

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary of the results, discussion and suggestions for further study.

Summary of the Results

The research questions listed below can serve as guidance in order to summarize the results gained from this study.

- 1.) What sections in the coursebook do the teacher use and which parts do they reject?

The sections in the coursebook that all teachers always used were conversation, grammar, listening and word power (vocabulary). Some sub-sections of conversation and word power (vocabulary) were partially omitted but the gap fill activities in the grammar sections were often used. Listening was used by three teachers and reading was used by only two teachers.

The sections the teachers did not use were snapshot (only one teacher partially used this section), speaking/role play and writing. Pronunciation and Interchange activity were used by only one teacher.

- 2.) Do the teachers use the coursebook in the ways that correspond to the writers instructions (found in the student's book and teacher's book)? If not, in what ways do they modify the coursebook?

The teachers did not use the coursebook in the ways that corresponded to the writer instructions but they modified some of the tasks (21/113) in the coursebook to meet learners' interests, motivation and the syllabus of the language center. This can be seen in the way that one teacher modified the task features of participation (who with?) from individual work to group/pair work (2/21). Another task feature modified was source which was modified from material to teacher (10/21).

- 3.) Do the teachers supplement the coursebook tasks? If so, what are the characteristics of the supplementary tasks?

All teachers supplemented the coursebook because they see that what is in the coursebook may not be sufficient for learners. It is interesting to see that the supplementary tasks gave the learners practice in grammar; thus the characteristic of supplementary tasks in the feature of focus was often meaning and meaning-system relationship. From this it could be seen that form and meaning are essential for the teachers in the current study. Next, the supplementary tasks required oral words, phrases, sentences for the output. However, there were few tasks requiring production of oral extended discourse (texts of more than 50 spoken words which cohere, containing supra sentential features), perhaps because the learners using this coursebook are only beginners, lacking in ability to generate extended discourse. In addition the source of content was usually the teachers and learners rather than

material. In this case, it is notable that it is not only teacher who plays the key role for sources of content but learners are also play a vital role in providing the source of the content.

4.) What factors contribute to the ways the coursebook is used?

The data from the interview about the metaphors revealed that all the teachers had a rather positive view towards the coursebook and were satisfied with the coursebook as resource or support in language teaching. So it can be said that the role of the coursebook is also driven by the perception of the teachers towards the coursebook. The metaphors of the coursebook elicited from them were “a liver”, “a facilitator”, “a guideline”, “a ship of sail”, “a guide”, and “a tool box”. The coursebook to them was regarded as support, resource and guidance rather than constraint when expressed through metaphor use. Every teacher saw that the coursebook is important in language teaching. Although their views towards the coursebook seemed rather positive, they did not heavily rely on the instruction in the coursebook but used the contents in each unit as support and guidance. This can be seen through the way they adapted and supplemented the coursebook freely by using the target language and topic included as a base or an idea to generate supplementary and modified tasks.

When the teachers decided to modify and supplement the coursebook, many factors come into play. For instance, the content needs to motivate learners' so they are entertained by the lessons. Next, the learners' unfamiliarity with some content made the teachers decide to reject some tasks or sometimes modify or supplement the tasks. This could be seen from the fact that snapshots were frequently rejected. In

addition, grammar was seen as important in language learning because it was believed to give learners the basis to generate unlimited sentences for appropriate situations by using the structures taught in class. There was evidence from the way grammar sections were used by all teachers and the supplementary tasks such as games and role play were designed to give learners more practice for grammar. Moreover, conversation and the output requiring learners to generate oral words/phrases/sentences instead of written words/ phrases/sentences were often emphasized whereas writing sections were largely rejected due to the institutional syllabus and classroom management issues. It is the educational policy to educate learners to become competent in speaking not writing. Writing was perceived as a demanding process. If it was not managed well, some learners may have been left out. With the class time of only 30 hours per course, it was impossible, to the teachers, to train the learners to write. Also some sections needed to be rejected because of time constraints, with some teachers regretting that they had no time to cover every section. Furthermore, pair work was used to give the learners rehearsal for the real life as communication usually involved at least two people. Finally, it was found that there was little attention given to pronunciation tasks as some teachers said that there were no correct ways to teach pronunciation.

Discussion

Some interesting and notable points from the findings of the current study are selected for further discussion to understand better the factors influencing the role of the coursebook.

Coursebook as Resource or Support, not Constraint

The coursebook, *Interchange Third Edition: Student book 1*, was used as a resource and support in language teaching. This is in line with Grant (1987), O'Neill (1982, 1993), Hutchinson and Torres (1994) and Ur (1996), citing McGrath (2002 p. 10), that coursebooks can benefit both teacher and learners in several ways. For learners and teachers, the coursebook serves as a map because it provides language samples and offers variety. For teachers, it provides a structure for teacher and saves times as well as offering linguistic, cultural and methodological support. Additionally, to Hutchinson and Torres (1994), coursebooks can act as agents of change, allowing innovative ideas to be introduced within their structured frameworks in a way that helps teachers and learners develop in harmony with these new ideas. In other words the coursebook is a means of re-skilling rather than de-skilling the teachers as it can be adapted and supplemented to fit unique classes.

From the investigation, it was found that the teachers in the current study, both experienced and inexperienced ones, did not use the coursebook in the ways that correspond to the writer's instruction found in the teacher's guide but used it as a resource or support in language teaching so they were not controlled by the coursebook. This corresponds to what Chathep (2006) found in her study in a university context. However, what was found from the current study is therefore in contrast with both Littlejohn and Swan (cited in Hutchinson and Torres 1994) who argue that there may be some drawbacks to using coursebooks. There is the danger, in their opinion, that ready made coursebooks may reduce teachers' roles and responsibility and deskill the teachers through allowing teachers to rely heavily on the coursebook when teaching as well as depriving creativity from the teachers. From the

current study, the coursebook did not deskill the teachers because they could use the coursebook creatively by supplementing and adapting the lessons to fit with their learners' background and learning context as well as the institutional syllabus. This is seen in that the source of content in modified tasks was frequently characterized by coming from teachers rather than the materials. This is in agreement with Maddalena (2003 p. 163, citing Block) and McGrath (2002) that published materials do not always provide the types of texts and tasks that a teacher is seeking for a given class. That is why many teachers usually produce their own materials, adapt existing texts or supplement a designated coursebook by creatively planning how to meet their learners' needs by using the contents in the coursebook as an idea or resource to generate other related tasks appropriate to the given class.

A Positive View of the Coursebook

From the retrospective interview, it was revealed that all of the four teachers of the current study had a rather positive view of the coursebook. This is in agreement with what McGrath (2006) mentioned, that the metaphor described by the teachers can reveal the way they use the coursebook. In his study, the metaphors towards the coursebook from the teachers were positive but there were more negative views towards the coursebook from the learners. However, in the work of Chathep (2006), she did not elicit metaphors used towards the coursebook from the teachers in her study, it was implied that most of the teachers had a rather negative view towards the coursebook.

Institutional Syllabus

The role of the coursebook in a particular institution is also determined by institutional syllabus (Appendix C). The data from the retrospective interview revealed that the fact that the conversation, listening and the tasks requiring oral output as well as pair work encouraging learners' practice on the language points were used, modified and supplemented because they were driven by the institutional syllabus and policy. Though it was not written explicitly every teacher agreed that the language center aims to improve the learners' speaking and listening competence. From this fact, it seems like syllabus played a key role in determining which aspects of the coursebook should be manipulated. This is to some extent in accord with Gadusova and Hartanska (2003 p. 156) that "educational values and the coursebook itself should coincide" when selecting a coursebook using impressionistic method, but the results of the current study suggest that educational values are also important when the coursebook is in use. In addition, in the work of Chathep (2006), the achievement test influenced how the coursebook was used. Although the institutional syllabus of her study also aims to improve speaking, listening, reading skills, etc., it is the format of exams that focus on grammar and reading, so it is the exams or what is called an "assessment syllabus" of the institution that shapes the coursebook use.

Unfamiliar Contents/ Experience

It has been stated that the educational policy of this private language centre is to improve learners' competence in speaking and listening, however, some speaking/role play sections and interchange activity, which require oral output, were

largely rejected by some of the teachers in the current study. What they did was modify and supplement other tasks requiring oral output instead. This was because the content and topic presented in the coursebook may not have interested the learners and was beyond their background knowledge. That is probably why the nature of the content of some modified and supplementary tasks was often personal information. This is in line with Islam and Mares (2003) who wrote that some modified or adapted tasks should make the input more engaging.

As a result, it is notable that most of the adapted or modified tasks fit in what is called, 'adaptation as a change.' According to Tomlinson (1998), many teachers modify or adapt the lessons in the coursebook to make things more accessible to learners. The teachers in the current study did this by personalizing and localizing the content. It was found that snapshot, a neglected section, was also modified as a change through the use of personalization and localization by two teachers. It was modified from flea market to walking street and JJ market, and riding a camel to riding an elephant which are more commonly known to Thai learners. According to Brown (1990), a great deal of language situated in traveling at international airports, customs posts, at large international railway stations, or in international hotels can be found in modern published materials, where the topic of conversation can be expected to refer to the location or to expanding areas of leisure activity such as sports, types of music, fashion etc. Such topics in fact do not require background knowledge of any particular culture to understand but just familiarity with westernized cosmopolitan culture which can be explored via pop culture such as movies, music, novels, etc. However, in this study such topics in the coursebook were modified by the teachers as they saw that knowledge of specific culture is in fact necessary, especially for adolescent learners in their early years of language learning.

However, Brown (1990 p. 14) admitted that it is a problem for teachers of English “to determine how to approach the teaching of those aspects of background knowledge which their learners will find necessary in the interpretation of language they encounter.”

Grammar through Communicative Activities

Speaking would not be possible if grammar which was seen as a basis for language production were ignored. Unsurprisingly, many supplementary tasks created by the teachers gave learners’ practice communicatively on grammar rules. It can be seen that most supplementary tasks focusing on grammar practice contained the characteristics of communicative tasks such as requiring pair work and oral output. This is in accord with Ellis (1993), cited in Maddalena (2003), that there are benefits in teaching grammar through a communicative activity, not solely via the direct teaching of a grammatical structure.

For Chathep (2006), grammar and reading were also the tasks that were implemented as supplementary, modified and unmodified tasks, but the teachers in her study said that they used grammar activities a lot because the achievement tests often put an emphasis on grammar and reading.

Although the teachers in the current study and the study of Chathep (2006) used a lot of grammar activities, the grammar activities in the work of Chathep (2006) did not let the students practice it communicatively but rather used gap fill activities requiring written output and teacher fronting rather than pair or group work. Thus, this is to some extent consistent with to what Holliday’s (1994) comments on the implementation of the communicative approach in BANA and TESEP institutions.

BANA refers to “a part of profession which originates in Britain, Australasia, and North America.” Here, English language teaching tends to be instrumentally oriented, in that it has grown up within a private language school ethos where there has been considerable freedom to develop classroom methodology as a sophisticated instrument to suit the precise needs of language learners (Holliday, 1994 p. 4).”

TESEP refers to “the other part of profession comprises of tertiary, secondary and primary state English language Education in the rest of the world.” Unlike the BANA type, English in these institutions is taught as part of a wider curriculum and is therefore influenced and constrained by wider educational, institutional and community forces quite different from those in the BANA sector (Holliday, 1994 p.4).” The situation where the study of Chathep (2006) took place is a TESEP institution. This may mean the teacher who implements the approach is constrained by his/her own cultural beliefs, class size, furniture, facilities and the expected role perceived by the learners. This makes the teachers in TESEP institutions reluctant to adjust themselves and their learners to learn English communicatively using group and pair work. In contrast, the situation where the current study took place is that of a BANA institution where English is taught in a small class size and usually taught for commercial purposes. Additionally the native English speakers are familiar with the BANA methods found in the coursebook. Therefore these teachers are not constrained by any cultural or traditional beliefs and of course feel free to make use of what can help their learners learn English.

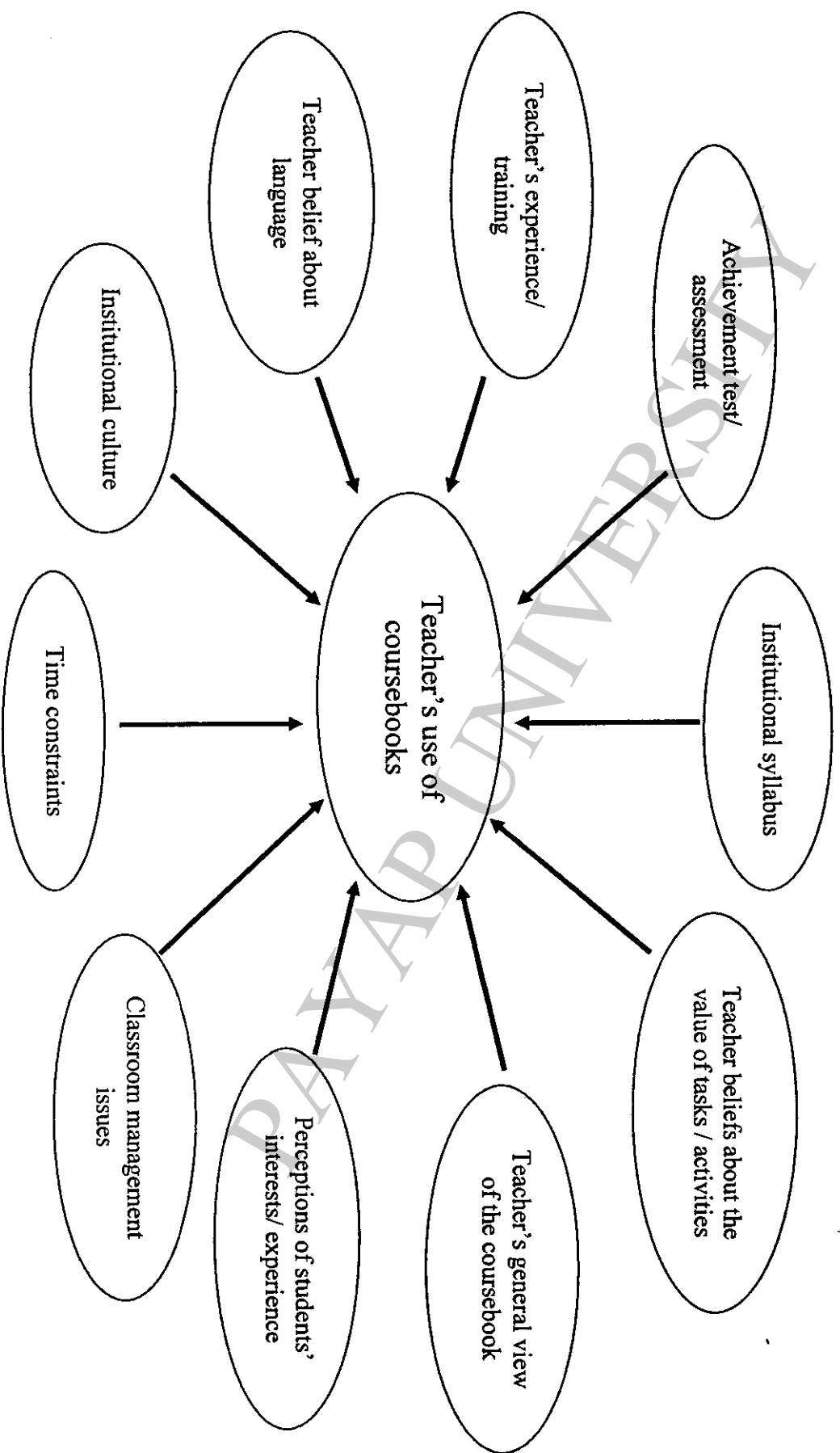
Skepticism of Teaching Pronunciation

Another section in the coursebook worth discussing is pronunciation. It is widely claimed that pronunciation is usually neglected by many teachers. This is not always true because from the current study even though the teachers largely rejected the pronunciation sections presented in the coursebook, what can be seen is that they integrated pronunciation teaching in each task. This is in agreement with Kenworthy (1987) that whenever a new word is found in a text, learners will ask how it is pronounced, or when learners say something that the teacher or class members cannot understand, the intended word has to be discovered and its correct pronunciation must be presented. To Kenworthy (1987), every lesson is a pronunciation lesson because every time the teacher speaks he or she is introducing a spoken model. In the work of Chathep (2006), pronunciation was also omitted because – it was argued – the students can work by themselves in the computer lab provided by the university.

Summary of Teacher's Use of Coursebooks

To summarize, there are many factors, gained from this study, Chathep (2006) and others, that influence teacher's use of coursebooks. The factors are summarized in figure 2 below, including institutional syllabus, teacher beliefs about the value of tasks/ activities, teachers' general view of the coursebook, perception of students interests/ experience, classroom management issues, time constraints, institutional syllabus, teachers' beliefs about language, teacher's experience/ training and achievement tests/ assessment.

Figure 2: Summary of factors influencing teacher's use of coursebooks



The Role of Coursebooks

In the opinion of the author, coursebooks should have a supporting role in language teaching and learning, as no coursebook will ever perfectly fit for a language program. What is presented in coursebooks should therefore give the teachers some ideas of what to teach learners rather than imply that they use every section. In other words, teachers should use coursebooks as resource to language teaching.

Coursebooks will never deskill teachers if teachers think critically of how to use the contents presented in coursebooks. No one knows students better than teachers themselves, therefore teachers should feel free to decide how to use coursebook based on getting to know learners' needs, lacks and wants. This can be done in many different ways. For example, in this study, it was found that the teachers rejected and many times supplemented related tasks for their learners. However, the data derived from the retrospective interview did not show that the teachers necessarily thought of learners' needs, lacks and wants when they decided to supplement, modify and reject some tasks in the coursebook.

There is interplay between the role of coursebooks and their implementation. From the study, some factors that influenced how the coursebook was used were revealed but what seems to be the most influential one gained from this study was teachers' beliefs about the value of activities and tasks. As the teacher is the person who creates lesson plans, there is a tendency that he/she uses his/her beliefs as priority when teaching. It is possible that if the teachers considered the learners' lacks, wants and needs or did any survey about how the learners wanted to progress, the

coursebook use would be differently. Perhaps, the role of coursebooks based on learners' survey could give invaluable suggestions for future coursebook use.

The idea of being autonomous from coursebooks would require different attitudes from learners, as they might feel awkward when teachers come to class without any coursebook. This means learners have nothing to look at or things to follow when they are in need. The idea of being autonomous from coursebooks is exciting for very experienced language teachers because they can pick up anything they see and think useful for their learners and make them become authentic learning materials. However, learners are also an important group of people using coursebooks who really need coursebooks as a support when they are independent from teachers.

Suggestions for Using Coursebooks

The results reveal that the coursebook is not a bible because the teachers did not follow it but modified and supplemented some sections from time to time. Moreover, it did not contain what every student needs and wants and many times the topics are unfamiliar to the students. In addition each section in the coursebook contained both weak and strong points; therefore, teachers of TESOL need to be skeptical about the topics and the tasks presented in the coursebook, whether they fit with the students in their particular context and help their learners improve language competence.

Many teachers in the study claimed that they neglected *snapshot* and sometimes modified the task in order to localize the contents because of learners' lack of background information towards western culture. To this fact, although it is very sensible to localize the contents for low level learners to make the input more

engaging, the teachers should also prepare their learners with some background information of particular culture because learning a language is learning a culture and learning and teaching English should have a cultural component; the cultural characteristics of particular community, its values, attitudes, conventions, life style and so on—it can be helpful to equip these learners with differences between native culture and target culture (Hewings, 1991 p. 237) especially as English is learned as an international language. Therefore some cultural features hidden in the coursebook should be integrated in order to get the learners involved in the target language beliefs and cultures as suggested by Brown (1990 p. 15) that “it is worth remembering in this context what most foreign language students need background information for, from the perspective of learning English: they need the background knowledge which will enable them to understand the language that they are encountering now and will be encountering in the future.”

It is suggested that teachers think of learners’ needs, lacks and wants when they decide to reject, modify and supplement coursebook tasks. For example, some learners may want to spend time on the section the teacher rejects, as they feel that it may be interesting. For example, one student in teacher B’s class privately told the author that he would like to listen to the conversation about four people on a TV game show, “Who’s my date?”, however, this section was rejected. Therefore, it could be seen that teachers’ perception of some activities may be different from learners’ perceptions of what is interesting. Understanding learners’ needs, lacks and wants could help alleviate this issue.

The findings reveal that output which was characterized as oral words, phrases and sentences was largely used in many supplementary tasks. It is obvious that these 16-20 year-old students have learned English for more than 8 years. They are

supposed to be able to generate oral discourse or oral extended discourse. It is therefore advised that teachers create more supplementary tasks requiring oral discourse or oral extended discourse in order to give learners more practice communicating in English more efficiently. This can be done right away when teachers and learners start the course. There is no need to wait until they reach higher levels.

Although it is stated in the syllabus to help students have proper pronunciation is a part of all level, pronunciation was rejected by three teachers. From the study, pronunciation teaching was seen integrated with other tasks such as grammar by many teachers by correcting mispronunciation whenever they occurred rather than followed what was presented in the pronunciation teaching. It is suggested that there is a need to integrate pronunciation with more communicative activities in order to give students' opportunity to develop their pronunciation by speaking and listening. As according to Robertson (2003), there is a consensus that a learner's pronunciation needs to be taught in connection with communicative practices for learners to communicate effectively. He also suggested that teacher should play a key role in pronunciation teaching. This role is described by Morley, cited by Robertson (2003), as "speech coach" or "pronunciation coach." Instead of just correcting the learner's mistakes, the speech coach offers information, gives models, gives cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about the performance, sets high standards, provides a number of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourages the learner.

For the *Interchange* publisher, the pronunciation section seemed to be another neglected section. This is because some of the teachers in the current study did not agree with the way it was instructed in the coursebook, for example the pronunciation section in unit 3, "sentence stress" and unit 4, "intonation question." One teacher

commented that “there’re no correct ways to say these statements.” Thus, the publisher should offer some more detailed suggestions of pronunciation teaching in the teacher’s manual as pronunciation is something teachable. This could be done by using the idea of speech coach, given above. The publisher may use this idea to point out the role of the teacher, as speech coach, in teaching pronunciation such as providing more communicative pronunciation practice in different situations.

Limitations of Study

It is quite normal for most research that the findings must be analyzed and interpreted bearing in mind the study limitations. Consequently, readers should be cautious about making generalizations from the results. First and foremost, this is a case study of four native English speaking teachers, who do not hold a degree in English language teaching but are well-trained by the teacher training program offered by the language center, in a private language center in Chiang Mai. Second, the coursebook used in this study is *Interchange third Edition*, student Book 1 and only one different unit of the coursebook from the four teachers was used for data collection. Finally, video recording was used for data collection, thus some teaching may have been adjusted due to the presence of the video camera.

Suggestions for Further Study

As this study has focused on the teachers' perceptions of the role of the coursebook, further study could research how the learners use the coursebook and their perceptions towards the coursebook in a setting free of achievement test and small class sizes.

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