

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chinese as International Education

With the rapid development of Chinese government and the fast growth of Chinese economy, Chinese language has gained greater attention among non-Chinese students (Gek, Lidia, Boon, 2013). Chinese has become as important as English language so that there are hundreds of millions of Chinese-speaking people in the world now (Masuntisuk, 2010). As a result, teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language has recently drawn much attention from both the Eastern and Western hemispheres (Xing, 2006).

Zhang and Li (2010) reported that nowadays almost all British universities offer Chinese courses. More and more secondary schools have started, or have planned to start, Chinese courses as part of their curriculum. Chinese language and culture activities are entering into more and more primary schools. Meanwhile Chinese language courses have also been provided in both public and private institutions for Chinese learners. Chinese language learning and teaching in the UK has grown rapidly in three main sectors, namely primary and secondary education, higher education and lifelong education. According to Ke and Li's research result (2011), a variety of public and private institutions, foundations and agencies have increased their funding to expand the study of Chinese language, culture and history. In addition, extensive measures have been carried out to help cultivate Chinese language learning worldwide especially from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. And the rapid growth in Chinese language field were supported by US government, the government of mainland China and Taiwan and many private foundations, institutions, publishers and individuals. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev suggested that young people in Russia learn Chinese besides English since a knowledge of Chinese would be beneficial to their future success, Russian media reported on April 17, 2015 (Hanban News, 2015).

With reference to internationalization of Chinese education, the most important organization Hanban must be introduced. Hanban, also called Confucius Institute Headquarters, as a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, was committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide, it went all out in meeting the demands of foreign Chinese learners and contributing to the development of multiculturalism and the building of a harmonious world. Three main functions of Hanban were to make policies and development plans for promoting Chinese language internationally; to support Chinese language programs at educational institutions of various types and levels in other countries; and to draft international Chinese teaching standards and develop and promote Chinese language teaching materials (Hanban official website, 2015).

Hanban continuously set up international collaboration and programs of Chinese language, culture and international education since 2006. Numerous secondary and primary school principals from the USA, the UK, Japan, South Korea and other countries were invited to visit China. During the Beijing Olympic Games, Hanban collaborated with Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games to establish the “Chinese Learning Area at the Olympic Village”. In this Chinese Learning Area, Chinese cultural courses were taught by experts and teachers to help foreign athletes, officials and other interested personnel study Chinese. In addition, “Chinese Bridge” was founded by Hanban as an annual Chinese proficiency competition. During “Chinese Bridge”, oversea school principals were invited to visit China. During American Secondary and Primary School Principals’ Trip to China in June 2008, 430 people from American secondary and primary school principals were invited by Hanban, including the deputy chairman and executive committee members of the Council of American Universities, and chairpersons of US national educational bodies (Yuming Li and Wei Li, 2008).

To meet the greater demands of foreign Chinese learners, an increasing number of Confucius Institutes (CIs) and Confucius Classrooms (CCs) were set up all over the world. About 475 CIs and 851 CCs were established in 126 counties and regions worldwide up to December 7, 2014. Among 475 CIs in 120 countries and regions, 103 ones were established in 32 Asian countries and regions, 42 ones in 29 African countries, 159 ones in 39 European counties, 154 ones in 17 American countries, and 17 ones in 3

countries of Oceania. Among 851 CCs in 65 counties, 79 ones were established in 17 Asian counties, 18 ones in 13 African counties, 211 ones in 25 European countries, 478 ones in 7 American counties, and 65 ones in 3 countries of Oceania (Hanban, 2015). Over the recent year, CIs and CCs provided scope for people all over the world to learn about Chinese language and culture. In addition, they also furnished the rest of the world with a platform for cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and the world.

1.2 Regulating teaching Chinese language

Throughout history, teaching Chinese language encountered numerous ups and downs. The first modern style Chinese school in Thailand was established in Siam after Dr. Sun Yat-sen visited there in 1908. This school was not only for teaching Chinese language but also for connecting Chinese people with China and carrying out Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People"-nationalism, democracy, and socialism. Several years later, main organizations among the Chinese immigrants at that time, the five major speech-group associations, namely Teochiu, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, and Hokkien, started to set up their own schools. At the very beginning, each speech association used their dialect or their own *muyu* (mother tongue) as the instruction medium. Mandarin was called *guoyu*, "the national language", or *guanhua*, "the official language". In order to have better communication among different speech-group associations, a ubiquitous language was then rather necessary to unite those different dialect groups. Mandarin slowly became the instruction language in the schools till 1930, then Chinese immigrants from different language groups began to learn the same common and formal language –Mandarin (Tan, 2013).

Tan (2013) reported that Thai government issued new policies to control and limit Chinese education in order to assimilate Chinese citizens. In 1918, the Thai monarchy declared that all Chinese school principals must be Thai people. In addition, Thai state announced that Chinese schools' curriculum hindered "the pupils' assimilation of the new Thai national spirit. In 1939, the Thai Ministry of Education issued new rules that students in the compulsory age limits (seven to fourteen) could study Chinese language only two hours a week and that all other subjects must be taught in Thai language.

During the Second World War, eliminating Chinese education became a national strategy, partly due to the mutual defense pact signed between Thai Phibun government and Japan. After the Second World War, the number of Chinese schools increased immediately. However it just existed for a very short period of time. In 1950s, teaching hours were reduced to five hours per week; previous textbooks were replaced by new ones with Thai nationalist ideology. During the Cold War, leaning Chinese was regarded as a sign of identifying with “red China” or an old fashion. In contrast, English became increasingly popular.

The turning point occurred in February 1992, the Thai government realized that Thailand lost a great amount of Chinese-speaking investors during the past years. In order to attract investment, restrictions against teaching Chinese were abolished. Since then, the number of Chinese schools increased rapidly. Chinese language now has been allowed to be taught from primary school to high school, and it has had the same significance with English. For the first time, Chinese language has become a subject field in national college entrance examinations (Tan, 2013).

Teaching Chinese has become a new fashion and a hot topic during recent years in Thailand. According to Thailand’s Education Ministry, in May 2009 over 1000 schools in Thailand specialized teaching Chinese. In addition, many Chinese-Thai and Thai students were sent to high-quality universities in China for studying Chinese Mandarin and other subjects. In order to help Thai students achieve an appropriate level of Chinese language, the Thai Education Ministry and Hanban cooperated in many different aspects of teaching Chinese. For example, both parties provided Thai teachers of Chinese a three-month training course; China’s National Language Institute provided scholarships for teachers to study in China; volunteer Chinese teachers came to teach Chinese in Thailand. In terms of textbooks, Hanban have authorized Thai Education Ministry to license its Thai-language textbook *Happy Chinese* (Tan, 2013).

1.3 Chinese language teaching in Thailand

In Thailand, Chinese language gradually became more and more popular since China and Thailand re-established diplomatic relationship in 1975. In 1992, Chinese language was accessible to the public in Thailand. At present, many public and private

schools have offered Chinese language courses, and even in primary schools, the students have begun to learn Chinese language as a compulsory subject (Masuntisuk, 2010).

Nowadays teaching Chinese has gradually boomed due to the extensive trade cooperation between Thailand and Chinese speaking countries. Chinese language is not only taught in public high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities, but also offered by private tutors and organizations all over Thailand. Chinese now is the second most popular foreign language taken by Thai students instead of Japanese. In addition, graduates with good Chinese proficiency and computer skills are easier to get more opportunities and to find better jobs (Luangthongkum, 2007).

1.4 Chinese language teaching in Thailand at primary and secondary education levels

Three main school categories exist in Thailand, namely Chinese schools, public schools and private schools. “Chinese schools” are the original teaching sites. Most of these schools have had a long history in teaching Chinese with enrollment of about 78,700 students. Public schools and private schools have been offering Chinese language since Chinese became a subject in the national entrance exam in 1998. They have enrolled about 250,000 students totally. In all, there have been a total of 328,700 elementary and high school students in Thailand (Masuntisuk, 2010).

The Chinese language teaching curriculum is different among Chinese schools, public schools and private schools. In Chinese schools, all students start to learn Chinese as a compulsory subject since kindergarten level. From kindergarten level to high school level, students spend 2-16 hours per week on Chinese language learning. However, Chinese language is provided as an elective subject in public school, and students begin to learn Chinese in middle school. In addition, private schools use the same teaching curriculum with Chinese schools. But some private schools may provide Chinese language as an elective subject in middle school level and high school level (Masuntisuk, 2010).

The ratio of Chinese and Thai teachers is quite asymmetrical among these three types of schools. Table 1.1 shows that Chinese schools have the highest ratio, almost 4 teachers per school; private schools have a lower ratio, about 2 teachers in each school; public schools have the lowest ratio, only 1.5 teachers per school.

Table 1.1 Thai and Chinese teachers in Chinese schools, public schools
and private schools (Adapted from Masuntisuk (2010))

Category	Chinese school		Public schools		Private schools	
	schools	Teachers	schools	Teachers	schools	Teachers
Thai teachers	92	367	240	360	70	152
Chinese teachers	69	306	251	347	70	194

1.5 Thai students with Chinese speaking proficiency

Calculated from the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2013) issued by Thailand's Ministry of Education, Table 1.2 shows that speaking skill places the most important skill among the 4 foreign language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in primary schools. But different graders (Grade 1-6) focus on different teaching content for improving speaking skill, and the difficulty coefficient increases with ascending grade. While it suggests that Grade 1 and Grade 2 students' foreign language speaking skill converges on pronouncing alphabet, sounds, and using simple words, models and simple sentences. However, Chinese language teaching in Thailand is still faced with many difficulties, even though Thai Education Ministry has developed clear teaching objectives.

Table 1.2 Four language skills in Basic Education Core Curriculum (Appendix A)

Level	Focus	Listening %	Speaking %	Reading %	Writing %	Others %
P1	L: simple words/sentences, models S: alphabet, sounds, simple words /sentences, models O: activities, collecting terms	16.88	70.31	0	0	12.81
P2	L: simple words/sentences, models S: alphabet, sounds, simple words /sentences, models R: simple sentences O: activities, collecting terms	17.19	67.19	3.13	0	12.49

Table 1.2 Four language skills in Basic Education Core Curriculum (Appendix A)
(Continued)

Level	Focus	Listening %	Speaking %	Reading %	Writing %	Others %
P3	L: words, sentences, dialogues, simple tales, models S: differences of alphabet, words, sentences, models R: words, sentences, simple chants O: activities, collecting terms	15.56	64.72	8.61	0	11.11
P4	L: words, sentences, simple texts, models S: differences of alphabet, words, sentences, interpersonal communication R: words, sentences, simple texts, chants O: activities, collecting terms	8.25	61.25	8.00	12.50	10.00
P5	L: sentences, short texts, dialogues S: similarities and differences of pronunciation and festivals, sentences, interpersonal communication R: sentences, texts, short poems W: interpersonal communication, own needs O: activities, collecting terms	9.00	48.25	14.00	18.75	10.00

Table 1.2 Four language skills in Basic Education Core Curriculum (Appendix A)
(Continued)

Level	Focus	Listening %	Speaking %	Reading %	Writing %	Others %
P6	L: sentences, dialogues, simple tales and stories S: similarities and differences of pronunciation and festivals, interpersonal communication R: texts, tales, short poems W: interpersonal communication, own needs O: activities, collecting terms	6.50	48.25	16.50	18.75	10.00

Source: Calculated from the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2013)

Many researches have investigated the relevant problems on Chinese language teaching in Thailand, in which different difficulties have been identified and the solutions as well as recommendations have been proposed.

Chen (2010) reported that, for the very beginners in Thailand, the main Chinese speaking weakness is pronunciation of part finals (consonants: h, j q x, z c s, zh ch sh r), initials (vowels: ü, er, uo, ie) and tones (rising tone, falling-rising tone). Chen explained the cause of the pronunciation error based on Contrastive Linguistics. Chinese language beginners in Thailand felt difficult to pronounce these sounds due to the differences of articulation manner and articulation place between Chinese language and Thai language. As the solution, the speech organ schema and gestures were recommended to teach students finals, initials and tones.

In Li's study (2010), Thai students' weak Chinese proficiency was caused by several main factors. Firstly, shortage of Chinese teachers has been a serious problem of many schools; secondly, the local Thai teachers' Chinese proficiency still need to be improved; Thirdly, even though a large number of Chinese volunteers have taught

Chinese in many schools, most of them haven't had enough teaching experience and know little about Thai culture. Fourthly, the standardized teaching plan and assessment criteria have not been set up. Li suggested that, on the one hand, more universities in Thailand should be encouraged to provide Chinese language major with cooperation with China's higher education; on the other hand, volunteers should attend a standardized training before coming to Thailand.

Masuntisuk (2010) investigated Chinese language teaching in Thailand at the primary and secondary education levels. The problems and difficulties of Chinese language teaching in Thailand have been summarized as follows: the high demand for Chinese language in Thailand, the ineffectiveness of the teaching and learning, the lack of teachers, the inappropriateness of the textbook, and the inefficient teaching methods.

Feng and Wu (2009) attributed Thai students' weakness in Spoken Chinese to several factors: 1.) Standard Chinese language input is not enough; 2.) part of local Thai teachers even cannot speak Chinese well; they have problems in pronunciation and grammar. 3.) Students only speak Chinese in weekly Chinese classes due to lack of language applying environment. 4.) There is no unified and standard textbook.

In conclusion, main difficulties of Chinese teaching in Thailand are: (1) pronunciation of part Chinese finals, initials and tones; (2) local Thai teachers' Chinese proficiency need to be improved; (3) most Chinese volunteers do not have enough teaching experience; (4) standardized textbooks, teaching plan and assessment criteria have not been set up; (5) the ineffectiveness of teaching and learning as well as the inefficient teaching methods; (6) lack of Chinese language environment.

1.6 Four main language skills in second language acquisition

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are four main language skills in the process of second language acquisition. In addition, their developmental sequence and close relationship will be explained in the following part.

1.6.1 Developmental sequence of four language skills

The acquisition sequence of these four skills is listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is the very first step to successful language acquisition, regardless of the learners' age. After having listening experience, the students begin to

imitate what they have heard and practice what they have learned, namely speaking. Then their reading skill begins to improve when they have acquired enough vocabularies by listening to others and by practicing the pronunciation and usage of new words in conversation. Finally, the writing skill emerges with grasping enough vocabularies and syntaxes through listening and reading, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 (Sousa, 2010). Therefore, for foreign language beginners, listening and speaking skills are more important than another two skills. Detailed relationship of these four skills will be discussed as follows.

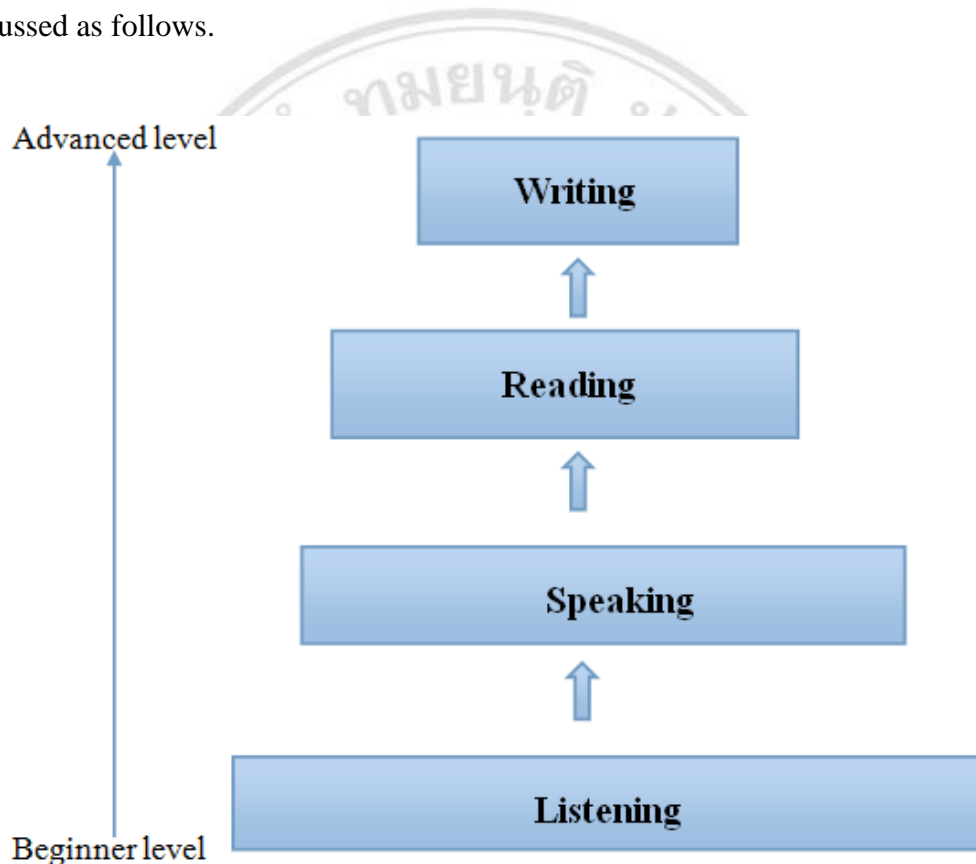


Figure 1.1 Developmental sequence of four language skills

Source: Adapted from Sousa (2010)

1.6.2 Relationship of four language skills

Listening is the input of speaking, in turns, speaking is the output of listening. Reading is the input of writing and writing is the output of reading. By the direction of communication, Sousa (2010) divided four language skills into 2 groups, namely input (listening and reading) and output (speaking and writing). By the method of communication, these four skills were divided into spoken skills and written skills.

Listening and speaking belonged to spoken skills, while reading and writing were written skills. Figure 1.2 showed that four skills were related to each other. And spoken skills were the most fundamental and primary ones for the foreign language beginners to focus on. In order to justify the most important foreign language skill for P2 students in Thailand, teaching objective of foreign languages will be analyzed based on Basic Education Core Curriculum (2013) issued by Thailand's Ministry of Education.

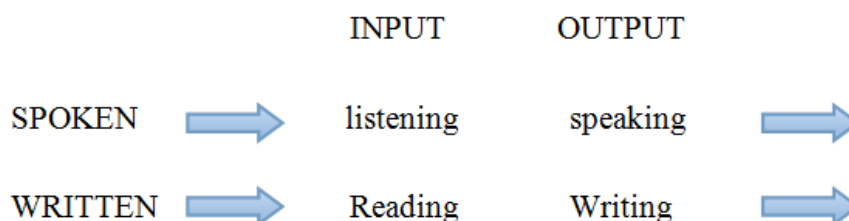


Figure 1.2 Relationship of four language skills

Source: Sousa (2010)

1.7 Chinese Language Teaching in Rattana Auewittaya School

To present the Chinese language proficiency of the 26 P2 students, their Chinese subject score at the first semester is attached below in table 1.3. The score and grade indicate that 1 student is in a poor level, 14 students in a fair level, 8 students in a good level, and 3 students in an excellent level. In order to push more students to reach a good or an excellent level, much progress should be made to enhance their Chinese language proficiency. According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum, speaking skill is the most important skill among the four language skills for primary school students. Based on the pretest result, P2 students have a poor Chinese speaking ability, especially their pronunciation ability. Therefore, it is necessary and significant to enhance P2 students' Chinese speaking proficiency.

The reasons why P2 students in Rattana Auewittaya School do have a poor Chinese speaking ability are explained as follows. Firstly, even though current P2 students have had vivid online materials in their smart classroom since March 2014, but textbooks were nearly the only teaching materials when they were in P1 level. Lack of diversified materials in P1 level weakened students' learning motivation. Though these

students have got online materials in P2 level, it is difficult for them to understand these materials, as they did not lay a firm foundation

Table 1.3 Chinese subject score at the first semester in 2014

เลขที่	ชื่อ - สกุล			Score	Grade		
				100			
1	ด.ช.	พงษ์พิชญ์	สุจิตต์	76			
2	ด.ช.	ชินศักดิ์	แซ่จ้าว	86			
3	ด.ช.	ภาณุวัฒน์	บุญใส	60			
4	ด.ช.	ธีรเดช	บุญอุตร	86			
5	ด.ช.	ภาณุวัฒน์	สิทธิดา	76			
6	ด.ช.	วรเมธ	ฟองกุณา	72			
7	ด.ช.	โรจน์ศักดิ์	เงินใส	75			
8	ด.ช.	จรัสวัฒน์	ช่างไม้	68			
9	ด.ช.	พัชรพล	ภูกระเนตร	71			
10	ด.ช.	จักริน	ปึกด้วง	66	Score range	No. of students	Level
11	ด.ช.	พนัญญ์กรณ์	อินตะยศ	59	$0 \leq S < 30$	0	extremely poor
12	ด.ช.	เจตนิพัทธ์	กาศคำ	68	$30 \leq S < 60$	1	poor
13	ด.ช.	ลัญญกร	สมคำ	83	$60 \leq S < 75$	14	fair
14	ด.ช.	นันทภพ	แซ่ซา	68	$75 \leq S < 85$	8	good
15	ด.ญ.	ปณิชา	กันทำ	72	$85 \leq S \leq 100$	3	excellent
16	ด.ญ.	นวพร	พลอยเหลือง	86			

Table 1.3 Chinese subject score at the first semester in 2014 (Continued)

เลขที่	ชื่อ - สกุล			Score	Grade
				100	
17	ด.ญ.	พรรณวรินทร์	บุญคำแสน	77	
18	ด.ญ.	เกตุรียา	ธรรมสูตร	73	
19	ด.ญ.	อารีรัตน์	มัธยมจันทร์	72	
20	ด.ญ.	ณัชชา	ทองจินดา	72	
21	ด.ญ.	ณัฐธิดา	สองเมือง	71	
22	ด.ญ.	เบญญาภา	ศิริสิงห์	81	
23	ด.ญ.	ศศิวิมล	มีงาม	67	
24	ด.ญ.	จุลรัตน์	โณปัญญา	82	
25	ด.ญ.	ธณัชชา	พิมเสน	70	
26	ด.ญ.	กวินพัทธ์	แซ่ลี่	78	

in P1 level. And teachers used the unified textbooks and online materials, they did not design their own specific teaching content which focused on students' weakness and difficulties. Secondly, students just learned Chinese in class, except for some Chinese-Thai students; they had few chances to speak Chinese out of class. Lack of practice and application was another important reason that hindered students' Chinese learning. Thirdly, there wasn't a full time native Chinese teacher in Rattana Auewittaya School. Students' Chinese was taught by Thai teachers for a long period. As a result, they got poor Chinese pronunciation skills. Even though a few native Chinese students taught Chinese as interns for several months per year, such a short-time period was not enough to correct and enhance students' pronunciation ability. Finally, at the very beginning of smart classroom implementation, teachers were not familiar with this teaching equipment. It took time for teachers to make full use of these modern devices, to design activities for practice.

1.8 Constructionism to remediate Prathom 2 students' Chinese speaking skill

In previous researches, contrastive linguistics, the speech organ schema and gestures were recommended to improve students' pronunciation ability by Chen (2010). Contrastive analysis was proposed to analyze the differences between Chinese language and foreign languages, and to improve students' Chinese pronunciation through analyzing the mispronounced words as the key target (Dong, et al., 2013). Two major language activities, listening to textbook CD and watching various mandarin language movie DVDs, were presented to establish a mandarin environment by Wu (2012). However, few studies assess and analyze all aspects of Chinese speaking errors using error analysis. In addition, previous researchers seldom combined constructionism with modern teaching equipment to create construction zone for students' active learning.

In this paper, to improve Prathom 2 students' Chinese speaking proficiency, constructionism contributes to create a Chinese pronunciation incubator through organizing problem solving situation, intellectual tools and intelligent learning environment. In this incubator, Prathom 2 students learn through participating in language activities, cooperating with their group members, as well as getting assistance from peers or teachers. To shift the teaching method from teachers' passive teaching to students' active learning, Chinese pronunciation incubator is composed of three sections, namely learning content that is designed based on students' common weakness and language errors, learning tools which consist of tablets and Bed Time Story application, and learning environment that aims to facilitate students to 'play and learn' utilizing smart classroom as modern teaching equipment.

To evaluate Prathom 2 students' weakness in Chinese speaking skill and to test their progress after learning for a period, Error analysis is proposed in this thesis as the assessment tool to analyze students' language errors in depth. More details will be explained in chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

1.9 Developing a case study: Rattana Aue Wittaya School Fang

This paper takes the 26 P2 students in Rattana Aue Wittaya School as a case study. Three main parts are presented in this section, namely AEC 2015 to Chinese language

study, Chinese language program in Rattana Auewittaya School, and students' Chinese speaking proficiency.

1.9.1 AEC 2015 to Chinese language study

According to Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2011-2015), article 3.3 Cooperation in Education states that ASEAN and China continue to deepen practical cooperation between secondary and tertiary institutions with emphasis on talent cultivation, student mobility, mutual recognition of academic credits, joint research and language teaching, where appropriate (Article 3.3.3). Both parties continue to promote youth exchanges in the fields of languages, culture, art and heritage with a view to enhancing mutual understanding and further deepen friendship (Article 3.3.4). Both parties should promote academic exchanges and encourage the co-hosting of academic conferences, offering courses on languages, cultures, arts and heritage, politics and economics of ASEAN Member States and China (Article 3.3.6). Although China and the ten member nations of ASEAN used to compete on exports and attracting foreign capital, the two regions have since found opportunities for cooperation and synergy in education and other industries, including language teaching, especially Chinese language and culture teaching.

1.9.2 Chinese Language Program in Rattana Auewittaya School

Rattana Auewittaya School is located in Fang district, about 150 kilometers from Chiang Mai, Thailand. It is a comprehensive school that is composed of kindergarten, primary school, middle school and high school. The Chinese language program in Rattana Auewittaya School has made a significant progress since it opened Chinese language course in 2000. All the students in each level have learned Chinese language, 2 or 3 teaching hours per week for kindergarten, P1-P6 and M1-M3 students, 6 teaching hours per week for M4 and M5 students, and 4 teaching hours for M6 students.

Rattana Auewittaya School has built a friendly cooperative relationship with Peng Zhen primary school in Shuang Liu, Chengdu, China. Teachers and students from both parties are exchanged to visit and study Thai and Chinese languages as well as culture. Thai students have been invited to Chengdu for attending variety of traditional

Chinese culture courses, such as Chinese calligraphy, Chinese music, Tai Ji (Chinese Kongfu), Chinese paper cutting, Chinese language, Chinese painting, Chinese dancing, Chinese food cooking, Chinese table tennis, as well as other courses including English, technical innovation, basketball, volleyball, calisthenics. The latest visit to Peng Zhen primary school has been organized by Chengdu government and Peng Zhen School during 26 April-10 May, 2015. Meanwhile, part teachers and students at Peng Zhen School have been invited to visit Rattana Auewittaya School during 16-26, July, 2015.

Several native Chinese volunteer teachers are sent to Rattana Auewittaya School as Chinese teachers every year since 2012. This volunteer project is supported by Chiangmai government, Chengdu government, Chengdu University and other universities in China. These volunteers are students who major in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, English education, elementary education and secondary education from Chengdu University and other universities in China. Spoken Chinese courses are taught by these native Chinese speakers, which is beneficial to improve students' Chinese speaking ability.

In addition, Rattana Auewittaya School is in the province's pilot project called 'The Smart Classroom', which is a part of the Chiang Mai Smart Province Scheme. Meanwhile, it is the 1st school with smart classrooms in Chiangmai province, also the 1st one in Thailand. In accordance with news report from The Nation on March 4, 2014, Prathom 2 students at Rattana Auewittaya School have been enjoying learning with a tablet as a companion device every day. Rattana Auewittaya School director Pongthada Subhasan said the institution had brought in 90 Intel Education Tablets for its three classrooms at Prathom-2 level in January 2014, with the support of the Chiang Mai Provincial Administrative Organization, Chiang Mai University and Intel Microelectronics (Thailand). The school have deployed the tablets into classroom study of its six main subjects: mathematics, Thai, English, Chinese, science and social studies.

1.10 Scope of the study

This paper aims to create a pronunciation incubator to improve Prathom 2 students' Chinese speaking skill. Relevant researches suggested that most of primary students in Thailand did not achieve an appropriate level of Chinese proficiency,

especially the Chinese speaking skill (Xu, 2009). As most primary students' speaking skill did not meet the minimum requirement of the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2013), it is urgent to enhance their Chinese speaking skill via the pronunciation incubator in this paper.

The target group in this thesis is 26 P2 students, who were studying Prathom 2 in the second semester in 2014 at Rattana Auewittaya School, Fang district, Thailand. This research is to understand and enhance the Chinese speaking skill of these students. Testing have been implemented during the second semester and summer class from 2014 to 2015. In this thesis, the pronunciation incubator based on constructionism is created to organize students to cooperate, share and gain knowledge in language activities. Error analysis contributes as an assessment tool to evaluate students' language errors and assess students' progress. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to propose solutions to achieve a higher level in students' Chinese spoken skill, to lessen students' highly frequent language errors.

1.11 Benefits of the study

This study provided Chinese language teachers a good example to enhance students' Chinese speaking skill by Chinese pronunciation incubator. In addition, this incubator transferred positive teaching to active learning by combining constructionism and modern teaching equipment, which help students keep better knowledge retention and application.

1.12 Aims and objectives

This paper aims:

- (1) to analyze the critical problems in Chinese language study of P2 students;
- (2) to promote Chinese pronunciation abilities as well as speaking skill of P2 students using Chinese pronunciation incubator;
- (3) to evaluate P2 students' Chinese pronunciation abilities utilizing error analysis.

1.13 Definition terms

Three main definition terms are captured in this section, namely pronunciation incubator, Chinese pronunciation ability and P2 students.

Pronunciation incubator is a place to enhance Chinese pronunciation ability of P2 students by arranging teaching contents, education tools, learning environment, language activities and construction zone. The main theme of this incubator is ‘play and learn’ with four main teaching processes (teaching - group collaboration - share - feedback). Students use tablets, Bed Time Story Application and other vivid materials to learn Chinese. They are encouraged to participate in a variety of language activities, to cooperate and practice with team members, to share learning outcome in the construction zone.

Chinese pronunciation ability means the basic Chinese pronunciation skill of P2 students, which is based on the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2013) issued by Thailand’s Ministry of Education, including Chinese alphabets, tones, sounds, simple words, sentence models and sentences. Referring to Basic Education Core Curriculum, the qualification of students after finishing P2 they have to achieve the speaking skill of 47 Chinese alphabets, daily used simple words, sentence models and simple sentences.

P2 students are Prathom 2 (Grade 2) students, who were studying Prathom 2 in the second semester in 2014 at Rattana Auewittaya School, Fang district, Thailand. In addition, they are enrolled in Chinese subject ๑12201.

1.14 Thesis structure

Chapter two: Literature review

This chapter presents the literature review of five main theories in this research, namely error analysis, language acquisition, constructionism, zone of proximal development, and cone of experience.

Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology of this research, about how key theories are utilized to create the Chinese pronunciation incubator, as well as the tools and techniques applied in pronunciation leaning incubator. The case study is developed in

Rattana Auewittaya School of Fang district, in which 26 P2 students are chosen as the target group.

Chapter four: Results and discussion

This chapter analyzes the results and findings after implementing the proposed methodology in the case study of this paper, which provides significant references for future studies.

Chapter five: Conclusion

This chapter concludes this research and presents the contributions, the weakness and limitations of this paper.

