2)

Order of Importance*	Components
1	Vocabulary
2	Pronunciation
3	Cultural knowledge
4	Grammar

*1= the most important

She stated that the most important component that helps the students to communicate is vocabulary. In her opinion, the students can communicate by using vocabulary together with correct pronunciation. And the third most important component is the cultural knowledge which helps the students to communicate appropriately. For example, in greeting, some foreigners may ask questions like “How do you do?”. If the students understood the culture of greeting, they would know that “How do you do?” is a greeting, and they would be able to reply appropriately. And she believed that grammar is the least important component of the four parts. She stated that without grammar the students still are able to communicate, although it may not be as effective as communicating with grammatical knowledge. She said the students can use their knowledge of vocabulary and pronunciation to communicate orally. However, knowledge of grammar would help communicate more effectively.

4. Participant’s Views on the Role of Grammar

The participant was asked to answer the questionnaire about her view on the role of grammar. The data are presented in **Table 5.8**.

Table 5.8 Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar (Case 2)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The students should be able to appropriately use grammar that they have learned in order to do the exercises.			/		
2.	The students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences.			/		
3.	The students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules that they have learned correctly.			/		
4.	The students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly and appropriately.			/		
5.	The students should be able to appropriately use English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness.		/			

Table 5.8 (cont.)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6.	Grammatical knowledge is one important component of language proficiency.			/		
7.	The students should learn grammar in order to use it as a tool for effective communication.		/			
8.	The importance of grammar depends on the situation, for example, grammatically correct sentences are required more in a formal meeting than in talking to friends.			/		

Table 5.8 shows that the participant agreed that grammar should be learned in order to use it as a tool for communication. To communicate in some situations, it is more important to be able to use the language appropriately than to focus only on grammatical accuracy.

She seemed to give less emphasis to the grammatical correctness as she moderately agreed with statement numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, which concerned the students' ability to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly. She explained in the interview as follows:

Grammar should be taught for the communicative purposes. Students should rather learn grammar as one of the components to communicate than learn its rules and do the exercises.

Participant Two (Interview), July 20, 2000

5. Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom

The participant was asked to answer the questionnaire about how she actually taught grammar in the classroom. The data are presented in **Table 5.9**.

Table 5.9 Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom (Case 2)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
1	Grammar is taught through pattern presentation, for example, Subject + Verb + Object.				/	
2	Grammatical rules, grammatical structures and exceptions are presented with detailed explanation.				/	
3	Sample sentences which present the target grammar are provided after the grammar explanation.		/			

Table 5.9 (cont.)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
4	Grammar is presented in context through different types of material, for example, reading texts or listening materials. The students learn and deduce grammatical rules from those contexts. This may be guided by the teacher or teacher may summarize at the end of the lesson.		/			
5	Grammatical terms such as gerund and participle are used to explain grammar.			/		
6	English grammar is taught by comparing with Thai grammar.				/	
7	The students translate words or sentences from Thai into English and/or English into Thai.				/	
8	The students practice writing sentences using the grammatical items that they have just learned. For example, <u>Transformational drill</u> They walk to school. They don't walk to school. Do they walk to school? <u>Substitutional drill</u> I / We / She went home.			/		

Table 5.9 (cont.)

No	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
9	The students practice using appropriate language in a certain situation, for example, the students select the right tense to describe everyday activities such as greetings and telephone conversations.		/			
10	The students memorize grammatical rules.				/	
11	The students practice transferring information, for example, transferring texts to diagrams or tables.			/		
12	The students do the activities using English in exchanging information for communication such as group discussions and role play.			/		
13	The students practice asking-answering questions and solving problems.			/		
14	The teacher speaks English in the classroom.		/			

Table 5.9 shows that the participant's learning experience had an influence on her teaching. For example, at the stage of grammar presentation, the data from the questionnaire show that the participant often learned grammar through reading texts, listening materials or activities that provided a chance to deduce grammatical rules from the context. This experience has influenced her teaching. According to **Table 5.9**, she often had her students practice deducing grammatical rules from different

contexts. This may be done under her guidance. In addition, she often used sample sentences which contain the target grammar. The participant stated that the sample sentences can be used as models for the students to use in communication.

After the students have learned grammar, the sample sentences are provided as a model of the grammatical structure that they have learned. They can refer to the sample sentences when they have to use the language in a certain situation.

Participant Two (Interview), July 20, 2000

Normally, in the classroom, the participant mainly let her students practice using language for communication. Based on the questionnaire, the students often practice using appropriate language in a certain situation, for example, they select the right tense to describe everyday activities. They sometimes practice asking-answering questions, transferring and exchanging information, for example, transferring texts to tables, group discussion and role play. Moreover, the participant often uses English in conducting the lesson. According to the interview, she would like her students to be familiar with the use of English in the classroom. This will encourage the students to interact in English. As she said,

I try to speak English as much as possible in order to make my students familiar with the language. They have been encouraged to speak to me in English as well.

Participant Two (Interview), July 20, 2000

The participant hardly taught grammar by comparing Thai grammar with English grammar and rarely did translation activities. She did not pay much attention to memorization of grammatical rules. Pattern presentation as well as detailed explanation with some grammatical terms were not often presented in the classroom.

Although the participant did not emphasize her teaching on grammatical structures, the students sometimes had to practice writing sentences using the grammar that they had learned, for example, transformational drills and substitutional drills.

6. Classroom Observation

A two-period observation was conducted in order to see an overall picture of how the participant actually taught grammar in the classroom and how the influence of her learning experience and her view on the role of grammar were reflected in her teaching.

The lesson was on the topic of "Question words". Each period lasted for 50 minutes. There were 30 students in the classroom. They were active and very well cooperative. The objective of the lesson was that the students should be able to use question words for everyday life communication. In the classroom, there were some interactions between the participant and her students as well as among the students themselves. English was mainly used as the medium of interaction. During the lesson, the students did not depend much on the participant. They did activities on their own, following the instruction and little guidance from the participant. The participant expected that, after the lesson, her students should be able to correctly use question words learned in the classroom through the four skills: speaking, listening, writing and reading.

The participant's learning experience as well as her views on the role of grammar appeared to influence her teaching. Her teaching did not focus on form. It was observed that there were no pattern presentations or detailed explanation in the teaching. The participant had her students study and deduce grammatical rules from the context by themselves under her supervision. It can be noticed that the participant had often experienced this kind of activity during her learning too. In the first lesson, the students were asked to form ten wh-questions without any control of what types of question and which tense they should form. As a result, the students, as a group of five, formed a variety of questions, for example:

1. Who is your favorite singer?
2. When is your birthday?
3. Where you bury a dead person?

4. What fruit you like?
5. What book you are reading?
6. How many brothers do you have?
7. How old are you?
8. What team win an FA Cups?
9. Who is the captain of Manchester United?
10. What is your favorite TV show?

It can be seen that the students had formed isolated questions with no context of the communicative use. During the activity, the participant went around the classroom. She gave the instruction and answered the questions that the students may had. After they had finished forming questions, the participant asked them to exchange their questions with other groups. Each group had to answer the questions that they had exchanged. Then, they returned the answers as well as the questions to the writer of the questions in order to check the answers and present them to the class. It can be noticed that the participant did not correct any mistakes the students made but she did note some ungrammatical questions. She stated that these ungrammatical questions or any mistakes the students made would be discussed in the next period.

The participant explained in the interview that she would like her students to practice working on their own first. In the first lesson, her purpose was to introduce the students the topic of the lesson, “Wh-questions”. As she said, “In the first lesson, I let my students try to work on their own first. I expect them to work as a group and solve the problems they may have during the lesson. The mistakes will be left to the next period.”

In the second period, the students, as a group, formed questions according to the supplementary sheet (See **Appendix E**) which focused at the sentence level.

For example,

Complete the questions on the left to fit the answers on the right.

Think about the combinations you can make with *What's...?* or *What...?*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What (<u>are you doing / looking at</u>)? | I'm looking at some travel brochures. |
| 2. What (<u>is your job / job do you do</u>)? | I work as an assistant in a book shop. |
| 3. What | I use "Woodland" shampoo. It's lovely. |
| 4. What.....? | She's good looking, but very unpleasant. |

After the students completed the exercise, they selected some interesting questions from the exercise. The questions and answers that they formed in the previous period were also presented to the class. Similar to the earlier period, while the students were presenting their answers, the participant wrote the incorrect questions on the blackboard. After every group had completed their presentation, the participant asked them, as a class, to locate the mistakes and correct them if they could. But if they could not locate the mistakes, the participant would give them some guidance. For example, the students were asked to find out what was missing from the question "Where you bury a dead person?" The students gave an answer "verb to do" :

Question : Where you bury the dead person?

Correct question : Where do you bury the dead person?

Answer : A dead person is buried at the burial ground.

The participant followed the same procedure with other questions. It can be noticed that the participant did not explicitly teach the structure of wh-question.

During the two-period observation, the participant appeared to avoid explicit grammar teaching. She attempted to conduct activities from which the students could learn grammar without detailed explanations on the rules or the exceptions. This agreed with her view that in grammar teaching and learning memorization of grammatical rules should not be emphasized. Instead, she expected her students to be

able to use what they had learned in communication even though they produced ungrammatical sentences. As she stated :

We should avoid the traditional teaching in which the students have to take note of the grammatical rules. The students should have a chance to do varieties of activity in order to practice using grammatical structure that they have learned.

Participant Two (Interview), July 20, 2000

It is interesting to see that the activity was conducted at the sentence level. The meaning in the context of using wh-questions in communication seems to be invisible in the lesson.

Obviously, there was an attempt to promote communicative teaching in the classroom. During the lesson, the students did a group activity which provided a chance to interact among the members of the group. And the participant mainly spoke English. As a result, the students had to interact in English. However, it was observed that the students were able to do the activity with few problems because they had some background knowledge of “question words”.

We can see from the observed lesson that the participant did not provide any activities for the students to practice memorizing the grammatical rules. This agrees with her views on the role of grammar that she moderately agreed with memorization of grammatical rules.

7. Problems and the Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using Communicative Teaching

Table 5.10 presents the participant’s rank of the importance of the problems in teaching grammar using the communicative approach.

Table 5.10 Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using in the Communicative Approach (Case 2)

Problems and Limitations	Rank
1. Students	4
2. Teaching Aids	2
3. School Policy	1
4. Curriculum	3
5. Teaching Techniques	5
6. Evaluation	6

*1=the most important

According to the questionnaire, the main problem derived from the school policy. Since the school had promoted a variety of teaching strategies for example, Learning Integration, Learner-Centered, and so on, it was difficult to follow all the methods the school had proposed. Insufficiency of teaching aids was another problem. The teaching aids were not enough for the English language teachers to conduct some activities. For example, audio-visual aids should be provided for the students to practice English pronunciation.

The curriculum is considered the third most important. The participant explained during the interview that broad description with high expectation imposed stress on the teachers. The English curriculum, focusing on the communicative goal, does not meet the students' needs in studying English. Communicative competence is needed, but what is more important in studying English is for higher education of which the emphasis is still on grammatical competence. There should be some reconsideration on the focus of the curriculum.

The fourth most important problem was the students. In the communicative teaching, the students' cooperation in doing communicative activities was very important. If the students do not understand why they have to do the activity, it will be difficult to achieve the communicative purposes.

The fifth most important was the teaching techniques. The participant suggested in the interview that traditional grammar teaching did not serve the communicative purposes. In her opinion, the students should not be taught to memorize grammatical rules by taking notes. Instead, they should learn grammar and practice using it for communication.

Finally, the sixth most important is evaluation. This can cause some difficulties in teaching if it evaluates differently from what have been taught, for example, the university entrance examination tends to focus more on the grammatical competence while teaching focuses more on communicative competence. However, the participant stated that the evaluation had caused fewer problems than other factors mentioned earlier.

8. Discussion (Case 2)

8.1 The participant viewed grammar as one of the components that help in communication. She believed that grammar does not hold the major role in communication. And there was no need to teach grammar explicitly. This view appeared to influence her teaching, since there was no explicit grammar teaching in the observed lesson. Even though the participant seemed to understand and agree with the communicative teaching, she was still concerned with the need to teach grammar for higher education. It seems to her that grammar should be emphasized for further study. Communicative teaching does not respond this need. Siriporn Chantanont (1989 : 117) found that a number of English teachers felt that the communicative teaching did not emphasize grammar teaching, and this lack of grammar teaching caused the students to lack grammatical knowledge. This also agrees with the survey-study of Uraiwan Saringkanun (1984). The results of the study showed that many teachers still emphasized grammar teaching, and they felt that CLT did not serve such purposes. Therefore, the teachers saw CLT as an approach that did not help the students improve their grammatical knowledge.

8.2 The participant's learning experience occasionally influenced her teaching. Since she did not often study grammar in the traditional way, she did not teach her students using the traditional approach either. She often taught the students to use language through the four skills, which was similar to what she had experienced in her own study. According to Richard and Lockhart (1996 : 30-31), teachers' learning experience is one of the sources of the teachers' belief systems related to the content and the process of teaching. They also proposed that the teachers' beliefs about teaching are often the reflection of how they, as a student, were taught.

8.3 Since the participant appeared to understand the principles of the communicative approach, it was expected her teaching would be based on that approach. According to the observation, there was an attempt to use communicative activities.

8.3.1 The participant used group work for language learning. Theoretically, the purpose in using group work in learning language is to provide a chance for the students to practice communicating (Larsen-Freeman, 1986 and Brumfit, 1990). As a matter of fact, group work in the observation appeared not to serve such a purpose. The group activity did not provide the students a chance to interact meaningfully. For example, the students in groups of five were asked to form any ten questions without any communicative purposes. Most of them were able to do the activity by themselves without working in group. Group work tends to be used for the purpose of classroom organization instead of promoting communication.

8.3.2 An asking-answering question activity was used in the lesson mainly as a drilling. The activity emphasized the sentence level, and it was done without context. According to Larsen-Freeman (1986: 132), forming questions through a transformational drill may be a worthwhile activity, but it is not communicative since a speaker will receive no response from a listener, who is thus unable to assess whether the question has been understood or not.

Case Three

1. General Information

The participant was a female teacher from Tanyongmas school in Narathiwat. She was about 50 years old. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1976. She had been teaching for more than ten years. During her teaching, she rarely had an opportunity to attend any seminars, and she never attended any seminars overseas.

2. Participant's Learning Experience

According to the participant's response to the questionnaire and the interview, her learning experience was based mostly on the traditional approach.

During her study, the classroom's focus was often on memorization of grammatical rules. The participant, as a language student, did exercises to practice memorizing the grammatical rules. For example, she often did transformational drills and substitutional drills. As she recalled :

I mostly learned grammar through detailed explanation and sample sentences. After that I had to practice quite a lot of writing activities such as substitutional drills.

Participant Three (Interview), September 5, 2000

She also often learned grammatical rules and their exceptions in details. The grammatical rules were occasionally presented in patterns. Grammatical terms were used in the explanation along with model sentences. However, she did not seem to have much chance to practice translating Thai into English and/or English into Thai which is considered one part of the traditional approach.

Thai was mainly used as the medium of classroom instruction. The participant did not practice a lot of communicative activities. She sometimes practiced transferring and exchanging information, and grammar was occasionally presented through context.

3. Participant's Views on English Teaching and Learning Using the Communicative Approach

The participant was asked to select the statements from the questionnaire that represented her understanding of communicative teaching. She viewed the communicative teaching as an approach that focused on the appropriate use of language in a certain situation and that language must be understandable and acceptable among the English users. She believed that it was necessary for the students to learn a variety of language patterns in order to be able to use them in different situations, and it is more important to learn how to use language than to learn grammatical rules.

The participant was asked to rank the importance of the students' aims of studying English and components that help the students to communicate, which are presented in **Table 5.11** and **Table 5.12**. Even though the communicative teaching emphasizes the use of appropriate language to communicate in a certain situation, what is more important in the participant's opinion is the learning of English for higher education. And the aim for appropriate and effective communication is considered the second most important. She tends to look at communication more as a speaking skill since she felt that the students would be able to communicate by using words with correct pronunciation, which were ranked the first and the second most important components that help in communication.

Table 5.11 Participant's Views on the Students' Aims of Learning English (Case 3)

Order of Importance*	Aims of Learning English
1	For higher education
2	To be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a certain situation
3	To be able to use grammatically correct English
4	To understand and gain cultural knowledge of native speakers

*1=the most important

Table 5.12 Importance of the Language Components in Communication (Case 3)

Order of Importance*	Components
1	Vocabulary
2	Pronunciation
3	Grammar
4	Cultural knowledge

*1=the most important

4. Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar

The participant was asked to rate the level of agreement about the role of grammar. The data are presented in **Table 5.13**.

Table 5.13 Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar (Case 3)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The students should be able to appropriately use grammatical items that they have learned in order to do the exercises.			/		
2.	The students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences.		/			
3.	The students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules that they have learned correctly.		/			
4.	The students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly and appropriately.			/		
5.	The students should be able to appropriately use English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness.			/		
6.	Grammatical knowledge is one important component of language proficiency.		/			

Table 5.13 (cont.)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.	The students should learn grammar in order to use it as a tool for effective communication.			/		
8.	The importance of grammar depends on the situation, for example, grammatically correct sentences are required more in a formal meeting than in talking with friends.		/			

The participant seemed to view grammar mainly through the traditional approach. **Table 5.13** indicates that the participant viewed grammar as an important component in writing. She agreed that the students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences. In addition, she agreed that the students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical structures that they have learned correctly. This may be influenced by her views on the students' most important aim in studying English (**Table 5.11**).

She agreed that the knowledge of grammar was one important component of language proficiency. In her opinion, in order to achieve the most important aim in studying English, which is to attend higher education, it is important for the students to have good grammatical knowledge. As she said in the interview,

In order to attend higher education, the students need good grammatical knowledge since it is considered the basis for using English through 4 skills. In addition, before being able to use such knowledge, the students need to be able to recognize all the forms, rules and the exceptions.

Participant Three (Interview), September 5, 2000

Since the participant viewed grammar as more important in writing, grammar tended to take a minor role in oral communication. She moderately agreed with most statements (Items 4, 5 and 7) that presented grammar as a tool for communication. For example, she moderately agreed that the students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly and appropriately. She moderately agreed with the use of English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness. And she agreed that the importance of grammar depends on situations.

5. Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom

The participant was asked to answer the questionnaire about her teaching and activities used in the classroom. The data are presented in **Table 5.14**.

Table 5.14 Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom (Case 3)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
1	Grammar is taught through pattern presentation, for example, Subject + Verb + Object.			/		
2	Grammatical rules, grammatical structures and exceptions are presented with detailed explanation.			/		

Table 5.14 (cont.)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
3	Sample sentences which present the target grammar are provided after the grammar explanation.			/		
4	Grammar is presented in context through different types of material, for example, reading texts or listening materials. The students learn and deduce grammatical rules from those contexts. This may be guided by the teacher or the teacher may summarize at the end of the lesson.		/			
5	Grammatical terms such as gerund and participle are used to explain grammar.			/		
6	English grammar is taught by comparing with Thai grammar.			/		
7	The students translate word or sentences from Thai into English and/or English into Thai.			/		
8	The students practice writing sentences using the grammatical items that they have just learned. For example. <u>Transformational drills</u> They walk to school. They don't walk to school. Do they walk to school? <u>Substitutional drills</u> I / We / She went home.		/			

Table 5.14 (cont.)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
9	The students practice using appropriate language in a certain situation, for example, the students select the right tense to describe everyday activities such as greetings and telephone conversations.		/			
10	The students memorize grammatical rules.				/	
11	The students practice transferring information, for example, transferring texts to diagrams or tables.			/		
12	The students do activities using English in exchanging information for communication such as group discussions and role play.			/		
13	The students practice asking-answering questions and solving problems.			/		
14	The teacher speaks English in the classroom.			/		

The data from **Table 5.14** show that the participant's teaching seems to be based on both the traditional and communicative approaches.

In presenting grammar, the participant sometimes conducted a traditional activity in the classroom. For example, she sometimes presented grammar through pattern presentation together with detailed explanation using grammatical terms. She

also provided some sample sentences. Once in a while, she taught grammar by comparing Thai grammar with English grammar.

The participant presented grammar using the communicative approach, in which grammar was often presented in context through different types of material.

In practicing, since she agreed that grammar was more important in writing (Table 5.13), she often conducted an activity that mainly focused on the use of grammar in writing. She often had her students practice writing the target grammar through transformational drills and substitutional drills. She sometimes let her students do some translation activities in the classroom. Although the participant tended to use traditional activities in teaching, she less conducted an activity for the students to memorize grammatical rules. Sometimes, she had her students do some communicative activities such as transferring and exchanging information, or asking and answering questions.

6. Classroom Observation

A two-period observation was conducted in order to investigate how the participant actually taught grammar in the classroom and how the influence of her learning experience and her view on the role of grammar were reflected in her teaching.

Each period of observation lasted for 50 minutes. The lesson was on the topic of Present Continuous Tense which followed the classroom book *Blueprint* - unit 15 (See Appendix E). The objective of the lesson was that the students should be able to use and form present continuous sentences. The participant expected that after the lesson her students should be able to use the Present Continuous tense to talk about present activities through writing and speaking. There were 35 students in the classroom. They were talkative and well cooperative, willing to speak and answer their teacher's questions. The participant mainly used English in the classroom which seemed to cause some difficulties for some students in following the instructions, while Thai was used to explain grammar. The participant discussed this point in the

interview, that she used English to motivate the students to use English in the classroom.

I try to speak English in the classroom as much as possible. But it seems to be a waste of the time since most students do not try to understand what the teacher said. It takes so much time to conduct the class in English. Usually, after the English instruction, clarification is needed. And most of the time it ends up with translating it into Thai.

Participant Three (Interview), September 5, 2000

In the first period, the participant aimed to present the concept of “Present Continuous tense” and the structure through sample sentences. During the lesson, she had her students practice using the structure that they had studied. In the second period, the students learned some grammatical rules and exceptions in detail.

According to the observation, it appeared that the participant attempted to use the communicative teaching approach in the classroom. For example, she presented grammar through a situational context, which agreed with her response to the questionnaire that she often presented grammar through different types of material.

In teaching the concept of Present Continuous tense, the participant started the lesson by informing the students that they were going to study about present time activities, then she gave instructions in English.

For example,

The participant : Everybody please, stand up. (Students stand up)

The participant : What are you doing?

Students : Standing

The participant : What are you doing? I am...

Students : I am standing.

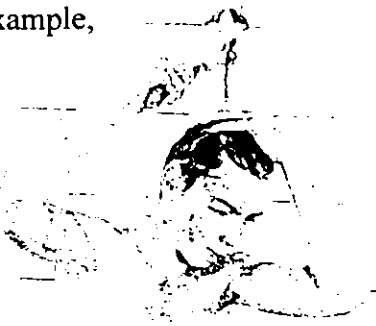
The participant : Everybody now, touch your eyes. (Students touch their eyes)

The participant : What are you doing?

Students : I am touching my eyes.

In addition, the participant also used pictures showing everyday activities to present the grammar points. The students were asked to look at the pictures in the book “Blueprint” page 43 (See **Appendix E**) and form questions from what they had seen. In doing this activity, the participant let the students work on their own first, and then she pointed out the mistakes the students made as well as let the students try to correct the mistakes by themselves.

For example,



1 have/a shower

Students :	Where have a shower?
The participant :	Where is the subject?
Students :	Where he a shower?

The participant noticed that students had difficulties in forming questions. So she explained how to form questions. After the explanation, the students were asked to form questions based on the first picture.

For example,

Students : Where does he have a shower?

Since the students were free to ask any questions, it appeared that their questions did not lead to the objective of the teaching of Present Continuous. So the participant changed the instructions focusing on the word level. For example, the participant asked the students to change the verbs provided in each picture to the -ing form e.g. “have” was changed to “having”, “play” to “playing”, “listen” to “listening”. In doing this activity the participant expected her students to recognize the verb form used in the Present Continuous tense.

The participant mainly used an asking-answering question activity to present grammar through the context of situations and pictures. Obviously, this activity did not fulfill communicative purposes; in fact, it focused on form.

Some substitutional drills were also conducted. For example, the participant asked the students some questions and taught how to form questions focusing on the use of “verb to be” with different pronouns such as “I”, “You”, “We”, “They”. The students had to answer mainly by substituting the verb to be, in the continuous form.

For example,

The participant : What is she doing?

The students : She is(V_{ing}; sitting, studying, reading...).

The participant : What _____ I doing?

(The participant asked the students to fill in the gap and form a question.)

The students : *Am*, What am I doing?

There were also activities that provided an opportunity for the students to practice pronunciation. After they had learned some vocabulary, they were divided into two groups to read dialogues from the book (See **Appendix E**). Then, they practiced forming questions using the dialogues as a model. In addition, they had to ask and answer questions using the words provided.

For example,

The participant : They - wash

The students : What are they doing? (They are washing.)

What are they washing? (They are washing dishes.)

The participant : We - walk

The students : What are we doing? (We are walking.)

Where are we walking to? (We are walking to the train station.)

It can be noticed that the participant used an asking-answering questions activities to focus only on form. The students rarely practiced exchanging information, which is considered one of the communicative activities. Her teaching approach agreed with her opinions on the importance of forms.

In the second period, the participant distributed supplementary sheets to the students. The supplementary sheets (See **Appendix E**) presented forms, explanations of how to use Present Continuous tense, exceptions and substitutional exercises. The students were asked to work in groups even though the main activity was substitutional drills. Obviously, group work was not used for communicative purposes since the activity did not promote an interaction nor exchanging information.

According to the interview, after the lesson, the participant believed that the students had achieved the objective as they were able to complete the exercises. However, she stated that there were still some problems in teaching since her students could not memorize the grammatical rules or appropriately use the target grammar in a particular situation.

I think the problem in teaching grammar is that after the teaching, the students still cannot memorize the rules. And they cannot appropriately use them in a certain situation. It is important for the students to memorize the rules before using them in doing exercises or in communicating.

Participant Three (Interview), September 5, 2000

This agrees with the participant's response to the questionnaire. She agreed that the students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules that they have learned correctly. However, there was a conflict between her views and her actual teaching. Based on the questionnaire, while she agreed with the memorization of grammatical rules, she less often let her students practice memorization. However, during the class observation, the students had practiced memorization indirectly. They did a lot of substitutional activities that seemed to provide a chance for them to practice memorizing grammatical rules.

It is interesting to see that the participant tended to focus her teaching on forms which appeared to agree with her view that the students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences. And it also reflected her view on the importance of grammar for writing. In the classroom, the students had practiced writing at the sentence level as can be seen in the supplementary sheet (See **Appendix E**).

7. Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach

The participant was asked to rank the importance of problems and limitations in teaching grammar using the communicative approach. The data are presented in **Table 5.15**.

Table 5.15 Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach (Case 3)

Problems and Limitations	Rank
1. Students	1
2. Teaching Aids	5
3. School Policy	6
4. Curriculum	2
5. Teaching Techniques	3
6. Evaluation	4

* 1 = the most important

According to **Table 5.15** and the interview, the participant felt there were several problems that needed to be solved in order to teach English more effectively. The most important problem was the students. The participant pointed out that the students did not realize the importance of the study of English since a number of the students did not aim for higher education. In addition, they did not see the need to speak English in the area where they lived. Also, a conflict about the aim of learning English between the teacher and the students could be noticed. She hoped that her students would have a higher motivation for learning English. In addition, it is difficult to conduct the communicative activities since the students do not have enough knowledge to do or follow the instructions. To solve such problems the

students have to be taught in the traditional way in which the target grammar is presented one at a time.

In addition, the teaching aids, for instance audio-visual aids, are not enough for the teachers, especially in the local area, which sometimes can be a limitation in doing some communicative activities. The participant pointed out :

I think one thing that would motivate the students to study English is English programs on television. However, there are not many good English programs. I suggest my students to watch soundtrack movies with Thai sub-title. I think this way can help the students get familiar with the use of English in a certain situation.

Participant Three (Interview), September 4, 2000

And finally the participant felt that the evaluation does not seem to be congruent with communicative teaching, for example, examinations often focus on form and accuracy. In order to prepare the students for the university entrance examination, grammatical knowledge and vocabulary are emphasized in both teaching and evaluation.

8. Discussion (Case 3)

8.1 The participant's views on communication as an oral skill have an effect on her concept of communicative teaching. She believed that the students would be able to communicate by using vocabulary with correct pronunciation (**Table 5.12**). This agrees with the study of Li (1998 : 677-703) that some English language teachers in South Korea perceived the communicative language teaching as an approach that emphasized speaking. This perception appears to obstruct them from teaching English communicatively. As reported by the Korean teachers, they do not have confidence in their own oral proficiency, which prevented some teachers from applying the communicative teaching.

The narrow view of communication, focusing on only speaking, may lead to an ineffective teaching, as mentioned earlier. Thompson (1996 : 9-15) pointed out that it is important to recognize that communication does not only take place through speech, and that it is not only the speaker (or writer) who is communicating. Communication involves both written and spoken media.

In addition, the participant thought that the communicative goal was hardly attained even though there was an attempt to teach grammar communicatively as she pointed out, one of the problem in teaching grammar was that the students see no need to speak English in their community (**Table 5.15**). She doubted whether the communicative teaching would be successful since there is no need for communication. When the participant taught the students communicatively, the students would come up with questions like “Where would I use it?”.

8.2 The participant viewed grammar as one of the components in using language for communication. However, in terms of teaching, she seemed to view it as separate from teaching language for communication. There appeared to be some confusion in the participant’s views on the role of grammar in the communicative teaching. While she believed that the communicative teaching focused on the use of language for communication, grammar was taught separately as another subject matter.

According to the observation, grammar was mainly presented through a variety of activities; following the instructions, asking and answering questions and reading. However, those contexts did not seem to provide a situation for the students to use language to communicate meaningfully.

The participant tended to separate the form and the use of grammar in her teaching. Most activities were done at the recognition stage. The students practiced a variety of activities which did not lead to the communicative use of language. For example, the asking-answering question activity was conducted as a substitutional drill. The students formed questions by substituting a verb from the model sentences

with the verb provided. The activity did not provide the communicative conditions that the activity must meet: a real situation, the need to communicate and unpredictability in interaction (Xiaoju, 1984 : 2-13).

Even though the participant perceived that the use of language for communication was more important than learning grammatical rules, she still felt that it was necessary for the students to be able to memorize and explain the grammatical structure that they had learned. According to the interview, the participant believed that the students should have mastered grammatical knowledge before using it for communication. In the classroom, she provided an opportunity for the students to study the grammatical structure in detail and did exercises focusing on writing using the structures that they had learned.

8.3 The participant stated in the interview that the students' most important aim of learning English was to attend higher education. In order to achieve the aim, she believed that the students should have good grammatical knowledge, which the students can gain from memorization of the grammatical rules.

However, the participant realized that many students were not interested in memorizing the grammatical rules. To her understanding, many students did not see the necessity of learning English for academic purposes since they did not aim at attending higher education. The inconsistency between the participant's views on the students' aim of learning English and those of the students' may lead to ineffective teaching, or it can cause problems in achieving the objectives of the lesson.

Case Four

1. General Information

The participant was a female teacher from Satunwittaya school in Satun province, about 40 years old. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1974 majoring in French. She has been teaching for more than ten years. During her teaching, she has rarely had a chance to attend a seminar in Thailand and she has never had an opportunity to attend a seminar overseas.

English is not the only subject that the participant has been teaching. She has also taught French.

2. Participant's Learning Experience

The data from the questionnaire show that the participant's learning experience was mainly based on the traditional approach in which the study of grammar was emphasized. Generally, her teacher explained grammatical rules and exceptions in details sometimes using grammatical terms. Grammar was often taught through pattern presentation followed by sample sentences that presented target grammar. During her study, the classroom's attention was often on memorization of grammatical rules. She had to memorize the grammatical structures. According to her response to the questionnaire, she rarely practiced translating and learned grammar by comparing Thai with English grammar. English was sometimes used as a medium of classroom instruction. On the other hand, she sometimes did communicative activities, for example, transferring information, asking-answering questions and learning grammar through context of reading or listening.

3. Participant's Views on English Teaching and Learning Using the Communicative Approach

The participant selected the statements that represented her understanding about communicative teaching from the questionnaire. To her understanding, communicative teaching focuses on learning a variety of language forms in different situations. And she thought that memorization of grammatical rules was important in learning English. As can be seen in **Table 5.16**, the participant believed that attending higher education is the students' most important goal in learning English. As she said.:

Most secondary students aim their study towards the university level where good background knowledge is required. In studying English, the students should master grammatical knowledge to attend higher education.

Participant Four (Interview), September 5, 2000

Table 5.16 Participants' Views on the Students' Aims of Learning English
(Case 4)

Order of Importance*	Aims of Learning English
1	For higher education
2	To be able to use grammatically correct English
3	To be able to communicate appropriately and effectively in a certain situation
4	To understand and gain cultural knowledge of native speakers

*1 = the most important

The participant did not view the importance of grammar only as an academic field but she also felt that grammar has a role in communication. According to the ranking on the importance of the components helping in using language for communication (**Table 5.17**), grammar is ranked the second important. What is more

important than grammar is vocabulary. In the participant's opinion, vocabulary can represent intended meaning of the message and grammar helps in forming meaningful sentences.

In communication, vocabulary is the most important component in communication. Vocabulary expresses meaning of the message. At the same time, grammar is taking part in forming intended sentences meaningfully.

Participant Four (Interview), September 5, 2000

Table 5.17 Importance of the Language Components in Communication (Case 4)

Order of Importance*	Components
1	Vocabulary
2	Grammar
3	Pronunciation
4	Cultural knowledge

*1 = the most important

4. Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar

The participant was asked to answer the questionnaire about her views on the role of grammar. The participant's responses are presented in **Table 5.18**.

Table 5.18 Participant's Views on the Role of Grammar (Case 4)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The students should be able to appropriately use grammar that they have learned in order to do the exercises.		/			

Table 5.18 (cont.)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.	The students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences.		/			
3.	The students should be able to memorize and explain the grammatical rules that they have learned correctly.			/		
4.	The students should be able to use grammatical knowledge to communicate correctly and appropriately.			/		
5.	The students should be able to appropriately use English for communication in a certain situation without focusing on the grammatical correctness.			/		
6.	Grammatical knowledge is one important component of language proficiency.		/			
7.	The students should learn grammar in order to use it as a tool for effective communication.			/		

Table 5.18 (cont.)

No.	Statements	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	The importance of grammar depends on the situation, for example. correct grammatical sentences are required more in a formal meeting than in talking to friends.			/		

According to **Table 5.18** the participant tended to view grammar according to the traditional approach. From her point of view, grammar plays an important role in the academic aim. She agreed that grammatical knowledge is one important part of language proficiency. She also agreed that in learning English, the students should be able to appropriately use the grammar that they have learned to do exercises and write grammatically correct sentences.

The participant moderately agreed with the view that the importance of grammar depends on the situation. It can also be noticed that the participant moderately agreed on the appropriate use of English for communication without focusing on the grammatical correctness. She explained during the interview that grammar played a role in every situation, not only in an academic context.

5. Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom

She was asked to answer the questionnaire about her teaching and activities used in the classroom. The data are presented in **Table 5.19**.

Table 5.19 Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom (Case 4)

No.	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
1	Grammar is taught through pattern presentation, for example, Subject + Verb + Object.		/			
2	Grammatical rules are presented with detailed explanation.		/			
3	Sample sentences which present the target grammar are provided after the grammar teaching.		/			
4	Grammar is presented in context through different types of material, for example, reading texts or listening materials. Students learn and deduce grammatical rules from those contexts. This may be guided by the teacher or the teacher may summarize at the end of the lesson.		/			
5	Grammatical terms such as gerund and <i>participle</i> are used to explain grammar.			/		
6	English grammar is taught by comparing with Thai grammar.				/	
7	The students translate words or sentences from Thai into English and/or English into Thai.			/		

Table 5.19 (cont.)

No	Grammar Teaching and Activities Used in the Classroom	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
		very often	often	some times	not often	rarely
8	The students practice writing sentences using the grammatical items that they have just learned. For example, <u>Transformational drills</u> They walk to school. They don't walk to school. Do they walk to school? <u>substitutional drills</u> I / We / She went home			/		
9	The students practice using appropriate language in a certain situation, for example, the students select the right tense to describe everyday activities such as greetings and telephone conversations.		/			
10	The students memorize grammatical structure.			/		
11	The students practice transferring information for example, transferring texts to diagrams or tables.			/		
12	The students do activities using English in exchanging information for communication such as group discussion and role play.				/	
13	The students practice asking - answering questions and solving problems.			/		
14	The teacher speaks English in the classroom				/	

Table 5.19 shows that the participant tended to base her teaching mainly on the traditional approach with some communicative activities. The participant often taught grammar through pattern presentation, for example, Subject + Verb + Object together with detailed explanations of grammatical rules and their exceptions by using grammatical terms. She usually provided sample sentences that represented the grammatical structure that were taught. However, grammar was also often taught in context through different skills.

In practicing, the participant sometimes let the students do transformational drills and substitutional drills to practice writing grammatical structures.

The participant did not give much chance to her students to be exposed to the use of English for communication through communicative activities or her use of English in conducting her lessons. However, the participant emphasized the appropriate use of language in certain situations. For example, the students would select the right tense to describe everyday activities.

6. Classroom Observation

A two - period observation was conducted in order to see how the participant actually taught grammar in the classroom and how the influence of her learning experience and her view on the role of grammar were reflected in her teaching.

One class period observation lasted for 50 minutes. The lesson was on the topic of “ Active and Passive Voices”. There were 45 students in the classroom. They were quiet but well cooperative. The participant mainly spoke Thai in conducting the lesson. The objective of the lesson was that the students should be able to form active and passive sentences correctly.

In general, any teaching act in the classroom is directed to the objective of the lesson. Her teaching then was conducted towards the study of form. According to the observation, the participant focused her grammar teaching on pattern presentation, detailed explanation and sample sentences.

In the first activity, the students were asked to identify tenses of each model sentence. The model sentences were :

1. A maid will clean our hotel room.
2. James was arrested by the police.
3. Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.
4. A doctor has examined the sick child.
5. A thief stole Ann's purse.
6. The jogger was bitten by a dog.

It was observed that the participant emphasized the specific points of the grammatical structure. During the activity, she had given some clues since most of the students had some difficulties in identifying tenses. For example, she asked her students to pay attention to the verb or auxiliary verb of each sentence. She explained, "Most of the students have studied the irregular forms of verb. It would be easier for them to identify which tenses in these sentences are by using the verb as a clue."

In addition, she focused her teaching on form. After the students identified tenses and located the verb or auxiliary verb, she reviewed the structures of such tenses. For example, the participant asked the students to tell the structure of present perfect tense. Then, she summed up the pattern.

For example,

The students' answer

4. A doctor has examined the sick child.

Present Perfect Tense

The participant's summary

Present Perfect Tense

Subject + has/have + Past Participle

The data from the second activity confirmed the participant's style of teaching. Grammar teaching was focused on discrete points. In the second activity, the participant asked the students to group the sentences in the first activity into active and passive groups. Moreover, they had to give reasons for grouping the sentences. There were a variety of answers.

For example,

Group 1

Active

1. A maid will clean our hotel room.
4. A doctor has examined the sick child.
5. A thief stole Ann's purse.

Passive

2. James was arrested by the police.
3. Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.
6. The jogger was bitten by a dog.

The students in group one, considered "verb to be" as a criteria in grouping the active and passive. They said, "The three sentences, 2, 3, and 6 are grouped together because they contain "was". So it is possible that other sentences without "was" are in the same group."

Most students did not have a particular reasons why they put certain sentences in active form and others in passive form. It can be noticed that some of the students gave reasons which were not related to the study of active and passive voices, even though some of them had grouped the sentences correctly. After that, the participant wrote the correct answer on the blackboard by asking the students to locate the sentence structure, subject, verb and object.

For example,

1. A maid will clean our hotel room.
2. James was arrested by the police.

Then, the students had to translate the sentences into Thai. Thai was also used to define active and passive voices. And the students had to find out the particular features of the passive voice. The word “by” was pointed out as a clue of passive sentences by the participant. Finally, the students determined the passive form from the model sentences. The students gave the answer orally. The participant summed up on the blackboard

For example,

2. James was arrested by the police.
3. The jogger was bitten by a dog.
6. Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

Passive Voice = Subject + Verb to be+ Past Participle

In the second period, each student was given a supplementary sheet (See **Appendix E**). The class was divided into groups. The supplementary sheet presents grammar points through patterns together with the explanation of rules and the exceptions which was mainly written in Thai. It provided exercises focusing on form, for example, substitutional and transformational drills.

Based on the observation, the participant’s teaching emphasized form, focusing on pattern, and the presentation of sample sentences. Grammar was taught without the context of using it to communicate. Obviously, her teaching reflected her views on the role of grammar. She said that grammar plays a role in studying English for higher education for which grammatical knowledge is required. Grammar is viewed as important in writing grammatically correct sentences and doing the exercises. In her teaching, she emphasized form and meaning at the sentence level.

In sum, grammar had not been taught in context that led to the use of English in communication.

7. Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach

The participant was asked to rank the importance of problems and limitations in teaching grammar using the communicative approach. The data are presented in **Table 5.20**.

Table 5.20 Problems and Limitations in Teaching Grammar Using the Communicative Approach (Case 4)

Problems and Limitations	Rank*
1. Students	1
2. School Policy	5
3. Curriculum	2
4. Teaching Techniques	3
5. Teaching Aids	4
6. Evaluation	6

*1= the most important

In the participant's opinion, the most important problem was the students. According to the interview, the students seemed not to see the importance of studying English. Some students did not participate in any communicative activities in the classroom. In order to solve this problem, the participant had to force them to do some activities and hand in the assignments.

I give my students some exercises that they have to write and hand them in to me, so I can check their understanding. And these exercises will be evidence that they have learned something...

Participant Four (Interview), September 5, 2000

In addition, a big class usually makes it difficult to conduct some communicative activities. As she explained in the interview, "... some communicative activities require too much time to supervise around the class. This seems to be impossible for a class of 45 students."

Moreover, other important problems were school policy and the inappropriate curriculum. The participant felt that the school policy complied with the curriculum which was set by the Ministry of Education. This did not seem appropriate to the local teaching situation. The participant also stated that the objective of the curriculum, focusing on the communicative ability, did not match the students' aim in attending higher education. She stated :

The curriculum does not seem to place an importance on the study of grammar. It is essential for the students to have good knowledge of grammar since they need it for higher education.

Participant Four (Interview), September 5, 2000

8. Discussion (Case 4)

8.1 In spite of the fact that the curriculum focused on the ability to communicate, the participant tended to teach grammar using a traditional approach in which form is the center of the teaching. She taught grammar explicitly focusing mainly on form with no context of communication. This reflected her views on the role of grammar. She felt that grammar played an important role in learning English for higher education. Thus, her teaching emphasized form and the practice of using grammar in doing the exercises and writing grammatically correct sentences. To her understanding, grammar was obviously separated from communication, and it was observed that she did not provide any classroom activity that led to the meaningful use of grammar in communication.

8.2 In the Thai teaching situation, communicative ability was taken into consideration as the curriculum focused on learning English for communication. However, the participant did not seem to agree with the curriculum. She pointed out that the curriculum that focused on communicative ability rather than grammatical knowledge did not help the students achieve their aim in learning English, attending higher education. This agreed with the study of Pimpa Naksuk (1984 : 96-97; cited in Amporn Sribunruang, 1991: 85). The study shows that there is little agreement on the curriculum and the students' needs in learning English. This means that the students' do not realize the need to learn English to communicate outside the classroom.

8.3 In addition, the participant experienced intensive traditional teaching in her learning. It can be noticed that her learning experience had an influence on her teaching since the grammar lesson was strongly traditional, explicitly teaching grammatical pattern presentation without any communicative activities. Kunlaya Saetan (1991:3) pointed out that many language teachers experienced the traditional style of language teaching when they were students. They found it too difficult to change from the way they were familiar with to something new. Therefore, they often teach in the same way as they were taught. However, it is interesting to see that there was an attempt to encourage the students to study communicatively, and the students did have a chance to practice a problem solving activity.