A Study of Thai Postgraduate Students' Authorial Voices in Writing Research Proposals: Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

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Abstract

This paper presents the analysis of the written texts produced by two Thai postgraduate students whose authorial voices are projected in their research proposals. It highlights how the students project themselves in the introductions and final parts of their proposals at the beginning of their candidature in an EIL PhD program. The study uses the SFL Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005) as a tool to analyse the students' writing. Two students' texts are analysed within the particular "Engagement" system; heterogloss, which is of the larger appraisal framework. The preliminary results of the analysis indicate the students use more dialogic expansion (entertaining and attributing resources) to project their voices and positions at the beginning and ending of their writing than the contracting resources. This trend could be a result of receiving some instructions from their other previous courses or their writing background. It is argued that further development of the students' writing is needed for when they are required to counter other people's opinions in their fields logically and effectively. However, it is suggested that if students are supervised systemically and frequently, they could develop their own ways of writing clearly when making a position or an argumentation more effectively by being concerned with the audience and the ways that they are engaged in the community discourse. The paper also suggests some pedagogical applications for the further development of effective and explicit authorial stance in academic writing.

Keywords: authorial voice, postgraduate student, academic writing, appraisal framework, engagement system, research proposal

Introduction

Writing a research proposal is an essential and difficult task for L2 novice postgraduate students to develop their research projects during their candidature. This task challenges them in terms of engaging themselves in an academic discourse community as they indicate their voice to experts or other in their field of study. TESOL or ESOL pedagogy often suggests some guidelines for those novice researchers to improve their performance. However, those approaches are not adequate to help them achieve their goals to clearly indicate their authoritative stance while they don't clearly perceive how to relate their ideas suitably in the research forum of their field.

This study presents the analysis of two research proposal texts that can be linked to the engagement framework of systemic functional linguistics (Martin & White, 2005) and other research works (Hood 2004,2006; Pho 2008; Chang 2010; Chang and Schleppegrell, 2011; Srinon, U. and White, P. 2011). The analysis draws on the linguistic resources identified through the framework which provides more pieces of evidence about how the students project and indicate their authorial voices in their research proposals. The focus of this study has been incorporated into a pedagogy tool that offers new writers explicit scaffolding based on the engagement system concerned. This may help L2 new research writers to be aware of their potential linguistic and discursive writing capabilities so as to be able to project an argument as they are developing their research.

The framework of the analysis

Based on the framework of "engagement system" (Martin & White, 2005) and the work of Chang and Schleppegrell (2011).

The analysis looks closely at the texts of two research proposals written by two postgraduate students in the Ph.D. English Program of the International Language at Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus during 2013-2014. The analysis mainly focuses on the construal of heterogloss under the "Engagement" framework which suggests that heterogloss statements can be categorized as either "Expanding" or "Contracting". In this regard, Martin and White (2005,p.102) state that these two differences may be understood as: " the degree to which an utterance….actively makes allowances for dialogically alternative positions and voices (dialogic expansion), or alternatively, acts to challenge, fend off or restrict the scope of such (dialogic contraction). To further understand these ideas, Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) elaborate that the two options " Expanding" options include 'attribute' (with sub-categories 'acknowledgement' and 'distance') and 'entertain' while "Contracting" options include 'disclaim' (with sub-categories 'deny' and 'counter') and 'proclaim' (with sub-categories 'concur', 'pronounce', and 'endorse').

Therefore, these two main options are employed to analyse the student's texts. That is, the analysis shows how the framework can be used to indicate the linguistic resources that the students use to present their stance and voice toward the research they are reviewing when making their arguments.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this paper was from a small sample of texts which were derived from two postgraduate students' preliminary research proposals in the International English Program as presented in the previous section. The study looked closely at each clause in the texts (the parts of introduction and final sessions of the research proposals) and determined how the students position themselves under the Engagement system framework developed by Martin and White (2005) and based on the analysis of Chang and Schleppegrell (2011). The results of the study showed some of the steps in which the students presented their authorial voices and writing performance. Below is the framework of the analysis which is applied in this current study.

Figure1. Engagement system: heterogloss: Adapted from Martin & White,2005 by Chang and Schleppegrell (2011)
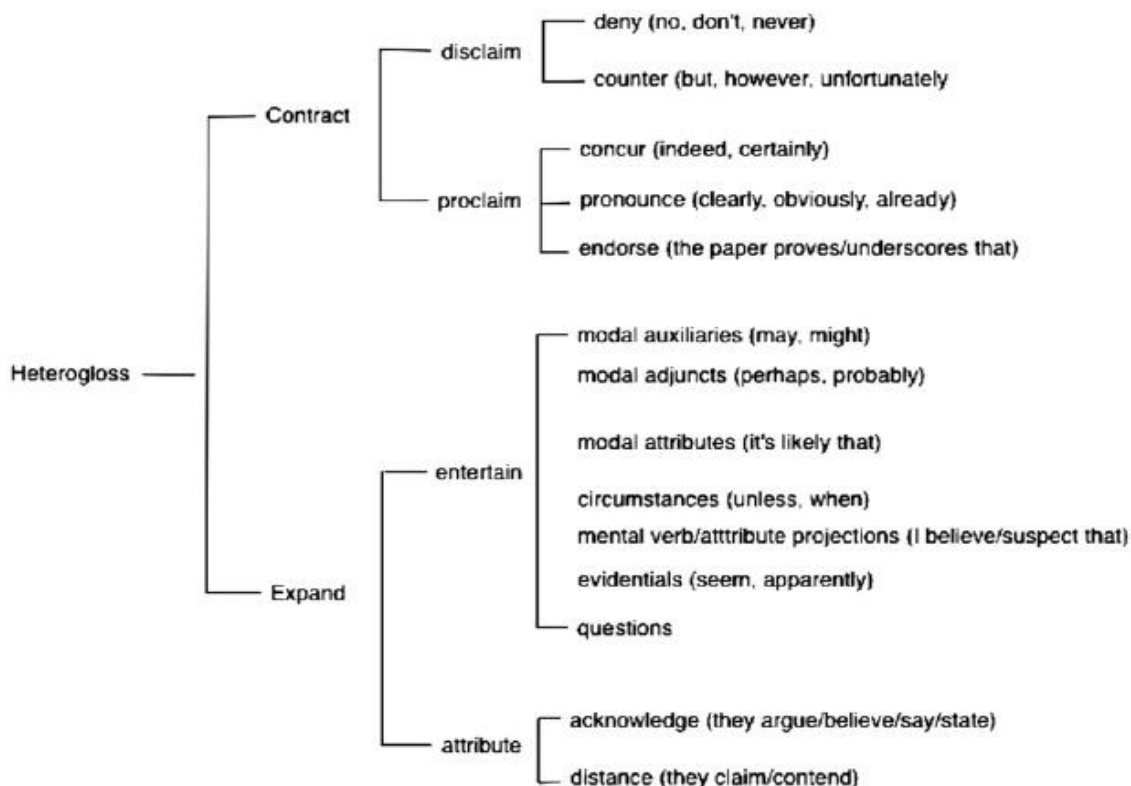
Findings: Patterns in the prosodies of expanding and contracting

a. Resources for Expanding: entertaining other views

In this section the analysis looks at parts of the texts which are involved with entertaining resources. As discussed by Chang and Schleppegrell (2011), "Entertain" options are used to bring alternative perspective into a text, and to draw on a variety of linguistics means, including modality of probability and usuality, evidential, conditionals, and rhetorical questions, among others, that enable a writer to hypothesize, explore assumptions, and speculate, as well as to compare and generalize. In Text A below, the student introduces the issue of globalization and communication. The linguistic resources that the writer uses to expand his dialogic expansion are bold and italicized.

Text A Entertaining resources

[Paragraph 1] *Because of* the revolutionary changes of the world since the 18ᵗʰ century, the trends of people's life have gone through the era of '-izations,' e.g. colonization, urbanization, industrialization, liberalization, computerization, and the most familiar and popular about 'globalization **(expand: entertain+attribute)**.' *Globalization is an important phenomenon* for defining the 'social community' as a unified form of communication or a common linguistic communication code **(expand: entertain+attribute)**. *As a result,* the phenomenon of globalization has actually activated a questionable idea in terms of what the global language of the global communication in the global community is *(expand: entertain+attribute)*. *Outstandingly, English should occupy* as the most popular-globalized position because of it is almost used widespread, e.g. in education, science, technology, or even mass media expression, in order to enhance people's understanding all around the world *(expand: entertain+attribute)*. *Banda (2003) and Fairclough (1995, 2001) argue that* the language of the market and globalization as well as the language of the new world order increasingly becomes English, as a code for communication *(expand: entertain+attribute)*.

The paragraph begins with a monoglossic statement that presents the introduction of the '-izations' idea. Then the idea of 'social community' which is a unified form of communication or a common linguistic communication code is presented. After that the writer presents various clauses to entertain the audience about why the term 'globalization' is important and is related to the language of communication. The writer presents these elaborations which pave the way for the key augments to be developed and constructed later.

Following this, the writer presents steps taken in asserting evidence and research on the issue of globalization. He presents some options to entertain the audience and to present arguments about why English should be used as a global language. In so doing, he presents the clauses and sentences significantly with the two systems of contract and expansion as indicated in the framework.

Text A Entertaining resources

[Paragraph 2] *In addition*, *Graddal (1997) has also manifested* that political dominance of British and American colonialists attributed English as the most widely spoken language in the world and English is seen as the result of colonization occupied by Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and led by the economic and military power in the twentieth century of the United States *(contract: proclaim)*. Even though this historical statistic data mentions how English is spread all over the world, *it does not indicate* about how competently its users employ the language *(contract: disclaim)*. Except the political and military dominance, *English is also manipulated and engaged* for the benefits in the development of 'Science and Technology,' for instance Software and Information Technology *(contract: proclaim)*. *This was incorporated by Crystal (1997)* in the ad hoc data about 85 per cent of international organizations in the world use English as an official language, at least 85 per cent of the world film market is organized in English, and in certain 90 per cent of published academic articles in certain academic fields are written in English *(expand:entertain+attribute)*. *At this point, it may be regarded* that English is the most current widespread language used when comparing with other widely spoken language such as Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese *(expand:entrain+attribute)*. *English is used* in the contexts as an official language or as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) or as a language of the world's written information or as a language of communication *(expand:entertain+attribute)*.

As can be seen, because the globalization mainly trends to political and economical needs, good command of English, also as a second language or as a foreign language so far and so forth, is the most essential qualification for selecting people to work in today's global context, involved with all trades and professions around the world *(expand: entertain+attribute)*.

In the second paragraph of Text A, the writer tries to elaborate the thesis statement by giving more evidences about how colonization is involved with language use. In so doing, the writer employs the texts that proclaim and disclaim the issue. Then he entertains the audience by giving various expansions to make the text more explicit.

Text B Entertaining resources

(Paragraph 1) *An analysis of classroom discourse is a greatly significant form* which classroom process research has taken **(contract: proclaim)**. Classroom discourse*, it is* the distinctive type of discourse that occurs in classrooms 3 **(contract:proclaim)**. *It involves* the relationship between a teacher and learners, or among learners, including the interactive features of classroom behaviours, such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning, and feedback **(expand:entain+contribute)**. *According to Nunan (1993)*, special features of classroom discourse include unequal power relationships which are marked by unequal power opportunities for teachers and students to nominate topics, take turns at speaking etc **(contract:proclaim)**. *In classroom learning and teaching,* talking should be a crucial part in the process of learner development because of one basic medium of classroom interaction **(expand:entertain+attribute).** *As Barnes (1992: 124) states* that most important learning is a matter of work on understanding, which can be achieved through talk **(expand:entertain+attribute)**.

From Text B, the writer begins the text with the contract in which she proclaims the significance of the analysis of classroom discourse. Then she makes a further contract and an expansion of the text. In the last three sentences, she makes a contract by referring to a researcher's quote. Then she entertains the audience by giving some reasons for talking by students and understanding through talk. These ideas indicate that the writer makes further use of the two systems of contract and expansion in the framework to further establish her position.

b. Resources for expanding: entertaining and distancing oneself from other views

From the analysis of the texts, it is indicated that the writer of Text B uses entertaining resources in the text to a greater degree than the writer of Text A. That is, she refers to more researchers and experts to support her argument and position as can be observed in the following text.

Text B Attributing resources

(Paragraph 3) *According to a review of the literature*, *there are many theories in order to analyze classroom discourse;* for example, Birmingham School (as well-known the IRF/E exchange structures), critical discourse analysis, and conversational analysis **(expand: attribute)**. *Another perspective is* a systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory which has been developed in the Australian educational context as well as in other contexts around the world **(expand:attribute)**. In recent years, *a number of* researchers *(Christie, 2000; Young and Harrison, 2004; Christie and Derewianka, 2008; Unsworth, 2000; Christie and Martin, 1997) have claimed* substantial advantages of the use of systemic functional theory for analyzing classroom discourse **(expand:attribute)** ; the SFL is concerned by modeling both language and social context as 'semiotic systems' in a relationship of realization with one another *(Martin, 1997: 4)* and *it explains* language in terms of what people do with the language and how people use language in their lives **(expand:attribute)**. *Christie (2000)* who is one of systemic linguists *proposes* a model of classroom discourse analysis which draws on the SFL and Bernstein's (1990) theory 'pedagogic discourse'*(expand:attribute).* *She did* a numbers of researches in relation to classroom discourse analysis at the level of early childhood, upper primary school, and junior secondary school **(expand:attribute)**. *She reports* that different level of learner shows different model of curriculum genres/ macrogenres due to the various variations; such as age of students, teaching styles, subjects, and so on, although she did not mention much regarding tertiary level or higher education as a university level **(expand:attribute)**.

From Text B, it is clear that the writer uses more attributing resources to present her ideas in writing. In so doing, she refers to various references that advocate the studies of classroom discourse with more dialogic expansions. This indicates the writer entertains the audience by ways of providing more attributing resources.

b. Resources for contracting: closing down dialogic possibilities

It is a fact that contracting options are also dialogistic, but they are used to close down rather than open up the dialog. In this perspective, Martin and White (2005, p.117) state that they are directed toward excluding certain dialogic alternatives from any subsequent communicative interaction or at least toward constraining the scope of these alternatives. As it is shown in Figure.1, they include both 'disclaim' and 'proclaim' options.

That is, the 'disclaim' options are related to the linguistic resources that deny negative polarity or counter through conjunctions and adverbials of concession and counter-expectation (Chang and Schleppegrell ,2011 p.146). Text A below indicates one example of the proclaiming option.

Text A Proclaiming

(Paragraph 12) *Even though* Thailand is going to confront with intercultural and multi-language environment with ASEAN community in the next few years, *the teaching of EFL in almost educational secondary schools is still unable to meet the requirement of the new currency of the political and economic growth of the country* **(contract:proclaim)**. *It was found* that students still get trouble with effective communication in English although they have learned for a long time. *Therefore, this study may premise* on the assumption that the failure of education rely on the independence of L1 power in the Thai social context, conventional teaching approaches, the use of mnemonic strategies, memorization and rote learning as basic learning techniques, outdated material, or even passive learners vs. active teachers **(expand:entertain)**. *These were also assumed* as the obstruction of the effectiveness of both teaching and learning of EFL in Thai social context **(expand:attribute)**. *Exactly,* most Thai students always have sought the knowledge as the teachers assign them to do rather than they investigate or discover by themselves **(expand:attribute)**. *It may be argued* that this is scaffolding of teacher-centered approach in which the learners gain knowledge rather than criticize it **(expand:attertain)**.

From Text A, it is clear that the writer makes a contract by proclaiming the value of EFL teaching in an intercultural and multi-language environment within the ASEAN community. This indicates that apart from making dialogic expansion in other clauses and sentences, the writer uses the sub-system of proclaiming ideas in the text which confirms the framework in some degree.

Text B Proclaiming

(Paragraph 3) *In the context of this dissertation, it will be concerned specifically* with the role of spoken discourse in a Thai university EFL classroom which taken a longitudinal study (one semester) **(expand:entertain)**. *It is focused on* the role of teacher authority, classroom interaction, and learning **(expand:entertain)**. *To be noted that there have been a few studies (Woodward-Kron and Remeios, 2007; Raimaturapong, 2006)* regarding the application of SFL perspective for analyzing classroom discourse in Thai educational context **(expand:proclaim).** *The research project here provides* some distinction of these general trends in that it will look for an authority of the teacher in order to support and guide students in relation to contribute them regarding the knowledge construction **(contract:proclaim).** *In addition, it provides* a principle basis upon which to collect very long sequences of classroom text and applies the notion of a curriculum macrogenre to provide a means to trace the developments and changes within large tracts of classroom talk and activity over very long periods of time **(expand:entertain)**. *The study is directed to explore* the nature of a Thai university EFL classroom discourse **(expand:entertain)**. *It will be substantial benefits* towards teachers, students, and also schooling in order to contribute to understand of the nature of student-teacher interactions, and how learning takes place in the classroom **(expand:entertain)**.

From Text B, it is clear that the writer uses the sub-system of proclaiming in two sentences where she refers to the application of SFL perspective in the course of classroom discourse in Thai context and the importance of the research project and its distinction from other research works. This example illustrates how the writer uses more proclaiming resources to establish the significance and application of SFL perspective to her research project. This clearly indicates that the writer can control the argument concerned with the explicit authoritative voice by using a consistent prosody of contractive resources. This also indicates some development of the author in writing her research proposal although there are still more skills to be developed.

Conclusion and pedagogical applications

From the analysis, the examples of the texts show that the writers can use linguistic resources to present their authoritative voices effectively in some degree. It is observed that they can develop a prosody of assertive claims through a range of linguistic resources that can proclaim a clear stance. However, it is obvious that the writers hardly use disclaiming resources to counter the arguments in their field. This might be due to their personal experiences which need further development. In Texts A and B, the writers use high proportions of "Attribute" and "Entertain" resources which are involved with an 'expansive' device to introduce their research proposals.

These results illustrate how proclaiming and disclaiming resources should be reinforced for the student writers. A deeper analysis at the micro level and the macro level of language structures and resources is needed in any future study. Therefore, this study suggests that more resources on proclaiming and disclaiming options should be made explicitly and systemically to postgraduate students in the early stage of their candidature. This might possibly help them become successful in producing their potential research proposals and theses at the end of their study. In addition, concerning the issue of validity, the study suggests that future study should look at a larger corpus of students' research proposals and compare their texts in terms of monogloss and heterogloss statements which might give a more complex perspective on the application of the Appraisal framework in the literature.

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Appendices: Students' texts

Text A

Because of the revolutionary changes of the world since the 18th century, the trends of people's life have gone through the era of *'-izations,'* e.g. colonization, urbanization, industrialization, liberalization, computerization, and the most familiar and popular about '*globalization.'* Globalization is an important phenomenon for defining the 'social community' as a unified form of communication or a common linguistic communication code. As a result, the phenomenon of globalization has actually activated a questionable idea in terms of what the global language of the global communication in the global community is. Outstandingly, English should occupy as the most popular-globalized position because of it is almost used widespread, e.g. in education, science, technology, or even mass media expression, in order to enhance people's understanding all around the world. Banda (2003) and Fairclough (1995, 2001) argue that the language of the market and globalization as well as the language of the new world order increasingly becomes English, as a code for communication.

In addition, Graddal (1997) has also manifested that political dominance of British and American colonialists attributed English as the most widely spoken language in the world and English is seen as the result of colonization occupied by Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and led by the economic and military power in the twentieth century of the United States. Even though this historical statistic data mentions how English is spread all over the world, it does not indicate about how competently its users employ the language. Except the political and military dominance, English is also manipulated and engaged for the benefits in the development of 'Science and Technology,' for instance Software and Information Technology. This was incorporated by Crystal (1997) in the ad hoc data about 85 per cent of international organizations in the world use English as an official language, at least 85 per cent of the world film market is organized in English, and in certain 90 per cent of published academic articles in certain academic fields are written in English.

At this point, it may be regarded that English is the most current widespread language used when comparing with other widely spoken language such as Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. English is used in the contexts as an official language or as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) or as a language of the world's written information or as a language of communication. As can be seen, because the globalization mainly trends to political and economical needs, good command of English, also as a second language or as a foreign language so far and so forth, is the most essential qualification for selecting people to work in today's global context, involved with all trades and professions around the world.

When considering to the Thai educational system, it was found that English is taught as a foreign language at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The English language is not used in a typical day, as it affects to people's communicative language use in some other countries. Nevertheless, English is contributed to use across the country owing to regarding as one of the most crucial languages for communication in the world communities, i.e. it is widely used as an international language of trade, diplomacy, science technologies, research and education (McKay, 2002). This significance has urged Thai government to contribute learning of English in order to concern with these developments. In this regard, Wongsothorn (2003) has argued that the majority of Thai learners have learned only low level of linguistic skills. It is required that Thai learners' competence in English should be improved in order that they can effectively communicate on industry and business communities. Based on the requirement of the English language significance, approximately in 2015, Thailand is going to concentrate and encounter with the ultimately changing economical policy around South East Asia countries. The country has to concur to the current of changing world situations, and there is the most crucial consideration on how to develop the country and people's competences, e.g. language use, educations, employments and business running, in order to compete with the people from neighboring countries in South East Asia. The most extremely important consideration of the country, thus, exactly persuades on how to prepare its qualitative educated and good command of English population, not only to participate but also to compete in ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) community in this decade.

Particularly, this obligation is specifically held by the government who has to accelerate every part involved in the country to harmoniously corroborate for country development. In this way, as the important unit, Ministry of Education has to provide effective education to the generation people in the country.

As the English teacher experienced in language teaching in the classroom in the context of high school situations, it is essential that Thai learners have more opportunity to develop their language learning, knowledge of language use and experiences on using language for communication. From this, it is expected that those learners may be familiar with how to use English as a second/foreign language and be able to use English to communicate when negotiating, interviewing for job employment and running business with people as internationally.

For above shadowed discussion, though the government of Thailand realizes on the crucial role of English language in an ASEAN context and mostly attempts to encourage its people's English competency as much as possible, it seems not easy for Thai students to communicate in English outside the classroom if teachers do not give them opportunities or circumstances similar to real life situations. Possibly, this study may make an assumption that EFL teachers in Thai social context have probably failed to concern with English language structure with the social meanings where English is used. Hopefully, this study has to put an emphasis on communicative language teaching (CLT) in which the role of the teacher specify to facilitate authentic communication amongst students in the target language and to be a participant in the act of communicating and negotiating meaning (Breen and Candlin, 1980). Also, it is realized that language is a resource or a tool implemented to provide functionally relevant meanings in social contexts (Halliday, 1978, 1985; Martin and Rose, 2004). Christie (2005) discussed that "it would be educationally insufficient and inadequate to become preoccupied either with structure or with meanings, for understanding of both is essential to effective learning."

According to the Thai government's investigations about language teaching and learning development, many textbooks of English for primary and secondary schools have been changed because they were more focused on grammatical forms, which were accepted as an obstruction of learners' communicative competence. A great number of educated native speakers are employed to design a great deal of materials, syllabuses and even curricula for Thai schools to learn English near native circumstance with insofar wishing that those learners could have better language use abilities.

Moreover, local Thai graduate students of English are also sent to oversea countries of English speaking cultures, e.g. England, Canada, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to obtain experience and degrees in English language teaching . In addition, the government even hires a lot of foreigners who always use English in typical days, such as Philippine, Indians and Africans, to take up jobs in language teaching professions. Besides, the language laboratories and audiovisual aids such as Internets, Magic Boards, CDs, videos, computers, English newspapers and magazines, for secondary school students are provided for the language classrooms development. Surprisingly, the teaching of English in Thailand still seems inadequate and lacks authentic communication between teachers and students although the curriculum emphasizes the importance of communication competence and intercultural understanding.

Thus, this study aims at investigating the rationales for the seemingly argumentative situation above mentioned and suggest feasible alternative strategies for teaching and learning EFL in Thailand secondary-school social context in order to preparing learners to expose with the new currency of globalization such a coming soon ASEAN community circumstance.

As the foreshadowed discussion, although the government puts an emphasis on much effort to improve and empower the teaching of English in Thailand, it has been just found that students' performance is still assessed only on structural and linguistic competence, or not seeming to go beyond the language form. According to the reference through structural and linguistic competence approach, that means almost Thai students have only both explicit knowledge about linguistic knowledge or the grammatical forms and the ways to combine those to form sentences. It may reflect that learning and teaching language in the EFL situation in Thailand nowadays is not achieved the goal of the target language if the social context merely pushes the insight through manipulating the correct language. Based on the early eighties discussion by Morrow (1981), this was argued that a simple communicative task would not seem to be performed if 'structurally competent' students were developed only the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. For the majority of students in the Thai context, English language is contained only in the curriculum of the schools and is exclusively required students to pass the national examinations, i.e. National Test (NT), O-NET (Ordinary National Educational Test), A-NET (Advanced National Educational Test) or even General Aptitude Test. Consequently, it seems that students' sociolinguistic and strategic competence with grammatical knowledge is still dominant in English language instruction. Linguists such as Widowson (1972, 1973, 1978), Hymes (1972, 1974), Brumfit and Johnson (1979) and Brumfit (1984, 1986) have proven that EFL students with communicative skills are not accomplished on the concentration of linguistic form when they have to use their foreign language in the context of outside classroom. It is recommended that learners should have the opportunities to induce the rules of grammar and must be directly encouraged to use the foreign language in the classroom spontaneously. Therefore, all EFL teachers should be realized that teaching method focused on forms of language may distaste by thousands of school learners compelled to remember only even the tedious experience of memorizing endless rules of grammar and vocabulary so as to attempt to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose (Richards and Rogers, 2001).

With regard to the literacy standard of Thai students, studies (Jogthong, 2001; Pongsiriwet, 2001; Wongsothorn, 2003; Apiwansanong, 2005) are particularly involved with investigation of students' language use abilities in writing skill. They indicated that those students have low levels of skills in writing, i.e. they always have an array of problems and errors associate with the use of tenses, verb forms, determiners, punctuation, lexical meaning and so far so forth. During the last decade, an educational paradigm shift was switched with more communicative approaches of foreign language teaching around the world. The instructional styles were allotted to more time for students to actively communicate with one another. The classroom activities were emphasized interest language in use, changing linguistics instead of grammar rules, as described in terms of 'sociolinguistic revolution' by Johnson, 2001). The scaffold of language teaching is applied the relationship between modern sociolinguistic theory and sociolinguistic competency with language and social environment. However, a great number of lecturer of English in Thai social context have so far ignored the currency of new language teaching paradigm shift; they cannot stand student's error on grammar, taking less looking at language as a meaning-making system in the social context of communication.

Even though Thailand is going to confront with intercultural and multi-language environment with ASEAN community in the next few years, the teaching of EFL in almost educational secondary schools is still unable to meet the requirement of the new currency of the political and economic growth of the country. It was found that students still get trouble with effective communication in English although they have learned for a long time.

Therefore, this study may premise on the assumption that the failure of education rely on the independence of L1 power in the Thai social context, conventional teaching approaches, the use of mnemonic strategies, memorization and rote learning as basic learning techniques, outdated material, or even passive learners vs. active teachers. These were also assumed as the obstruction of the effectiveness of both teaching and learning of EFL in Thai social context. Exactly, most Thai students always have sought the knowledge as the teachers assign them to do rather than they investigate or discover by themselves. It may be argued that this is scaffolding of teacher-centered approach in which the learners gain knowledge rather than criticize it.

Text B

An analysis of classroom discourse is a greatly significant form which classroom process research has taken. Classroom discourse, it is the distinctive type of discourse that occurs in classrooms. It involves the relationship between a teacher and learners, or among learners, including the interactive features of classroom behaviours, such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning, and feedback. According to Nunan (1993), special features of classroom discourse include unequal power relationships which are marked by unequal power opportunities for teachers and students to nominate topics, take turns at speaking etc. In classroom learning and teaching, talking should be a crucial part in the process of learner development because of one basic medium of classroom interaction. As Barnes (1992: 124) states that most important learning is a matter of work on understanding, which can be achieved through talk.

According to a review of the literature, there are many theories in order to analyze classroom discourse; for example, Birmingham School (as well-known the IRF/E exchange structures), critical discourse analysis, and conversational analysis. Another perspective is a systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory which has been developed in the Australian educational context as well as in other contexts around the world. In recent years, a number of researchers (Christie, 2000; Young and Harrison, 2004; Christie and Derewianka, 2008; Unsworth, 2000; Christie and Martin, 1997) have claimed substantial advantages of the use of systemic functional theory for analyzing classroom discourse; the SFL is concerned by modeling both language and social context as 'semiotic systems' in a relationship of realization with one another (Martin, 1997: 4) and it explains language in terms of what people do with the language and how people use language in their lives. Christie (2000) who is one of systemic linguists proposes a model of classroom discourse analysis which draws on the SFL and Bernstein's (1990) theory 'pedagogic discourse'. She did a numbers of researches in relation to classroom discourse analysis at the level of early childhood, upper primary school, and junior secondary school.

She reports that different level of learner shows different model of curriculum genres/ macrogenres due to the various variations; such as age of students, teaching styles, subjects, and so on, although she did not mention much regarding tertiary level or higher education as a university level.

In the context of this dissertation, it will be concerned specifically with the role of spoken discourse in a Thai university EFL classroom which taken a longitudinal study (one semester). It is focused on the role of teacher authority, classroom interaction, and learning. To be noted that there have been a few studies (Woodward-Kron and Remeios, 2007; Raimaturapong, 2006) regarding the application of SFL perspective for analyzing classroom discourse in Thai educational context. The research project here provides some distinction of these general trends in that it will look for an authority of the teacher in order to support and guide students in relation to contribute them regarding the knowledge construction. In addition, it provides a principle basis upon which to collect very long sequences of classroom text and applies the notion of a curriculum macrogenre to provide a means to trace the developments and changes within large tracts of classroom talk and activity over very long periods of time. The study is directed to explore the nature of a Thai university EFL classroom discourse. It will be substantial benefits towards teachers, students, and also schooling in order to contribute to understand of the nature of student-teacher interactions, and how learning takes place in the classroom.