

## Effectiveness of Explicit CA-informed Telephone Conversation Instruction in Enhancing Conversation Abilities of Thai Learners of English<sup>\*</sup>

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### Abstract

The study investigated the effectiveness of explicit CA-informed telephone conversation teaching in developing the conversation abilities of Thai learners of English. The participants included 97 university students from several faculties enrolled in an elective English conversation course. Mixed methods were employed. The students were engaged in telephone conversations in both pre- and post-tests to determine the improvement in their conversation abilities. Open-ended questionnaires were also constructed to explore the students' attitudes after the treatment. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group outperformed the other group particularly in two aspects; namely, vocabulary and grammar. Most of the learners receiving the treatment also developed positive attitudes towards explicit telephone conversation instruction, finding it beneficial in getting them to think systematically about conversation and to learn useful telephone expressions. It was suggested that although the instruction dealt with the inherent nature of conversation which might initially be difficult to grasp especially for low-proficiency students, it is still worthwhile for teachers to incorporate it into the classroom since such an instruction can potentially help enhance their conversation abilities in the long run.

**Keywords:** Conversation Analysis (CA), CA-based instruction, conversation abilities, explicit telephone conversation teaching, Thai university students

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## Introduction

It is undeniable that English serves as an especially vital medium of communication in the era of globalization. Given its global roles, the English language has been accepted not only as a lingua franca but as an official working language by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, consisting of approximately 600 million members within ten countries. Additionally, as a result of the merger of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), most of these countries have encouraged their citizens to prepare themselves for this influential event in many aspects, including in language learning, and English has been emphasized as one of the most essential factors in strengthening the citizens' lives and creating a great success for the nation (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The demand for speakers with a good command of English communication skills has never been greater in the ASEAN region (Richard, 2006).

Luama (2004) argues that it is especially necessary for people to pay most attention to speaking skills in order to live and survive in the AEC. Speaking competence is at the heart of language learners' abilities to utilize the language to reach their goals in social interaction. Learning and strengthening speaking abilities is however challenging since L2 speaking is a complex process and it takes considerable time and effort particularly for adult learners.

The Thai education system puts emphasis on developing all four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Nevertheless, Thai learners from kindergarten to university levels still have a number of problems with English and are considered low English proficiency learners, especially in speaking skills (Bruner, Shimray, & Sinwongsuwat, 2014; Khamkhien, 2010). It is therefore important for language teachers to become familiar with how to teach conversation-the most basic mode of human interaction-with an appropriate understanding of its genuine nature (Hatch, 1978; Schegloff, 1986). Through everyday conversation, ones can control their daily lives and get things completed from routine to professional matters, such as meeting friends for lunch, planning a wedding, establishing a business partnership, and discussing a business deal (Wong & Waring, 2010, p. 3). So, a strong understanding of such everyday conversation is required for teachers to be successful in teaching speaking.

Analyses of telephone conversations have demonstrated additional connections with naturally-occurring talks which are essential in language instruction. Teachers are encouraged not only to develop and provide activities that meet learners' needs but to apply insights on the nature of everyday naturally-occurring conversation unveiled via the lens of Conversation Analysis (CA) in their classroom teaching. They should let the learner experience interactional

practices of real conversations (Wong & Waring, 2010). A large number of scholars have agreed upon the effectiveness of CA in helping learners to develop their English conversational skills (Barraja-Rohan, 1997, 2011; Markee & Seo, 2009; Richards & Seedhouse, 2005; Seedhouse, 2007; Wong & Waring, 2010). While the discipline of CA itself in fact started off with Harvey Sack (1992)'s works on phone calls, there have also been a number of subsequent CA studies deciphering the sequential structure of telephone conversation and yielding important insights for classroom teaching (Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2002; Wong & Waring, 2010).

In Thailand, Teng and Sinwongsuwat (2015) examined the use of explicit CA-informed instruction in improving conversational abilities and their findings showed that Thai undergraduates were able to better develop their conversational abilities in all aspects evaluated. Nonetheless, there has not been any empirical research investigating the use of CA insights in telephone conversation teaching. This study was consequently conducted to explore the effectiveness of explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction in enhancing learners' telephone conversation abilities.

### **Conversation Analysis (CA)**

Conversation Analysis (CA) is an approach to studying natural conversations. CA principles originated from works by three sociologists: Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s. CA is noted as a tool to analyze human talk-in-interaction through principles including three broad categories: collecting, transcribing, and analyzing data (Seedhouse, 2004; Sinwongsuwat, 2007).

CA is used to study several kinds of human actions, concentrating primarily on the actions noticeable via talks. CA analysts investigate how participants analyze and interpret their interlocutors' talk and develop understanding of interaction (Seedhouse, 2004). Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) proposed two core analytic questions in CA; namely, what interactional business is being accomplished through the sequential organization of talk, and how talk participants display their active orientation towards this business.

Three fundamental types of interactional organization revealed via CA are essential for understanding this study: turn taking, adjacency pairs, and repair. Turn-taking is central to conversation. Two components are noted in the literature: turn-constructive as well as turn-allocational components. The turn-constructive component accounts for the construction of turns with turn-constructive units (TCUs), which can be sentences, clauses, or words (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Seedhouse, 2004). At the time a speaker is going to complete a

turn, the turn allocational component operates as a speaker transition could take place, rendering the point known as the transition relevance place (TRP) (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Seedhouse, 2004).

Turns are organized in to sequences the most typical ones are adjacency pairs (AP). APs refer to the pairs of often mutually-dependent utterances in talk (McCarthy, 2002), for example, question-answer, greeting-greeting, request-grant/refusal, and invitation acceptance/declination. For a large number of adjacency pairs, there are alternative two pair-parts that are the first part (e.g. question) and the second part of the pair (e.g. answer) and two types of responses: a response by acceptance (preferred action) as well as a response by rejection (dispreferred action) (Seedhouse, 2004).

As participants encounter difficulties in their interactions, repair is known as the treatment to solve problems. It helps us comprehend what people have said, make clear and simplify what we say, and correct our utterances to be more understandable (Wong & Waring, 2010).

### **CA and Second Language Teaching**

Conversation Analysis takes numerous implications for L2 teaching and learning since it can be used to unveil the social organization of natural language-in-use (Button & Lee, 1987). CA is noted as an effective teaching and diagnostic tool in second language pedagogy. A great number of researchers and scholars have utilized CA both as a teaching methodology to enhance interactional competence and as an approach to learning L2 talk-in-interaction (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Martin, 2000; Richards & Seedhouse, 2005; Seedhouse, 2004; Wong & Waring, 2010).

For L2 learners, learning to participate in regular conversation is considered one of the most challenging tasks. From CA perspectives, it is essential for learners to improve their interactional competence (IC) by engaging in social interaction. Interactional competence (IC) is defined as the ability of learners to utilize a variety of interactional resources; namely: turn-taking, repairs, adjacency pairs to get things done and deal with problems in their interaction (Wong & Waring, 2010).

Barraja-Rohan (1997) argued that CA can be employed in second language teaching in order to develop learners' conversational skills. There are many articles examining the application of CA to L2 classrooms for several purposes. For instance, Wu (2013) explored the use of CA in teaching learners' oral English skills and developing interactional competence by examining the transcription of native speakers (NS) or nonnative speakers' (NNS) interactions.

It was found that learners are able to communicate and organize a conversation effectively. Accordingly, their sociolinguistic competence was developed. In addition, Kitajima (2013) conducted a study outside the classroom with low-proficiency learners to examine their conversational skills. The learners were provided with task-oriented activities, information gap and personal information exchange, via talking to native speakers of target languages. It was found that engaging learners in task-oriented context of CA can encourage them to talk, interact more with others and orient themselves to their co-participants.

In Thailand, Teng & Sinwongsuwat (2015) explored the integration of CA into language classrooms. Explicit CA-informed conversation teaching was proven effective in improving conversational competence of Thai undergraduates. The study found that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in most of the aspects assessed. Furthermore, CA-informed instruction can provide an effective lens for teachers to identify problems of interactions in the classroom. Another study by Kongnin (2016) investigated Thai learners' interactions with Thai and non-Thai teachers in English conversation classes. Videotaped classroom interactions were transcribed and analyzed by employing the convention of CA in order to discover certain kinds of micro-pedagogical contexts. The findings showed that three kinds were constructed during the class period: procedural, form-and-accuracy, and meaning-and-fluency contexts. It was expected that the result of the study can provide some insights and strategies to enhance English conversation instruction by both native and non-native teachers.

### **The Organization of Telephone Conversation**

Telephone conversation is very important part of daily-life interaction; therefore, abilities to carry out a phone conversation constitute an essential part of one's interactional competence. Language learners who can take part in telephone conversations fluently and confidently will be able to deal with conversations in the real world more effectively. An understanding of telephone conversation structures such as *conversation openings* is essential for teaching telephone conversation. Telephone openings are normally composed of four stages: 1) summons-answer; 2) identification-recognition; 3) greeting; 4) *how are you*. Learners should be able to follow these sequences while talking on the phone (Wong & Waring, 2010).

The following example was taken from a landline phone call (A = answer; C = caller):

- (1) [Schegloff, 1986, p.115 – modified]
- |                                 |   |                                     |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 01 ((ring))                     | } | summons-answer                      |
| 02 A: Hello,                    |   |                                     |
| 03 C: Hello, Jim?               | } | Identification-recognition          |
| 04 A: Yeah,                     |   |                                     |
| 05 C: It's Bonnie.              | } | Identification-recognition          |
| 06 A: Hi,                       |   |                                     |
| 07 C: Hi, how are yuh.          | } | Greeting + first <i>how are you</i> |
| 08 A: Fine, how're you,         |   |                                     |
| 09 C: Oh, okay I guess.         | } | second <i>how are you</i>           |
| 10 A: Oh okay,                  |   |                                     |
| 11 C: Uhm, (0.2) what are you   |   | anchor point                        |
| 12 <u>doing</u> New Year's Eve. |   |                                     |

The first type is *Summons-Answer Sequence*. It is a sequence of two turns in which the speaker and the caller check whether the other is available for a conversation. This sequence has two steps: Phone Ring and Answers. The answerers sometimes wait until the end of a ring or even the beginning of a new one before the phone is picked up (Schegloff, 1968, 1986). In the Answers part, it is a distribution rule that the answerer will speak first. There are three regular ways of answering the phone: 1) self-identification; 2) *hello*; 3) *yeah* or *hi*. Self-identification is one type of answer. To produce a self-identification can reduce the problem of dialing a wrong number. The second type is '*hello*'; it is the most usual way when answering the phone, especially in personal calls. A minimal *voice sample* is provided to the caller at this stage. Lastly, *Yeah* or *hi* is used when returning calls immediately and when the speakers would like to display who or the type of person is calling, i.e., the person from a certain organization, business, institution, etc (Wong & Waring, 2010).

The other type is *Identification – Recognition Sequence*. This sequence is used when the callers and answerers try to recognize each other by a name or a voice sample. The third type is *Greeting Sequence*. Wong and Waring (2010) defined this sequence as a sequence of two or more turns created by participants who say *hi*, *hey*, *hello* or the like to each other upon original contact on the phone. When a greeting exchange is constructed by the participants, the formality, informality, or intimacy of relationship are revealed.

After the greeting sequence, the last type is *How are you* sequence; for example, *How are you doing? How are things going?* A first exchange of these sequences is usually followed by a second one (Wong & Waring, 2010). *How are you* sequences are differently constructed in telephone openings across languages. In Sweden and Germany, participants hardly exchange *How are you* sequences. To use this sequence in German, people just use it once as a question for well-being (Lindstrom, 1994; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2002). In Hong Kong, *How are you* sequences are regularly used but not with close friends or families (Luke, 2002). However, In Iran, people use these sequences to show politeness of asking about others' well-being (Taleghani-Nikazm, 2002). In addition, in Samoan, *what are you doing* is used instead of *how are you* in telephone openings (Liddicoat, 2000).

Another important part of telephone conversation structure is *conversation closings*. The organization of telephone conversation closings is more complicated than the openings, and there are no particular numbers of sequences compared to the openings (Bolden, 2008; Liddicoat, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

The leading structure of telephone conversation closings is *a basic closing*. This part consists of two types of adjacency pairs: a pre-closing sequence and a terminal exchange. Pre-closing sequence is one or more adjacency pairs which occur before the terminal exchange. Terminal exchange is an adjacency pair in which *goodbye* is exchanged and used to end the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). The following example is a basic telephone closing between friends or acquaintances. It comprises two sets of adjacency pairs.

(2) [Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p.317 – modified]

01A:OK.	}	Preclosing sequence
02B:OK.		
03A:Bye-bye.	}	Terminal exchange
04B:Bye.		

One of the problems L2 learners have concerned is the use of preclosing signals (Griswold, 2003). Preclosing signals are defined as lexical items such as *OK, OK then, alright, alright then, well, so, anyway, yes, yah*, or the like, which do not indicate anything new to the present topic (Wong & Waring, 2010).

(3) [Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p.307]

01A: <b>Okay</b> boy, →	}	Preclosing signal
02B: <b>Okay.</b> →		
03A: Bye bye.		

04B: Good night.

There are nine types of preclosing sequences normally used in telephone conversations. All of them can co-occur (Button, 1987; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973):

- (1) arrangement sequence (for example, “I’ll see you in the morning.”);
- (2) appreciation sequence (for example, “Thank you”);
- (3) solicitude sequence (for example, “Take care”);
- (4) reason-for-the call sequence (for example, “I just called to find out if you’re going.”);
- (5) back-reference sequence (for example, “So what are you doing for Thanksgiving?”)
- (6) in-conversation object sequence (for example, “Mm hmm?”);
- (7) topic-initial elicitor sequence (for example, “Anything else to report?”);
- (8) announced closing sequence (for example, “OK, let me get back to work.”)
- (9) moral or lesson sequence (for example, “Yeah well, things always work out for the best.”).

### **CA and the Study of Telephone Conversation**

Analyses of telephone conversations have increasingly shown that more association with naturally occurring talk is significant in language instruction (Wong & Waring, 2010). There are a number of CA-based studies investigating telephone conversation teaching.

Bowles (2006) adopted CA techniques to examine how participants made telephone calls to discuss their requirements in bookshops. The study was based on data from NS and NNS corpora, and focused particularly on the reason-for-call sequence that is part of the telephone conversation openings. The findings showed the positive outcome of CA in the areas of institutional talk.

Huth-Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) investigated the use of telephone openings that showed sociocultural norms between German and English by comparing a pair of students’ pre- and post-instruction of telephone openings. It was pointed out that engaging students in German-style sequences helped the students to learn more in cross-cultural situations.

CA has brought significant implications for second language teaching and learning (Button & Lee, 1987). Barraja-Rohan (2011) and Teng & Sinwongsuwat (2015) maintain that CA is an effective tool in analyzing L2 interactions, raising learners’ awareness of interactional mechanisms, identifying interactional problems, and developing learners’ conversational competence. In the Thai ELT context, there has been a little empirical research exploring the



effectiveness of CA-informed conversation instruction, none of which examined telephone conversation teaching. Therefore, this study was conducted to fulfill the following research purposes:

2.1.1 To develop Thai EFL learners' conversation abilities by using explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction.

2.1.2 To compare the conversational performance of students given explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction and those given traditional instruction.

2.1.3 To investigate learners' attitudes towards explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction.

### **Research Questions**

2.2.1 Does explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction help to enhance students' English conversation abilities?

2.2.2 In what aspects can explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction enhance students' English conversation abilities?

2.2.3 Are there any differences in the effectiveness between explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction and traditional instruction? If so, what are these differences?

2.2.4 What are students' attitudes towards explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction?

### **Research Methodology**

This experimental study was conducted in order to answer the four research questions related to the effectiveness of explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction. The methodology adopted is described in the following:

#### **1. Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of two classes of 97 university students from several faculties who enrolled in an elective English course (890-212 English Conversation I) in the third semester of academic year 2016 at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai campus. All participants needed to complete pre-requisite courses (i.e., 890-101 Fundamental English Listening and Speaking and 890-102 Fundamental English Reading and Writing). They were selected by the convenient sampling method for the experimental study. Both of the classes were given additional lessons on telephone conversation; unlike the control group, taught

following typical non-CA lesson plans, the experimental group was treated with CA insights in every lesson.

## **2. Data-collection Procedures**

### **2.1 An English placement test**

Before starting the class, both groups were required to take a placement test to evaluate their English proficiency. The test was produced by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. It was divided into two parts of 60 items. The results of the test were interpreted according to Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) levels. According to the test scores, the majority of participants were in the lower intermediate level (B1), with scores between 30 to 39 out of 60.

### **2.2 Video recordings of pre- and post-instruction one-on-one interview**

An interview was conducted to measure students' conversation abilities. All participants were interviewed by a native speaker of English. A scoring criteria and descriptors were adapted from Barraja-Rohan (2011), O'Loughlin (2001), Luoma (2004), and Tsang & Wong (2002). The rubric contained five features essential for conversation ability evaluation: fluency, vocabulary, appropriacy, comprehensibility, and grammar (See Appendix A).

### **2.3 Video recordings of pre - and post-instruction peer telephone conversations**

The pre-instruction and post-instruction telephone conversations of both groups of participants, which lasted for three minutes each, were video-recorded in pairs for subsequent transcription. A video camera was set up close to the students during their conversations to capture their spoken interaction. The performance was assessed by a Thai speaker of English and an English native speaker using the rubric adapted from Barraja-Rohan (2011), O'Loughlin (2001), Luoma (2004), and Tsang & Wong (2002). To assure the reliability of the rating process, the inter-rater reliability was computed, and the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level in all aspects assessed.

### **2.4 Teaching processes**

The students in both control and experimental groups were taught extra classes for one hour each week. Each group was given 15 handouts with the same conversation materials. During the instruction, students in both groups were given handouts, and asked to watch the same video files and practice various English conversations related to their conversation lessons in assigned contexts. However, the experimental group was additionally introduced basic CA concepts such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs via the materials in the

first eight handouts while the other seven handouts focused on CA-informed telephone conversations.

For the control group, the students were taught following non-CA lesson plans using the same conversation materials as those used to teach students in the experimental group. The first eight lessons related to conversation practices such as greeting, leave-taking, invitation, request, and offer while a number of telephone conversation expressions as well as certain steps to making a telephone call without CA insights were introduced through the other seven lessons; for example, giving more information, taking a call and making a request, transferring a call, common phrasal verbs used in telephoning, telephone problems, leaving and taking a message, making arrangements, and making an appointment on the phone. In the classroom, the students were asked to watch sample conversations videos, discuss what was going on in the conversations, do some class activities related to the lessons and role-play following given contexts.

However, for the experimental group, the researcher took the role of course lecturer, instructing the students using 15 CA-based lessons. The first eight lessons were presented to students to raise their awareness of conversation structures. The lecturer directed students' attention to conversation structures such as opening, centering, and closing by having them watch a sample videotaped conversation. Before initiating the first lesson, transcription convention was introduced to students. At this stage, the CA symbols played a minor role as a shorthand for the lecturer to produce a number of handouts, so that the students would be able to comprehend the scripts of the sample conversations provided. After that, the students were introduced to fundamental CA concepts, namely adjacency pair (2 lessons), turn-taking (2 lessons), roles of the listener (1 lesson), and repairs (2 lessons). After basic CA concepts were taught to the students, overall telephone conversation structures were given in the other seven lessons. Students were asked to discuss certain questions about the frequency and ability to talk on the phone. The telephone conversation lessons dealt with telephone conversation openings (3 lessons) and closings (3 lessons), including such topics as ways of producing a first turn, institutional telephone opening sequences, features of answering and dealing with a call, types of first turns, typical words and expressions used in telephone conversation closings, and types of preclosing sequences. After learning the overall structures of telephone conversation, students were asked to analyze scripted dialog openings and closings in terms of basic sequences found in a real telephone dialogue and made particular changes. Additionally, they did a role-play according to the typical telephone openings and closings in given scenarios.

## 2.5 Materials

The materials employed in the teaching were as follows:

2.5.1 Fifteen non-CA handouts produced for students in the control group

2.5.2 Fifteen CA-based handouts produced for students in the experimental group

2.5.3 Fifteen-hour lesson plans created to teach both groups of students

2.5.4 An open-ended 5-item questionnaire was created for students in the experimental group to explore their attitudes towards the CA-based telephone conversation instruction.

## 3. Data Analysis

In order to answer the four research questions, the scores obtained from the two raters in the pre-instruction conversations as well as post-instruction conversations were statistically computed using mean, standard deviation, and independent t-tests to determine significant degree of differences in the students' conversation abilities before and after the treatment. The pre- and post-instruction telephone conversations of both groups of participants were also recorded and transcribed using the transcription convention adopted by Seedhouse (2004) and Schegloff (2007) (See Appendix B). Close analysis of students' sampled conversations was conducted following the principles of CA to determine performance improvement.

## Findings and Discussion

### 1. Improvement in English Conversation Abilities

As shown in Table 1, explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction helped to enhance the students' English phone conversation abilities. A paired sample t-test run to compare the students' pre- and post-test scores from phone conversation with peers demonstrated that after attending a class with explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction, participants in the experimental group performed considerably better in all the aspects assessed in phone conversation: fluency, vocabulary, appropriacy, comprehensibility, and grammar. A significant difference of the overall performance was found at 0.01 level ( $t = 9.871$ ,  $sig = 0.00$ ) and the Cohen's  $d$  effect size was 1.637, considered remarkably large.

Table 1 Pretest and Posttest Phone Conversation Performance of the Experimental Group

Tests Aspects	Pretest		Posttest		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
Fluency	3.00	0.96	3.53	0.78	3.741 **	46	0.00	0.614
Vocabulary	2.91	0.54	4.04	0.75	11.379 **	46	0.00	1.741
Appropriacy	3.06	0.76	4.21	0.41	11.401 **	46	0.00	1.952
Comprehensibility	3.23	0.94	4.26	0.61	7.606 **	46	0.00	1.323
Grammar	2.83	0.70	3.77	0.79	8.407 **	46	0.00	1.259
Overall performance	15.06	3.82	20.09	2.31	9.871 **	46	0.00	1.637

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

To compare the effects of the explicit CA-based telephone conversation instruction and the traditional instruction on the students' performance, an independent *t*-test was used to determine performance differences between the two groups of participants. As shown in Table 2, participants in the experimental group performed significantly better in phone conversation than those in the control group especially in terms of *vocabulary* and *grammar*. The degree of difference was found significant at the level of 0.01 and 0.05 respectively. The term 'vocabulary' in the scoring criteria of this study was defined as the ability to appropriately use a wide range of vocabulary in various conversational situations; for example, in asking and answering questions, in greeting, in making and refusing or accepting a request, and in offering an invitation and accepting or declining one. The term 'grammar' was defined as the ability to employ a wide range of grammatical structures or expressions to communicate effectively with only few mistakes. While vocabulary and grammar appeared to improve considerably easier via explicit CA-informed phone conversation instruction, fluency, appropriacy, comprehensibility seemed to require more training sessions to be enhanced.

Table 2 Phone Conversation Improvement of Experimental and Control Groups

Aspects \ Groups	Control		Experimental		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
Fluency	0.62	0.80	0.53	0.97	-0.46	92	0.64	-0.096
Vocabulary	0.72	0.74	1.13	0.68	2.75 **	92	0.01	0.568
Appropriacy	0.89	0.76	1.15	0.69	1.71	92	0.09	0.352
Comprehensibility	0.70	0.95	1.02	0.92	1.65	92	0.10	0.341
Grammar	0.60	0.74	0.94	0.76	2.19 *	92	0.03	0.452
Overall performance	4.10	2.98	5.02	3.49	1.38	92	0.17	0.286

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

\* Significant at 0.05 level

In order to explore the overall improvement in students' conversation abilities, pre- and post-test interviews were also conducted. The following table indicates a significant difference in performance improvement between the two groups at 0.01 level in all the aspects evaluated, indicating that students participating in the CA-informed class outperformed those in the class with no CA-informed teaching. CA-informed telephone conversation instruction can therefore help learners develop not only their phone conversation skills but also their overall conversation skills. These findings support the supposition that integrating explicit instruction in CA into a conversation classroom can benefit English learners' conversation skills, strengthening similar claims made by Teng and Sinwingsuwat (2015).

Table 3 Face-to-face Conversation Improvement of Experimental and Control Groups

Aspects \ Groups	Control		Experimental		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
Fluency	-0.24	0.86	0.50	0.76	-4.36 **	89	0.00	0.915
Vocabulary	-0.30	0.57	0.42	0.60	-5.83 **	89	0.00	1.226
Appropriacy	-0.23	0.72	0.63	0.66	-5.92 **	89	0.00	1.240
Comprehensibility	-0.34	0.90	0.50	0.69	-4.99 **	89	0.00	1.049
Grammar	-0.23	0.57	0.49	0.56	-6.09 **	89	0.00	1.277
Overall performance	-1.35	2.84	2.53	2.35	-7.13 **	89	0.00	1.496

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

## 2. Close Analysis of Telephone Conversation Openings and Closings

Even though the comparative statistical results of pre- and post-test telephone conversation performance between the two groups may not be shown to be significantly different in terms of fluency, appropriacy, and comprehensibility, close analysis of the openings and closings of the videotaped phone conversations obtained from the two groups showed noticeable differences in all of these aspects.

Excerpts 1 and 2 illustrate the delivery of opening and closing sequences from a pre-test by Thunya and Karn, students in the experimental group. In Excerpt 1, Thunya was calling her classmate, Karn, whom she did not know very well, to borrow her class notes. Role-misalignment is evidenced between the speakers in the opening. Instead of projecting a phone conversation in the first turn by letting Karn answer her call, Thunya initiated the talk herself with a high-pitched greeting, apparently treating it more like a face-to-face conversation. Karn's uptake in the next turn, which prompts Thunya to identify herself in line 03, also indicates her treatment of the latter's first turn as being inadequate for a phone conversation. The closing sequence in Excerpt 2 also shows the student's inappropriate leave-taking from a phone conversation; instead of saying goodbye in return to Karn's line 03 to terminate the exchange, Thunya chose to show appreciation, typically prompting the production of at least one more turn.

### Excerpt 1 Pretest phone conversation opening [ Karn = answerer, Thunya = caller ]

- 01 Thunya: Hi?, noon  
02 Karn: Hi, who are you.  
03 Thunya: Ah:h I'm Thunya. Ah:h I'm a (.) classmate, your classmate.  
Do you remember me?  
04 Karn: Oh? Yeah?  
05 Thunya: A:hh U:mm Can I: E:rr May I: borrow your (.) lecture, please.

### Excerpt 2 Pretest phone conversation closing

- 01 Karn: Okay, see you Wednesday at my home ok?  
02 Thunya: =Okay.  
03 Karn: Goodby:e  
04 Thunya: \$Thank you\$

After CA training, the conversation between Thunya and Karn was markedly improved. The two students conversed successfully, mastering the overall structure of telephone conversation, both in the opening and in the closing sequence, as shown in Excerpts 3 and 4. The four stages of a typical conversation opening were manifested: summons-answer, identification-recognition, greeting, and *how are you*. Karn could also realize her role as the caller by ringing the phone unlike in the pre-test. The two completed the four-staged opening sequence, starting from the *summons-answer* sequence and ending with the *how-are-you* sequence before initiating the first topic or anchor point of the phone conversation. They also delivered their turns more fluently and confidently without unnatural pauses. Additionally, they were able to appropriately construct a pre-closing sequence, shown in Excerpt 8, in which Karn says thanks to the caller for an invitation to breakfast before exchanging goodbyes to end the conversation. The entire conversation apparently proceeded smoothly and was easily comprehended.

**Excerpt 3 Posttest phone conversation opening [Thunya = answerer, Karn = caller ]**

- |    |         |                                      |  |
|----|---------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 01 | Karn:   | ((Ring ring))                        | summons-answer                                       |
| 02 | Thunya: | (0.4) Hi, Noon=                      |  |
| 03 | Karn:   | =Hi, Rut.                            | greeting+ Identification-recognition                 |
| 04 | Thunya: | A:hh How are you?                    |  |
| 05 | Karn:   | I'm fine, and you?=<br>=I'm fine uhh | How are you<br>Noon, are you free now?+ anchor point |
| 06 | Thunya: |                                      |  |
| 07 | Karn:   | Yes, now I'm free.                   |  |

**Excerpt 4 Posttest phone conversation closing**

- |    |         |                              |                                    |
|----|---------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 01 | Thunya: | Thank you but I ate already. |                                    |
| 02 | Karn:   | Okay.                        | Preclosing sequence (Appreciation) |
| 03 | Thunya: | Okay. Thank you. Bye bye.    |                                    |
| 04 | Karn:   | Bye bye.                     |                                    |
| 05 | Thunya: | See you.                     | Terminal exchange                  |
| 06 | Karn:   | See you.                     |                                    |



This is in stark contrast with the excerpts taken from the post-test phone conversation between Ussa and Panu, participants in the control group with no CA treatment, shown in 5. In these excerpts, Panu called Ussa for the same purpose as Thunya and Karn in the previous excerpts. It was evident that even in the post test the two students were still facing the same problem as Thunya and Karn did in their pretest. Apparently, the four-staged opening sequence was not realized.

**Excerpt 5 Posttest phone conversation opening [Ussa = answerer, Panu = caller]**

- 01 Panu: Hello, Ingy↓  
02 Ussa: Hello? Who's speaking?  
03 Panu: I'm Scott.  
04 Ussa: What is it about?  
05 Panu: May I borrow your book?

In addition to the results of the statistical analysis previously discussed, close analysis of conversation extracts has affirmed the benefits of incorporating CA insights into second language teaching and learning (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Seedhouse, 2004; Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015). The explicit CA-informed instruction can improve learners' performance not only in face-to-face conversation, but also in telephone conversation. Given its complexities, the teaching of the latter even requires a more solid understanding of the specific sequential structure revealed via CA (Wong & Waring, 2010). As discussed earlier, it would take learners more time to acquire phone conversation skills and improve in all the aspects involved in telephoning such as fluency, appropriacy, and comprehensibility.

**3. Students' Attitudes towards CA-informed Instruction**

The students receiving CA-informed phone conversation instruction could also see benefits from the treatment based on findings from the 5-item questionnaire survey. The questionnaire items were constructed to determine students' level of satisfaction with learning English telephone conversation; the perceived advantages and disadvantages of CA-informed phone conversation teaching; the possible application of CA-informed lessons in daily life conversations, and aspects of conversation abilities which they thought explicit CA-informed telephone conversation instruction helped to improve.

It was found that 96% of the participants (n = 50) were in favor of the explicit CA-informed telephone conversation instruction. They argued that such an instruction allowed them to comprehend the nature of telephone conversations, accurately interpret interlocutors' expressions, organize the conversation sequences systematically and consequently produce their utterances in accordance with telephone etiquette. They gained substantial knowledge about CA principles and became more confident as they knew how to communicate fluently and appropriately on the phone. They also found the class interesting and enjoyable since the CA-based teaching was rather new to them.

The following quotes show various students' attitudes towards the instruction:

"The CA-based instruction helps me have a better understanding of the nature and the components of telephone conversations. It helps me improve my telephone conversation skills especially in the telephone openings as well as closings. I am able to perceive the emotion of the interlocutor appropriately during the conversation, and at the start and close of the conversation." (A. Surangkha, personal communication, June 27, 2016)

"I am pleased with your ways of teaching which makes me have more confidence, converse without unnecessary pauses and speak more fluently. I was very bad at English in the past but now it is much better." (H. Kodiyoh, personal communication, June 27, 2016)

"I comprehend the role of each character when learning it through the CA lens. It is more understandable than reading the common texts without CA transcription convention. The instruction helps me get a big picture of what is going on in the conversations and learn the telephone conversations easily and systematically." (H. Pattharaporn, personal communication, June 27, 2016)

"The CA-based teaching is new, fun and interesting to me; I have never learned about it. I hope that the campus will include it in the curriculum as a separate course, so that students who are interested in CA have a way to study more about it." (J. Jintaporn, personal communication, June 27, 2016)

"I like it since I am rather bored with the teaching of face-to-face instructions. I have never been taught about telephone conversations. Some lecturers just provided me a number of sample telephone conversations but they did not explicitly teach me how to talk on the phone. In this course, I am able to analyze the given sample conversations; it helps me to become tactful, think carefully before speaking and communicate appropriately in each conversational situation provided." (N. Palinporn, personal communication, June 27, 2016)

Concerns were expressed over limited practice time and the complexity of CA transcription convention. The students expressed a need for more time to comprehend the transcription system and practice transcribing and making conversations with friends. At the end of the course, they expressed an inability to relate well to the transcription convention. Giving them more time and a larger number of typical daily life telephone conversations could have addressed this problem.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of explicit CA-informed telephone conversation instruction on Thai EFL university learners' conversation abilities. The conversation performance of both the experimental group and the control group were transcribed and subsequently analyzed following CA principles. Based upon the statistical analysis of pre- and post-test scores obtained from the students' phone conversation, the participants in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group especially regarding vocabulary and grammar. The improvement in all the five aspects assessed became even more noticeable in the close analysis of sampled conversations. An open-ended questionnaire survey also revealed positive attitudes towards the CA-informed telephone conversation teaching among most of the students in the experimental group.

The results of the study shed some light on the benefits of explicit CA-informed telephone conversation instruction especially in developing students' English conversation skills and motivating their learning of English conversation. Further studies should be conducted providing learners more time to familiarize themselves with the CA transcription system and to comprehend basic CA principles. It was also suggested that instructors make an effort to gain knowledge of CA and CA concepts, so that they can understand the mechanism or norms of the target language interaction and apply such knowledge to their classroom teaching so as to enhance their learners' conversation abilities.

## Appendix A

Scoring criteria and descriptors adapted from Barraja-Rohan (2011), O’Loughlin (2001), Luoma (2004), and Tsang & Wong (2002).

Fluency	Vocabulary	Appropriacy	Comprehensibility	Grammar
Students can speak fluently and manage to keep the conversation going smoothly.	Students have mastered a wide range of vocabulary and used it appropriately.	Students can appropriately and effectively respond to their conversation partner.	Students can produce intelligible speech which is not misunderstood by their partner.	Students can employ a wide range of structures or expressions with only minor mistakes.

## Appendix B

### Transcription convention

*(adapted from Seedhouse (2004) and Schegloff (2007))*

- [ Point of overlap onset
- ] Point of overlap termination
- = (a) Turn continues below, at the next identical symbol
  - (b) If inserted at the end of one speaker’s adjacent turn, indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns
  - (c) Indicates that there is no interval between adjacent utterances
- (0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of seconds; what is given here indicates 5 seconds of silence
- (.) Very short untimed pause, hearable but not readily measurable; ordinarily less than 0.2 second
- word Speaker emphasis
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption
- ? Rising intonation, not necessarily a question
- . Low-rising intonation, or final, not necessarily the end of a sentence
- (word) A stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech
- word: Colons show that speaker has stretched the preceding sound
- oword Material between “degree signs” is quieter than the surrounding talk
- ((word)) Transcriber’s comments
- \$word\$ Smiley voice
- ↑↓ Sharper intonation rises or falls
- hhh Aspiration or laughter

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