



**TOPIC DEVELOPMENT IN THAI EFL CLASSES:  
A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE**

**SUMITA SUPAKORN**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Integrated PhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics**

**School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Newcastle University**

**UK**

**December 2016**

## **Abstract**

### **Topic development in Thai EFL classes: a conversation analytic perspective**

This study investigates topic development in EFL classrooms at a university in Thailand, adopting CA as the research methodology. The majority of previous CA research into topic has focused on explicating talk in ordinary conversations, and only a few studies have been conducted in institutional settings, with EFL contexts particularly ignored. There is also a lack of studies which examine how exactly topics are developed through talk in EFL classrooms and how they express explicitly their reflexive relationship with institutional goals. This study therefore aims to extend existing knowledge by focusing on how topic, as a central concept co-constructed by teachers and students and students and their peers during the course of their talk, is related to the pedagogical purpose in different L2 classroom contexts (Seedhouse, 2004). More specifically, the machinery of topic development, combined with the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair, is examined inductively using CA.

The data were selected from a database of audio and video recordings of 11 hours of EFL lessons. By following the pedagogical focus and what actually happens during the teachers' and students' conversational procedures in two different L2 classroom contexts, namely meaning-and-fluency and task-oriented contexts, certain patterns of topic initiation, shifting and ending are uncovered. The findings demonstrate that topic delivers the institutional business by developing a dual-faceted character. Topic-as-workplan is static, homogenous and pre-determined for all teachers and students whereas topic-in-process is dynamic and heterogeneous talk-in-interaction, with the teachers and students talking a topic into being so that the same topic-as-workplan results in different ways that turn-taking is organised with respect to topic-in-process when performed by different teachers and students.

In relation to topic development in two classroom meaning-and-fluency contexts, the findings show that epistemic imbalance (Heritage, 2012) between the teacher and the students plays a vital role in driving sequences of talk and topic in one classroom, but not in the other. While the topic observed in the meaning-and-fluency context is developed in the normative epistemic

sense, the topics-in-process progress through the imagination of the students in the task-oriented contexts, which involve role-play. Variable approaches are thus necessary in the analysis and evaluation of participation in the development of topic in different L2 classroom contexts.

This present study argues that much remains to be investigated in terms of the micro-interactive practices used by teachers and students in L2 classrooms and as part of an overall architecture of how participants develop particular topics in relation to the specific pedagogical focus in which they are engaged. The study also suggests that research into institutionality of interaction should probe more closely the role of topic in relation to institutional goals.

## Declaration

I declare that this thesis contains some contents and materials which have already been published collaboratively with Prof. Paul Seedhouse.

Seedhouse, P. and Supakorn, S. (2015) 'Topic-as-script and topic-as-action in language assessment and teaching', *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), pp. 393-413.



Sumita Supakorn

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my family – my parents, who are my absolute loves and my inspirations, and my beloved husband, who is my best friend and who has always been there for me. It is also dedicated to the dear memory of my late brother.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to express the deepest appreciation and immense gratitude to my principal supervisor, Prof. Paul Seedhouse, for his never-ending supervision, support and unflagging help. I consider it an honour to have worked with him and it has been an amazing experience. This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for his wisdom and guidance and for the enormously constructive feedback which he has given me. I am also extremely grateful for his understanding and patience, which inspired me to sustain my efforts and encouraged me to progress through the stages of this research. He has been a tremendous mentor to me. I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to my second supervisor, Dr. Adam Brandt, for his thoughtful comments and insightful suggestions on data analysis and for reviewing the final draft of this thesis, and this in spite of his very busy schedule. His Micro Analysis of Intercultural Interaction module also helped me build my confidence in carrying out CA research. I am also truly grateful to my internal examiner, Prof. Steve Walsh and my external examiner, Dr. Florence Bonacina-Pugh, for meticulously reading and examining this thesis, and for providing illuminating feedback and valuable suggestions. In addition, my thanks are extended to all members of MARG for their invaluable ideas and contributions during my data presentation sessions.

In Thailand, I am indebted to Thammasat University for their financial support. This support has been priceless to me. I am also grateful to the teachers and students at the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University who took part in this research and for giving me permission to observe and to record their classes. Special thanks are given to my dear friends Assist. Prof. Dr. Chutigarn Raktham and Daniel Rooney for their whole-hearted support, help, and proofreading throughout the period of my doctoral study. Their friendship has meant so much to me. Most of all, my profound gratitude goes to my family- my parents and my husband, who have always believed in me and who have let me fulfill my dreams. Words cannot express how grateful I am for their patience, support, love, and trust. I owe everything I am to them.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables and Figures</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and Significance of the Study .....	1
1.2 Research Focus .....	4
1.3 English Language Teaching and Learning in the Thai University Context .....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	8
1.5 Outline of the Thesis .....	8
<b>Chapter 2. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	10
2.2 Topic from DA Perspective.....	12
2.3 Topic from CA Perspective .....	15
2.3.1 Topic initiation.....	16
2.3.1.1 Topic initial elicitor.....	17
2.3.1.2 Itemised news enquiry .....	18
2.3.1.3 News announcement .....	20
2.3.1.4 Displaying prior experience .....	21
2.3.1.5 Setting talk .....	23
2.3.1.6 Pre-topical sequence .....	23

2.3.1.7 Topic-proferring sequence .....	25
2.3.2 Topic pursuit .....	29
2.3.2.1 Itemised news enquiry .....	30
2.3.2.2 Returned topic initial elicitor .....	31
2.3.2.3 Recycling of no-news report .....	31
2.3.2.4 News announcement .....	32
2.3.2.5 Reclaimer .....	33
2.3.3 Topic shift .....	34
2.3.3.1 Stepwise topic shift .....	35
2.3.3.2 Disjunctive topic shift .....	45
2.3.4 Topic ending .....	48
2.4 CA and Classroom Interaction .....	53
2.5 Task and Topic .....	58
2.6 Classroom Research into Topic .....	59
2.7 Summary.....	63
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>65</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	65
3.2 Research Focus .....	65
3.3 Research Paradigm and Epistemology .....	66
3.4 The Interactional Architecture of the L2 Classroom .....	69
3.5 Conversation Analysis (CA).....	71
3.5.1 CA principles .....	71
3.5.2 Aims of CA .....	72
3.5.3 Two CA research traditions .....	73
3.5.4 Types of interactional organisation.....	74
3.5.4.1 Turn-taking organisation.....	74



3.5.4.2	Adjacency pairs.....	75
3.5.4.3	Repair organisation .....	77
3.5.5	Conceptual issues relating to this CA study.....	78
3.6	Justification for Choosing CA as the Research Methodology.....	78
3.7	Research Methodology.....	79
3.7.1	Theoretical framework.....	79
3.7.2	CA institutional-discourse perspective on L2 classroom contexts .....	82
3.7.2.1	Form-and-accuracy contexts .....	82
3.7.2.2	Meaning-and-fluency contexts.....	83
3.7.2.3	Task-oriented contexts .....	84
3.7.2.4	Procedural contexts .....	84
3.8	Research Setting and Ethical Issues .....	86
3.8.1	Participants.....	86
3.8.2	Data collection .....	87
3.8.3	Video recordings .....	90
3.8.4	Audio recordings.....	90
3.9	Data Selection.....	90
3.10	Data Analysis.....	94
3.11	Limitations of this Study .....	96
3.12	Summary.....	97
<b>Chapter 4.</b>	<b>Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Contexts .....</b>	<b>99</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	99
4.2	Topic-as-Workplan.....	100
4.3	Class 1: Teacher’s Intended Pedagogical Focus 1 .....	103
4.4	Class 1: Topic-in-Process 1 .....	105
4.5	Class 2: Teacher’s Intended Pedagogical Focus 1 .....	115

4.6 Class 2: Topic-in-Process 1 .....	117
4.7 Comparison of Two Teacher’s Intended Pedagogical Focus .....	119
4.8 Comparison of Topic-in-Process in Two Classrooms .....	120
4.9 Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Contexts .....	125
4.9.1 Topic-in-process: class 1 vs class 2 .....	125
4.9.2 Topic development within turn-taking and sequence organisation .....	126
4.9.3 Topic development and repair organisation .....	128
4.9.4 Epistemic imbalance and topic development .....	129
4.10 Summary .....	130
<b>Chapter 5. Topic Development in Task-Oriented Contexts.....</b>	<b>131</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	131
5.2 Class 1: Teacher’s Intended Pedagogical Focus 2 .....	132
5.3 Topic-as-Workplan.....	135
5.4 Class 1/Group 1: Topic-in-Process 3.....	137
5.5 Class 1/Group 2: Topic-in-Process 4.....	148
5.6 Comparison of Topic-in-Process of the Two Groups.....	160
5.6.1 Task type .....	160
5.6.2 Topic-in-process.....	161
5.7 Topic Development in Task-Oriented Contexts.....	164
5.7.1 Topic-in-process: group 1 vs group 2 .....	164
5.7.2 Topic development within turn-taking and sequence organisation .....	167
5.7.3 Topic development and repair organisation.....	169
5.8 Summary.....	172
<b>Chapter 6. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>175</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	175
6.2 The Research Process and Its Outcome.....	175

6.3 Research Questions .....	176
6.4 Pedagogical Implications.....	184
6.4.1 Pedagogical implications regarding topic development and learning opportunities in EFL classrooms.....	184
6.4.2 Pedagogical implications regarding topic and language task design for EFL classrooms .....	185
6.4.3 Pedagogical implications regarding oral proficiency evaluation .....	187
6.4.4 Pedagogical implications regarding EFL teacher development.....	188
6.5 Research Contributions .....	189
6.5.1 Contributions to research into English language teaching.....	190
6.5.2 Contributions to CA research on ‘topic’ in language classrooms.....	191
6.6 Suggestions for Future Research .....	196
<b>References .....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>213</b>
Appendix A. Letter requesting permission to collect research data.....	213
Appendix B. Participant information sheet .....	214
Appendix C. Participant consent form .....	216
Appendix D. Participant debriefing sheet .....	218
Appendix E. Jeffersonian transcription conventions.....	219
Appendix F. Recording data and transcripts not included in the analysis.....	220
Appendix G. Examples of topic-in-process in meaning-and-fluency contexts .....	221
Appendix H. Examples of topic-in-process in task-oriented contexts .....	229

## List of Tables

Table 1: Recording Data .....	89
Table 2: Data Used in the Analysis.....	93
Table 3: ‘Dating Customs Around the World’ Task Sequence.....	119

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Task/Topic-as-Workplan 1: ‘Dating Customs Around the World’ .....	102
Figure 2: Task/Topic-as-Workplan 2: ‘The Dating Game’ .....	136
Figure 3: Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Context I.....	179
Figure 4: Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Context II .....	180
Figure 5: Topic Development in Task-Oriented Context I .....	182
Figure 6: Topic Development in Task-Oriented Context II.....	183
Figure 7: Framework for the Exploration of Topic Development in L2 Classroom .....	195

## Glossary

CA	Conversation Analysis
CIC	Classroom Interactional Competence
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DA	Discourse Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
IRF/E	Initiation, Response and Follow-up/Feedback/Evaluation
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MCA	Membership Categorisation Analysis
MCDs	Membership Categorisation Devices
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TCUs	Turn Constructional Units
TRP	Transition-Relevance Place

# **Chapter 1.**

## **Introduction**

This introductory chapter explores the background to and significance of the study. This is followed by a description of the research focus and of the current state of English language education in Thailand. Finally, the research questions are specified and an outline of the thesis is given.

### **1.1 Background and Significance of the Study**

In a globalised world, it is inevitable that the use of English in all domains of communication, at local, national, regional, and global levels, is both widespread and continues to grow. This situation has led to growing demands for speakers of English, which is of course used as a vehicle for communication for matters relating to knowledge, economics, and culture, in almost every country in the world. As a consequence of this, English language teaching and learning is of growing importance in meeting these communicative demands.

In recent years, the tourist industry in Thailand has become extremely well developed and English has been generally used in the fields of tourism, international trade and finance (Baker, 2008). English is therefore used for academic and career advancement (Khamkhien, 2010) and is also important in obtaining well-paid work (Keyuravong, 2010). In the Thai context of English as a foreign language (EFL hereafter), students will typically study English for approximately ten years before progressing to the tertiary level. However, the majority of undergraduate students are incapable of speaking English with confidence, particularly so for real use in communication with foreigners (Boonkit, 2010). One reason among many is that most Thai students have limited opportunities to use English with native speakers or within nationally and culturally diverse situations. In addition, the medium of instruction in the vast majority of language classroom is Thai because most teachers are non-native speakers of English, leading to unnatural communication and a failure to create authentic interactions in the classroom.

In the last few decades, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT henceforth) has been advocated as a preferable ‘learner-centred’ approach to meet curricula reforms in many Asian countries, including in Thailand. However, a number of studies have shown that the implementation of CLT in Thailand has not always resulted in providing students with opportunities to develop their communicative competence. Saengboon (2004), for example, has asserted that due to a lack of knowledge about this approach, many teachers continue to place an emphasis on form and accuracy, giving students pattern drills and rote memorisation of isolated sentences. Classroom interaction remains largely teacher-dominated, and students are required primarily to respond to the teacher’s questions with factual information, creating limited opportunities for genuine and authentic speaking activities. This problem has also been observed by Bilasha and Kwangsawad (2004) and Kanoksilapatham (2007), who found that Thai EFL teachers encounter difficulties in designing effective communicative tasks and in matching materials and content to students’ speaking abilities.

These studies suggest that, in order to adopt CLT in their classroom successfully, it is necessary that Thai EFL teachers understand CLT in terms of its implementation. More to the point, as textbooks are also generally adopted and used in mainstream English language teaching (ELT) in Thailand, providing both classroom topics and particular language functions, teachers should not only know how to relate these topics to students, and this in terms of their language skills, personal experiences and real world situations, but should also know how to create sufficient opportunities for authentic use of English in the classroom.

Teachers can foster their students’ communicative competence and confidence by creating and maintaining an English speaking environment and this can be done with the use of communicative tasks, since these can help students develop their language skills through classroom discourse. Walsh (2011) has suggested that in the language classroom, discourse is influenced by the fact that all participants are focusing on a pre-determined aim, which is teaching and learning a second language (L2 hereafter) and that most interactions between teachers and students and between students and their peers are adapted to this end. These interactions entail turn-taking, topic management, topic switching, sequential organisation and many features of ordinary conversation, all of which are determined by that endeavor and by the

roles of interactants. For this reason, topic has a direct impact on how language is co-constructed and this influences students' speaking performance in the L2 classroom.

In view of this, it can be said that in order to prepare Thai EFL students for a world in which they are required to be competent in English, teachers should improve teaching strategies, including developing or enhancing communicative activities in the classroom so that their students are provided with opportunities for the authentic use of English. To meet this end, it is important to begin with an understanding of what actually happens in English language classrooms in Thailand, in particular with how topic management occurs in the classroom.

However, when considered as a research construct, topic in conversation is an elusive concept (Morris-Adams, 2014) owing to the fact that there is no general consensus among researchers on how best to define it. The common-sense definition of a 'topic' is given by Brown and Yule (1983, p. 71) as "what is being talked about". From a discourse analysis (DA henceforth) perspective, Keenan and Schieffelin (1976 as cited in Morris-Adams, 2014, p. 152) have proposed that a topic is "the proposition or set of propositions about which the speaker is either requesting or seeking information." However, this definition may not be the best since, as has been argued by Stokoe (2000, p. 195), "treating topics as discrete, identifiable units is problematic because defining topics is highly subjective and may be different for all the participants, as well as for the analyst."

Alternatively, conversation analysis (CA hereafter), aims to provide a more reliable and promising view on or method of researching topic in discourse. Indeed, topic organisation featured prominently as an object of early CA research (Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2015); Sacks (1992, 1995), for example, discusses at length topic organisation in his 'Lectures on Conversation'. Topical organisation, according to Sacks (1995, volume 1, p. 540), is "a direct consequences, almost an artifact, of the tying structures." In view of this, participants have "tying structures" as a fundamental organising principle of conversation, and this provides the basic means by which they display to one another their mutual understanding. Then, they have topics as a consequence. This is in line with what noted by Schegloff (1990) that the practice of "formulating the topic" is something that may be done *by the participants*, and it is typically the vehicle for other activities or actions. Sacks, thus, proposes a way of analysing topic in terms of



formal procedures rather than content based on the question, “How do persons go about doing topical talk?” or “How do persons show respect for a topic?”

In accordance with the CA position on ‘topic’, the practice of topic talk is “a focus on what a given stretch of talk is *doing* rather than a focus on what it is *about*” (Sidnell, 2011, p. 457). Therefore, research into topic within the CA tradition has, focused on how, from the participants’ perspectives, topic initiations, shifts, and endings are managed in the unfolding of moment-to-moment interactions. This is opposed to other approaches to discourse analysis that try to define and categorise topics from an analyst’s perspective. The CA perspective on how topic can be initiated, shifted and ended will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

In recent years, topic has fallen off the research agenda in discourse studies, including in CA research, and this encompasses that conducted in institutional settings. Heritage (1997), for example, omits topic from his proposed six basic places for probing the institutionality of interaction, which are turn-taking, overall structural organisation, sequence organisation, turn design, lexical choice and asymmetry. More recently, however, topic has become an interest in Heritage’s (2012b) ‘epistemic engine’ of talk. Heritage has emphasised the concept of territories of knowledge and information imbalances in the organisation of conversational sequences. By considering sequences of conversation launched from both knowing and unknowing epistemic stances, the role of epistemic stance and status in motivating interactional sequences can also be warranted by the production of topical talk as from the different roles of interactants.

In this research, topic organisation and development in classroom discourse is therefore of interest and the research will, it is hoped, extend the existing work in CA on topic and help to improve the situation of ELT in Thailand.

## **1.2 Research Focus**

The main purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to investigate the processes by which topics are developed through L2 classroom discourse; and (2) to fill a first gap in classroom research in the area of topic-based analysis and a second gap in research in the CA tradition. The use of conversational procedures, as a way of looking at topic, is therefore the main focus of this study.

This research considers classroom settings in which topic is fore-grounded and works as a prominent interactional organisation to drive the institutional business, namely language teaching and learning. The situation in most EFL classrooms, including in Thailand, is consistent with that described by Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. 139), namely that teachers' speech typically accounts for between one half and three quarters of the talking done in classrooms. Current foreign and L2 teaching methodologies based on CLT and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), however, have students work in small groups in order to maximise their opportunities for communicative practice, that is the teacher establishes situations that are likely to promote communication and the students will therefore interact with others and have more opportunities to express themselves by sharing ideas and opinions about topics which have typically been defined by the teacher. This feature of language classrooms and the teacher's control of classroom topics make investigation easier than it would be in ordinary conversation (Stokoe, 2000).

Any understanding of the 'interactional architecture' (Seedhouse, 2004) of the language of classroom discourse requires selection and mastery of a particular research tool. CA, an empirical research methodology for the analysis of the naturally-occurring spoken interaction (Seedhouse, 2005), is considered by many scholars to be one of the principal approaches used to investigate classroom interaction since it offers a way of answering questions that are related to teaching and learning (Walsh, 2011). CA generates interest in the function of language as a means for social interaction (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), and talk-in-interaction has become the accepted term to refer to the central concern of CA research (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Interaction is examined in relation to meaning and context. Social context is a dynamically created circumstance that is expressed in and through the sequential organisation of interaction. In other words, CA is based on a microscopic view of context in which interaction is context-shaped and context-renewing; that is, one contribution is dependent on a previous one and subsequent contributions create a new context for later actions.

Numerous studies of classroom discourse have employed CA as a methodological framework. CA analysts focus on the explication of talk-in-interaction, and the concern of analysis is to examine the speakers' sequential organisation of talk and how interlocutors mutually orient to the business at hand. In a language classroom, the emphasis is thus upon the interactional organisation of the collaborative development of understandings in classroom discourse. The

focus of analysis is on how teacher and students orient to each other and how their turns at talk are constructed and patterned. In particular, CA institutional-discourse methodology, an applied form of CA, attempts to relate the overall organisation of the interaction and individual interactional devices to the institutional goal (Seedhouse, 2004). By applying CA institutional discourse methodology to research classroom discourse, the detail of teacher-student and student-student interactions can be uncovered by looking at the ways in which contexts are co-created in relation to the goal-oriented activity in which they are engaged (Heritage, 1997, p. 163).

The data in this study were collected using audio-visual recordings. Periods of transcribed classroom discourse from a database containing a total of eleven-hours of recordings were selected for analysis. This study was exploratory and interpretative in nature, employing CA institutional-discourse methodology as the research method. By employing a qualitative mode of enquiry, the researcher attempts to illuminate the empirical findings with in-depth analysis of topic organisation and development in different L2 classroom contexts. The study does not engage primarily with language learning because the main focus is on the sequential organisation of classroom interaction and therefore theories of language learning are not applied. Moreover, in line with the nature of CA, this study is unable to present the entire data collected and thus the data must be analysed and presented selectively in order to illustrate particular points. However, transcripts which were not included in the analysis can be found in Appendix F.

### **1.3 English Language Teaching and Learning in the Thai University Context**

The Thai government passed the Thai National Education Act (NEA) of B.E. 2542 (1999) with the aim of meeting the demands of the global economy and in pursuit of this, the government launched a series of educational reforms, with English becoming a compulsory subject at all levels of education. EFL teaching and learning has thus become an aspect of Thai lives for communication in social, economic and academic environments (Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf Jr. and Moni, 2006). According to Foley (2005), the current English curriculum was revised and introduced in 2001. At the university level, students are required to study twelve credits-worth of English modules; six in general English as a foundation course and six in English for academic or specific purposes (depending on their fields of study). Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf Jr and Moni

(2006) show that the new initiatives in the reformed English curriculum also follow trends in contemporary ELT pedagogies, which focus on “learner-centred” classrooms. This is also supported by Wongsothorn, Hiranburana and Chinnawongs (2003), who view English-language education in Thailand, in particular the teaching methodologies employed, as having undergone a paradigm shift from traditional grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods to CLT and TBLT, this with the aim of developing students’ communicative competence, developing better learning strategies and emphasising autonomous learning in the classroom.

Nevertheless, in spite of the substantial efforts made to reform the English curriculum, and although Thai students have usually studied English for at least ten years before graduating from university, Boonkit (2010) holds that the majority of university students are unable to speak English confidently. Owing to the fact that English in Thailand is taught and learnt as a foreign language, students’ exposure to the real use of the language is relatively limited, and instruction is located where English is not a mother tongue. Given that English speaking is a skill necessary for effective communication in the international arena, students’ English skills should be developed to enhance their ability to communicate both with native speakers of English and with speakers of other languages.

In this regard, when English is taught as a skill to practice, the classroom often provides students with an environment for interaction in the target language. Enhancing the development of students’ speaking ability can be achieved by means of teaching strategies and by selecting effective tasks and materials. Therefore, if the goal of ELT in Thailand is to be successful in creating opportunities for genuine and authentic English interaction in the classroom, it can be concluded that there is a need to investigate both the pedagogical goal of EFL classrooms and teachers’ and students’ actual interaction in the classroom. This will help to provide an understanding of classroom interactional organisation and supply insights for improving classroom and professional practices.

In terms of the current status of topic in the Thai EFL system, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, it has not been mentioned explicitly in any Thai educational curriculum at any level. Watson Todd (1998) provided an analysis of classroom discourse by identifying topics in the discourse and following their development by adopting a DA perspective. Nonetheless, no study

has yet examined extensively the role of topic in relation to institutional goals. Given the importance of topic in Thai EFL classrooms, the following research questions and sub-questions emerge.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The overall aim of this study is to reveal how topics are developed in EFL classrooms in Thailand. The main research question is thus:

- 1) How are topics developed within the reflexive relationship between the institutional goal and the overall interactional organisation of L2 classroom discourse?

The research sub-questions are as follows:

- 2) How are topics developed within different L2 classroom contexts?
- 3) How are topics developed in the interaction between the teacher and the students?
- 4) To what extent do students develop topics during their talk-in-interaction in group discussion?

#### **1.5 Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of six themed chapters. The introduction in the first chapter provides the rationale and focus of the study, followed by the research questions. Chapter two provides a review of the literature that has informed the research and that has helped to identify gaps in the research to date and which this work hopes to fill. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used in the study. The next two chapters present the analysis and discussion of the research data, focusing on the two key themes: topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts (Seedhouse, 2004) in chapter four and topic development in task-oriented contexts (Seedhouse, *ibid.*) in chapter five. Chapter six offers the answers to the research questions. The research contributions, pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research are also addressed in this final chapter.

The central argument of this research is that topic develops a dual-faceted character in service to institutional goals; topic-as-workplan is the homogenised topic which teachers give to students, whereas topic-in-process refers to the ways in which the teachers and students talk a topic into being. The movement from topic as a predetermined, static and homogeneous pedagogical goal to a heterogeneous series of talks-in-interaction by different teachers and students (topic-in-process) is the main object of discussion. This research also provides an analytical tool for studying topic in language classrooms from a CA perspective.

Sacks (1992, p. 541) argues, in relation to ordinary conversation, that topical organisation is an “accessory” to turn-taking and sequence. However, this study shows that topic is fore-grounded and works as a prominent interactional helping to meet the given demands of the immediate language teaching and learning environment. In the specific context of the EFL classroom setting, this transformation of topic provides a basis for the analysis and evaluation of the teacher and student performance. Topic is employed in multiple ways on multiple levels as an organising principle for the interaction; topic is thus both a vehicle for and a focus of the interaction.

This research suggests that a great deal remains to be discovered about how topic is adapted to institutional goals, and thus research into the institutionality of interaction should probe more closely the role of topic in relation to these goals. The results of this study also provide valuable pedagogical implications for pre-service and in-service teachers in developing their teaching strategies, material design and classroom evaluation in terms of providing students with opportunities for genuine and authentic communicative practice.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a general overview of how topic has been approached in the previous literature. Three main aspects of the analysis of topic are considered: research into topic from a DA perspective, research into topic from a CA perspective, and previous research into topic in relation to classrooms. How CA has been applied to study classroom interaction is also explored.

The main argument of this chapter is that topic is a construct of great practical importance in the field of ELT, although how topic is adapted to institutional goals is a little-explained area. In contrast to DA, CA is a better methodology to describe and to analyse L2 classroom interaction. By taking CA methods of dealing with topic in ordinary conversation and applying them to talk in institutional settings, more specifically L2 classrooms, questions on how topics are developed within the reflexive relationship between the institutional goal and the overall interactional organisation of L2 classroom discourse in EFL classrooms in Thailand should be at least partially answered and thus this research gap partly filled.

Topic is a key area for approaching discussion about talk. To date, however, no common ground has been found in developing a definition of conversational topic on which researchers might reach agreement. McCarthy (1991, p. 132) states that from a semantic framework, a topic is the content of different segments of talk which can be described under a title consisting of a single-word or a phrase. One of the shortcomings of this definition is that if a conversation revolves around, for example ‘holidays’ or ‘buying a house’, this is clearly divisible by analysts into a wide range of possible topics or sub-topics.

From a pragmatic point of view, as derived from a common sense understanding of phenomenon, topic has been described as a “metapragmatic folk term” (Grundy 2000, p. 192). Topics are strings of utterances perceived as relevant to one another by participants in the talk (McCarthy, 1991, p. 132). However, this kind of definition can also be problematic if adopted as the basis of analysis when describing and defining a given topic since certain topics, such as the start of a

story or joke, are easier to identify than discrete topics due to the formulaic expressions that are used to introduce and to end them (Stokoe, 2000).

While the two approaches mentioned above focus more on single sentences and transactional talk rather than on longer stretches of discourse, DA puts a premium on more interactional and interpersonal aspects of topical content and selection. From a DA perspective, topics can be defined as stretches of language marked by boundaries which may be either lexical ('by the way', 'to change the subject', for example) or phonological (changes in pitch, for example) (McCarthy, 1991, p. 132). Cook (1990, p. 25) has defined topic as "the information carried in the message", and Keenan and Schieffelin (1976 cited in Morris-Adam, 2014, p. 152) have proposed the definition of a discourse topic as "the proposition or set of propositions about which the speaker is either requesting or seeking information." Watson Todd (1998) has also suggested that topics can be identified using bottom-up and top-down processing.

The first bottom-up topic identification is based on the theme-rheme structure. A theme signals the main topic that one wants to talk about, and a rheme represents comment on that topic (Widdowson, 2007, p. 43). Associated with the notional-functional grammar proposed by Halliday (1970, 1973), a theme is "what the sentence is about" and a rheme is "what is said about [the theme]" (Connor, 1996, p. 81). The second bottom-up topic identification is based on lexical cohesion suggested by Halliday and Hasan (1976). This approach asserts that lexical items which recur most frequently or which are most frequently linked to other items are likely to be the topic of the stretch of discourse. Based on schema theory, top-down topic identification suggests that topics are knowledge structures composed of presuppositions and contexts. In other words, topics are sets of related propositions and represent components of knowledge (Watson Todd, 1998).

Unfortunately, the above bottom-up topic identification, described by Watson Todd, brings its own problems insofar as this type of approach is likely to lead to a potentially infinite series of categories. Furthermore, top-down topic identification is also problematic, since different people's interpretations may differ depending on what they find relevant in light of their own background knowledge and understanding of the context. The identification of schemata activated by some particular stretch of discourse is therefore inevitably somewhat subjective.



In light of these unresolved problems in defining a topic and topic identifications, analyses of topic instead rely upon a common-sense understanding and the ways in which topics are produced, maintained and shifted (Brown and Yule, 1983; Maynard, 1980). As Crow (1983, p. 137) has pointed out, “Defining ‘topic’ with any greater specificity than ‘what a conversation is about’ at any particular moment usually entails focusing on topic boundaries and shifts.” Hudson (1980) also holds that topics are dynamic and may change frequently through discourse; a speaker may gradually shift from one topic to the next without any noticeable break or may instead abruptly change the topic using a clear marker. More recently, however, Morris-Adams (2014, p. 152) circumvents these problems by defining topics as “stretches of discourse, with an identifiable and sustained focus, and bounded by specific moves that led to a recognisably complete or partial change of focus”. Morris-Adams argues that content and organisation contribute to defining a topic and these provide the basic structure of a coherent conversation. This understanding stems from the role of topic as a coherence-organising device, as is reflected in Svennevig’s (1999, p. 164) definition of topic “as a process, that is a set of techniques for establishing boundaries and coherence patterns in discourse.”

As we have seen, since topics are not static, DA follows topic development and change through the unfolding discourse as these topics are negotiated in the interactional process. The next section therefore provides more details of the analytic perspective on topic, as understood from the DA standpoint.

## **2.2 Topic from DA Perspective**

Following Brinton and Fujiki (1984), Crow (1983), and Keenan and Schieffelin (1976), there are six ways in which topics may progress over a stretch of discourse:

1. Topic maintenance
2. Topic drift
3. Non-coherent topic shift
4. Coherent topic shift

5. Topic renewal

6. Topic insertion

Topic maintenance occurs where there is no abrupt shift and the same topic is retained through a stretch of discourse. Topic drift occurs when each discourse act is semantically related to the previous one and signals its relation to the previous utterance, incorporating some of this previous information, but the overall topic gradually changes. As described by Keenan and Schieffelin (1976, p. 342), these two phenomena create continuous discourse, while discontinuous discourse is created when there are abrupt shifts within discourse. Discontinuous discourse involves larger jumps between topics and these may take the form of shifts where the topic is changed with no shared propositions between discourse acts and so the term describes a shift to a topic that has not previously been discussed and which does not incorporate information from the previous topic. Such shifts may be signaled explicitly by discourse markers giving coherent topic shift, or alternatively non-coherent shift may occur. A further variation is that the topic may return or shift back to a topic previously discussed, giving topic renewal. Finally, an exchange on a different topic embedded in a single-topical stretch of discourse is termed topic insertion and is similar to the insertion sequences described in Conversation Analysis (Coulthard, 1977).

In addition, Gardner (1987, pp. 138-139) also gives an exhaustive classification of topic development namely:

1. Topic introduction

This occurs with the first topic in a conversation, the initial greetings, identification, and so forth having been negotiated.

2. Topic continuation

This is found where the primary presupposition in an exchange is linked directly to the primary presupposition entailed in the immediately preceding utterances. A topic may be continued through such links as “Could you explain that again?” or “What happened next?”, or by the completion of an adjacent pair with its second pair-part. A typical example is the recounting of a story and the accompanying listener comments and responses.

### 3. Topic shift

Gardner proposes three sub-types of topic shift. First, when a topic comes to an end, a speaker may pick up a thread from an earlier exchange within the current sequence and pursue 'topic continuation'. Second, where the domain of a topic, for example 'date of forthcoming exam' is expanded or shifted, for example to 'forthcoming exam', this is called 'topic shading' (Hurting, 1977). The third type of topic shift is called 'topic fading' which occurs where there is a reference to a topic from the previous sequence, but which is also a preparation for a new topic.

### 4. Topic recycling

This occurs when the primary presupposition of the exchange cannot be linked to the preceding sequence, but can be linked to an exchange within an earlier sequence. This can be done through topic shift.

### 5. Topic reintroduction

This is quite similar to topic recycling, but topic reintroduction occurs where the linkage of the primary presupposition to the earlier sequence is not achieved through topic shift.

### 6. Topic change

This happens where a new topic appears which has no link to any previous exchanges in the discourse (Yabuuchi, 2002, p. 236). The only difference between topic change and topic introduction is that topic change introduces the second or subsequent topic in interaction.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned DA approach to topic development lacks the fine-grained detail to investigate participants' turns at talk and may obscure issues which are attended to by participants themselves. This type of approach is also likely to lead to analysis which may be overly influenced by the analysts' frame of reference or the analytic categories imposed upon the data, which may or may not reflect the participants' notion of what is being talked about. Topic should perhaps be conceived of as something that is performed by participants, turn-by-turn in their talk, rather than as something which is defined externally by the analyst. Such an approach, which explores how topics are managed in the moment-to-moment interaction and are accomplished practically turn-by-turn by participants in their talk, is CA.

In comparison with DA, CA depends less on an interpretational basis for the analytic claims which are made. CA basis is in “*people’s own orientation* to what’s going on: what they take to be relevant and to be pertinent to the interaction as it proceeds” (Antaki, 1995, p. 23). It is in the participants’ understandings of their own interactions that one finds the basis for analysis (Sacks, 1992). Within the CA tradition, Atkinson and Heritage (1984, p. 165) state that “not only is topical maintenance and shift an extremely complex and subtle matter, but also ... there are no simple or straightforward routes to the examination of topical flow.” More details of CA, as the selected methodology in this study, will be discussed in Chapter 3. Accordingly, in the following section the interactional organisation of topic within discourse will be approached from this alternative theoretical standpoint, CA.

### **2.3 Topic from a CA perspective**

CA deals with ‘talk-in-interaction’, or daily conversational interactions and other forms of interaction. As suggested by Walsh (2011), most interactions between teachers and students and students and their peers in the L2 classroom discourse entail turn-taking, topic management, topic switches, sequential organisation along with many other features of ordinary conversation. In order to understand topic organisation and development in classroom discourse, it is thus vital to begin with an understanding of how CA deals with topic in ordinary conversation. Within the CA perspective, turn-taking is considered a key aspect as it is necessary for speakers to build on the talk of previous speakers (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). Speakers usually produce turns-at-talk which show interpretation and understanding of prior turns, though sometimes unrelated utterances occur and these new topic-initial referents lead to topic changes. Instead of attempting to understand and define what topics are, conversation analysts instead explore how topic is accomplished practically by participants in conversation and the ways in which topics are initiated/proffered, pursued/developed, shifted, and shifted back and terminated/closed.

Unfortunately, the terms used to analyse topic has not always been consistent in the CA literature although much research on topic, including initiations, closings, and shifts, has been conducted within the CA tradition (e.g. Boden, 1994; Button and Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988/1989; Campbell-Larsen, 2014; Drew and Holt, 1988, 1995, 1998; Fisher 1996; Gan, Davison, and Hamp-Lyons, 2008; Howe, 1991; Jefferson, 1993; Maynard, 1980; Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984; Myers,

1998; Sacks, 1992, 1995; Seedhouse and Harris, 2010; Stokoe, 2000). As shown by Seedhouse and Harris (2010), research into topic within the CA tradition has focused on how, from the participants' standpoint, topic initiations, shifts, and endings are managed in moment-to-moment interaction. This is opposed to analysis from the perspective of the analyst, which attempts to categorise and describe topics externally. The importance of the participant's perspective is illustrated by Sack's (1992, p. 75) observation that "the way in which it's a topic for them is different than the way it's a topic for anybody else". In the following section, topic development will be introduced from the CA perspective and the four technical aspects of topic management will be explored:

1. Topic initiation
2. Topic pursuit
3. Topic shift
4. Topic ending

### ***2.3.1 Topic initiation***

Topic initiation refers to practices by which new topics are started and the obvious place for topic nomination is at the opening or closing of a piece of talk (Campbell-Larsen, 2014; Wong and Waring, 2010). Following the "boundaried topical movement" given by Sacks (1992), there are four places at which new topics (unrelated to prior utterances) are initiated: at the openings of conversations, after closings of conversations, after the closure of a previous topic, and following a series of pauses.

According to Button and Casey (1984, 1985), Maynard and Zimmerman (1984), and Schegloff (2007), there are seven methods through which topics can be initiated:

1. Topic initial elicitor
2. Itemised news inquiry
3. News announcement

4. Displaying prior experience
5. Setting talk
6. Pre-topical sequence
7. Topic-proffering sequence

#### 2.3.1.1 Topic initial elicitor

In understanding how a topic is generated, Button and Casey (1984) have proposed a three-turn sequence of conversation that is initiated by a topic initial elicitor. This sequence consists of topic initial elicitor, newsworthy event, and topicaliser. The turn designs of topic initial elicitors vary according to the environments in which they occur. However, Wong and Waring (2010) have suggested a (non-exhaustive) list of useful topic initial elicitors: “What else?”, “What’s new?”, “What’s new with you?”, “What’s going on?”, “What are you doing?”, “How are you doing?”, “How are things going?”, “Anything else to report?”, and “What do you know?”.

The preferred second turn, made in response to the topic initial elicitor, is a report of a newsworthy event. Two techniques are usually employed in this regard: (1) prefacing the newsworthy event with markers such as “Oh” e.g. “Oh, I went to the dentist”, and (2) presenting the event as being searched for e.g. “U:::m. ... getting my haircut tomorrow” (Button and Casey, 1984). The topicaliser exhibited in the third turn may be an utterance such as yeah, oh really?, did you really?, among others. This has a dual function; it underpins the newsworthiness of the report and it transforms a potential topic into an actual topic (Wong and Waring, 2010). Extract 1 below, modified from Button and Casey (1984, p. 182), illustrates the topic initial elicitor sequence.

#### **Extract 1**

- 1 S: What’s new?
- 2 G: Well. Let me see. Last night, I had the girl over.
- 3 S: Yeah!

### 2.3.1.2 Itemised news enquiry

In contrast to a general enquiry function of a topic initial elicitor, an itemised news enquiry targets a particular newsworthy item which is related to or known about by the recipient. This may be accomplished in one of three ways (Button and Casey, 1985, pp. 5-11). The first form an enquiry may take not only displays that there is a gap in knowledge which needs to be filled, but may also contain a request for information. For example, in Extract 2 below, B enquires into whether the school is open. B therefore displays a lack of knowledge regarding an item of information and requests that this knowledge-gap be filled.

**Extract 2** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 7)

- 1 A: Hello Hillcrest High School.  
2 B: Yes, is Hillcrest going to be open today?  
3 A: We don't know yet uh Mrs Rodgers just came in an' she's  
4 going to tell us (if) we're gonna have (a) school or not.

The second form itemised news enquiries may take is that of a solicitous enquiry into troubles that the recipient is known to have.

**Extract 3** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 11)

- 1 Clara: How's your foot?  
2 Agnes: Oh, it's healing beautifully.

A solicitous enquiry provides the occasion for the recipient to recount news about a referenced trouble. In Extract 3 above, Clara provides a solicitous enquiry by targeting a trouble which she knows Agnes has had and by so doing she requests updates or news about this trouble.

The third form of news enquiry is concerned with knowledge of a recipient-related activity which is designed to generate reports of news. In this form, the speaker orients to the recipient-related activity or circumstance but does not display any knowledge of specific newsworthy items. In Extract 4 below, Agnes's enquiry does not display any particular knowledge but instead represents a recipient-related activity, Portia's work at a restaurant, as a context from which she can generate some news to report.

**Extract 4** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 12)

- 1 Agnes: How's everything at the restaurant?  
2 Portia: hh uh- Gee we were really busy last night it was like  
3 summer.

The responses to the itemised news enquiries presented in the extracts above display a second common turn, which is relevant when starting a topic. Further development of the newsworthy report can be achieved through presenting the news as recognisably incomplete. In Extract 2, for example, A responds by reporting the news. However there may be more to say. In Extract 3, Agnes can talk more about her remarkable recovery and in Extract 4, Portia can give more detailed explanations of why the restaurant was “busy”. In the third turn, the next speaker may continue to talk by either addressing the incompleteness of the news or by using continuation markers such as “Yeah”, “uh huh”, or “Mm Hm”, which provide a sequential space for continuation by the recipient.

The progression of an itemised news enquiry through an elaborated response can be used to start a topic. However, Button and Casey (1985, p. 17) also point out that a recipient may *not* produce their turns in collaboration to begin a topic, but may start a follow-up move, which may possibly terminate the development of talk on that news. The recipient may give only a minimal response which fills a gap in the prior speaker's knowledge or, alternatively, the recipient may produce an elaborated response, but again this may not provide anything to report.

In the next extract, Nancy's asking about the mail that Hyla has received implies that she considers it as being potentially newsworthy. Obviously, Nancy expects more than simply a straightforward answer and provides a space for Hyla to continue to relate any news which she might have about the mail. Unfortunately, Hyla, the recipient of the itemised news enquiry, does not respond to this aspect of Nancy's enquiry, as can be seen from her minimal response. Consequently, this response, which does not present any form of progress, provides the means for Nancy to understand that Hyla does not want to talk further on that topic and hence such a response has the character of curtailing the production of the topic. Nancy therefore subsequently responds to this with “Sorry I brought it up”.



**Extract 5** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 20)

- 1 Nancy: Did you already get the mail,=  
2 Hyla: = .hhh Yes, hh-hh-h I- h,  
3 Nancy: Oh, hhhmhhhh  
4 Hyla: hh-hh  
5 Nancy: Sorry I brought it up.  
6 Hyla: Yeah,

Overall, it is sufficient to conclude that the aforementioned interactional sequence is designed to establish talk on an item of news, and the itemised news enquiry may be used to start a topic through mutual understanding.

2.3.1.3 News announcement

Button and Casey (1985) contend that the news announcement is a type of activity report and that it has three characteristics. Firstly, while an itemised news enquiry targets a recipient-related activity, a news announcement represents a method of topic initiation that reports on a speaker-related activity. The activity is not necessarily about the speaker, but it is the current speaker who, to some extent, has first-hand knowledge of the activity. Secondly, although the activity is speaker-related, the speaker also regards the recipient as having some knowledge of aspects of the report. For example, in Extract 6, Shirley knows that Geri's mother has met Michael. The current speaker, Shirley, believes that the recipient, Geri, knows a third party, who is referred to in the activity reported by the name Michael. Thirdly, the news announcement is produced as a partial report that leaves other aspects of the activity to be related. Such things as where and how Geri's mother met Michael, what happened, and so forth may be further reported on.

**Extract 6** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 21)

- 1 Geri: How are you doing?  
2 Shirley: Okay how're you?  
3 Geri: Oh, alright.  
4 Shirley: Uh:m your mother met Michael last night.

It is also necessary to point out that the announcement in this regard constitutes ‘headline’ news rather than ‘news delivery’. The recipient may provide an opportunity for the speaker to develop the talk referring to the news announcement. The recipient may not elaborate on the news, but use a topicaliser, as shown in the second turn in Extract 7 below where the utterance is relevant to talk on the reported activity introduced by Edgerton, the news announcer. The topicalising response offered by Joan therefore provides a sequential opportunity for Edgerton, the original news announcer, to elaborate on the news with “Ten pounds”.

**Extract 7** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, pp. 23-24)

1 Edgerton: Now look (.) im-uh Ilene has just pushed a note in  
2 front of my face,  
3 Joan: Yes?  
4 Edgerton: Ten pounds

The original news announcer may not elaborate further, but may instead produce an item which only confirms the previously reported news. By not elaborating on the news, the speaker has not provided a resource to underpin further development of that news, and this could possibly curtail the development of the topic, such as in the Extract 8.

**Extract 8** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, pp. 23-24)

1 J: Terry is got the kids,  
2 (0.3)  
3 A: Terry does,  
4 J: Yep

#### 2.3.1.4 Displaying prior experience

Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) observe that speakers rely on mutually shared knowledge when using prior experience to initiate a topic. This may include, for example knowing one another’s biography, relationships, interests, and the activities in which they are involved, as illustrated below.

**Extract 9** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 303)

1 Betty: I don't think we really need this warm-up period  
2 Carl: heh heh  
3 (5.5)  
4 Carl: That snake was kind of neat work the other day  
5 [cause of lot of]  
6 Betty: [Was it? ]  
7 Carl: the kids hadn't ever seen a snake

In this setting, after having talked about an experiment (lines 1-2) and then a long pause, Carl initiates a new topic at line 4. Carl's use of the term "that snake" connects the immediate utterance with their earlier talk concerning a snake and the circumstances surrounding its presence at their place of work. The prior talk and the speakers' relationship provide the common background to enable the reference to "that snake" in this situation. Betty and Carl rely upon mutual knowledge of one another's biography in reference to practices within their topic-initial utterances and this makes visible a shared history of interaction.

Responses to this kind of topic initiation can also regularly demonstrate a possible topic closure. This happens in the Extract 10, when Jack responds to Melinda's observation with a topicaliser that displays his lack of interest in Melinda's utterance. Jack's minimal response is followed by a 0.9 second silence, and Melinda therefore switches to a topic in which the talk itself is the topic (lines 4-6).

**Extract 10** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 304)

1 Melinda: Your patches are coming apart  
2 Jack: Yeah I know it  
3 (0.9)  
4 Melinda: Boy this is really funny when you think about our  
5 conversation we've hit about twelve different topics  
6 in the last seven minutes

### 2.3.1.5 Setting talk

Setting talk is a method of topic initiation that focuses on the immediate environment of the interaction (Wong and Waring, 2010). Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) found that setting talk, for example conversations about the weather, may be exhausted or occasioned by other topic talk. In Extract 11, a topic related to an experiment which Bill and James are participating in is initiated by referring to the videotape equipment involved in both the experiment and in television production. The talk then develops Bill's having been on TV before. Setting talk is thus generally characterised as topical talk available to participants through shared access to events and objects in their environment.

**Extract 11** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 304)

1 Bill: Hey, I know he's been watching us. They're going to  
2 leave us in here.  
3 James: They're not watching me. Oh, it's my one moment of  
4 glory then  
5 James: Well  
6 (3.0)  
7 James: No, actually I was on TV twice  
8 Bill: Real TV?

### 2.3.1.6 Pre-topical sequence

Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) argue that not all sequences result in topical talk because in a pre-topical sequence, a questioner may ask a recipient a categorisation or category-activity question. Firstly, a pre-topical question is an invitation proffered to a recipient. The invitation may not be specific to a given topic but may invite the recipient to produce an utterance leading to a topic-initial utterance. The recipient may accept, decline, or provide an ambiguous response to this. Secondly, whether that topical offer is successful in generating further related topical talk or not depends on how it is treated.

In order to offer a topical-initial utterance, a recipient accepts the invitation with a long-form reply to a pre-topical question. For example, in lines 2-4 of Extract 12, the recipient (A2) not only describes how he/she may be categorised (his major) but also further talks on that categorisation.

**Extract 12** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 306)

- 1 A1: What's your major?  
2 A2: Um, well my major's physics but I haven't really taken a  
3 physics class yet so I have a good chance to change it.  
4 Probably to anthro if I change it  
5 A1: I've heard that's a good major

On the other hand, a rejection of an invitation may occur by producing a short-form reply plus a return question as in line 2 of Extract 13. In answering with a return question, B declines the opportunity to offer a topic-initial utterance, but does not reject the topic itself. The question produced by B relates to the categorisation device of A's original question. By replying to a categorisation question with minimal information and returning a question, B formulates the reply as only an answer, not an offer to engage in topical talk.

**Extract 13** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 306)

- 1 A: Are you a freshman here?  
2 B: Sophomore. Are you- what are you  
3 A: uh, I'm a freshman

It is important to point out that short-form answers without any return questions may appear ambiguous. While long-form answers are explicit topical offers, short-form answers may contain implicit topical-initial offer. This is because they leave open the possibility in the next turn for the questioner to produce a topicaliser that may open further topical talk.

**Extract 14** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 307)

- 1 A1: What's your major?  
2 A2: Sociology.

3     A1:   Really?  
4     A2:   Yeah  
5     A1:   uh, you taking Soc one or-  
6     A2:   um, right now I'm in Soc two

Following the short-form reply by A2 in Extract 14 above (line 2), the questioner (A1) produces a minimal topicaliser (line 3). Next, A2 acknowledges this response (line 4), and A1 produces a category-activity question (line 5). This opens a space for a longer answer (line 6) and related topical talk. Accordingly, it may be the case that a short-form reply to a pre-topical question demonstrates neither acceptance nor rejection of the invitation to provide a topical offer. The questioner and the recipient may produce further utterances which lead to possible topical talk.

Alternatively, a topicaliser and a return question may be treated as only an answer and not as a topic-initial offer (see line 4 in the next Extract 15).

**Extract 15**   (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 307)

1     A:    Where do you live anyway?  
2     B:    Ventura  
3     A:    Ventura? Ah, you're just right down the road aren't you?  
4     B:    Yeah. Where're you from?  
5     A:    Um, Forest Park eh heh which is ...

The repeated response “Ventura?” produced by A shows recognition of the name and the subsequent return question makes a reference back to where they are at the time of interaction. This repeating device may be used to give B a second chance to produce a topic-initial utterance, but this is declined through the production of a return question. However, a short-form reply to a pre-topical question may also be a topic-initial offer made through a series of turns.

#### 2.3.1.7 Topic-proffering sequence

Schegloff (2007) defines topic proffering as an action utilising a question which possibly succeeds in engaging its recipient in topic talk. In this distinct mode of entering into topic talk, a speaker proposes a particular topic and makes available to the recipient(s) the possibility of accepting or of declining it. A topic proffer has two characteristic features. The first feature is

characterised as “recipient-oriented topic”. The recipient is treated as being the authoritative speaker because the topic concerns something within the recipient’s experience. The second common feature is that a topic proffer is mostly implemented through a yes/no question, though other types of questions can also be used.

Schegloff (2007) suggests that in response to a topic proffer, the recipient may accept or decline what has been proposed and this can be displayed in several ways. First, the recipient displays positive or negative response tokens following a proffered yes/no question. Second, the recipient provides a response by aligning to or denying the yes/no question, though this is not necessarily straightforward; the aligning response to a negative question may be “no”, while a “yes” response may be a way of denying the question. Third, the recipient may construct a minimal or an expanded response. The third feature is the key aspect of the response since it plays a strategic role and does not work mechanically. The expanded response, which is constructed of more than one turn-constructive units at the sentential level and is very informative, may be used to reject the topic. Extracts 16 and 17 are examples which demonstrate how recipients accept or decline proffered topics.

**Extract 16** (modified from Schegloff, 2007, pp. 171-172)

- 1     Ava: That’s goo[d,  
2     Bee:                   [Did you have any-cl- You have a class with Billy  
3                   this te:rm?  
4     Ava: Yeh he’s in my abnormal class.  
5     Bee: mnYeh [how- ]  
6     Ava:                   [Abnor]mal psy[ch.

Ava’s response to Bee’s yes/no question in lines 2-3 above shows agreement. This is indicated directly with the “Yeh” token, and the response is built as an expanded turn in line 4, followed by the post-completion repair in line 6. On the other hand, Ava’s response in Extract 17 below shows disagreement with Bee’s question by displaying in the turn-initial position the negative token “No”. Even though built to be expanded, the further expansion is designed to decline the potential topic about “Vivian”.

**Extract 17** (modified from Schegloff, 2007, p. 172)

- 1 Bee: I don't know. So anyway hh Hey do you see fat ol' Vivian  
2 anymore?  
3 Ava: No, hardly, and if we do, you know, I just say hello quick  
4 and hh you know just pass each other in the hall.

More recently, topic has become an interest in the 'epistemic engine' of talk suggested by Heritage (2012). Heritage has written on the role of information imbalance in the organisation of conversational sequences. Heritage argues that "when a speaker indicates that there is an imbalance of information between speaker and hearer, this indication is sufficient to motivate and warrant a sequence of interaction that will be closed when the imbalance is acknowledged as equalized for all practical purposes" (p. 32). In view of this, sequences can be opened either through a K- (the unknowing) or K+ (the knowing) position by means of a question or an announcement. In case of the K- initiation, "a request for information positions the requester as occupying an unknowing (K-) epistemic status and the recipient as occupying a knowing (K+) one" (p. 34). In Extract 18, for example, Lesley initiates the sequence asking her mother about a kind of medication that she has recommended.

**Extract 18** (modified from Heritage, 2012, p. 34)

- 1 Lesley: Uh did you get your garlic tablets.  
2 Mum: Yes I've got them,  
3 Lesley: Have you started tak[ing them  
4 Mum: [I started taking them today  
5 Lesley: Oh well don[e

The request for information by Lesley motivates a corresponding response from her mother as the information about taking the herbal tablets is clearly in the mother's epistemic domain. After briefly expanding the request in line 3, the acknowledgement/change of state token "Oh" coupled with the assessment "well done" in line 5 together indicate that the epistemic gap has been satisfactorily filled.



Heritage asserts that assessments may also function as “sequence closing thirds” (Schegloff, 2007, p. 123) indicating that an epistemic gap has been closed, and the interaction may progress through a process of “boundaried” or “segmented” topic organisation, as suggested by Button and Casey (1985) and Jefferson (1984). This can be seen in Extract 19 below.

**Extract 19** (modified from Schegloff 2007, p. 124 as cited in Heritage, 2012, p. 35)

1 Ava: [.hh ] How have you been.  
2 Bee: .hh Oh:: surviving I guess, hh[h!  
3 Ava: [That’s good=  
4 Ava: =How’s (Bob)  
5 Bee: He’s fine  
6 Ava: That’s good  
7 Bee: °(But)° (Good)=  
8 Bee: =and how’s school going.  
9 Ava: Oh same old shit.

After the assessment “That’s good” (lines 3 and 6) given by Ava, new information-requests are initiated (lines 4 and 8) and thus the sequence is expanded. By using each assessment as “sequence closing thirds” to terminate the epistemic imbalance, segmented topic initiations are deployed to invite sequence expansion. It can thus be said that topic organisation plays a vital role in the organisation of conversational sequences and thus of the epistemic imbalance.

In the case of a speaker assuming a knowing (K+) position, a pre-sequence to initiate a talk through an announcement may be deployed, as seen in Extract 20. The pre-announcement sequence contains Ron’s effort to upgrade the K+ claim in reference to the status of the information as “news” with “I forgot to tell you” and its recency with “today”.

**Extract 20** (modified from Terasaki, 2004 as cited in Heritage, 2012, p. 41)

1 Ron: I forgot to tell you the two best things that happen to me  
2 today.  
3 Bea: Oh super.=What were they

- 4 Ron: I gotta B plus on my math test,  
5 Bea: On your final?  
6 Ron: Un huh?  
7 Bea: Oh that's wonderful

In conclusion, this analysis of conversation offers several ways of thinking about topic initiation in conversation. Note that a topic beginning is disjunctive with regard to the previous topic(s) and may be organised through a series of sequential moves in the three environments where conversation openings are produced; where a prior topic has been closed-off; and where conversations' closings have been introduced. This is opposed to particular sequential environments, where a systematic feature of topic organisation is that topics flow from one to another and a distinct topic initiation may not be apparent.

Once a topic has been introduced, the speakers expect their co-participants to engage in the topic with them. This can be accomplished by providing feedback on topics, discussing alternatives to the proposed content, and/or providing variations on the theme. Nevertheless, it is expected that the topic will be developed. With regard to topic development, Schegloff (2007, p. 171) has described the processes through which a topic is taken up and developed by participants: "the key issue is whether the recipient displays a stance which encourages or discourages the proffered topic, embraces it or rejects it, accepts or declines what has been proposed". Accordingly, the next section details another technical aspect of topic management, topic pursuit.

### ***2.3.2 Topic pursuit***

Topic pursuit refers to practices of insisting on developing a topic by participants once the topic has been initiated, but after it may have received curtailed responses (Wong and Waring, 2010). Button and Casey (1984, 1985) observe that a possible curtailment could occur in response to a topic initiation. Following possible curtailing moves, however, attempts to pursue or to insist on developing a topic may be made. Topic pursuit may be engaged in by using one of the following ways, which will be discussed and illustrated in Extracts 21-26.

1. Itemised news enquiry
2. Returned topic initial elicitor

3. Recycling of no-news report
4. News announcement
5. Reclaimer

### 2.3.2.1 Itemised news enquiry

In Extract 21, Lawrence responds to Maggie's topic initial elicitor with a no-news report. Maggie, in lines 5-6, attempts to pursue the production of topic using an itemised news enquiry which preserves a feature of the original topic elicitor by going on to orient the topic to Lawrence's news. Lawrence thus continues to report his real estate activities (lines 7-10 and 12).

**Extract 21** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, pp. 27-28)

- 1 Maggie: What have you been up to  
 2 (0.5)  
 3 Lawrence: Well I have about the same thing.  
 4 One thing anoth[er.I should  
 5 Maggie: [You're still in the real estate  
 6 business, Lawrence?  
 7 Lawrence: Wah e'uh no my dear heartuh you know Max Rickler h:  
 8 (0.3) .hhh uh with whom I've been 'sociated since I've  
 9 been out here in Brentwood  
 10 [has had a series of um-bad experiences  
 11 Maggie: [Yeah  
 12 Lawrence: uhh -hhh I guess he calls it a nervous breakdown .hhh

Likewise, Button and Casey (1985) observe that recipients of a possibly curtailed news announcement may also use an itemised news enquiry in order to pursue topic production. In Extract 22, for example, C's itemised news enquiry in line 4 attends to B's announced news in line 1 and initiates the next turn, in which B provides elaboration in the form of an answer to the

prior turn. B, the original news announcer consequently continues to elaborate on the previously announced news in lines 5-6.

**Extract 22** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 37)

1 B: Oh I got hurt a little bit last night.  
2 C: You did.  
3 B: Yeah,  
4 C: What happened to you?  
5 B: Well ah(,) like tuh cos' much little finger they had me in  
7 surgery for about three and a half hours getting ( )

#### 2.3.2.2 Returned topic initial elicitor

A returned topic initial elicitor is also possible following a no-news report, as in the Extract 23 below, where J's no-news report at her turn initial in line 7 may curtail F's prior initiation of a possible topic. However, by continuing to return a topic initial elicitor, J may pursue the generation of a topic, although she first declines to introduce a possible topic initial.

**Extract 23** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, pp. 30-31)

((3 lines omitted))

4 J: Hello. hello.  
5 (0.4)  
6 F: What's going on,  
7 J: Not much. What do you know,

#### 2.3.2.3 Recycling of no-news report

The next extract demonstrates another way of pursuing a topic, recycling of no-news report. Pete shows in line 2 that he is not reporting news or providing any other topic production. Marvin then recycles the no-news report in line 3 and again prompts Pete to address that. In doing so,

Marvin may challenge Pete for having withheld the news as it is subsequently revealed that Pete is out of work.

**Extract 24** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 33)

- 1 Marvin: How're things going?  
2 Pete: Oh:::: nothing doing  
3 Marvin Nothing doing huh?  
4 Pete: Jee:z's I've had a hell of time.=  
5 Marvin: =hih u-Have you?  
6 Marvin: [wuh  
7 Pete: [Since the eighth of October.  
8 Marvin: W:u\_h-u what's that.  
9 Pete: Well I've nothing to DO;  
10 Marvin: Oh you mean you're not working?

#### 2.3.2.4 News announcement

In their discussion of curtailed itemised news enquiries, Button and Casey (1985) found that speakers may form a further news announcement in order to pursue a topic. As can be seen in Extract 25, following such a possible curtailing move of J in line 2, A then challenges the absence of any news report by asking “Is she?” and supplying news which J could have delivered in response to the itemised news enquiry in line 1. With this news announcement in line 3, A continues to pursue the topic and finally gets J to elaborate on it.

**Extract 25** (modified from Button and Casey, 1985, p. 43)

- 1 A: How's Tina doing.  
2 J: Oh she's doing goo:d.  
3 A: Is she I heard she got divo:rc:ed.=  
4 J: = Mhm?  
5 A: Is she?

6 J: (sh)sposeuh get rema:rried again thou:gh, next couple of  
7 weeks,=  
8 A: = †Oh you're †kidding. Who's she marrying.

### 2.3.2.5 Reclaimer

The next method for pursuing topical talk following a curtailed response is a *reclaimer* (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984). In Extract 26, in response to B1's short-form reply (line 2), B2's reclaimer (line 3) is a topic-initial utterance bringing the focus back (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 114) to an occasioned categorisation, or their own membership (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 308). However, a reclaimer is only a potential topical-initial utterance and, like other kinds of topic pursuit, may be responded to in various ways.

**Extract 26** (modified from Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984, p. 308)

1 B2: Where do you come from.  
2 B1: Sacramento.  
3 B2: Oh Yeah? I'm from Concord. It's up north too.  
4 B1: Yeah it's a little bit close.  
5 B2: Yeah and I went home this weekend ... ((story))

In the discussion above, particular attention has been paid to the pursuit of topics following curtailed responses. The pursuit of an already-going topic is also emphasised by Schegloff (2007, p. 173). In a topic-proffering sequence, after a preferred response in which the initial topic proffer has been accepted, the second “try” in the “follow-up” move directs the talk towards a particular aspect of the proffered topic. This is the case in Extract 27 where the second try produced by Bee in line 7 leads the talk towards a discussion of Billy's relationship, which is quite different from the first proffer in lines 2-3, which was with regard to an academic aspect. By being expanded and displaying an acceptance to the topic, the talk indicates the direction of the topic pursuit.

**Extract 27** (modified from Schegloff, 2007, p. 174)

1 Ava: That's goo[d,

2     Bee:                   [Did you have any-cl- You have a class with Billy  
3            this te:rm?  
4     Ava: Yeh he's in my abnormal class.  
5     Bee: mnYeh [how- ]  
6     Ava:                 [Abnor]mal psy[ch.  
7     Bee:                   [Still not getting married,  
8     Ava: hhh Oh no. Definitely not.[married.]  
9     Bee:                   [No he's] decided [defin[itely?]  
((6 lines omitted))

The various methods of pursuing a topic described above provide precisely the tools to go beyond a single turn and expand sequences of talk, as suggested by Schegloff (2007, p. 171): “[A key feature] is whether the response turn is constructed to be minimal (or minimized i.e., analyzably kept short, even if not as short as possible) or expanded. Here turn organization plays a strategic role; response turns composed of a single TCU [Turn Construction Unit] (especially if they are redundant or repetitive) are ways of embodying minimal response”. As talk is not monotopical in nature, another important component of topic management is topic shift, which is discussed in the following section.

### ***2.3.3 Topic shift***

Topic shift is a process of transition from one focus or aspect of topic to another, or the movement from one topic to a new one. It is important to differentiate between topic shift and topic initiation. While topic shift occurs within the current topic, topic initiation is found in four environments: openings, closings, after a topic boundary, and after a series of silences (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 115).

Button and Casey (1984), Jefferson (1984) and Sacks (1992, 1995) identify two phenomena found in any investigation of topic shift/transition. The first is stepwise or touched-off topical movement, which Schegloff and Sacks (1973) term ‘topic shading’. This is a step-by-step transition, where one topic flows into another. “In this process, elements of the current topic which are incidental are fore-grounded and become topicalized in their own right, whilst the foregoing topicality is, by default, backgrounded by not being attended to in ongoing talk. The

process repeats in a cyclical manner (Campbell-Larsen, 2014, p. 173)". The second phenomenon is bounded topical movement ('disjunctive' or 'segmented' topic shifts) which occurs when the closure of one topic is followed by the initiation of another topic (Sacks, 1992, p. 352). In other words, this second phenomenon occurs where an explicit boundary marker is used to mark the end of one topic and the beginning of another topic (to indicate the topic shift). This is often employed when there is a larger distance between the topics and this is often the difference between this and stepwise transitions.

Sacks argues that "'talking topically' doesn't consist of blocks of talk about a topic" (1992, p. 762), and the quality of a conversation can be partially measured by the "relative frequency of marked topic introductions [which] is a measure of a lousy conversation" (1992, p. 352). Sacks (1992, p. 762) claims that people discriminate between touched-off and topically coherent utterances, "specifically signalling touched-off utterances where they might not present such a signal with topically coherent utterances." Sacks also identifies topic markers, which show that what is said is either 'same topic' or 'different topic' (Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2015).

#### 2.3.3.1 Stepwise topic shift

In stepwise transition, the change from one topic to another is gradual and no clear boundary between the two topics is apparent (Sacks, 1992, 1995). As noted by Sacks (1995):

*"It is a general feature for topical organization in conversation that the best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but by what we call a step-wise move. Such a move involved connecting what we've just been talking about to what we are now talking about, though they are different. I link up whatever I'm now introducing as a new topic to what we've just been talking about in such a way that so far as anybody knows we've never had to start a new topic, though we are far from wherever we began and haven't talked on just a single topic. It flowed"* (p. 566, emphasis added).

Topic moves from one aspect to another or to a new topic in a stepwise or gradual fashion through the following methods (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 120):



- pivot + new focus/topic
- invoking semantic relationships between items
- summary of prior topic → ancillary matters → new topic

The first general way that stepwise topic shift is manifested involves using a pivot to connect the talk, as suggested by Sacks (1992, p. 300); “If you have some topic which you can see is not connected to what is now being talked about, then you can find something that is connected to both, and use that first.” A pivot can take three forms of shift-implicatives (Jefferson, 1981, 1984, 1993) namely: minimal acknowledgment tokens, assessments, and commentary. Additionally, figurative expressions, as suggested by Holt and Drew (2005), are also used as pivotal utterances in touched-off/stepwise topical developments.

To start with acknowledgment tokens as topic-shift implicatives, Jefferson observes the recurrent position of the recipient acknowledgment tokens “Yeah”, “Yes”, “Mm hm” or “Uh huh” preceding a topic shift. The shift may involve a complete change of topic, as in lines 8-9 of Extract 28 below. After the minimal acknowledgment token “Yes”, V stepwise shifts to the new topic about ‘having hair done’.

**Extract 28** (modified from Jefferson, 1993, p. 4)

((4 lines omitted))

- 5 J: [shot about three feet in ] the air I think=  
6 V: [°Oh::::::::::::::::::::::::::°]  
7 J: =he[h heh] [hhh  
8 V: [Yes ]::hh [Eh:m, we didn't go to have our hair done  
9 by the wa:y,=  
10 J: =.h No well I gathered not.

Alternatively, the shift may be to some extent connected to the prior topic as in the next extract. In lines 7-8, J responds to L's prior talk about Christmas with “Yeah” and then shifts to ask about another aspect of the same topic.

**Extract 29** (modified from Jefferson, 1981, p. 11)

1 J: but you know it's just the idea whether you wanna go out  
2 and shop for it or i[f you wanna get it there=  
3 L: [Yeah  
4 J: =That['s the] thi[ng. [So.  
5 L: [Hu:h] [hh [I'll have to go to Toys'R Us,  
6 [uh::m] sometime [before] Christmas,]  
7 J: [Ye::ah] [hhhhh] Oh I wanna a:sk you. hh  
8 [What do you want to do, about Christmas.  
9 L: [Ye(s),

In addition, it should be noted that while “Yeah” or “Yes” are associated with ‘speakership,’ “Mm hm” or “Uh huh” exhibit ‘passive reciprocity’, as in Extract 30 (lines 2 and 5).

**Extract 30** (modified from Jefferson, 1981, p. 13)

1 L: I'm kinda cleaning up from yesterday.  
2 E: Mm: hm,  
3 (1.0)  
4 L: I was just washing the dishes,  
5 E: Yeah, we're just cleaning up here too.

Similar to Jefferson's (1981, 1993) description of “Yeah” as a speaker topic-shift implicative, Beach (1993) found that “Okay” is also employed pivotally by recipients and current speakers at transitional places which involve movement from prior to next-positioned matter(s) (p. 326).

**Extract 31** (modified from Beach, 1993, p. 340)

1 C: I guess the ba:nd starts at ni:ne  
2 D: Oh really  
3 C: Ya from what Jill told me  
4 D: Okay when's Jill gonna go

5 C: Same time (0.2) we're gonna meet her there  
6 D: Okay um (0.5) so you wa:nt to take your car  
7 C: We can take your car if you want  
8 D: .hhh hhh I meant you want-  
9 you wanna have your car there so you can le:ave  
10 C: Yeah I think that'd be a better idea  
11 D: Okay  
12 (0.5)  
13 D: Okay .hhhh well what what time is it now ...

In Extract 31 above, it appears that D's first two "Okay"s in lines 4 and 6 acknowledge C's prior utterances in lines 3 and 5 and these then preface queries for additional information on the same topic. On the other hand, D's "Okay" in line 11 is a passive response to C's show of affiliation (line 10) to D's clarification (lines 8-9), and the subsequent "Okay" in line 13 following a 0.5-second pause shifts the topic to "what time is it".

The second shift-implicative device is recipient assessment. Like acknowledgment tokens, recipient assessments precede topical shifts. Acknowledgment tokens such as "Yeah" are neutral and, because of being minimally produced, are potentially disaffiliative in character. By contrast, recipient assessments exhibit affiliativeness and some analysis of the prior talk. Recipient assessments agree with the prior talk by being either positive (e.g. "Well that's good", "Well how nice", "Oh lovely") or negative (e.g. "Well that's too bad", "That's very disappointing isn't it") (Jefferson, 1981, pp. 39-43). In Extract 32, V's positive assessment "Well how nice" in line 6 exhibits a positive attitude towards the prior information given by B, and is used as a resource for a topical shift that occurs shortly thereafter.

**Extract 32** (modified from Jefferson, 1981, p. 41)

1 B: Well I was sorry that I couldn't wait to[day  
2 V: [Oh ( ).  
3 B: But I was going to a luh- I had to come home and get  
4 dressed for lunch. [A luncheon.

5 V: [Oh.  
6 V: Well how nice. Well you know I didn't get through, it-it  
7 was the strangest thing, see no matter which way I'd go  
8 there'd be somebody looking for me ...

The last shift implicative is recipient commentary. As with recipient acknowledgment tokens and recipient assessments, recipient commentaries, these may be simple or lengthy and elaborate and can precede topical shift. Topical shift may be moderate or drastic, and may occur immediately or at some distance from the commentary. For example, in Extract 33, C's comment "No, she wasn't saying anything too much, was she." in lines 4-5 is simple and followed immediately by a moderate topical shift from explanation of a problem (too much talking while playing bridge) to a possible solution of the problem (separate the tables into different rooms) (Jefferson, 1981, pp. 105-106).

**Extract 33** (modified from Jefferson, 1981, p. 106)

1 K: .hhhhh and I don't think Elva appreciates anything like  
2 that Not that she said anything but (0.4) you (.) just  
3 don't play bridge that wa[y Claire.]  
4 C: [No she wa]sn't saying anything  
5 too much was she. .hhhhh I was just wondering if we had  
6 that other table (0.2) in the dining room ...

Finally, figurative expressions are also used in pivotal topic transitions (Holt and Drew, 2005). In Extract 34 below, D is talking about running into an acquaintance from high school who is graduating from law school. In lines 7-8, M refers to the man using the figurative expression "late bloomer" and then continues telling a story about her friend's son. In the story M repeats the figurative expression in line 11, but on this occasion it is used to refer to "late bloomers" in general. In this extract, D and M are talking about two different matters but the figurative expression used provides a stepwise transition from the previous story to the next relevant story. Thus, a figurative expression performs a pivotal role moving between the two topics.

**Extract 34** (modified from Holt and Drew, 2005, p. 44)

((5 lines omitted))

6 D: =and he's rea:l cute now

7 M: .hhh We:ll see that just goes to show you he's a late

8 bloomer

9 D: Yeah he was re:al handsome

10 (1.0)

11 M: You know (0.4) sometimes the late bloomers 'll fool you

12 (0.6)

13 D: Yeah that's true

14 M: I told you about my friend who's son graduated from .hhh A

15 and [M:]

14 D: [ye:]ah and he went straight to law schoo:l and

((3 lines omitted))

The second technique for achieving stepwise topic transition is to invoke semantic relationships between items (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 123). As suggested by Sacks (1992, 1995), such relationships involve three class analyses of terms: co-class membership, touched-off utterances, and sub-topical talk.

In terms of co-class membership, pipes and cigars, for instance, are indeed co-class members (Sacks, 1992a, p. 757). However, many items which may not be considered 'natural' co-classes are routinely produced as topically related items for given topics. Some strange pairs may turn out to be co-class members by virtue of their relationship to a particular topic, as in the following extract.

**Extract 35** (modified from Sacks, 1992a, p. 757)

1 A: I have a fourteen year old son.

2 B: Well that's alright.

3 A: I also have a dog.

4        B:     Oh, I'm sorry.

We can see that the status of children and dogs as co-class members is understandable here if A is renting an apartment. In this case, dogs are possible disqualifiers for renting an apartment, as can be seen from B's response in line 4.

The next basic way speakers stepwise shift the topic is by means of a touched-off mechanism. Touched-off utterances or topically coherent utterances are content words which carry over from a prior utterance to recur in the following one (Sacks, 1992, p. 761). The key feature of touched-off utterances is that they stand in perfectly obvious relationships to what was just said and are signaled by utterances such as by "Hey!" or "Oh by the way", for example. In Extract 36, C mentions "shaving" and B says "I shaved". The prior utterance 'shave' plays a role and is used to generate the next item. In this case B's memory is touched-off by the word. In other words, the word simply recurs with some 'thought' attached to it and is used in a more elaborate fashion; it signals that B had done something. Note that in the case of touched-off utterances, they are not co-class members but are in fact generally the same item.

**Extract 36**     (modified from Sacks, 1992a, p. 761)

1        C:     Then you'd have to start shaving.

2                (1.0)

3        B:     Hey I shaved this morning - I mean last night for you.

The last semantic relationship concerning stepwise topic shift is the phenomenon of sub-topical talk (Sacks, 1995, pp. 761-763). Extract 37 illustrates a way of introducing a sub-topic which stands in a class relationship to the topic.

**Extract 37**     (modified from Sacks, 1995, pp. 762-763)

1        A:     How is Mrs. Hooper.

2        B:     Uh oh, about the same.

3        A:     Mm, mm mm mm. Have they uh th-uh Then she's still

4                continuing in the same way

5        B:     Yes, mm hm.

6        A:     Well, I hope uh he can con- uh can, carry on that way,

7 B: Well he wants to make a chay- a change,

Line 6 is the first time that “he” is introduced by A. No person has been talked about before to whom the “he” could refer. However, the topic of talk here is Mrs. Hooper’s illness and therefore in this case “he” is assumed to refer to Mr. Hooper. Mr. Hooper is thus talked about ‘sub-topically’ through Mrs. Hooper’s illness.

The last method of achieving stepwise topic shifts involves multiple stages (Wong and Waring, 2010, pp. 124-125). Jefferson (1984, pp. 202-204) describes the process of stepwise transition through a series of five moves played out by a ‘troubles-teller’. This is given below:

- troubles-teller sums up the heart of the trouble
- troubles-teller turns to ancillary matters
- troubles-recipient topically stabilises the ancillary matters that potentiate further talk
- troubles-recipient produces a pivotal utterance that has independent topical potential
- troubles-teller and recipient arrive at matters that may specifically constitute the target of a series of moves

**Extract 38** (modified from Jefferson, 1984, pp. 200-201)

1 L: But it’s terrible to keep people alive and  
2 [you know and just let them suffer [day in and day=  
3 E: [Right [Right.  
4 L: =out, [it’s  
5 E: [They don’t do that with an animal. ((sniff)) (0.5)  
6 You kno[w  
7 L: [Yeah.  
8 E: Oh well bless his heart Well, we don’t know what=  
9 L: ((sniff))  
10 E: =it’s all about I g-I- ((sniff)) Don’t get yourself=  
11 L: [Oh I’m not. I just- you know I wish ]

12 E: =[Honey you've got to get hold of your- I know]

13 L: =I'd - I'd kind of liked to gone out there but

14 I was afraid of the fog I was gonna drive him in

15 I- .hh last [night. But,

16 E: [.hh Oh it was terrible coming down ev[en=

17 L: [But-

18 E: =this morning. ((sniff))

19 L: But San Diego? I c- I couldn't believe it last night.

20 We left there about, .hh eleven thirty (.) and it w- it was

21 clear all the way up until we hit, (1.0) uh:: the uh

22 Fashion Square here in Balboa.

23 [I couldn't believe it [and we went into,=

24 E: [((sniff)) [( )]

25 L: =you couldn't even see:

26 E: Oh God it's terrible. ((sniff)) That's why well we didn't

27 get home till two o'clock. God it's-(0.2)[beautiful-]

28 L: [It was ter]rible

29 in town?

30 E: Oh we just got into bed at two. I wasn't gonna (.) go down,

31 wait let me turn this fa- uh: (0.5) You know we w-this

32 party and then we went to another little party afterwards

33 and oh I met so many f: fa::bulous pees- (.) people and

34 danced with my poor old toes with no t(h)oenails and I was

35 in- .hhhh hh(h)igh (h)h(h)eels and .hahh and oh we (.) just

36 had a (.) beautiful time.

The talk starts with L, the troubles-teller summing up the core of the issue in lines 1-2. The topic is gone through by the participants until lines 13-15, when L turns to a matter that is still ancillary to the topic. Subsequently in lines 16 and 18, by reference to that which L has



introduced in the previous turn. E takes this opportunity to topically stabilise L's trouble-telling at the point where the talk has been moved away from the core of the trouble but has not yet arrived at closure of the topic (Jefferson, 1984, p. 203). In lines 26-27, E produces a pivotal utterance "That's why well we didn't get home till two o'clock" displaying her affiliation to L's report of the previous night. Although it is on-topic, this pivotal utterance by E has independent topical potential. Finally, the talk arrives at the targeted matter, which is a report of the party from lines 31 to 36. This series of moves continues without any apparent topic disjuncture until the participants have moved away from their troubles-telling. This is in line with Sacks (1995), who states that

*" ... I link up whatever I'm now introducing as a new topic to what we've just been talking about in such a way that so far as anybody knows we've never had to start a new topic, though we are far from wherever we began and haven't talked on just a single topic. It flowed"* (p. 566, emphasis added).

Drawing on the notion of territories of knowledge, epistemic downgrades can also be adopted to achieve stepwise topic transitions (Heritage, 2012, p. 37). In the following case, the topic is started with Mom requesting a small amount of food in line 1. Wesley stepwise shifts the topic with a declarative K- assertion in line 5. Wesley's epistemic downgrade, which is produced as a misunderstanding, invites a response from Virginia.

**Extract 39** (modified from Heritage, 2012, p. 39)

- 1 Mom: Just a ta::d I been nibbling while I was cooking supper.  
2 Pru: uh hhuh ((laughter))  
3 Mom: .hhh But Virginia is very hungry.  
4 Mom: Very very.  
5 Wes: I thought you was dieting.  
6 Vir: Me? No. Beth. Beth is the one fo[r die[t(h)ing.  
( (3 lines omitted) )

### 2.3.3.2 Disjunctive topic shift

Apart from the stepwise transition, a second type of topic shift is ‘marked’ (Sacks, 1992, p. 352) or ‘disjunctive’ (Jefferson, 1984). In this process of ‘boundaried’ or ‘segmented’ topic organisation (Button and Casey, 1985; Jefferson, 1984), the participants develop a new focus on the same topic or move to a new topic. The demarcation of one topic from the next is achieved by means of boundary markers. In most cases, when a topic is closed by the participants, another abrupt or unexpected topic, which may have no relation to the previous topic, is initiated/proffered. A list of boundary markers has been given by Crow (1983, pp. 141-143 as cited in Wong and Waring, 2010, pp. 116-117): “Anyway”, “Alright”, “Oh”, “Speaking of X”, “That reminds me of”, “Oh say”, “I tell you what”, “One more thing”, “Listen, there’s something I gotta tell you”, “You know what?”, “Before I forget”, “By the way”, “Incidentally”, and “Actually”.

Extracts 40 and 41 are examples of “Alright” and “By the way” being used to mark topic shifts.

#### **Extract 40** (modified from Holt and Drew, 2005, p. 40)

((3 lines omitted))

4 Emma: .hhh you're keeping busy that's good,  
5 Nancy: †Well sure. Worki[ng °(evry]kow:nss)°]  
6 Emma: [Tha:t's ] †a : ll, ]  
7 Nancy: °r:†Ri:ght.°=  
8 Emma: =A::LRI[GHTY I don't know]=  
9 Nancy: [°(Ye::ah ut suh)°]  
10 Emma: =What ti:me is it I- I: WOKE UP at a:: †six †this  
11 mor:n[ing Go]:d what ]is it q ]uarter=

Nancy starts by talking about her problem, then in lines 8 and 10 Emma shifts to a new topic with “Alrighty I don’t know. What time is it”. The boundary/disjunctive marker “Alrighty”, produced as a turn initial utterance and with increased volume, indicates that Emma is introducing a new topic which is not connected to the previous talk.

“By the way”, as suggested by Sacks (1992, p. 352), is used to indicate that an utterance is off-topic as seen in the next extract. In line 5, the caller uses a topic-shift marker “by the way” to disengage from the current topic and move to unrelated new matters.

**Extract 41** (modified from Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, p. 320)

1     Caller:     You don't know what that would be, how much it costs.  
2     Crandall:   I would think probably, about twenty five dollars.  
3     Caller:     Oh boy, hehh hhh! Okay, thank you.  
4     Crandall:   Okay dear.  
5     Caller:     OH BY THE WAY. I'd just like to say that uh, I DO like  
6                 the news programming. I've been listening, it's uh ...

In addition, besides the stepwise transitions, figurative expressions are also regularly used to mark distinct changes of topic (Drew and Holt, 1988, 1995, 1998). These figurative expressions perform a dual-function: to act as summary assessments and to close the preceding matter. As topic boundaries, these figurative expressions provide positive or negative summary assessments, and at the same time close down one topic before the introduction of a new one. In contrast to disjunctive figurative expressions, in stepwise transitions, rather than disengaging from the current topic, pivotal figurative expressions form a connection to a new but related matter and the turns after the pivotal figurative expression connect this new matter to the previous topic.

Extract 42 below is an example of this kind of topic ending. Lesley offers a summary assessment of the preceding talk about an acquaintance with her mother by means of the production of a figure of speech in line 9. After agreement tokens are given and a 0.2-second silence, the new topic is then proffered.

**Extract 42** (modified from Drew and Holt, 1998, p. 499)

1     Lesley:     He was a (0.2) buyer for the only horse hair factory  
2                 left in England.  
3     Mum:        Good gracious,  
4                 (0.3)  
5     Lesley:     And he was their buyer,

6 Mum: Hm:::

7 Lesley: .t

8 Mum: Hm:.

9 Lesley: So he had a good innings did [n't he.

10 Mum: [I should say so: Ye:s.

11 (0.2) Marvellous,

12 Lesley: .tk .hhhh Anyway we had a very good evening o:n

13 Saturda:y.

Lesley starts by detailing aspects of a man's life. In line 9, she offers the figurative expression "he had a good innings" which has the metaphorical meaning that he had a long and good life. Here, the figure of speech functions as a positive summary assessment of the preceding details (Holt and Drew, 2005, p. 36). This figurative expression, together with Mum's agreement in lines 10-11, brings the topic to an end. In lines 12-13, Lesley introduces a new and different topic, here her weekend activities, which is unrelated to the previous talk. This new topic is introduced with the disjunctive marker "anyway", showing that the previous talk is not relevant to what follows (Campbell-Larsen, 2014, p. 175).

Holt and Drew (2005) stated that the most common position in which figurative expressions are found is prior to a disjunctive topic change following a 'standard sequence'. As proposed by Drew and Holt (1998, p. 506):

- 1 Speaker A: Figurative summary assessment
- 2 Speaker B: Agreement
- 3 Speaker A: Agreement/confirmation
- 4 Speaker A/B: Introduction of next topic

Campbell-Larsen (2014, pp. 175-176) noted that, on the one hand, this disjunctive topic shift may represent a new phase of talk that terminates the previous topic completely. This topic insertion may continue for a lengthy period and there may be no subsequent return to the original topic. On the other hand, the new topic may be pursued as a temporary deviation from the main

topic. A speaker may hark back to the original topic although the production of a disjunctive marker is intended to bring that topic to a closure. In doing so, such expressions as “Well, getting back to ...” or “As I was saying ...” may be used to return to the previous topic.

The subtleties involved in topic shifts provide a systematic understanding of another aspect of topic management. Shifting topics is a very important strategy for avoiding answering too personal a question, preventing an argument, getting out of a topic that the speakers are not interested in, and so forth. Managing topic shifts is found in all talk-in-interaction. The last step in topic development, in addition to the already covered topic initiation, topic pursuit, and topic shift, is topic ending as described in the next section.

### ***2.3.4 Topic ending***

Topic ending can, but does not necessarily, close off the conversation (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 126). Howe’s (1991, p. 2) analysis of topic changes shows that topic endings are negotiated by participants over a series of turns using the following indicator types: summary assessments, acknowledgement tokens, repetition, laughter, and pauses.

According to Howe, the major characteristic of summary assessments is that they contribute little new information to the prior topic and function as closures to that topic. Assessment tokens such as great, good, that’s good, oh splendid, oh great, oh good, lovely, very good, oh it was....., among others regularly occur at topical boundaries (Antaki, 2002; Heritage, 1984b; Howe, 1991; Waring, 2008; Wong and Waring, 2009).

In Extract 43 below, Les ends the topic with the assessment “lovely” in line 6 and in the next extract, M’s utterance “oh it was dreadful” in line 15 sums up and evaluates the problems with the microphone and eventually closes down the topic.

**Extract 43** (modified from Antaki, 2002, p. 10)

1 Ed: I think she’d like to.  
2 (0.2)  
3 Les: Hm: hn- [Okay then. [Right [ Well  
4 Ed: [So- [(yes) I [’ll see you on- Thursday at  
5 six thirty then.

6 Les: Lovely.  
7 Ed: [( )  
8 Les: [(Bye bye then,  
9 Ed: Bye:,

**Extract 44** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 3)

((10 lines omitted))

11 M: =well from the internal microphone=  
12 T: =uff=  
13 R: oh yeah cause it hears its own hears its own micro- it  
14 hears it own motor yeah.=  
15 M: =oh it was dreadful

Acknowledgement tokens (Jefferson, 1981) or change-of-state tokens (Heritage, 1984b) are linguistic expressions which are used to acknowledge the previous speaker's utterance without elaborating on it. They frequently (but not necessarily) occur in response to summary assessments (Howe, 1991, p. 4). Examples of acknowledgement tokens include "ugh", "oh", "yes", "yeah", "no", "mm hmm", and "right". Schegloff and Sacks (1973, p. 303) also point out that "well", "okay", and "alright" are potentially pre-closing utterances found at the end of a topic. Acknowledgement tokens occur at topic-ending points because they provide no further information relevant to the current topic and they are always spoken with dropping intonation and minimal stress. Acknowledgement tokens with rising intonation, however, signal the other participant to continue the talk and are thus not topic-ending indicators. Extract 45 below shows a batch of acknowledgement tokens that terminates the topic.

**Extract 45** (modified from Jefferson, 1981, p. 2)

1 M: She's been to Europe too: so: [she wou]:ld.  
2 B: [Ye:ah. ]  
3 B: Ah ha:h  
4 (0.3)  
5 B: Uh-huh.

6 M: Uh-huh.

Howe also found that repetition of acknowledgement tokens is a strong indicator of topic closing. For instance, the repetition of lexical items (in boldface) in Extract 46 below initiates a closure, and the repetition of acknowledgement tokens at the end is followed by a topic boundary (Howe, 1991, p. 5).

**Extract 46** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 5)

1 M: somewhere in **California**.=

2 R: =yes **southern California** near [( )]

3 T: [just **south**] **south** [**east** ]

4 R: [Anaheim]

5 T: **yeah, southeast** of Long Beach=

6 R: =**yeah**=

Another topic-ending indicator is laughter which often appears in conjunction with other indicators, such as a pause, since it is not a very powerful topic-ending indicator when found in isolation. In Extract 47 laughter by more than one participant replaces a pause as a topic-ending indicator.

**Extract 47** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 6)

1 M: =they're pretty excited about this place, Dad was telling  
2 me that he talked to somebody from, the bank who was saying  
3 it was her third application from Rockland that day. she  
4 said, what's going on up there and Dad - so Dad said, you  
5 know maybe there's kind of a boom and we're in on the  
6 ground floor.

7 T: ((laugh))=

8 R: =((laugh))=

9 T: =well, now it's time to go home and start preparing dinner  
10 for my wife.

Pauses that are one second or longer are extremely common topic-ending indicators and the most powerful indicators of potential topic change when following summary assessments. They occur immediately before the introduction of the next topic (Howe, 1991). Maynard (1980, p. 265) notes that a series of silences indicates a topic change following the closure of a prior topic. Moreover, Zimmerman and West (1975) also observe that substantial silences of a second or more followed by such acknowledgement token as “Um-hmm” or “Mm” provide for a potential topic change. Extracts 48 and 49 illustrate significant topic-ending pauses of various lengths.

**Extract 48** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 6)

1 T: =doesn't have room for it in his car.  
2 M: oh.  
3 (1.4)  
4 M: so - did you - are you moved out?

**Extract 49** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 7)

1 B: did Priscilla listen to it?  
2 M: no I'm going to have her listen ((laugh))=  
3 B: ((laugh))  
4 (7.2)  
5 M: 'cause naturally I think our voices sound different.  
6 (2.6)  
7 B: yeah.  
8 (9.7)  
9 M: so what's new with you?  
10 (2.0)  
11 M: apart from the tedium [of]  
12 B: [oh]  
13 M: Russian phonetics.



Additionally, several topic-ending indicators may appear in sequence. For example, a summary assessment followed by an acknowledgement token followed by a pause seems to function as a particularly effective series of topic-ending indicators. Acknowledgement tokens, laughter and repetition rarely occur alone as topic-ending indicators, but rather tend to be found after summary assessments or pauses. Extract 50 below follows a discussion on the topic of K's thesis. K sums up the topic with the assessment in line 1. This is followed by A's acknowledgement in line 2. After a 1.67 pause, A initiates a new topic without any boundary markers.

**Extract 50** (modified from Howe, 1991, p. 9)

1 K: yeah, I don't know, we'll see how it goes.=  
2 A: =mm hmm  
3 (1.67)  
4 A: last Friday it was, it was half, or it was two for one, two  
5 lines for - and I didn't realize it.=  
6 K: =what, bowling?=  
7 A: =yeah! =

Note that it is also common for the aforementioned topic-ending indicators to be used without further use of a topically coherent utterance or the initiation of a new topic (West and Garcia, 1988, p. 554).

Just as the K+ (knowing) and K- (unknowing) epistemic aspects contribute to topic initiation and stepwise topic shift, topic closure can also be driven through this principle. In the following extract, the topic is Michael's wife's problems.

**Extract 51** (modified from Heritage, 2012, p. 46)

((6 lines omitted))

7 Michael: [It hasn't happened for ten years.=  
8 Edward: =ukhh huukhh uhk >Oh she's had it before.<  
9 Michael: Oh yes but not for ten yea[rs.  
10 Edward: [Oh::: Lo:rd.

11 Michael: Yes there we are.  
 12 Edward: The:[re we are.  
 13 Michael: [.tch  
 14 Edward: Ye[:s;,  
 15 Michael: [(and it's fl[attening)  
 16 Edward: [Well Michael anyway there it is, and  
 17 ah: and as I say we uhm (.) we we: we would like to  
 18 help if: uh if she ever needs ah:::: she's (in need).

In line 11, Michael moves to a summary with “Yes there we are”, which is repeated by Edward in line 12 and 14. Edward finally moves to close the topic in line 16 with “anyway there it is”. In the move toward topic closure, conversational participants use the formulaic expression “There we are”, which adds neither further information to the talk nor formulates an epistemic position. The role of the above formulaic expression, which displays an absence of K+/K- contributions, is similar to that of figurative expressions found by Drew and Holt (1995, 1998). These play a significant role in topic closure and topic transition.

From the literature review above, we can see that the majority of CA research into topic has focused on ordinary conversation. In general, topic in this kind of spoken language is fluid, emergent and implicitly initiated rather than stated explicitly. In classrooms, however, the topic of talk is usually made explicit by the lesson (Fisher, 1996). This means that formulations of topic are a common occurrence (Heyman, 1986) and the topic of the day's activity is usually defined by the teacher. Therefore, it is easier to investigate topic within a classroom setting than in ordinary conversation, as the topics-as-workplan are determined by the teacher. For this research to explore these classroom interactions, it is thus essential that one consider how topic has been examined within classroom discourse, in particular within the context of conversation analytic studies. This will be done in the next section.

## **2.4 CA and Classroom Interaction**

In the previous sections, we have looked at how CA is used to analyse ordinary conversation and this now provides a basis for the study of a variety of institutional interactions. Although the

boundaries between ordinary conversation and institutional talk are not clearly fixed and are difficult to define (Heritage, 2005), there are clear distinctions between institutional interactions, such as in formal classrooms, news interviews, medical visits and interaction in ordinary conversations, such as between family, friends, and strangers, and so on. CA work in institutional talk has also applied the same technique of asking again and again the basic question of “Why that now?” However, the analysis now centres on how specific types of turns and actions are implemented to achieve institutional aims (Heritage and Clayman, 2010). CA studies of institutional interaction (e.g., Drew and Heritage, 1992a) have focused on how the organisation of interaction is related to the institutional goal and on the ways in which this organisation differs from ordinary conversation (Seedhouse, 2004).

For several decades now, researchers have adopted CA to study the dynamics of talk-in-interaction and of social order in classrooms. CA-informed studies of classroom interactions (e.g. McHoul, 1978) started by comparing the organisation of turns in instructional talk with the turn-taking mechanisms of ordinary conversation, for example Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). In ordinary conversation, turn allocation is locally managed by the participants but in the classroom, recurrent patterns of turn taking show that only teachers use turn allocation techniques in formal classroom contexts. These different turn-taking practices reveal the social identities of teachers and students through their rights and obligations in participation.

CA researchers have also studied three-part exchanges consisting of initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) or initiation-response-feedback/follow-up (IRF) sequences (e.g., McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) to which the participants may or may not display their orientation. In CA analysis, this structure is not only observed in the classroom but may also occur outside the classroom setting, and participants may co-construct their interaction based on shared practices within some potentially pedagogical context.

Apart from the above three-part structure, ‘repair’ has been studied extensively in a number of CA-informed classroom research projects. McHoul (1990) investigated the organisation of repair in an Australian classroom and found that other-initiated self-corrections were predominant. That is, the teachers performed initiations, but withheld corrections, which were performed by students. Koshik (2002) showed how teachers initiate self-correction by learners and Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2003) demonstrated different types of repair initiations employed by

teachers and learners. Hosoda (2006) showed that the employment of repairs is related to participants' levels of language proficiency.

Other CA studies have demonstrated more diverse ways in which the three-part structure can be expanded by teachers in their conversational turns using a variety of syntactic, prosodic, and nonverbal behaviors in order to provide opportunities for participation by students. Olsher (2004) revealed how L2 learners in small-group work complete sequential actions through gesture or other embodied conduct. Such CA studies in the area of language learning as Lazaraton (2004), Mori and Hayashi (2006), and Seedhouse and Almutairi (2009) also demonstrate the significance for the understanding of classroom interaction of nonverbal communication and gaze as potentially important features of face-to-face interaction.

While McHoul focused on corrections within the recurrent participation structures of teacher-fronted pedagogical talk, Macbeth (2004) argued that those repairs observed in ordinary conversation, which aim to establish mutual understanding, are also omnipresent in classroom interaction. In other words, repair in ordinary conversation and in classroom correction should not be compared on the same terms due to the fact that not all talk in the classroom can be classified as pedagogical.

Subsequent CA studies have investigated how different types of classroom activities are accomplished through talk-in-interaction among peers. Mori (2002), for instance, examined how a task-as-workplan designed to have a group of students engage in a discussion with native speakers of Japanese in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom was transformed through task-in-process into a rigidly structured interview of question-and-answer exchanges. The analysis found that students constructed their talk in line with their pre-task preparation and the instructional design, which described the procedures and requirements of the task. These task designs potentially hindered the acquiring of language proficiency which might otherwise have occurred. Mondada and Pekarek Doehler (2004) also demonstrated that significant differences arise between the task-as-workplan and the task-in-process as students transform task-as-workplan into task-in-process on a moment-by-moment basis.

Another study by Markee (2005) described how learners shift back and forth between pedagogical and non-pedagogical talk in small group work undertaken in an English as a second

language classroom. The study provides empirical evidence for how “off-task” talk was occasioned during the official topic of discussion.

Seedhouse (2004) has proposed that there is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction in the L2 classroom; as the pedagogical focus varies, so the organisation of the interaction varies because the L2 classroom has its own interactional organisation which transforms intended into actual pedagogy. Seedhouse highlights the dynamic nature of this context-free architecture by illustrating how the L2 classroom is talked into being by participants and how teachers create and shift from one classroom context to another. In order to understand the language learning process, it is important to understand how the interaction in the classroom is organised. Seedhouse has therefore emphasised the distinction between task-as-workplan (the intended pedagogy) and task-in-process (the actual pedagogy), and then argued that there is a significant difference between what is supposed to happen and what actually happens.

Adopting a CA institutional-discourse perspective, Seedhouse has also provided a detailed account of how turn taking, sequence and repair are organised in different L2 classroom contexts, namely form-and-accuracy, meaning-and-fluency, task-oriented, and procedural contexts. Seedhouse (2004, p. 38) argues that “topic is a central concept in the analysis of talk and is coconstructed by participants during the course of the talk. However, it is not an interactional organisation and is not part of the context-free architecture of talk. Unlike the organizations of adjacency pairs and turn taking, topic is not oriented to normatively”. However, Seedhouse describes the way in which topic relates to turn taking, sequence and repair and how topic varies in different L2 classroom contexts. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

Markee (2000, p. 44) points out that CA research “can help refine insights into how the structure of conversation can be used by learners as a means of getting comprehended input and producing comprehended output”. Accordingly, CA has been employed to investigate notions of communicative competence and interactional competence. CA presents communicative and interactional competence as a shift away from a linguistic model focused on individual performance toward a model in which competence is co-constructed by participants in interaction. A study by Carroll (2005), for example, showed how linguistically limited interactants can skillfully interact utilising their limited L2 resources.

Another area of CA research relevant to language learning is longitudinal studies that explore students' interactional development over time. Young and Miller (2004) found that students' participation framework changed over time, while Hellermann (2007) studied how six successful students open their teacher-assigned tasks over a period of eighteen to twenty-seven months. The study showed that the students incorporate language from the teacher and from one another over time to manage the openings of their interactions. Subsequent CA-for-SLA work by Markee (2008) has proposed a 'learning behavior tracking' (LBT) methodology, which was developed from empirically based analyses of classroom talk, that was able to track longitudinal L2 development. This methodology tracks how the participants' emerging 'learning object' and 'learning process' occur in interaction and also describes the process of learning via interaction both in the moment and over time.

The abovementioned CA studies illustrate how students participate (or do not participate) in learning. These research findings also aid teachers and researchers in helping to reconsider instructional designs and to re-evaluate students' competence as it is demonstrated through their talk-in-interaction (Mori and Zuengler, 2008). As suggested by Seedhouse (2013), a number of CA studies have revealed subtle interactional practices related to language classrooms. These studies have transformed our understanding of how L2 classroom interaction is organised, and how this organisation is related to language teaching and learning and as a result this has transformed our perceptions of L2 students and teachers.

We have seen that the majority of CA-informed studies of classroom interactions have studied extensively the dynamics of talk-in-interaction and social orders in the classrooms by comparing the organisation of language classroom talk with the mechanisms of ordinary conversation, including three-part exchange, repair, and students' competence, among others. Alternatively, such works as Mori (2002), Mondada and Pekarek Doehler (2004), and Seedhouse (2004) tend to approach issues from a CA institutional discourse perspective, focusing on how the intended pedagogical aims are transformed into actual classroom interactions.

The researcher agrees with Seedhouse (2004) that the L2 classroom has its own interactional organisation which transforms intended pedagogy into actual pedagogy and as a consequence, CA institutional-discourse perspective should be the main focus of L2 classroom research. Furthermore, as the concept of task is crucial to this perspective, the topic of the classroom, which is considered in terms of the extent to which it focuses on the same content as the teacher-

defined task, is also vital. At this point, the definition of task and its reflexive relationship with the notion of topic in language pedagogy need to be provided.

## **2.5 Task and Topic**

A number of definitions of a task have been proposed. Breen (1989) adopts the broad definition that a task is “a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication” (as cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 4). Ellis (2009, p. 111) also emphasises the fact that a task is a workplan since it takes the form of materials for teaching which involve (1) some input (information that students are required to process and use); and (2) some instructions relating to the outcome students are supposed to achieve. As we have seen, the distinction that Breen makes between task-as-workplan and task-in-process is important. In light of this, definitions of task are essentially related to task-as-workplan. At the level of workplan, the most complete and widely accepted version, reflecting a broad consensus among researchers and educators, has been given by Peter Skehan (1998a, p. 268): task is goal oriented and the primary focus is on meaning. Tasks must have some real-world relationship, and the success of the task is evaluated by its outcome.

At the level of workplan, topic plays an integral part of promoting the negotiation of meaning. Drawing on research (e.g., Pica, Kanagy and Falodun, 1993) which follows from the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Long (1983), topic is one of the task dimensions that impacts meaning negotiation and it has been suggested that the kinds of interactional modifications hypothesised to contribute to L2 acquisition are likely to be more frequent in tasks that involve human/ethical type topics, among other dimensions (Ellis, 2009, p. 114). Furthermore, topic also appears as one of the parameters for the description of type tasks in the study of needs analyses and target task by Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006); topics that relate to different aspects of life in society, especially public and cultural life, came out of the analysis of the language learning needs of adult second language learners (Van Avermaet and Gysen, 2009, p. 162).

Topic familiarity and topic importance are factors that have an impact on students’ propensity to negotiate meaning (Ellis, 2003, p. 91) and students’ familiarity with the topic of a task influences

the amount of negotiation work that takes place; the more familiar a topic, the more the negotiation (Gass and Varonis, 1984). Students function more as active speakers when talking with native speakers about a topic that is less important to them, for example, when talking about food. In contrast, native speakers become more dominant when the topic is more important, for example, talking about a topic in their shared field of expertise (Zuengler and Bent, 1991). Moreover, Newton (1991) also suggested that objective-spatial types of topic, such as the zoo, result in a significantly greater number of participant questions than do human-ethical topics, such as medicine, when engaged in during task activities by adult ESL learners. To date, however, it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding the effect of topic on learner interaction.

Seedhouse (2004, p. 38) has written that “topic is a central concept in the analysis of talk and is co-constructed by participants during the course of the talk”. In many institutional settings, topic is pre-planned and in L2 classrooms, topic is defined explicitly in a syllabus, and then adapted either to a piece of writing or used as a vehicle for talk in a conversation class. It is therefore important to review how the notion of topic has been studied in L2 classroom research. This follows.

## **2.6 Classroom Research into Topic**

The topic of the classroom discourse is considered in terms of the extent to which it focuses on the same content as the teacher-defined task. In other words, the teacher, perhaps with the students’ support, explicitly determines the topic of the day’s talk. However, the teacher’s understanding of what the topic is about may not necessarily match that of the students’. Although it is relatively easy for the teacher to identify and to make explicit the lesson objectives, or what the class or groups should discuss, alternative interpretations can arise from students and thus it is important to consider what students might treat as being relevant to their discussions. To do this, it is necessary to examine their formulations of and orientations to the topic of the day’s lesson.

Slimani (1989) highlighted the role of topicalisation in classroom language learning. By investigating the relationship between classroom interaction and learning outcomes of Algerian



university students studying an English intensive programme, Slimani found that students' topicalisation was more powerful than the teacher's. Topicalisation by the students generated more comprehensible input by making the topic understandable and interesting; a memorable rather than a routine event. By topicalising, students offered learning opportunities for their peers to benefit from. Therefore, when comparing to topicalisation by the teacher, whatever was topicalised by the students had a better chance of being claimed to be learned.

Fisher (1996) has identified the features of effective educational talk as they relate to the topic and other areas through the investigation of an undergraduate psychology seminar at a university in the UK. Fisher suggested that educational talk is generally task or topic focused. The discourse topic is described as that which the tutor defines as the topic (p. 240). A boundary for the talk is established and the topic of the discourse can be considered in terms of the extent to which it focuses on the same content as the tutor-defined topic. The study shows that effective educational talk must definitely rely on collaborative turn-taking. If topics are to be explored through discourse, it is necessary for speakers to build on the talk of previous speakers. Switches in topic content can be productive when either the previous path has been unfruitful, or when they arise as a subset of earlier talk. In contrast, the topic was not in itself productive when a previous question went unanswered and the switch was to a completely different aspect of the topic.

In Thailand, Watson Todd (1998) has provided an analysis of topics in EFL classroom discourse by identifying the topics in a given discourse and following their development. To identify topics, bottom-up approaches based on theme-rheme progression and lexical networks were used in conjunction with a top-down schematic approach producing semantic networks of keywords. Having identified topics, topic development was followed through the semantic network and categorised as topic maintenance, topic drift, topic shift, topic renewal or topic insertion. The findings in this study suggest that clearly sequenced classroom discourse involves a reasonable ratio of topic movements to sentences, a fairly straightforward sequencing of keywords, the use of metadiscourse markers to indicate discontinuous discourse, and movements between keywords which are limited in semantic space.

Watson Todd has also suggested that there are two aspects in any investigation of topics in classroom discourse: topics in explanation and topics in elicitation. Explanation is one area of classroom discourse where sequencing of propositions is of particular importance (Kennedy,

1996). Elicitation is another area where sequencing is crucial, given that elicitation usually takes the form of a series of questions which follow a path towards the required information. Hence the effectiveness of elicitation is predicated on the sequencing and relationships of the propositions in classroom discourse. As also stated by Mehan (1979), the teacher does not elicit information from students randomly. Indeed, elicitation sequences are organised around topics which are called topically related sets, and the beginnings of topically related sets are most notably marked by the teacher's orientation toward the instructional materials to be used.

Watson Todd found that the ratio of topic movements to sentences for the eliciting section is much lower than for the explanation section. The limited distance in semantic space makes it easier for the students to follow the progression between keywords and thus the development of topics in continuous discourse. When looking at the topic development through discourse, the parts of the discourse which are bounded by metadiscoursal markers and topic insertion help the teaching-learning process to flow more smoothly, so metadiscoursal markers are crucial in indicating changes in topic within classroom discourse. The findings of this study suggest that clearly sequenced classroom discourse involves a reasonable ratio of topic movements to sentences, a fairly straightforward sequencing of keywords, the use of metadiscoursal markers to indicate discontinuous discourse, and movements between keywords which are limited in semantic space.

Stokoe (2000) adopted CA methodology for a study of topical talk in university seminars involving different fields of study. The study found that what the students treated as relevant to their discussions differed from group to group, although they oriented to the task and accepted an educational agenda, following certain patterns in the process of topic production. These included clarification talk, where the students checked the task instructions, and the formulation of the task or tutor's words as topic-initial utterances. With regard to the kinds of topics that they treated as legitimate for educational talk, 'off-topic' talks were noticed, and some topic-opening patterns were found in the reorientation sequences.

The next CA study into topic was conducted by Gan, Davison, and Hamp-Lyons (2008), who examined the production of topical talk in group oral assessment situations involving secondary school ESL students in Hong Kong. The study found that students were able to pursue, develop, and shift topics to ensure the successful completion of an assigned task. Topical organisation resulting from this study displays features that are both similar to and different from those in

ordinary conversation and other institutional talks. As an oral assessment format, this group topical discussion indicates the potential opportunities for students to demonstrate their ‘real-life’ interactional abilities.

More recently, Campbell-Larsen’s (2014) longitudinal study examined conversation topic management by Japanese university students of English. The study found that the talk was initially characterised by limited topic management strategies. The students deployed simple interrogatives as topic proffers and furthered minimal development of the proffered topics. Disjunctive markers were frequently adopted with little or no negotiation of the topic. However, a wider variety of strategies were produced as they engaged in more stepwise topic shifts. More profoundly developed, topics are proffered by means of self-disclosure, and students became more aligned with other in co-constructing coherent and convergent interaction.

The aforementioned literature reveals a gap in the research into topic in the English language classroom, when considered from a CA perspective. Over the past few decades, CA research on topic has generally been in decline. This may be due to the fact that “topic may well prove to be among the most complex conversational phenomena to be investigated and, correspondingly, the most recalcitrant to systematic analysis” (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, p. 165). While some CA research explored topic organisation occurring around the mechanics of topic development, including initiations, shifts, and endings (e.g. Campbell-Larsen, 2014; Gan, Davison, and Hamp-Lyons, 2008; Stokoe, 2000), no work has researched topic in different varieties of L2 classroom contexts (Seedhouse, 2004). Above all, none has studied what exactly is the institutional goal and how the organisation of classroom interaction is related to this goal. More specifically, no CA work has studied the pedagogical purpose of any particular classroom context and how topic of talk relates to this. Topic has also received little attention regarding its effect on student interaction. More to the point, the transformation from topic-as-workplan into topic-in-process in the classroom discourse has not been investigated deeply.

This research thus attempts to fill these gaps and to answer the following question (1) and sub-questions (2-4):

- 1) How are topics developed within the reflexive relationship between the institutional goal and the overall interactional organisation of L2 classroom discourse?

- 2) How are topics developed within different L2 classroom contexts?
- 3) How are topics developed within the interaction between the teacher and the students?
- 4) To what extent do students develop topics during their talk-in-interaction in group discussion?

In answering these questions, this research adopts a CA institutional-discourse perspective to topic as its theoretical underpinning to reveal how topics are developed in EFL classrooms in Thailand. In so doing how topic as a central concept is co-constructed by teacher and students during the course of their talk is considered and related to the pedagogical focus. The emphasis in the above sub-questions (2-4) will be on the micro-detail: what precisely do the teacher and the students do in relation to topic development? The focus is upon how the teacher and the students themselves orient to the topic in their talk. Particular attention will be paid to the conversational procedures involved in their discussion in different L2 classroom contexts and how topics-as-workplans are transformed into topics-in-process.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of topic and the process of topic development as expressed through the DA perspective. It has also included an analysis looking at the moment-to-moment topic development in the CA tradition. This research has argued here that CA is preferable to DA as a research approach to study topic in discourse, in particular when applied to study topic in L2 classroom interactions; as suggested by Seedhouse (2004), CA is able to capture the dynamic, fluid, complex interplay between the different levels on which the L2 classroom operates and thus it is able to portray the complexity of teacher's and students' interactional work. On the other hand, DA not only lacks the ability to capture the fine-grained details of participants' interactional concerns, but it is also unable to unfold the different contexts and foci of interactions because it is essentially a static approach.

The majority of previous CA research into topic has focused on explicating talk in ordinary conversations, and only a few studies have been conducted in institutional settings, including L2 classrooms. Moreover, the abovementioned classroom literature conceives of topic as something

fixed and standardised which is introduced into lessons. There is thus a notable lack of studies which examine how exactly topics are developed through talk and how they express explicitly the reflexive relationship between the institutional goal and topic in classroom interaction.

This present study therefore also argues that much remains to be investigated in terms of the micro-interactional practices used by teachers and students in L2 classroom work and how this forms part of an overall architecture of how they develop particular topics in relation to the specific pedagogical goal in which they are engaged. In order to fill the gaps identified in the literature review and to answer the proposed research questions specified above, a CA institutional-discourse perspective has been used in this research. The following chapter thus discusses in more detail how CA institutional-discourse has been adopted as the method of analysis.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of and justification for the research design. The chapter first outlines the research focus and the research question and sub-questions. Next, the overall research paradigm and epistemology are discussed. The use of CA as a research tool and conceptual issues concerning it (justification, reliability, validity, generalisability, and triangulation) are also covered as these issues are related to the current study. The use of CA as the methodological framework for examining institutional-discourse perspectives on L2 classroom is then described. The research setting, ethical issues, the research participants, data collection procedures and limitations of this research are enumerated and finally, this chapter finishes with a description of the procedures used in the data analysis.

This chapter argues that CA is the qualitative methodology most appropriate to the current study. CA, when used in relation to social science research methods and concepts, provides a holistic portrayal of language use and thus is a very useful research tool and by adopting CA as the research method, the organisation of the micro-detailed interactions which are directly related to the institutional goal and setting, can be explicated and the research questions answered. More specifically, through a CA institutional-discourse perspective on L2 classroom interaction, the relationship between EFL pedagogy at a university in Thailand and topic development in the classroom can be explained.

#### **3.2 Research Focus**

This research project follows in the tradition of CA work on institutional talk. Adopting the principles of CA, the research was conducted within the field of language learning and teaching, and CA institutional discourse methodology (Drew and Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 1997; Seedhouse, 2004) is applied to researching language classroom interaction. In this respect, the inquiry takes interaction in English language classroom discourse as the object of study, and the teachers' and students' talk relating to the pedagogical focus is the main focus of analysis. The

area of classroom discourse specifically attended to is that of topic organisation and development. Investigation of this uses CA institutional-discourse framing of the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair to examine the ways in which particular topics in classroom discourse are initiated, shifted to and from, and closed-off. Talk-in-interaction between the teachers and students in EFL classrooms at the university were audio and video recorded, transcribed and analysed inductively.

In view of this, this research aims to understand and to show how one aspect of interaction - topic organisation and development - is accomplished under classroom conditions. In so doing, the research will reveal how topics are developed in EFL classrooms in Thailand. The overall findings will be that turn-taking, sequence and repair are organised in relation to the description of topic development (initiations, shifts, and endings), which are linked to the pedagogical focus.

### **3.3 Research Paradigm and Epistemology**

As this study is conducted in the field of social sciences, which aims at the understanding of human behaviours rather than external forces, the epistemological position lies within interpretivism and the phenomenological tradition. This philosophy is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Schutz (1962) states that this is:

*“... By a series of common sense constructs they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it. The thought objects constructed by the social scientists, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men [and women!], living their daily life within the social world”* (p. 59, emphasis added).

The above quotation states that social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful. In other words, social reality has a meaning for all human beings and they act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others. In view of this, human behaviour is a product of how people interpret the world and hence, it is

the job of the social scientist to gain access to people's common-sense thinking and to interpret people's actions and their social world from their point of view (Bryman, 2012, p. 30).

By taking the interpretative stance, this research positions itself relative to the object of study in the interior of a particular social context. By adopting an interpretative stance, the ontological position of this research falls under constructionism (also referred to as constructivism) so that social phenomena and their meanings are continually seen as being accomplished by social actors. This ontology draws upon the insights of Strauss et al. (1973), who proposed that categories such as organisation and culture are pre-given and that organisation is conceptualised as a 'negotiated order'. Social order is an outcome of agreed-upon patterns of action that are themselves the products of negotiations between the different parties involved and culture is taken to be an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction. Thus Becker (1982) writes that:

*“people create culture continuously ... No set of cultural understandings ... provides a perfectly applicable solution to any problem people have to solve in the course of their day, and they therefore must remake those solutions, adapt their understandings to the new situation in the light of what is different about it”* (p. 521, emphasis added).

Constructionism suggests that the categories that people employ to understand the social world are social products and their meaning is constructed in and through interaction and therefore a concern with the language that is employed to present categories in particular ways flows naturally from this. In other words, the social world and its categories are built up and constituted in and through interaction. The phenomena and the constructs (knowledge) which will be revealed by this research are those which the teachers and students perform and orient to during their classroom interaction, rather than being categories pre-specified by the researcher. This chimes particularly with CA, a research paradigm, as we have seen, that was developed by Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff in the early 1960s.

Sacks's interests in practical reasoning and what Schegloff (1987c, p. 207) has called 'talk-in-interaction' were influenced by Harold Garfinkel's research project in 'ethnomethodology'. This emerged in the discipline of sociology, which sees the problem of social order as one of practical social action, as a question of activity and thus as methodic and analysable, so ethnomethodology focuses on the study of common-sense reasoning and practical theorising in everyday activities.



Building on Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Sacks developed CA as an approach following two themes: categorisation and sequential organisation. More importantly, sequential organisation is specific to talk-in-interaction, as any so-called doing, such as the production of an utterance, has practical form and the action it performs depends on its sequential position (ten Have, 2007, p. 6).

The CA framework for studying talk-in-interaction, including its basic concepts and examples, was first established in Sacks's 'Lectures on conversation' (1992a; 1992b). Sacks and Schegloff (1973) started with the analysis of conversations and their work has provided examples of the local functioning of conversational devices and interactional formats such as turn-taking. This in turn led to later institution-based CA studies. CA has subsequently been applied to show how institutions such as courtroom interaction (e.g. Atkinson and Drew, 1979), 911 emergency calls (e.g. Zimmerman, 1992), classroom lessons (e.g. McHoul, 1978), doctor-patient interaction (e.g. Heath, 1986), news interviews (e.g. Heritage, 1985; Greatbatch, 1988) and a wider range of social institutions and contexts (e.g. Boden and Zimmerman, 1991; Drew and Heritage, 1992) were 'talked into being' (Heritage, 1984a, p. 290). Heritage (1997) writes:

*"There are, therefore, at least two kinds of conversation analytic research going on today, and, though they overlap in various ways, they are distinct in focus. The first examines the institution of interaction as an entity in its own right; the second studies the management of social institution **in** interaction"* (p. 162, emphasis added).

Over time, those CA studies have provided a means to analyse the operations of other institutional talk. Accordingly, the current research positions itself within the domain of institutional CA and its interest is in studying specific institutional activities (language teaching and learning), specific interactional situations (EFL classroom interaction), its locale (a university in Thailand), interactional requirements (the institutional goal and the pedagogical focus), and especially the ways in which the interactants (the teachers and students) show their orientations (topic development) toward these situations and requirements. CA, as the adopted research paradigm, will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Furthermore, since this research is concerned with L2 classroom interaction, it is essential to start with an understanding of the organisation of language classroom interaction. This is found in the following section.

### **3.4 The Interactional Architecture of the L2 Classroom**

The first step toward an understanding of social order and participants' actions and their meanings in language classroom is to understand their overall organisation, or the 'interactional architecture' (Seedhouse, 2004) of classroom interaction. When considering the interactional architecture of L2 classroom interaction, it is necessary to begin with identifying what the institutional goal is. The universal core institutional goal in any L2 classroom around the world is that the teacher will teach the students the L2 (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 183). This goal then leads to the three interactional properties, which in turn shape the way in which L2 classroom interaction is accomplished:

Property 1: Language is "both the vehicle and object of instruction" (Long, 1983, p. 9). This means that language has a unique dual role in the L2 classroom in that it is both the process and product of the instruction.

Property 2: There is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction in the L2 classroom. This relationship means that the unique fingerprint of L2 classroom interactional organisation transforms the pedagogical focus (task-as-workplan) into interaction (task-in-process) (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 184).

Property 3: The third property derives rationally from the second property in that all linguistic forms and patterns of interaction displayed by students are normatively linked in some way to the pedagogical focus, and as a result student utterances are potentially subject to the teacher's evaluation to see how far reality matches the pedagogical expectation.

It can be said that in order to achieve the institutional goal, the roles of the social actors, or participants, who here are the teacher and students, need to display the aforementioned properties of L2 classroom interactions. To put this into practice, Seedhouse (2004, pp. 187-188) illustrates the following basic sequence organisation in terms of manifestations in L2 classroom interaction:

1. A pedagogical focus is introduced.
2. At least two persons speak in the L2 in normative orientation to the pedagogical focus.
3. The interaction involves participants' analysing the pedagogical focus and performing turns displaying their analysis of and normative orientation to this pedagogical focus in

relation to interaction. The other participants analyse these turns in relation to the pedagogical focus and produce further turns displaying this analysis.

*“Through this sequence the institution of the L2 classroom is talked into being, because introducing the pedagogical focus is directly implicative of the institutional goal: to teach the learners the L2”* (p. 188, emphasis added).

As we can see from those properties of the interactional architecture and the basic sequence organisation of L2 classroom interaction, there is a reflexive relationship between the pedagogical focus which derives from the institutional goal and the teacher and students’ interaction.

We should now turn to the important role of topic in relation to institutional goals and the pedagogical focus in L2 classroom interaction. Although not stated explicitly, Fisher (1996) has demonstrated that one important component of talk which has a primary educational aim is task-related topic, and this therefore serves as a focus for examining educational talk. As task has a dual-personality, in the same vein, topic in the L2 classroom, which is considered in terms of the extent to which it focuses on the same content as the teacher’s defined task (Fisher, 1996), develops a dual-personality, too (Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2015).

However, there is a lack of studies on how exactly topic develops this dual-personality. More to the point, no research has studied the reflexive relationship of how topic is directly transformed into L2 classroom interactions. Accordingly, the current research aims to fill this gap and thus to answer the research questions specified above but to get close to this aim, a methodology for the analysis of L2 classroom interaction first needs to be discussed. In order to study spoken interaction in relation to language teaching and learning, Richards, Ross, and Seedhouse (2012) suggest that there are a number of methodologies which may be used, one of which is a micro-analytic CA method. Thus, in the next section, an overall review of CA is given, and a justification for its adoption as the methodological approach of choice is provided.

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

As suggested by Seedhouse (2005), CA focuses on the explication of talk, and the concern of the analysis is to examine the speakers' sequential organisation of talk and how they mutually orient themselves to the business at hand. CA is also interested in how language functions as a means of social interaction (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), which is examined in relation to meaning and context. Social context is a dynamically created circumstance that is expressed in and through the sequential organisation of interaction. The following principles have been developed within the CA paradigm.

#### **3.5.1 CA principles**

1. At the core of CA is talk-in-interaction (Schegloff, 1987, p. 207). Talk-in-interaction refers to different varieties of talk and embodied conduct that occur in everyday life across settings from the ordinary to the institutional. Based on Sacks's original claim that there is order at all points in interaction, talk-in-interaction is systematically organised, deeply ordered and methodic (Richards, Ross, and Seedhouse, 2012, p. 38). This claim leads to the concept of rational design in interaction, that is that interaction is structurally organised, and this principle of rational organisation is applied to studies of institutional discourse (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 14).
2. The analysis is based on recorded and transcribed naturally occurring data, which refers to actual occurrences of talk. CA data are not gathered from interviews, observations, or experimental techniques, which are too much a result of manipulation, selection, or reconstructions by the analyst or informant based on preconceived ideas of what is plausible or significant (Heritage and Atkinson, 1984, pp. 2-3). As put forward by Mori and Zuengler (2008, p. 17), CA discourages analysts' interpretation of the participants' intentions or other psychological states. Additionally, CA also avoids making a prior connection between the observed behaviors and the participants' macro-sociological variables, such as age, gender, personal background, ethnicity, native/nonnative status, and the like. unless such a category is overtly displayed as being relevant. In contrast, CA encourages analysis of the observable structures of participants' talk, including segmental features of talk and prosody. The visible evidence also includes participants' nonverbal behavior, such as gaze, posture, gesture, and other types of embodied conduct co-occurring with talk. Through these features, which influence the

ways participants develop their talk-in-interaction and organise their participation, the analyst may be able to infer the participants' understanding of prior talk.

3. As a procedural study of talk-in-interaction, CA provides a holistic understanding of language in that no level of detail can be dismissed a priori, as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant (Heritage, 1984b, p. 241). This principle underlies the development of the fine-grained CA transcription system. Seedhouse (2004, 2005) noted that CA analysts regard the recordings of naturally occurring interaction as the primary data. Transcripts of the recordings are produced to make the primary data available for intensive analysis, and this allows analysts to present their data to readers and researchers and thus to public scrutiny (Heritage and Atkinson, 1984). Transcripts are, however, inevitably incomplete and selective renderings of the primary data.

4. The analysis should begin with “*unmotivated looking* or being open to discovering patterns or phenomena ... rather than searching the data with preconceptions or hypotheses” (Richards, Ross and Seedhouse, 2012, p. 44). CA is bottom-up and strictly data-driven. The analyst's intuition, which may be derived from membership of the participants' speech community, may guide the analysis (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; ten Have, 1999, 2007) but the systematic presentation of visible evidence is considered the most important analytic move.

5. CA is based on a microscopic view of context that interaction is context-shaped and context-renewing; that is, any contribution is dependent on a previous one and subsequent contributions create a new context for later actions. As noted by Heritage (1984b, p. 242), “the context of a next action is repeatedly renewed with every current action”. Interaction is context-shaped in that its contribution to a mutual understanding derives from the preceding utterance or activities in which participants are engaged. Interaction is context-renewing in that the current utterance will form the primary agenda for the next action in a sequence.

Based on the above principles underlying CA, the aims of CA are further discussed in the next section.

### ***3.5.2 Aims of CA***

One main aim of CA is to uncover the underlying machinery that enables participants to organise and order social action in talk-in-interaction (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 12). Ten Have (1999, 2007) also emphasises that the fundamental purpose of CA is to provide analytic descriptions of the

organisation of talk-in-action through taking a participant's perspective; that is to take an emic view (Pike, 1967). More specifically, CA's emic perspective involves repeated listening to and viewing of data. At all stages of analysis, the researcher must answer the question "Why that, in that way, right now?" CA thus asks why a particular action is expressed by means of particular linguistic forms in this particular developing sequence.

A further important aim of CA is to analyse simultaneous action, context management, and intersubjectivity. Put differently, "CA seeks to uncover the organisation of talk from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of what is going on" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, p. 15). Turns at talk are the building blocks of intersubjectivity (Heritage and Clayman, 2010, p. 15). CA attempts to describe, in as much detail as possible, how each turn is taken and constructed, and in so doing, explains how the participants accomplish social interaction and display orientation toward co-participants. Conversation analysts work on discovering recurrent patterns and structures which provide resources for participants to construct and interpret one another's contribution to their talk-in-interaction.

### ***3.5.3 Two CA research traditions***

According to Heritage and Clayman (2010, pp. 15-16), two general lines of CA research have developed. The original CA research developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson studies ordinary conversation as an institution in its own right. The second line of CA research studying institutional talk focuses on more restricted and institution-specific environments. Three basic elements underlie institutional talk: (1) participants' interactions are goal-oriented and tied to their given institution-relevant identities; (2) there are special constraints on participants' contributions to the business at hand; and (3) there are inferential frameworks and procedures of interactions for particular institutional contexts. Institutional CA first emerged with Atkinson and Drew's (1979) study of courtroom interaction. During the past two decades, major areas of institutional talk which have been investigated include interactions between lay people and the representatives of professions, such as occur within the legal system, education, police, social services, medicine, business meetings, and mass media (Heritage and Clayman, 2010, p. 34). In the following section, three types of interactional organisation employed in CA analysis will be discussed.

### ***3.5.4 Types of interactional organisation***

CA interactional organisations are part of the ‘context-free’ machinery which serves as the foundations for investigating the details of interactions, with participants in interaction employing them in a ‘context-sensitive’ way. CA analysts interpret context-sensitive social actions through context-free machinery with reference to what they can make sense of (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 17). In other words, the aforementioned organisations should be explicated as the reference to understanding of what actions are accomplished and what kinds of identities are displayed (Mori and Zuengler, 2008, p. 16).

Both being shaped by and shaping context, CA refers to this double relation of action as ‘indexicality’, the sense brought into an interaction by previous action. ‘Reflexivity’ refers to how sense is made of previous actions and displayed in new actions and how this provides for a new understanding so, “any action is based on earlier actions and indicates the way in which an earlier action has been understood. Any action paves the way for further actions, which will be understood on the grounds of what already has happened” (Mortensen and Wagner, 2013, p. 3). Participants use these interactional organisations normatively and reflexively as their social actions, and CA analysts thus use them as a reference for interpretation of participants’ actions.

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) studied ordinary social activities and described and explicated the following features: interactional organisation, including turn-taking organisation, adjacency pairs, repair organisation, preference organisation, and topical organisation. Three types of interactional organisation from this list which are employed in this research, turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair, are now discussed.

#### **3.5.4.1 Turn-taking organisation**

Turn taking refers to a system of ordinary conversation through which participants exchange their speakership and each turn in a sequence displays how speakers have interpreted previous talk and action (Ford, 2013). Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) propose that the base of the turn-taking system is comprised of two components: turn construction and turn allocation. Turns are composed of turn construction units (TCUs), which allow participants to predict a turn’s trajectory and possible completion points during the course of the developing turn. TCUs can be sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions, and sound production is also important for

turn projection. During the course of producing a turn for a current speaker, other speakers may take opportunities to self-select the turn with overlapping talk and/or to provide nonverbal responses.

Turn allocation involves a local management system of decision-making for changing the current speaker and selecting the next one. The point at which a change of speaker may occur is termed the 'transition-relevance place' (TRP). Initially, each speaker is allocated one TCU per turn. Seedhouse (2004, p. 28) suggested that the following norms apply at the first TRP of any turn:

- If the current speaker selects the next speaker by reference to specific knowledge of a topic, the current speaker must stop speaking and the next speaker must speak.
- If no particular next speaker is selected, a next speaker may 'self-select'.
- If the current speaker has not selected the next speaker, and no other speaker self-selects as the next speaker, the current speaker may (but need not) continue. In this case, the original speaker may produce an extended or multi-unit turn.

As described by Ford (2013), apart from grammatical and phonetic patterns, action trajectories are also essential components of turn projection, determining transition relevance places. Stories and other larger turns are continued through participant coordination and are responsive to specific social interactions. Additionally, the number of participants in a conversation also affects speaker selection and minimisation of gaps. Interactions with more than two speakers result in greater competition for speakership and a further minimisation of gaps between turns, which can lead to separation of interactional sequences or schisming (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974, p. 713).

#### 3.5.4.2 Adjacency pairs

An adjacency pair is described by the ethnomethodologists as one kind of turn alternation (Cook, 1989, p. 53). The notion of adjacency pairs (AP) was proposed by Sacks and Schegloff (1973) and APs are 'the basic building-blocks of intersubjectivity' (Heritage, 1984b, p. 256). They represent mutual understanding or interpersonal alignment (Seedhouse, 2004, pp. 21-22), and are considered one of the most basic forms of speech used by the participants to produce conversation. An adjacency pair is a sequence of two-part utterances; a 'first pair part' and a



‘second pair part’ which are adjacent or follow one another. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) gives a briefly explanation:

*“... adjacency pairs consist of sequences which properly have the following features; (1) two utterance length, (2) adjacent position of component utterances, (3) different speakers producing each utterance ... (4) relative ordering of parts (i.e. first pair parts precede second pair parts) and (5) discriminative relations (i.e. the pair type of which a first pair part is a member is relevant to the selection among second pair parts)”* (pp. 295-296 cited in ten Have, 1999, p. 20, emphasis added).

The speech characteristic and type of the first pair part (introduced by the first participant) determine the range of responses provided by the other participant in the conversation. In other words, adjacency pairs are paired utterances and on production of the first part of the pair, the second part of the pair become conditionally relevant (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 17). The following are some adjacency pairs given by Schegloff and Sacks (1973).

<b>Utterance function</b>	<b>Expected response</b>
Question	Answer
Greeting	Greeting
Congratulation	Thanks
Leave-taking	Leave-taking
Summon	Answer

It is widely accepted that each first pair part of an adjacency pair can normally have multiple second pair parts (Pomerantz, 1984) though some second pair parts will be preferred or dispreferred (Cook, 1989, p. 54), for example:

<b>Utterance function</b>	<b>Expected response</b>
Offer	Acceptance (preferred) or Refusal (dispreferred)
Apology	Acceptance (preferred) or Rejection (dispreferred)
Invitation	Acceptance (preferred) or Rejection (dispreferred)

Assessment	Agreement (preferred) or Disagreement (dispreferred)
Blame	Denial (preferred) or Admission (dispreferred)
Question	Expected Answer (preferred) or Unexpected Answer (dispreferred)

If the second pair part is absent, the speaker who introduces the first pair part does not accomplish his/her conversational goal, and therefore will be in search of the response. A failure to supply the second pair part is likely to be interpreted as signifying rudeness, deafness, or lack of attention. Nonetheless, it may remain close to the surface of the interaction and appear later.

Undoubtedly, the second part of the adjacency pair is vital to communication and social interaction. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, p. 43) also emphasises the significance of adjacency pairs. They point out that a next turn in an adjacency pair sequence which is a relevant second pair part can be used to indicate how mutual understanding has been accomplished and displayed in a conversation (p. 44). This is termed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, p. 729) ‘next-turn proof procedure’ and provides CA analysts with the opportunity to develop an emic perspective.

The concept of adjacency pair is a key mechanism for the analysis of sequence organisation but a full conversational sequence generally includes more than two pair-parts (ten Have, 2007, p. 130). The principles that underlie the analysis of adjacency pairs also underlie other larger and more complex sequences, such as in the L2 classroom interactions, which will be further discussed in this chapter.

#### 3.5.4.3 Repair organisation

Repair can be defined as the treatment of various kinds of trouble arising from problems with speaking, (mis)hearing, understanding, or agreement in interactions (Fox, Benjamin and Mazeland, 2013; Seedhouse, 2004; ten Have, 2007). Repair may include stating the rules explicitly, sanctioning violations of the rules, second starts, prompting, giving clues and helping, explaining, and correction of errors (van Lier, 1988, p. 183). Repair is an essential mechanism for the maintenance of reciprocity and intersubjectivity (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 34) although it should be noted that repair is more general than correction in that it may have no perceivable error.

A repair sequence starts with a repairable utterance or the trouble source. Typically, a repair sequence consists of two parts: first is repair initiation, in which some trouble is indicated and following this is repair proper, where the trouble is 'fixed' (Fox, Benjamin and Mazeland, 2013, p. 1). Normally, there are four repair trajectories: (1) self-initiated self-repair; (2) self-initiated other-repair; (3) other-initiated self-repair; and (4) other-initiated other-repair.

In the following section, some of the fundamental conceptual issues, concerning the position of CA as a social science research method as it has informed the present study, are considered.

### ***3.5.5 Conceptual issues relating to this CA study***

In terms of reliability, the technical quality of the recordings and the adequacy of transcripts are of most concern in this research. In line with standard practice in CA studies, the transcripts of the research data are displayed and very detailed analyses are available for scrutiny. This makes the process of research analysis transparent and the data repeatable and replicable (Bryman, 2012). By adopting an 'emic' perspective, the researcher ensures internal validity, which reflects the participants' perspective rather than that of the analyst. The case study in this research aims to contribute to the development of EFL education in Thailand in particular and consequently the research findings may provide some generalisable aspects to other EFL classroom settings in Thailand. As regard triangulation, given the detailed and in-depth analysis of individual sequences of interaction using CA methodology, other data-gathering techniques are not generally undertaken (Richards, Ross and Seedhouse, 2012, p. 330).

### **3.6 Justification for Choosing CA as the Research Methodology**

As we have seen, CA was originally developed through the study of ordinary conversation. In the field of applied linguistics and education, when CA is used as a research methodology when studying institutional discourse, including talk-in-interaction in the classroom, CA is able to describe the procedures and expectations through which the teacher and students accomplish orderly and intelligible classroom interactions. In this EFL classroom research, the researcher as the conversation analyst can investigate similarities and differences between the organisation of classroom interaction and ordinary conversation. How the teacher and the students design their

turns to accomplish specific actions and activities in relation to the pedagogical purposes and a specific classroom environment will also be explored.

The overall picture of classroom interaction is that it is a complex, heterogeneous, and “messy” source of data (Seedhouse, 2013). However, by using CA as the research methodology, the very complex, dynamic, and fluid interactional environment of the L2 classroom can be explicated. By adopting CA principles, aims and interactional organisation, as set out in the previous section to this study, it is possible to examine the micro-detail of pedagogy and interaction which are intertwined in a mutually dependent relationship. More importantly, previous CA studies have also demonstrated that from a CA perspective, the researcher is able to gain a full understanding of the minute detail of topic organisation and development in the L2 classroom interaction; as with conversation, there is also order at all points in L2 classroom interaction (Seedhouse, 2013).

Accordingly, the following section discusses in more detail how CA is adopted in this research, and particularly how the research adopts a CA institutional-discourse perspective on L2 classroom interaction as its theoretical framework.

### **3.7 Research Methodology**

#### ***3.7.1 Theoretical framework***

Although the origins of CA lie in ordinary spoken interaction, its relevance to classroom discourse can easily be seen. As we have seen in the previous chapter, numerous research studies on classroom discourse have over the past few decades used CA as their theoretical underpinning. When CA is applied in the language classroom, the emphasis is thus on the interactional organisation of the collaborative development of understandings in classroom discourse. The focus of analysis is on how the teacher and students orient to each other and how their turns at talk are constructed and patterned.

Studies of classroom discourse (e.g. Johnson, 1995; Seedhouse, 1996) have revealed that the classroom should be viewed as a context in its own right, or rather as a series of interrelated contexts, jointly created and defined by the participants, i.e. the teacher and students. In this view, any attempt to analyse teacher and student interaction starts from the assumption that verbal behavior is goal-oriented. Any attempt to understand the nature of classroom discourse

should, therefore, focus on recognising the relationship between language use and pedagogical purpose since the goal-oriented activities in which teachers and students are engaged are shaped by and for the work-in progress of the lesson; teachers and students adjust their use of language according to the task in which they are involved (Walsh, 2002).

In order to analyse and understand the goal-oriented interactions of how the teacher and students orient to each other and how their turns at talk are built in relation to the pedagogical purpose, the methodology which is used for the analysis of L2 classroom interaction is the next-turn proof procedure in relation to the pedagogical focus. CA institutional-discourse methodology is thus utilised in the current study. CA institutional-discourse methodology takes as its starting point the centrality of task-related talks which are completed through talk-in-interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1992a, p.3) and as shown by Seedhouse and Harris (2010), CA institutional-discourse methodology focuses on how to relate the overall organisation of the interaction to the institutional goal.

Drew and Heritage (1992, pp. 28-53) propose five dimensions of talk in institutions which constitute research foci. However topic is not included in this. Likewise, Heritage (1997) also omits the notion of topic in his proposed six basic places in any investigation of institutional interaction. More recently, however, topic has become of interest to some extent in discussion of the ‘epistemic engine’ of talk (Heritage, 2012) and ‘topic-proffering sequences’ (Schegloff, 2007). Heritage argues that epistemic or information imbalance drives sequences of talk, as the talk may arise from the unknowing (K-) or knowing (K+) positions of the first speaker, or that the participants occupy different positions on an epistemic gradient (more knowledgeable [K+] or less knowledgeable [K-]). This epistemic or information imbalance will motivate and drive the talk until the imbalance is equalised. In this view, although not explicitly stated by Heritage, topic development provides a key mechanism for information exchange in achieving this rebalancing. Schegloff (2007, pp. 169-180) suggested that ‘topic-proffering sequences’ can be interwoven with the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and preference, as preferred responses are likely to promote sequence expansion while dispreferred responses tend to close-down the sequence and that talk-in-interaction “is better examined with respect to action than with respect to topicality” (ibid., p. 1).

Consequently, this study will adopt the epistemic imbalance perspective emphasised by Heritage and Schegloff in relation to specific institutional discourse. This will be done firstly by

investigating how topics are fore-grounded and become the means of delivering institutional action, and secondly by exploring how topics are interwoven with the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair. The CA institutional-discourse theoretical underpinnings on L2 classroom interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 1997; Seedhouse, 2004) are adopted to examine topic development through a micro-analysis of naturally occurring classroom interactions.

In this research, the main focus in the investigation and analysis includes the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair. In the classroom, much of the turn-taking organisation works by specifically restricting the teacher to asking questions and students to answering them. In analysing sequence organisation, the specific actions that the teacher and students use to initiate, develop and close their classroom talk together are of particular concern. In general, the sequence organisation in the classroom, which Hauser (2006) terms pedagogical talk, typically takes the form of a three-part sequence of turns namely: Initiation-Response-Feedback or Initiation-Response-Follow up (IRF) (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975), Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) (Mehan, 1979), Question-Answer-Comment (QAC) (McHoul, 1978), and triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1990). These three-part exchanges consist of a question asked by the teacher, a response provided by the student(s) and feedback or evaluation given by the teacher (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Despite the pedagogical focus being mostly introduced by the teacher, it may be on occasion initiated by students. Repair is the treatment of conversational trouble which participants judge to be obstructing their communication.

Seedhouse (2004) has applied CA institutional-discourse perspective to the study of L2 classroom interaction by describing how turn-taking, sequence and repair are organised within different L2 classroom contexts. Seedhouse has argued that there is a reflexive relationship between the pedagogical focus and the organisation of turn taking, sequence, and repair; as the pedagogical focus varies, so the organisation of turn taking, sequence, and repair varies. This study takes this perspective as its research theoretical framework and for this reason, the section below explains in more details CA institutional-discourse perspectives on different L2 classroom contexts.

### *3.7.2 CA institutional-discourse perspective on L2 classroom contexts*

Any understanding of the ‘interactional architecture’ (Seedhouse, 2004) of the language classroom requires selection and mastery of a particular research tool. CA is considered by many scholars as one of the foremost approaches for investigating classroom interaction since it offers a way of exploring in detail questions that are related to teaching and learning (Walsh, 2011). Seedhouse (2013) notes that CA is a methodology for the analysis of naturally-occurring spoken interaction and CA research into language learning and teaching can be viewed as a subset of CA research into institutional talk, in which the organisation of the interaction is related to the institutional goal. Coupled with CA, the researcher develops an ‘emic’, or the participant’s perspective, to uncover and describe the interactional architecture of the language used in the classroom.

CA institutional-discourse methodology attempts to relate the overall organisation of the interaction and individual interactional devices to the day’s class objectives (Seedhouse, 2004). Adopting CA institutional-discourse methodology to research classroom discourse, the detail of teacher-student and student-student interactions can be uncovered by looking at the ways in which contexts are co-created in relation to the goal-oriented activity in which they are engaged (Heritage, 1997, p. 163).

As suggested by Seedhouse (2004, p.3), CA provides for a detailed analysis of the transcribed data of talk occurring in natural situations. The main aim of this is to characterise orders of organisation in talk-in-interaction, and to uncover the methods which interactants use to develop mutual understanding. Seedhouse has argued that the classroom contexts are subvarieties of the classroom interaction. At the micro level, we can observe variation in the organisation of turn and sequence according to specific pedagogical focuses. Seedhouse thus outlined the organisation of turn taking, sequence and repair in four different L2 classroom contexts; namely form-and-accuracy contexts, meaning-and-fluency contexts, task-oriented contexts, and procedural contexts. These will be discussed in the following sections.

#### *3.7.2.1 Form-and-accuracy contexts*

When a pedagogical focus is on linguistic form and accuracy, the teacher normally presents particular linguistic forms and patterns of interaction. The students are expected to learn from the

teacher how to manipulate linguistic forms accurately and they will practice and produce that particular linguistic form according to the pedagogical focus. The focus here will be on the production of linguistic form but the forms do not carry topic, content, personal meanings or new information in the same way as in ordinary conversation. The notion of 'topic' does not apply to interaction in form-and-accuracy contexts as the participants do not develop a topic in the normal sense. When the pedagogical focus is on linguistic form, the organisation is necessarily formal, and it is normally essential for the teacher to have tight control of the turn-taking system.

In terms of sequence organisation, the IRF/IRE (initiation, response and feedback/evaluation) cycle predominates in the formal interaction typical of form-and-accuracy contexts in which everything the students say is potentially subject to evaluation by the teacher. However, the L2 classroom interaction can sometimes be rather more complex. A pedagogical focus in relation to linguistic form and accuracy is normally introduced by the teacher, but in student-centred approaches the focus may be chosen by students. Students will nevertheless always produce patterns of interaction which are related in some way to the pedagogical focus. The major characteristic of repair organisation in this context is in general initiated by the teacher and will occur when the students' production of linguistic forms and patterns of interaction are not exactly identical to the intended pedagogical focus of the teacher. In fact, even when students' utterances are linguistically correct, they may still be subject to repair by the teacher.

#### 3.7.2.2 Meaning-and-fluency contexts

Seedhouse (2004) observes that when the pedagogical focus is on meaning and fluency, the main aim is on maximising the opportunities for classroom interaction. Within their classroom speech community, participants talk about their immediate classroom pedagogical environment, personal relationships, feelings, or the activities they are engaging in and their meanings. In comparison with form-and-accuracy contexts, in this context the focus is on the expression of personal meaning rather than display of linguistic forms and on promoting fluency rather than accuracy. Students will require interactional space to express personal meanings and develop topics, so the organisation of interaction will necessarily be conducted through pair or group work and thus in the absence of the teacher, students will have greater opportunity to manage interactions themselves. It is normative in this L2 classroom context to talk of the topic of the interaction, in contrast to form-and-accuracy contexts.



Within meaning-and-fluency contexts, students have a degree of control over the turn-taking system and the allocated interactional space enables them to develop topics and subtopics. Regarding sequence organisation, in contrast to form-and-accuracy contexts, the situation in this context is far more varied. A common feature is that the organisation is appropriate to the development of the topic. In contrast to form-and-accuracy contexts, repair is usually embedded and similar to that which occurs in ordinary conversation, focusing on establishing mutual understanding and negotiating meaning. Repair is overt only when errors in linguistic form lead to communication breakdown.

### 3.7.2.3 Task-oriented contexts

Following Seedhouse (*ibid.*), in task-oriented contexts, which are derived from the concept of task-based learning, the teacher introduces a pedagogical focus by allocating tasks to students and then allowing them to manage the interaction themselves. Typically, in this context, the teacher does not play any part in the interaction, although students sometimes ask the teacher for help and clarification when they encounter difficulty in meeting the task goal. In contrast to the two previous contexts, there is generally no focus on personal meanings or on linguistic forms and the focus of the interaction is on the accomplishment of the task, rather than on the language used. Seedhouse argues that in this context it is generally not relevant to talk of topic either since the focus is on task. The pedagogical focus and the nature of the task as interpreted by the students constrain the nature of the speech exchange system and the patterns of interaction produced by the students and there also exists a reflexive relationship between the nature of the task as understood by the students and the organisation of turn taking and sequence; types of turn-taking, turn order and turn size are thus constrained by the nature of the task. In this context, repair is primarily conducted by the students, and the objective is to establish understanding in order to accomplish the task. Errors of linguistic forms are therefore often ignored by the students because the main goal is task completion.

### 3.7.2.4 Procedural contexts

The previous three L2 classroom contexts may not occur in every lesson. However, the procedural context is usually found as a preface to another context. Here, the teacher aims to give procedural information to the students concerning the classroom activities to be accomplished in that lesson. The turn-taking system here is probably the most simple and straightforward, since

the teacher usually holds the floor and engages in a monologue, thus making it the most homogenous of all the L2 classroom contexts. Some possible variations, however, may occur when a student wishes to take a turn to ask a question regarding a procedure. The teacher may choose to make the procedural context more interactive by altering the turn-taking system and asking display questions instead of transmitting procedural information in a monologue and so allow students to take turns. Alternatively, the teacher may, after having explained the procedure, ask a student to confirm the procedure in order to check for understanding. As a consequence, there is generally little or no turn taking involved in this context. There is also no talk of topic in this context. Abdesslem (1993, p. 229), describing what called classroom management, says that “most moves are similar in all lessons and tend to be produced and reacted to automatically. Thus, students and teacher operate within a narrow range of language, much of which is formulaic”.

Nevertheless, in L2 classroom settings there is no limitation in principle on the kinds of interaction and the potential number of L2 classroom contexts which could occur around the world is vast. It is in addition not sufficient and or accurate to say that all instances of interaction within a particular L2 classroom context will be almost identical. L2 classroom contexts should be understood not only as institutional sub-varieties, but also as displaying an interplay between pedagogy and modes of interactional organisation and thus as environments through which institutional goals are met. Seedhouse (2004) concludes that:

*“The concept of L2 classroom contexts is not a static and invariant one in which a single L2 classroom context covers a whole lesson. Contexts can shift with great rapidity and fluidity from turn to turn during an L2 lesson and can be generated by learners as well as by the teacher”* (p. 207, emphasis added).

Following Seedhouse’s inventory of class types, the procedural contexts, meaning-and-fluency contexts, and task-oriented contexts have been used as analytic frameworks in this study in order to investigate topic development in relation to the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair. Table 2 (p. 93) shows how this has been done.

### **3.8 Research Setting and Ethical Issues**

This study describes topic organisation and development in EFL classrooms at a university in Thailand. The research data were gathered in September and October 2014 during the first semester of the academic year at Chiang Mai University, a university in a northern province in Thailand. The university was selected on the basis of the convenience; being a former student in the English department, the researcher has personal contact with some of the staff. This study followed strictly the ethical guidelines provided by Newcastle University and an ethical review was undertaken and approved by the University ethics convenor. A letter requesting permission (see Appendix A) to audio/video record a number of English courses was sent to the head of the English department and a separate letter asking the class teachers to voluntarily participate in this study was also sent to the coordinator. Three teachers (one non-native and two native speakers of English) were willing to participate in this research.

On the first visit, before starting recording sessions, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students. Participant information sheets (see Appendix B) providing detailed information about the research and informed consent forms (see Appendix C) assuring that the data collected would be treated with full confidentiality were distributed. Participants were given time to read the documents and were then asked to complete the consent forms indicating their agreement to participate in the study. Because the students in the non-native English-speaking teacher's class were English majors, the consent forms could be collected immediately after class. However, the students in the two native English-speakers' classes were non-English majors, so it was necessary for the researcher to explain in Thai the details on the information sheet and the consent form. The students also needed more time to read the document, thus the consent forms were collected at a later date. All of the students signed their consent forms, agreeing to be audio/video recorded for this research. At the end of the data gathering process, the participant debriefing sheets (see Appendix D) describing the aims and methodology of the research and the researcher's contact information were given to the teachers and students participating in the study.

#### ***3.8.1 Participants***

The teachers participating in this study comprised one female Thai teacher, one male native speaker of English and one female native speaker of English. The Thai teacher, who used to be

the researcher's teacher during her undergraduate study, was highly qualified, holding an M.A. in English literature and a Ph.D. in English, and had more than twenty years of teaching experience. The two native speakers were part-time teachers, one holding a B.Sc. in education and the other a B.A. and each had two or three years teaching experience. The students were, at the time of the recordings, third-year English major students, and second- and third-year non-English major students. Classes included both females and males and were between the ages of 19 and 21.

### *3.8.2 Data collection*

The research data were collected from two English modules taught in three classes (see also Table 1, page 91). Since the three teachers had voluntarily participated in the study, the researcher did not have any choice over the subject and type of lesson or the number of lesson. Recent L2 classroom research (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 87) has considered between five and ten lessons a reasonable sample from which to generalise and draw conclusions. Although the main aim of this study is not to generalise or to draw overly broad conclusions, a total of eleven lessons were allowed to be recorded, each of which was approximately sixty minutes long. Each classroom was recorded using three tripod-mounted video cameras; two were placed in the front corners of the classroom and one camera was placed at the center back of the classroom. However, for technical reasons, in some sessions, only two cameras were used, one in a front corner and one at the back of the room. In addition, two small digital audio recorders were used to randomly capture audio from students' pair or group interactions. The teachers all provided the researcher with their teaching materials and these were also used in the data analysis, where appropriate.

The first group which was taught by the Thai teacher were enrolled on the module English 353: Narratives in Prose. This course was designed for third-year English major students. According to the course description, the contents include short stories and novels, emphasising the importance of narrative points of view, various styles and devices for writing modern fiction and other forms of literature. This class was recorded on five occasions. The first two sessions involved presentations in which a group of four or five students chose one short story from the external reading list and spent sixty minutes presenting (1) the elements of the story, such as setting, plot summary, themes, characters and characterisation; (2) the narrative techniques, such as point of view, metaphor, symbolism, allegory, foreshadowing, etc.; and (3) the overall

interpretation/response, such as how students related the story to other stories they had read in class, and how the story informed their views about other societies. The last fifteen minutes of the presentation were devoted to questions and answers and class discussion. The other three sessions were regular class discussions of the selected literary works.

In the other two groups, all the students studied the same module, English 210: Oral Expression I and each group was taught by a native speaker. Both groups followed the same topics (dating, talking on the phone, and locations) and the same communicative activities because this course was designed for all non-English major students. Each class was recorded on three separate occasions. In each lesson of this module, the objectives were to introduce new vocabulary and to get students to practice language functions in pairs or groups in the form of role-plays.

During the recording process, the researcher remained in the classroom to observe and adjust the recording instruments when necessary. All participants were asked to ignore the audio/video recordings and to participate in class as usual. In the 'Narratives in Prose' sessions, it was noticed that most of the interactions between the teacher and the students or among the students themselves took place during the class discussions and it was therefore decided to capture these utterances by means of video recordings only. For this reason, the audio recorders were not used. Regarding the course 'Oral Expression I', two audio recorders were placed near students in the classrooms during students' pair or group activities and these were used in addition to the main video recordings.

In order to ensure the reliability of the research data in that the gathered data are as naturalistic as possible, the researcher attempted to minimise the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972) during the recording periods of the participants' conversations. The methodological notion of the observer's paradox that the presence of the researcher and/or the recording devices paradoxically inhibits researchers from exploring "how people speak when they are not being observed" (Labov, 1972, p. 97) is inescapable and seen as a limitation. In this study, however, the first minutes of recordings were discarded, and the focuses of analysis were placed on conversational moments in which the recorders were not in focus. These measures aimed to obtain relatively naturally-occurring interaction that is as close as possible to what it would have been like if it was not being recorded.

The table below provides more details on the recordings.

Table 1: Recording Data

<b>Course:</b> English 353: Narratives in Prose	
<b>Teacher I:</b> Female non-native speaker of English	
<b>Students:</b> Third-year English majors	
<b>No. of recordings:</b> 5	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
22/09/14	Group presentation I: James Joyce's "Araby"
2/10/14	Group presentation IV: Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"
13/10/14	Beauty and the Beast Motif
16/10/14	The Courtship of Mr. Lyon I
20/10/14	The Courtship of Mr. Lyon II
<b>Course:</b> English 210: Oral Expression I	
<b>Teacher II:</b> Female native-speaker of English	
<b>Students:</b> Second- and third-year non-English majors	
<b>No. of recordings:</b> 3	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
13/10/14	Dating
16/10/14	Talking on the phone
20/10/14	Locations
<b>Course:</b> English 210: Oral Expression I	
<b>Teacher III:</b> Male native-speaker of English	
<b>Students:</b> Second- and third-year non-English Major	
<b>No. of recordings:</b> 3	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
14/10/14	Dating
17/10/14	Talking on the phone
21/10/14	Locations

### ***3.8.3 Video recordings***

The research data are principally composed of video recordings of real EFL classroom lessons, with a total of approximately eleven hours of video recording constituting the sample for the thesis. Each lesson was videotaped with a JVC and two Sony digital video cameras positioned in the front corners and at the back of the classroom to capture both the students and the teacher. The researcher operated the cameras in an attempt to capture as many interactions as possible.

All of the video recordings have been retained on the researcher's own computer hard drives, on USB external hard drives, and on DVD discs. The video recordings were first extensively reviewed and then extracts which were considered more relevant to this study were selected for transcription and analysis.

### ***3.8.4 Audio recordings***

Two Sony digital voice recorders were randomly placed among the participants in order to capture conversations and to produce audio recordings of interactions. The database for the audio recordings thus comprises samples of student utterances made during pair and group interactions. The audio data were also downloaded to the researcher's computer hard drives, USB external hard drives, and burnt to DVD and these audio recordings were also transcribed and analysed.

## **3.9 Data Selection**

All recorded data were transcribed using transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004 see Appendix E). In any L2 classroom, including in Thailand, it is common for the teacher and the students to use their L1 (native language). Translation from the L1 (Thai) into English is thus included to ensure the transparency of the data. Due to limitations of space and time, data had to be selected for analysis, and data which has been transcribed but not used in the analysis can be found in Appendix F.

In terms of the strategy used for data selection, initially all the recordings of the lessons were carefully observed. Distinctive extracts were then selected by identifying the practices of interaction that constituted the central object of the study: topic organisation and development.

As has been said, this research aims at explicating L2 classroom interaction concerning topic development in relation to the pedagogical focus, and CA institutional-discourse perspective has been adopted. From the corpus of eleven hours/lessons from three classrooms, the data had to be selected and reduced for analysis. In order to relate the nature of the selected data to the researcher's stated research aims and methodology, four episodes of the 'Dating' lesson of the 'Oral Expression I' module from both classes of the male and female English native teachers were selected for analysis (see Table 2, page 93). The reason for choosing this particular lesson is that its pedagogical focus enables the researcher to answer the research sub-questions on how topics are developed within different L2 classroom contexts; how topics are developed within the interaction between the teacher and the students; and to what extent and how the students develop topics during their talk-in-interaction in group discussion. In the two lessons from this module, 'Talking on the phone' and 'Locations', the pedagogical focus was mainly on having students practice language patterns and on memorisation of the language functions, rather than talking on a topic.

Regarding the module 'Narratives in Prose', this was reading and content-based in nature. During the first two sessions of the recording, however, the teacher provided students with opportunities for speaking by getting students to work in groups and presenting their selected short story to the class. The aim here was to transmit information about a story and so group members took turns describing in monologue their assigned component of the task, whether this be structural, narrative or reflective. Although the last fifteen minutes of the lesson were spent on questions and answers and class discussion, the focus was mainly on checking the comprehension of the other students, who were the audience of the presentation. As a result, personal meanings did were absent from the activity. The remaining three sessions were regular class discussions on the selected literary works and in these classes, the teacher did most of the talking by giving an interpretation of the story. In sum, in the literature class, the teacher and students rarely developed a topic in the normal sense. In addition, in the last three sessions, the teacher maintained tight control of the turn-taking system and the students presenting their work did the same in the first two sessions.

The first two episodes of the selected data contain several periods of the teachers and students in the two groups of non-English majors developing the topic of dating customs around the world, or more particularly, dating in Spain. By having data from two classes, the researcher is able to



use CA's analytical potency to illuminate through comparison the intricacies of two single episodes. More specifically, by comparing how topics are developed in terms of the actual procedures of interaction in two classrooms, the findings show that the topic developed both as topic-as-workplan, found in the reading text, and as topic-in-process, as this was performed by the teachers and students. However, the same topic-as-workplan did not result in the same topic-in-process when performed by different teachers and students, perhaps due to the two teachers having different pedagogical focuses. As a consequence, the research findings are highly pertinent to professional development, particularly instructional practices. The other two episodes consist of several extracts selected from two groups of students role-playing the 'Dating Game' task. Likewise, the comparison of these two groups performing the same task confirms the divergence between the topic-as-workplan and the topic-in-process. More importantly, the difference between the teachers' intended pedagogical focus and the instructions in the textbook led to different interpretations by the two groups and this resulted in different outcomes in the classroom.

As stated above, this research examines in detail topic development in four periods of classroom interaction involving two activities of a particular lesson, rather than a number of extracts from many lessons. This analytic strategy aims to answer the main research questions and by means of this investigation, the research will be able to explicate how the official topic of a certain task is initiated, shifted and ended in reflexive relationship with a particular pedagogical focus.

The sections of the module textbook relevant to the lesson were also used in the analysis along with the recording data. This was because these reading materials established the pedagogical focus in the form of the topic-as-workplan for the teachers and students to implement as the topic-in-process in actual classroom interaction. This type of data is considered text-external or ethnographic in nature and may be rejected by some conversation analysts. However, the ethnographic evidence of the intended pedagogical focus is used to provide contextual detail to help frame the distinction between the task and the actual pedagogical focus. Arminen (2000) and Silverman (2006) have argued that CA practitioners inevitably make use of some ethnographic and context-sensitive knowledge in their analyses of institutional interaction and therefore, although the analysis has been undertaken primarily based on details of interactions, this ethnographic evidence has also been utilised in this study.

The following table presents details of the data used.

Table 2: Data Used in the Analysis

Number of Extract /Figure	Title of data	L2 classroom context	Type of data	Participants	Level of students' proficiency in L2	Age of students
Figure 1	Task/Topic-as-workplan 1: 'Dating Customs around the World'	-	Reading material	-	-	-
Extract 52	Class 1: Teacher's intended pedagogical focus 1	Procedural	Recording	Female teacher native-speaker of English  Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20
Extracts 53-65	Class 1: Topic-in-process 1	Meaning-and-fluency	Recording	Female teacher native-speaker of English  Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20
Extract 66	Class 2: Teacher's intended pedagogical focus 1	Procedural	Recording	Male teacher native-speaker of English	-	-
Extract 67	Class 2: Topic-in-process 1	Meaning-and-fluency	Recording	Male teacher native-speaker of English  Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20
Extracts 68-69	Class 1: Teacher's intended pedagogical focus 2	Procedural	Recording	Female teacher native-speaker of English  Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20
Figure 2	Task/Topic-as-workplan 2: 'The Dating Game'	-	Reading material	-	-	-
Extract 70-77	Class 1/Group 1: Topic-in-process 3	Task-oriented	Recording	Female teacher native-speaker of English  4 Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20
Extract 78-82	Class 1/Group 2: Topic-in-process 4	Task-oriented	Recording	5 Thai EFL students	2nd-3rd year non-English major students	18-20

### 3.10 Data Analysis

The transcribed data were analysed using the framework described in chapter two. In general, it is a common practice in CA tradition that analysts work from a collection of instances to describe “a single phenomenon or a single domain of phenomenon” (Schegloff, 1987, p. 101). The purpose of this present study, in contrast, is not to discover a new practice, but to develop a richer understanding of an existing phenomenon (L2 classroom interaction) within its extended local context (a university in Thailand) and to uncover a particular aspect of interaction (topic development) previously unnoticed by but important for professionals (EFL teachers) working within a specific institutional context (EFL classrooms). For example, by examining and comparing how topics are developed in four single episodes of interaction between teachers and students within different specific L2 classroom contexts (meaning-and-fluency contexts and task-oriented contexts), this study demonstrates that topic develops a double aspect as previously described. Through this analysis, in line with what Mori (2004, p. 536) has described as “promot[ing] the overall sensitivity to the intricacy of classroom talk and generate critical reflections on classroom policies and instructional designs”, this study aims to reach a more detailed understanding of topic development within the Thai EFL context, as so answer the main research question.

In the first stage of CA, analysts start with an unmotivated looking (Psathas, 1995) which means being open to discovering patterns or phenomena, rather than looking at the data with pre-conceptions or pre-existing hypotheses. In this research, for example, (as described in chapter 4) the identification of the teacher’s use of gender difference as a topic carrier in the topic-in-process emerged as a phenomenon from an unmotivated looking rather than from any prior assumption by the researcher that this was an issue to be focused on. After the unmotivated looking has taken place and a single extract has been selected, this study follows the procedures for a single-case analysis described by Seedhouse (2004, pp. 40-42):

1. Locate an action sequence or sequences.
2. Characterise the actions in the sequence or sequences. This is done by looking for a first speaker to initiate an action, which is responded to by the next speaker. The sequence ends when the speakers move to perform a different conversational action. For example, as described below, the researcher identifies a complex sequence of topic-based initiation-and-response adjacency

pairs in which the teacher is the first speaker to initiate talk in a specific meaning-and-fluency context but this is responded to by a student initiating a topic, which in turn is followed by the teacher's response and another student's interruption.

3. Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of the organisation of turn-taking.
4. Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of sequence organisation. For example, in the data analysis, the researcher identifies complex sequences in which a topic-based question-and-answer adjacency pairs leads to a series of topic-based initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) patterns.
5. Examine the action sequence(s) in terms of the organisation of repair.
6. Examine how the speakers perform their actions in terms of the actual linguistic forms used and consider the significance of these forms. In other words, the focus is on the forms which are used to manifest the functions. For example, after responding to a student's offensive word-choice with a double speed-up change-of-state token, the teacher's utterances in two separated lines display her language policy in the classroom.
7. Uncover in the details of the interaction any roles, identities, or relationships which emerge as relevant to the actors in some way.

Since CA institutional-discourse methodology is used as the theoretical framework in this study, the key concept for the analysis is the next-turn proof procedure and how this occurs in relation to the pedagogical focus. What is required here, as stated by Seedhouse (2004, p. 195), is that "the analyst follows exactly the same procedure as the participants and traces the evolving relationship between pedagogy and interaction, using as evidence the analyses of this relationship which the participants display to each other in their own turns". In answering the research sub-questions (see pages 63-64), the researcher follows the above practice to analyse classroom interaction suggested by Seedhouse:

1. Analyse the teacher's and students' formulations of and orientations to particular topics by following their initiations, shifts, and endings through the organisation of turn-taking, sequence, and repair and this by a turn-by-turn emic analysis without bringing to bear any prior analytic commitments.

2. Specify the pedagogical focus, which is done through examination of two main types of evidence. The first type is a text-internal statement of the intended pedagogical focus as given explicitly by the teacher; this is the teacher's instructions regarding the intended classroom activity, or the task-as-workplan. The second type is the actual pedagogical focus, or the task-in-process as illustrated in the details of the interactions. Seedhouse states that the second type is the most convincing evidence because it derives from an emic perspective showing how participants display their analyses of and orientations to the pedagogical focus in their turns at talk. In addition, although these two types are present in every analysis, classroom materials such as student textbooks are also cited as evidence where available and appropriate.
3. Compare and analyse the teacher's intended pedagogical focus with students' linguistic forms and patterns of interaction to explicate matches or mismatches because explicit statements of intended pedagogical focus do not necessarily reflect the reality of how students actually analyse and orient themselves to the pedagogical focus (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 198).
4. Identify an emerging L2 classroom context as a mode of interactional organisation through which the teacher's and students' topic development is accomplished.

### **3.11 Limitations of this Study**

CA has been criticised for being over selective with regard to data. As this research involves applying CA to study institutional interaction and in reference to details given in the data selection and data analysis sections in this chapter, the amount and type of the research data covered in the analysis is indeed selective in order that the research outcome reflects only the focus of the study but as Walsh (2011, p. 88) writes, "this may appear contrived or idealised in order to illustrate a particular point with little attempt to relate the significance of discourses and their commentaries as a whole".

From the emic perspective, CA deals only with participants' own perspectives in analysing the data of each interaction and therefore, any influence of the usual macro-sociological factors has been ignored in this study unless it emerges in the participants' talk itself. Moreover, due to the fact that this study is not centrally concerned with language learning, given that the main focus is

on the sequential organisation of classroom interaction, theories of language learning have not been applied in the analysis.

Another typical criticism is that CA focuses only on the interactional details from the participants' own perspective and it is possible that these might not recur so as a consequence, CA studies may lack external validity or generalisability. However, this research focuses on very detailed lessons and shows very clear and deliberate interactional/pedagogical practice. The findings of topic-as-workplan versus topic-in-process of this research can be viewed as the products of a 'machinery' which is widely used in L2 classroom contexts around the world. More specifically, the epistemic imbalance, which drives the development of topic, provides a generalisable description of the interactional organisation of classroom discussion and supplies as a useful tool to look at epistemic gap and topic in classroom discourse.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter has described the methodological framework of the research. The chapter explains the research procedures used and gives a description of the research setting, the participants, the data collection, and the analysis, finishing with a review of the limitations of the study. This chapter has also provided a comprehensive review of how CA is used as an approach in researching L2 classroom interaction.

It is argued here that CA institutional discourse methodology is the most relevant strand of CA for use as a framework in this study. By adopting CA institutional discourse methodology to research topic development in EFL classroom discourse, this study can depict the details of teachers' and students' interactions, through which topics are developed and co-created within different L2 classroom contexts in relation to their pedagogic-focused activities.

Chapters four and five below constitute the empirical analysis and a discussion of how topics are developed by providing detailed investigation of specific interactions in the two EFL classrooms. Chapter four analyses and discusses the development of a particular topic in meaning-and-fluency context by comparing interactions between teachers and students in two classrooms. It also provides a framework for understanding how different ways of organising talk and developing topic are related to the same pedagogical goal. Chapter five then describes the

interactions between two groups of students in another type of L2 classroom context, that of task-orientation, and explores how certain topics are fore-grounded and become the means of delivering institutional business.

## Chapter 4.

### Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Contexts

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter compares instances of topic development in two EFL classrooms which were similar in terms of their institutional setting. As stated above, the researcher applies the principles of CA institutional-discourse methodology in order to examine organisation and development of topic as it occurs within classroom discourse. The data was analysed to investigate and to compare patterns of topic initiations, shifts and endings in the same learning activity as it found expression in two different classrooms. In order to gain insights into the mechanisms underlying topic development, stretches of conversation between two English teachers (both native-speakers of English) and their students in the two classrooms were selected for study.

Seedhouse (2004) has proposed the existence of ‘meaning-and-fluency’ contexts, among other L2 classroom contexts. A meaning-and-fluency context can be maintained both in the absence and in the presence of the teacher. When the teacher is present, students may manage the turn taking or the teacher may be in overall control of the turn taking. Since the main aim in this context is to maximise the opportunities for classroom interaction, despite variations in the precise pedagogical focus and speech exchange system, this context provides interactional space for students and enables them to nominate and develop a topic or subtopic and to contribute new information concerning their immediate classroom speech community and their immediate environment, personal relationships, feelings and meanings, or the activities in which they are engaged. In other words, this type of L2 classroom context is normative and appropriate to the development of the topic.

In the pages that follow, the ways in which topics are initiated, shifted and ended in two particular meaning-and-fluency contexts will be explored and the researcher will illustrate how and why topic develops its double characteristic. This chapter argues that topic develops a *dual-faceted character* to deliver the institutional goals. *Topic-as-workplan* is static, homogeneous and pre-determined for all teachers and students. *Topic-in-process* is dynamic and is constituted by heterogeneous processes whereby the teacher and students talk a topic into being. The same



topic-as-workplan thus results in different speech exchange systems with respect to topic-in-process when performed by different teachers and students. In the following sections, the researcher will illustrate how and why the topic develops its double characteristic by investigating data gathered from topic-in-process in two classrooms where the two teachers introduced the identical topic-as-workplan through the same classroom materials.

Following this introductory section, the chapter is broken into nine sections, starting with the topic-as-workplan (see Figure 1, page 102), the female teacher's intended pedagogical focus in the first classroom (Extract 52), and followed by the topic-in-process (Extracts 53-65). The next two sections detail the male teacher's intended pedagogical focus (Extract 66) and the topic-in-process in the second classroom (Extract 67). The subsequent sections provide in-depth analysis and discussion of the data, including a comparison of the two teachers' intended pedagogical focus, a comparison of topic-in-process in the two classrooms, and a discussion of topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts. The last section summarises the main argument of the chapter and the major findings regarding topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts.

## **4.2 Topic-as-Workplan**

Figure 1 below illustrates the task, or the official topic of the classroom activity, which was based on dating customs around the world. This topic was used by both teachers investigated in this study, who both had their students work in groups to read about teenager dating customs in different countries and compare these with those in Thailand. Employing the same procedure, after reading and group discussion, each group then reported to the class about the dating customs in their selected country. It can be seen that the text explains dating customs in several countries, but leaves a space for dating customs in the student's own country, in this case, obviously in Thailand. Students completed this section themselves and then shared this information with the rest of the class. The details on dating customs in different countries provided in the text, along with the information provided by the students themselves about dating customs in Thailand, is thus considered a topic-as-workplan for each group to be employed as their topic-in-process when reporting to the class.

Furthermore, as a precursor to the topic-in-process in the meaning-and-fluency context, the teacher's intended pedagogical focus is transmitted as procedural information to the students (Seedhouse, 2004). Therefore, following the topic-as-workplan (Figure 1 below) a transcript of the procedural interaction between the teacher and students is provided.

Figure 1: Task/Topic-as-Workplan 1: 'Dating Customs Around the World'

*Oral Expression I* *Unit 4 Class 1*

**III: Dating Customs Around the World**

*These are some of the ways teens date in other countries of the world.*

**United States of America**

- Girls and boys start dating in their early teens.
- Common places to go on dates are cinemas, nightclubs, parties, scenic spots, beaches, concerts, and restaurants.
- Men usually ask women out on dates, but women can ask men out, too.
- People from different social, economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds date each other.
- Men and women often share expenses on their dates.
- Usually after a date there is a goodbye kiss.

**Europe**

- Dating is usually a group event.
- In Finland, as many as 30 teens may attend a movie together.
- Slumber parties are common in Italy and Switzerland.

**Spain**

- Teens join a club or a group of friends with the same interests, like cycling or hiking.
- Dating is done one-to-one and both girls and boys ask each other out and split the cost of the evening's entertainment.

**Australia**

- Most teens go out in large groups and don't pair off until they are 18 or 19.
- Girls often ask out boys and pay for the date, too.
- Couples often go to dinner parties, barbecues or the beach.

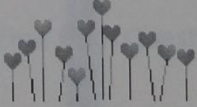
**Japan and Korea**

- Most high school students don't date or go to parties, but spend their time studying instead.
- Dating begins in college, when only boys do the asking and pay for the dates.

**Iran**

- It is against the law to date in Iran.
- Teens are separated until they are of marrying age.
- Their families introduce them to each other and sometimes a courtship follows

*Discuss them with a classmate. How are they different from Thailand?*



**Thailand:** *What are three dating customs in Thailand? Be ready to share them with the class.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3 | Page

### 4.3 Class 1: Teacher's Intended Pedagogical Focus 1

Adopting the same task/official topic from the textbook given above i.e. “Dating Customs Around the World” and its accompanying information as the topic-as-workplan, the following extract illustrates the use of text-internal statements by the teacher in the first classroom to explain the intended pedagogical focus at the outset of the activity. The teacher is a female native-speaker of English, and there are seventeen students in this classroom. The participants in Extract 52 are identified by their initials: T for the teacher, Ss for a group of students, and S1 to S3 for three individual students.

#### Extract 52

1 T: okay ((hand gesture counting)) okay (.) four groups of four  
2 and one group of:: f (0.5) ((hand gesture counting)) three  
3 groups of four one group of five (.) okay move your desks  
4 together (0.3) four here ((hand gesture)) four here (0.2)  
5 five (.) five okay? (3.7) ready? okay ↑page three (0.7)  
6 for:: (.) three minutes (.) read (.) over (.) the dating  
7 customs (.) in the different countries you will choose one  
8 country okay? so:: (.) read and decide which country would  
9 you like (.) okay? talk to your group. (13.0) okay  
10 ((walks towards the first group)) what country would you  
11 like to be  
12 Ss: Australia  
13 T: okay Australia (.) next ((goes to another group)) (0.3) not  
14 decide okay ((walks to another group))  
15 (0.3)  
16 S1: United States  
17 T: United States ↑yes ((walks to another group)) what country  
18 would you like to be Australia and America are gone

19 S2: um:: Japan=  
20 T: =Japan and Korea ↑okay ((walks to the last group)) country?  
21 S3: Iran ((giggles))  
22 T: Iran? ((giggles)) ↑okay Iran ((walks back to the group that  
23 hasn't decided)) ( ) (1.6) ↑okay (0.3) for your  
24 country (0.2) read (0.3) read the lists of customs (.)  
25 okay? you will tell the class about your country (.) and  
26 then I want you to tell me is it the same in Thailand or  
27 different (.) okay? so (.) only your country talk with your  
28 group and you will tell the class about your country (.)  
29 okay? so (.) five minutes preparation.

In this extract from a sample procedural context, T prepares the class to begin the activity by giving instructions in monologue; she tells students to work in groups and what to do in their groups. After a 3.7-second pause (line 5), T states explicitly the intended aims of the activity, that are that each group will read a text in the coursebook about dating customs in different countries, and that each group will choose one country to focus on. T then approaches each group to ask which country they have selected, and her question is met with the response “Australia” by a group of students in line 12, “United States” by S1 in line 16, “um:: Japan” by S2 in line 19, and “Iran” by S3 in line 21.

In line 13, after acknowledging the first group’s answer with “okay Australia”, T then goes to the next group. The 0.3-second pause, which is followed by her utterance “not decide okay” and T’s walking to another group at lines 13-14 indicate that this group has not selected their country yet. In line 22, after acknowledging the last group’s response saying “Iran? ((giggles)) ↑okay Iran”, T walks back to the group that had yet to decide on their country. An inaudible interaction occurs between T and this last group, though it transpires that this group had chosen Spain as their country, as will become evident later. After a 1.6-second pause, T then continues giving instructions: after reading, each group will tell the class about their selected country and compare that country with Thailand (lines 23-29). Accordingly, the transformation of the topic-as-workplan into the topic-in-process, which in this case takes the form of a group report, is explored in the next section.

#### 4.4 Class 1: Topic-in-Process 1

Extracts 53-65 illustrate aspects of topic-in-process in the first teacher's class. In the section of the lesson covered by these, one group read about dating customs in Spain and reported their reading and group discussion. In these extracts, the participants are identified by their initials: T for the teacher again, S for an individual student, Ss for the students as a whole, and Gr for the assigned group. The main eight students participating in the discussion are identified by the letters, A to H. A, C, and D are members of the assigned group. C, G and H are male students, while the other students are female.

#### Extract 53

1 T: u::m ↑Spain:: (3.1) sh:::~::~  
2 A: in Thailand uh:: different to Spain (.) in Thailand bo::y  
3 bo(hh)y pay for the date  
4 T: okay=  
5 A: =°but° sometime sh::are together  
6 (1.0)  
7 B: the boy pay only  
8 (1.4)  
9 A: and we don't have a club to join (1.0) like Spain  
10 (0.5)

The activity begins with T allocating a turn to the group which read about Spain. The lengthening of T's words and the 3.1 second pause in line 1 "um::: ↑Spain::: (3.1) sh:::~::~" can be seen as putting the emphasis on the task and drawing students' attention to this. A assumes an initiator role in orienting to the assigned task. This orientation is displayed through the formulation of a complete turn constructional unit (TCU) (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) which takes the form of "in Thailand uh:: different to Spain (.) in Thailand bo::y bo(hh)y pay for the date" in lines 2-3. This can also be read as a topic-initial utterance (Button and Casey, 1984). Following this, A's multi-turn-constructional-unit turn (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1982, 1987) is interrupted twice by T's acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1993) "okay" in line 4 and B's (a member of another group) self-selected turn in line 7, indicating an

implied disagreement “the boy pay only” with A’s elaboration “°but° sometime sh::are together” in line 5. These are before A regains the floor to stepwise shift to the new focus “and we don’t have a club to join (1.0) like Spain” in line 9.

#### **Extract 54**

9     A:     and we don’t have a club to join (1.0) like Spain  
10             (0.5)  
11     T:     okay (0.8) do (.) so girls in Thailand they don’t share the  
12             cost? (0.8) or do they share  
13             (0.4)  
14     C:     sometime [share]  
15     Ss:             [sometime share]

The topic is first nominated by a student, but from line 11 onwards it remains in the teacher’s hands. In line 9, A gives more information comparing teenage dating customs in Spain and Thailand. However, T doesn’t attend to the new information but brings the topic back to the issue of paying on a date, and this is done through closing A’s prior turn in line 9 with the acknowledgement token/discontinuity marker (Drew and Holt, 1998) “okay”, a 0.8-second pause, a false start with a tiny gap “do (.)” and the discourse marker “so”. The topic is controlled by T, who focuses on the previous aspect of the topic (paying for dates) by asking “girls in Thailand they don’t share the cost? (0.8) or do they share” (lines 11-12) rather than following the ‘club’ issue introduced in A’s earlier turn. C, who belongs to the same group, then takes this occasion to provide a response “sometime share” in line 14, and the answer is immediately repeated in overlap by other students (line 15). This shadowing of the other’s utterance in overlap displays how the students jointly put emphasis on their contribution to the topic.

#### **Extract 55**

16     T:             [sometimes] (0.9) so are Spain and Thailand  
17             similar? (2.7) or [different]  
18     S:             [in Thailand]  
19             (4.9)

20 C: different

In this sequence, T facilitates interaction by formulating a question which develops the topic. T's repetition of the students' answer "sometimes" in combination with a 0.9-second pause and the discourse marker "so" connect the prior material to what follows: "are Spain and Thailand similar? (2.7) or different" (lines 16-17). Evidently, this follow-up question functions as a confirmation check referring back to A's prefatory topic-initial utterance in line 2 (Extract 53): "in Thailand uh:: different to Spain". The 2.7-second pause after the word "similar" is a gap allowing students to take a conversational turn but they do not take advantage of this and thus T re-engages with the word "different", which overlaps with another student in line 18. There is a lengthy silence of 4.9 seconds showing a marked reluctance to speak, and then a repeated response is given by C (line 20).

### Extract 56

21 T: different? wait how different

22 (1.6)

23 B: phuchai jai  
'boys pay'

24 (0.6)

25 A: almost [boys]

26 C: [most] Thai like men (or) boy (to) pay

27 [(first) but ]in Spain they share

28 D: [boy will pay (first)]

Sacks (1995) asserts that touched-off utterances are content words from a previous utterance which recur, and they remain topically coherent through the inclusion of the same key term. In line 21, T's touched-off utterance "different?" is produced with a rising tone suggesting a question and serves as a confirmation check whereas the second instance, "wait how different", serves as a clarification request. Obviously, the code-switching (Gumperz, 1982; Heath, 1984) from L2 (the target language, English) to L1 (the students' native language, Thai) produced by B in line 23 "phuchai jai (boys pay)" could be considered a prefatory token which creates an interactional space for other students in the following turns. Subsequently, the students' multiple



responses (lines 25-28) reveal their co-construction of an answer and this overlapping turn-taking system allows the students to make a contribution to the topic.

### Extract 57

29 T: ah::: (.) o::kay (1.0) do you think that's good or ba:::d  
30 ((turns to other groups))  
31 (0.8)  
32 Ss: good good [((laughter))]=  
33 T: =good ((laughs))  
34 C: [bad] ((smiles))  
35 E: [good] for girl=  
36 F: =good for girl=  
37 T: =who thinks (.) guys who thinks it's good if the boys  
38 always pay  
39 (0.4)  
40 G: no  
41 C: no ((smiles))  
42 Ss: [good]  
43 T: girls okay what about if the girls pay  
44 (0.6)  
45 S: yeah  
46 H: no

From line 29 onwards, the talk gradually moves away from the group report to a whole-class discussion as T expands the group boundaries by asking “do you think that’s good or ba:::d”. This is after ending the previous sequence with the minimal concurrence token “ah:::” accompanied by the acknowledgement token “o::kay” and a 1-second silence. At the same time as asking the question, which is not specifically directed at the current group, T’s gaze moves to other groups in the classroom. This therefore marks the end of the group report and allocates speakership to the whole class, who may build on the earlier talk and develop the topic. Although

this may only occur minimally, the series of repeated turns (lines 32-36) in combination with laughter and smiles and sometimes in disaffiliative overlap (lines 34-35), provide on-topic contributions presented in a humorous way. This opens the floor and many students start to attend to the discussion. In particular, the emphasised “boys” in line 37 and “girls” in line 43 found in T’s touched-off questions “who thinks (.) guys who thinks it’s good if the boys always pay” and “girls okay what about if the girls pay” gain multiple responsive turns, although many TCUs contributed by the students are formulated at the lexical level and are repeated (lines 40-42, and 45-46).

### Extract 58

43 T: girls okay what about if the girls pay  
44 (0.6)  
45 S: yeah  
46 H: no  
47 T: no? why not  
48 (0.6)  
49 H: because=  
50 G: =it’s very nice  
51 Ss: [((laughter and claps))]  
52 G: I always pay na ((Thai particle))  
53 (0.5)  
54 T: [okay]  
55 Ss: [((laughter and nods))]

What is particularly notable here is that gender differences and dating customs are adopted by T to keep the topic flowing as students are able to associate them with their own experience. This can be seen in line 50, where the male student G expresses his opinion “it’s very nice” in response to T’s question “what about if the girls pay” in line 43. In addition, his next turn in line 52 clearly reinforces his brief identity with “I always pay na”. The Thai particle “na” at the end has a dual function. It indicates emphasis and also requests agreement from other students, especially girls. His contributions in both turns invite audience appreciation and positive

responses, as can be seen in the other students' laughter, claps and nods in lines 51 and 55, along with T's acknowledgement "okay" in line 54.

### Extract 59

46 H: no  
47 T: no? why not  
48 (0.6)  
49 H: because=  
50 G: =it's very nice  
51 Ss: [((laughter and claps))]  
52 G: I always pay na ((Thai particle))  
53 (0.5)  
54 T: [okay]  
55 Ss: [((laughter and nods))]  
56 T: why not ((hand gesture to S8))  
57 (0.5)  
58 H: it's not politely for men=  
59 S: =Ye::ah  
60 Ss: ↑OH::::: [((laughter and claps))]  
61 G: [↑OH:: OH]  
62 T: what about sha::ring  
63 (1.0)

In line 56, T re-engages the male student H due to his turn-initial "because" in line 49 being interrupted by G. T thus allocates the turn to H, reorienting to the topic by asking "why not" and making a hand gesture encouraging G to provide a justification for his response "no" in line 46. After H provides the response "it's not politely for men" in line 58, a student acknowledges this with 'Ye::ah' (line 59), the students produce a change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984) "↑OH" with rising intonation, and they jointly laugh and clap (line 60). This overlaps with the recurrent "↑OH" produced by G (line 61). Considered together, these not only offer an uptake but also

function as a topic transition which marks the closure of the ‘either boys or girls pay’ sequence and orients the class to the subsequent material, ‘sharing’.

### Extract 60

60 Ss: ↑OH::::: [(laughter and claps)]  
61 G: [↑OH:: OH]  
62 T: what about sha::ring  
63 (1.0)  
64 B: it's okay  
65 T: fifty fifty  
66 Ss: [it's okay]

Here, the topic is stepwise shifted when T takes this opportunity to ask the question in line 62 “what about sharing” followed by the reformulating “fifty fifty” in line 65. These questions are added to the previous talk and simultaneously change the focus. T also uses the extended pronunciation of the word “sha::ring” to designate her presence and to refocus the conversation after a burst of laughter among the students in line 60.

### Extract 61

67 T: okay (1.1) what about if women ask men on a date  
68 (1.5)  
69 G: it's okay=  
70 T: =do men say okay?  
71 B: it's okay ((laughs))  
72 (0.4)  
73 T: girls? (1.4) it's okay?  
74 F: no it's not  
75 T: it's not? Why not

T asks “what about if women ask men on a date” in line 67. This marks a shift which is indicated by her prefacing the turn with a minimal acknowledgement token, followed by a 1.1-second

pause. This is sufficient for the female student F in line 74 to provide a response with the answer “no it’s not” right after T directs a follow-up question to female students in line 73: “girls? (1.4) it’s okay?”. Accordingly, another follow-up question in line 75, “it’s not? Why not”, is directed in particular at F. This pattern is in line with what noted by Jefferson (1993) that acknowledgement tokens and pauses precede topic shifts.

### Extract 62

76 E: why not=  
77 F: =why not=  
78 B: =why not ((laughs))  
79 F: that girl will look (0.5) not good (0.7) [will look] bad  
80 T: [↑ah:::]  
81 (0.9)  
82 F: look raed ((offensive Thai word)) na ((Thai particle))  
83 E: ((laughs and slaps on F))  
84 F: look raed ((offensive Thai word))  
85 Ss: [((laughter))] look raed ((offensive Thai word))  
86 (0.4)

In lines 76-78, the students’ turn-taking, which involves repeating T’s question “why not” neither moves the sequence forward, nor completely discards it. In this pattern of ‘topic attrition/topic hold’ (Jefferson, 1981), the topic is not abandoned, but no further contribution to the topic is made available. The students take turns to pass the topic to each other, avoiding dealing with the information gap before F regains the floor, providing the response “that girl will look (0.5) not good (0.7) will look bad”. However, T’s overlapping minimal token of concurrence “ah:::” produced with rising intonation and extended pronunciation in line 80 is neglected. F then continues by code-switching to the Thai word “raed” in line 82, and this sequence is developed with students repeating the word for confirmation until line 85. The students’ shared knowledge of this offensive word also invites laughter from the whole class in line 85.

### Extract 63

87 B: slut  
88 C: look raed ((offensive Thai word))  
89 T: >okay okay< that's bad in the word  
90 Ss: [((laughter))]  
91 T: we shouldn't use that word (0.9) do you think it's  
92 tradition that says? (0.6) that men should ask women?  
93 (0.9)

What is also clear from the data is the occurrence of the perhaps inevitable phenomenon of code-switching from L2 to L1. The transcript makes clear that F's strategy of code-switching is not treated by T as a problem until the word 'slut' is introduced in line 87 as the equivalent of the Thai word. This can be seen in line 89, where T regains the speakership producing a double "okay" with sped-up intonation. These do not mark acceptance of the students' response, as can be seen by the fact that this is immediately followed by the negative summary assessment (Jefferson 1984; Drew and Holt, 1998) "that's bad in the word". In line 91, T produces a second assessment "we shouldn't use that word" after the students' laughter in line 90. It is clear to the researcher that the series of turns in lines 89-93, i.e. T's double discontinuity marker "okay" plus a negative assessment, students' laughter, and another negative assessment plus a 0.9-second pause, all function as sequence-closing tokens. Furthermore, these could also serve as indicators of T's language policy, that is that the taboo word is not allowed in the class.

### Extract 64

91 T: we shouldn't use that word (0.9) do you think it's  
92 tradition that says? (0.6) that men should ask women?  
93 (0.9)  
94 B: yes  
95 (0.8)  
96 T: do you think the tradition should stay the same?  
97 (0.9)

98 Ss: [no no]  
 99 (1.7)  
 100 T: what do you think could change  
 101 (13.5)  
 102 F: [but but nowadays ]  
 103 T: [who thinks it will] change over time  
 104 (1.6)  
 105 F: gir::l (.) will change  
 106 (1.0)

As soon as the sequence containing the contentious words “raed” (L1) and “slut” is closed, after a 0.9-second gap, T manages a topic transition by asking “do you think it’s tradition that says? (0.6) that men should ask women?” (lines 91-92). However, this is something which T attempts to initiate several times by asking the touched-off questions “do you think the tradition should stay the same?” (line 96), “what do you think could change” (line 100) and “who thinks it will change over time” (line 103). This repetition is presumably due to the students’ minimal responses (lines 94 and 98) and long silences of 1.7 (line 99) and 13.5 seconds (line 101). In line 102, F tries to engage with the topic by producing a preface “but but nowaday”, yet this overlaps with T’s question in line 103 “who thinks it will change over time” so F’s successful answer of a complete TCU in line 105 “gir::l (.) will change” can be read as the response to T’s question in line 100.

### Extract 65

107 T: because=  
 108 F: =>but now< but nowadays anyone can ask  
 109 T: o::kay so in fifty years you think everyone in Thailand  
 110 will ask?  
 111 Ss: [no:::]=  
 112 T: =no? ((laughs))  
 113 F: in fif ( ) cannot touch





identified by the initial T, holds the floor in monologue giving the instruction. In this class, the teacher is a male native-speaker of English, and there are twenty-four students in the classroom.

### Extract 66

1 T: okay so now I want you to get into groups of four (.) so  
2 six groups of four so (.) please group together very  
3 quickly (.) four (.) six groups of four.  
4 ((students sit in groups)) (5.1)  
5 T: okay (0.5) so ((walks towards the first group)) you're  
6 gonna be the United States of America (.) okay ((moves to  
7 another group)) you're Europe ((points at another group))  
8 you're Australia ((walks to another group)) you're Spain  
9 ((points to another group)) you're Iran ((points to the  
10 last group)) and you're Japan and Korea (.) so please turn  
11 to page (.) open page three (.) page three (0.4) so take a  
12 minute to read about your country (.) in two minutes I want  
13 each person to stand up and tell me one reason (.) one way  
14 your country is different than Thailand (0.2) so how's your  
15 country different than Thailand.

As we can see from the transcript, students are again required to work in groups to read about dating customs in different countries, as provided by their textbook. However, in contrast to the first class, where the female teacher gives her students the opportunity to choose their own country, the male teacher assigns a country to each group himself. More importantly, in lines 12-15, the teacher states explicitly that one representative from each group is required to stand up and report a difference between Thailand and their given country. Consequently, there are different trajectories of topic development during the topic-in-process of the male teacher's class, as becomes evident in the following section.

#### 4.6 Class 2: Topic-in-Process 1

Extract 67 below is another transcript of a follow-up activity. However, in contrast to the speech exchange systems and topic development in the first class, in this class, the group that read about dating customs in Spain has only one member who will report on the reading and group discussion. In this extract, the group representative is identified by the initial R.

#### Extract 67

1 T: ((hand gesture)) okay (2.0) ((hand gesture)) Spain right?  
2 S: Spain  
3 T: [Spain]  
4 Ss: [Spain]  
5 S: ((laughs))  
6 (1.0)  
7 R: uh::: in Spain teen join a club or a group of friend with  
8 the same interest (0.7) like cycling or hiking (.) but  
9 (0.8) in Thailand (0.4) teen join a group on facebook and  
10 find someone who want to date with.  
11 T: oh:::  
12 Ss: ((laughter))  
13 T: good  
14 (0.5)  
15 R: and in Spain dating (0.4) is (0.5) done one to one and both  
16 girl and boy ask each other out and split the cost of (0.5)  
17 de (the) (1.8) di evening en entertainment but in Thailand  
18 the men ((hand gesture)) also pay all of the cost.  
19 (0.7)  
20 T: mm::: (0.7) interesting in Thailand  
21 Ss: ((claps))

The turn allocation, given by T in line 1, starts with the minimal token “okay” coinciding with a hand gesture allocating the floor to the assigned group to start talking. After a 2-second pause whilst T waits for a reaction, T continues with the same hand gesture as before and asks “Spain right?” as a confirmation check. A student then takes this occasion to self-select the turn providing the confirmation in line 2, and this is subsequently followed by T and the other students repeating “Spain” in overlap (lines 3-4), followed by one student’s laughter (line 5). The repeated “Spain” and the laughter, taken in combination, show that students are orienting themselves towards each other, and that they are encouraging the assigned group member to talk after the long pause. In lines 7-10, R, who is the group representative, finally formulates a multi-turn constructional unit to initiate the topic. The topic opener is acknowledged by T’s change-of-state token or minimal acknowledgement “oh::” and the students’ laughter.

Given that the first part of R’s utterance providing information on Spain is read verbatim from the textbook: “in Spain teen join a club or a group of friend with the same interest (0.7) like cycling or hiking (.)” (see also Figure 1), the students’ laughter in line 12 can be considered a specific acknowledgement of “but (0.8) in Thailand (0.4) teen join a group on facebook and find someone who want to date with” (lines 8-10), which is new information presented by the group comparing Spanish dating customs with those in Thailand. Given a common-sense understanding of and acquaintance with these cultural norms, one might take the students’ laughter to be an acknowledgement that they understand the contemporary dating situation in Thailand. T’s change-of-state token “oh” (line 11), the students’ laughter (line 12) and T’s assessment token “good” (line 13), which appear adjacently, indicate potential topic shift.

Following this is another explicit formulation of a new aspect of the topic: “and in Spain dating (0.4) is (0.5) done one to one and both girl and boy ask each other out and split the cost of (0.5) de (the) (1.8) de evening en entertainment but in Thailand the men ((hand gesture)) also pay all of the cost.” (lines 15-18). R again reads directly from the textbook when talking about Spain and provides little information when talking about Thailand. In line 20, T’s minimal token “mm:::”, which acknowledges R’s utterance without elaborating on it, and the summary assessment “interesting in Thailand”, which contributes little new information, work to close the topic. This is sufficient for the class to anticipate the transition of this activity and as a result, they clap (line 21), this marking the end of the current group report.

Why topics are fore-grounded and how they become the means of delivering institutional action will be investigated in more detail in the following section.

#### **4.7 Comparison of Two Teachers' Intended Pedagogical Focus**

In order to understand the role of topic in delivering institutional action, it is useful to start with a description of an activity/task and its objectives and explore how the same topic-as-workplan develops under the slightly different pedagogical focus of the two teachers and how this results in very different topics-in-process.

To engage with the topic of dating, a sequence of tasks following Willis and Willis (2007) has been designed, each one leading to the next. In the final stage, the target task or the terminal objective, is to reproduce an activity which the students and the teacher will carry out. The same task sequence is implemented in these two classrooms as in the table below.

Table 3: 'Dating Customs Around the World' Task Sequence

<b>Stage 1: Priming</b>  The teacher sets the task by giving instructions on the intended activity and focus.
<b>Stage 2: Reading task and discussion task</b>  Students work in groups reading the text and discussing the differences between dating customs in Thailand and their selected country.
<b>Stage 3: Report</b>  Each group reports to the class the dating customs in their selected country and how they are different from those in Thailand.

As we have seen, the starting point of this activity is a specific topic or theme, dating, and after an initial priming stage, where the teacher states explicitly the lesson's structure, the subsequent task sequence includes a reading task, followed by a group discussion and comparison of the

dating customs in Thailand that draws largely on students' own experiences or background knowledge. This is followed by the target task of reporting the outcome of the discussion to the class.

Adopting the same task and topic-as-workplan, however, the intended pedagogical focus of the two teachers described in above are different in that while the female teacher gives general instructions on the target task, the male teacher gives much more specific instructions, namely that only one person from each group is to stand and reports one difference to the class. As a consequence, the different instructions given to the students by the two teachers lead to different outcomes during topic-in-process in these two classrooms. This is discussed below.

#### **4.8 Comparison of Topic-in-Process in the Two Classrooms**

As discussed in chapter three, this study adopts as an analytic tool the epistemic imbalance of talk described by Heritage (2012) and the suggestion given by Schegloff (2007, p. 1) that talk-in-interaction is better examined with respect to action rather than topicality in the analysis of the research data.

To start with the topic-in-process in the first classroom, it is apparent that after the student's report, the teacher's follow-up moves play an important role in driving topic development throughout the interaction. In line with the epistemic engine suggested by Heritage, epistemic or information imbalance drives sequences of talk and this develops the topic in this classroom. As native-speakers of English, the teachers may have no or limited knowledge of the dating customs in Thailand, so the sub-topics and the talk arise from the teacher performing as if in an unknowing (K-) position via referential questions posed to the students. The students, occupying knowing (K+) positions with regard to Thai dating customs, provide responses to the teacher's questions, and students' responses also motivate and drive the talk further until the information gaps are filled and the epistemic situation is brought into balance.

To illustrate the evidence of information transfer, it can be seen that sub-topic sequences arise from the teacher's initiation of an unknowing (K-) position, for example, in lines 11-12 of Extract 54 and line 21 of Extract 56. The female teacher's strategy of asking referential questions

in her follow-up moves, which function as clarification requests “so girls in Thailand they don’t share the cost? (0.8) or do they share” and “... wait how different?”, allows the topic to be further developed. In addition, the teacher’s evaluation request in line 29 of Extract 57 “do you think that’s good or bad” also displays a move by the teacher to promote topic development.

In addition to information gaps, opinion gaps also uncover a second type of epistemic imbalance and are used in the form of referential questions that drive topic sequences. This can be seen in lines 37-38 of Extract 57, in which the teacher asks “who thinks (.) guys who thinks it’s good if the boys always pay” followed by more opinion requests. In particular, the question produced by the teacher in line 67 of Extract 61 “... what about if women ask men on a date” appears to be a genuine question arising from her K- status. From this point onwards, the interaction moves away from the intended pedagogical focus and the topic-as workplan and instead develops through opinion gaps, and hence the teacher’s subsequent follow-up questions provide another way for the topic to develop fruitfully.

With reference to information imbalance, the teacher’s K- status is also demonstrated in the sequence including the offensive Thai word “look raed” (lines 82-88, Extracts 62 and 63). As a non-Thai, the teacher may not understand the Thai word and thus may not be aware of what has been said until it is translated into English “slut” in line 87. The teacher’s summary assessment “... that’s bad in the word” in line 89 and her assertion of a language policy, “we shouldn’t use that word”, in line 91 indicate that a gap in the information about the unknown Thai word has been closed. Therefore, it is sufficient to say that this classroom discussion and topic development moves away from an epistemic imbalance, in which the teacher initiates each sub-topic sequence with her overtly unknowing position characterised as adjacency-pairs starting with either an information, evaluation or opinion request.

Moreover, another observation which may be made is that gender difference can be analysed, in participants’ terms, at the level of talk-in-interaction, and the identity of the student may also be relevant here. Thus, the possibility of different views is developed by the students. According to Sacks (1992) and his ideas about membership categorisation analysis (MCA), one means of explicating how people orient to, make sense of, and culturally reason with each other in social interaction is to focus on the recognisability of people as certain types of members of society, and how this recognisability is a resource for them in dealing with each other through language. The ways in which categorisations rely on social categories, such as policeman, mother, male,

teacher, professional, etc., and how these categories are organised into categories, are identified as membership categorisation devices (MCDs). Although often brought to bear on the analysis of situations in everyday life, we can also use MCA as a gloss for how the participants in this institutional setting orient their talk to certain classes of members of society: the categories male and female. Hence, this classroom activity can also be thought of as being a category-bound activity (Sacks, 1992) by which the discussion of Thai dating customs becomes proper through its being relevant in falling under MCD of gender, which is relevant to the classroom talk.

In this classroom interaction, both the teacher and students make gender relevant to talk about dating through their use of words which signify the categories ‘girls’, ‘boys’, ‘men’ and ‘women’ and students’ talk implies their own identities of being male and female. To increase relevance to the sub-topic, the teacher brings together the groups boys, girls, men and women into a coherent set with given interdependencies as observed in her questions, for example in lines 37 and 43 of Extract 57, line 67 of Extract 61 and lines 91-92 of Extract 64. These categories are understood as being important by the students, as can be seen from their responses developing topic intertwining in interactional sequences.

The explicit orientation to gender difference, which displays students’ knowledge of the gendered nature of dating customs in Thailand is revealed by H and F. H makes the normative claim that it is not polite for men in general to let women pay for the date (line 58 of Extract 59). Similarly, when the teacher introduces the question of women asking men on a date in line 67 of Extract 61, a gender difference is opened up as most of the students agree that girls can initiate dates (lines 69 and 71), whereas F disagrees, providing the reason in line 79 of Extract 62 (the girl would look bad), then using the Thai word “*raed*”, meaning ‘slut’ in line 82. Her use of the generic gender category “that girl” refers to the potential girl who asks men on a date, and implies that it is not acceptable in Thai culture.

Schegloff (1997c, p. 182) suggested that “explicit mention of a category term . . . is by no means necessary to establish the relevant orientation by the participants . . . orientation to gender can be manifested without being explicitly named or mentioned”. Aside from the explicit use of different gender references, i.e. boys, girls, men and women in the teacher’s and students’ talk and development of the topic, an instance of the relevance of gender that a student implicitly

attends to can also be seen in the interaction. When the teacher nominates the sub-topic of whether it is acceptable for girls to pay on a date in Thailand in line 43 of Extract 58, the male student G participates in this interaction expressing his opinion and then identity of being a male in Extract 59 when he disagrees with H, saying that having the girl pay is a nice idea as he always pays (lines 50 and 52) without explicitly mentioning the gender category. As we have seen, the identity of being a male is in play in this scene and the identity is made visible to the other students. The consequence of introducing this identity is that the topic is brought to life by being related to his personal experience and the other students laugh and applaud this contribution.

Information exchanged to achieve epistemic balance provides a key mechanism for the sequential organisation and development of topic in this particular meaning-and-fluency context, and the topic is fruitfully developed through descriptions of and orientations to, in the participants' terms, gender difference. A different participation framework is adopted in the topic-in-process in the male teacher's class. While the epistemic imbalance between the female teacher's unknowing position of dating customs in Thailand and the knowing positions of the students, along with the orientation to gender difference, drive the turn-taking and sequential organisation of talk to develop the topic through information, evaluation and opinion gaps initiated by the teacher, classroom interaction in the male teacher's class is not enhanced further after the student's report of dating customs in Spain.

We can see that the main topic of a comparison between dating customs in Spain and Thailand is introduced by a student, but there is no attempt from either the teacher or other students to develop or discuss it at length. It is evident that one reason for this is the male teacher's pedagogical focus, which is stated explicitly in his instructions at the outset of the task. This inhibits expansion of the classroom discussion and development of the topic. It is important to note that the way in which the topic is developed in these two classrooms is related to the organisation of turn-taking and sequence. From Extract 57 onwards, the female teacher asks questions to the whole class, who can self-select and compete for turns so students are free to develop the sub-topics in a direction somewhat of their choice. In Extract 67, by contrast, the male teacher allocates the floor to one representative from the group, who then reads out a



prepared report about dating customs in Spain and Thailand. There is no competition for turns and only the teacher provides feedback, apart from laughter and applause by the students.

It is apparent that the topic-in-process in the first class (with the female teacher) is a more complex, fluid and dynamic piece of talk-in-interaction in comparison with that of the male teacher's, although both are based on the same topic-as-workplan. In the first class, the topic is jointly constructed by the teacher and the students, thus the number of participants in talk is greater. By contrast, in the second class, because only one member of the assigned group takes a turn, the speech exchange system is restricted to only two parties, the teacher and one group representative. Other students carry out choral repetition and laughter, but they do not make any contribution to topic development.

In the female teacher's classroom, some students demonstrate their language ability by producing complete TCUs to develop the topic while most simply give multiple short responses and echoed repetitions without developing the topic. However, there is competition for the floor with interruptions, overlaps, and disagreement during the topic-in-process. The topic-in-process in this class is more diverse in terms of turn-taking system and sequence organisation. The teacher implements the initial inquiry sequence or 'topic proffering' (Schegloff, 2007) and the topics are developed by the students. In the male teacher's classroom, the same speaker continues the topic in two extended or longer multi-unit turns leading to a larger turn size and although the teacher and other students show that they are paying attention, they have nothing further to contribute on the topic after their minimal responses.

So far, we have explored the two aspects of the topic as it develops in the process of meeting institutional goals in the meaning-and-fluency contexts in these two classrooms. It can also be said that while the pedagogical focus in these two classrooms is on meaning and fluency, the extent to which aim opportunities for interaction are maximising is varied. The extent of interaction can be great or narrow and rigid, depending on the degrees of control over the turn-taking system and sequence by the teachers, though they may still maintain a meaning-and-fluency context.

## 4.9 Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Contexts

### 4.9.1 *Topic-in-process: class 1 vs class 2*

It is clear even in the earlier sections that there are significant differences between the two classrooms. From the analysis, we can see that the topic-in-process in class 1 is an undeniably more complex, fluid and dynamic piece of talk-in-interaction than that of class 2, despite the fact that both classes follow the same topic-as-workplan. This shows clearly that topic-as-workplan and topic-in-process are not necessarily the same thing and in fact they can differ greatly. During the course of interaction in class 1, the topic is jointly constructed by the teacher, group collaboration, and class discussion. The learning experience, which utilises class discussion, and the nature and characteristics of the topic, gender difference and dating, allow the teacher to increase the number of participants and the range of speech exchange systems. By contrast, in class 2 only one member of the assigned group takes speech turns and the speech exchange system is restricted to only two parties: the teacher and the group representative. This results in limited organisation of turn-taking. Even though the other students take turns to repeat certain utterances and to laugh, they do not make any on-topic contributions.

The students' communicative competence and their ability to develop the topic are further affected by the fact that these heterogeneous classes consist of students who are non-English majors and exhibit mixed levels of language proficiency. In class 1, this can be seen in the long pauses between turns and the students' minimal turn size. Only some students show a language ability which allows them to produce complete TCUs when presenting their orientation to the topic, while most simply give multiple short responses and repeat each other without developing the topic. However, in contrast to class 2, the enactment of the topic-as-workplan in class 1 is occasionally affected by dynamic interaction through competition for the floor with interruptions, overlaps, and disagreement evident during the topic-in-process. Additionally, there are also displays of identity and code-switching by the students and an assertion of language policy by the teacher.

In general, although the students in class 1 are restricted in the context in which they can develop the topic and the topic still unfolds in a stereotypical fashion displaying the teacher's control of the topic, the topic-in-process in this episode is more complex in terms of turn-taking systems and sequence organisation. What is more, through the teacher's 'touched-off mechanism' (Sacks,

1992), which provides a machinery for producing topic shifts by asking follow-up questions that require students to elaborate or justify their contributions, the space of interaction is expanded and the topic is more fruitfully developed.

#### ***4.9.2 Topic development within turn-taking and sequence organisation***

In terms of the turn-taking systems, as described by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), two components, turn construction and turn allocation, are considered when combined with the topic. In class 1, on the whole, the topic-initial utterances in the turn-constructive units are sentential in length, while the second-pair parts or the expansion of the topic by the students are often at the phrasal or lexical levels.

The teacher's and students' turn-taking, which involve multiple and simultaneous semiotic systems (e.g. gaze, hand gesture, laughter, nods and claps), are also utilised as turn projections and contribute significantly to how topic trajectories are recognised. Furthermore, students' overlapping utterances, which may mutually elaborate one another through timing and content, enact affiliation by repeating that which students agree on or which they wish to confirm. They may also occasionally reinforce disaffiliative topical contributions. Fine features of speech (e.g. stress and intonation) during the teacher's turns can also project an upcoming interactional turn.

In the course of turn allocation, the topic is first nominated by the student reporting on the reading and group discussion, but is then dominated by the teacher through the use of questions. The teacher designates a particular group of students at the beginning of the discussion and some other students throughout the topic-in-progress by reference to specific knowledge or aspects of the topic. Additionally, the number of participants also affects the mechanics of speaker selection. Many times, students self-select their turn at transition-relevance points and this leads to competition for speakership, which in turn sometimes leads to 'schisming' (Egbert, 1997).

It is common in institutional settings that discourse is limited in terms of goal orientation. In this regard, the overall sequential organisation of the interaction in class 1 is dictated by the progress of the teacher's questions, which are asked in such a way that they constrain the students' contributions to the development of each topic. Moreover, the teacher's 'recipient-oriented topic' (Schegloff, 2007) has a yes-no format with follow-up questions and these shape the organisation of sequence and turn-taking and how the students respond. The sequence type, after the student's

‘topic-based initiation-response adjacency pair’ pattern, enters into an extended series of ‘topic-based question-answer adjacency pairs’ leading to the recycling of the ‘topic-based initiation-response-follow-up’ pattern. This starts with the teacher asking a referential or probe question about an aspect of the topic as an initiation. The students then respond to the teacher’s topic proffer (Schegloff, *ibid.*), and the third part of the triad is a follow-up question asked by the teacher.

Unlike the turn-taking system in class 1, in class 2 the same speaker continues the topic in two extended or longer multi-unit turns leading to a larger turn size. This topic organisation which combines turn-taking sequences can be regarded as a ‘topic-based narrative’ pattern. The other students show some acknowledgement of the topic but after their minimal responses, they have nothing further to contribute.

As illustrated in the data and analysis above, the topic in these two episodes progresses through ‘touched-off’ or ‘stepwise’ topical development, as described by Sacks (1995):

*“It’s a general feature for topic organization in conversation that the best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but by what we call a stepwise move. Such a move involves connecting what we’ve just been talking about to what we’re now talking about, though they are different. I link up whatever I’m now introducing as a new topic to what we’ve just been talking about [in such a way that] so far as anybody knows we’ve never had to start a new topic, though we are far from wherever we began and haven’t talked on just a single topic. It flowed”* (p. 566, emphasis added).

In these two classrooms, the assigned groups move from one aspect of the topic to another in a stepwise, gradual fashion. In class 1 (Extracts 53-65), however, the teacher uses stepwise topic shifts to move to a new topic through the following patterns of shift implicatives (Jefferson, 1981/1993):

- acknowledgement token ‘okay’ + ‘pause’ + discourse marker ‘so’ (line 11)
- ‘repetition’ + ‘pause’ + discourse marker ‘so’ (line 16)

- change of state token ‘ah’ + acknowledgement token ‘okay’ + ‘pause’ (line 29)
- acknowledgement token ‘okay’ + ‘pause’ (line 67)
- ‘commentary’ + ‘pause’ (line 91)
- acknowledgement token ‘okay’ + discourse marker ‘so’ (line 109)

This episode thus shows some degree of sophistication when moving to the next aspect of the topic. These far more varied prototypes reflect the fact that this piece of classroom interaction is full of technical topic features. More specifically in the first class, when the teacher and students talk about the topic, the teacher works on maximising opportunities for classroom interaction. During the course of their talk, the organisation of interaction is conducted through class discussion, and the interaction is maintained in the presence of the teacher who is in overall control of the turn taking. However, the teacher provides interactional space for the students and enables them to develop the topic or subtopics and to contribute new information; the students have been provided with a space to express their feelings and so they are able to contribute to the development of the topic as they have opportunities to manage the interaction themselves, even though this happens with the assistance of the teacher.

It is important to point out that the teacher’s strategy for clarification request is successful in carrying out topic development through information- and opinion-gaps which work to draw out students’ knowledge and opinions. The teacher also brings out the relevance of gender in the conversational interaction and the different approaches of males and females to the topic are used in the turn-by-turn construction of interaction and this also brings students’ identities into being in the here-and-now of interaction.

#### ***4.9.3 Topic development and repair organisation***

Given that the teacher’s main focus is on establishing mutual understanding and negotiating meaning, not on students’ manipulation of any particular linguistic form, any syntactic errors which do not lead to communication breakdown are not repaired by the teacher. However, the practices of same-turn self-repairs, such as word search, recycling and replacement, that are common in ordinary conversation are occasionally observed in these two episodes. Word search using the non-lexical perturbation (“uh”) are seen in line 2, Extract 53 and line 7, Extract 67.

Recycling or repetition of the words “boy” (line 2, Extract 53) and “but” (line 102, Extract 64) are detected from the first group. One replacement is conducted by the teacher in line 11, Extract 54 in which “do” is replaced with “so”. A student in the first group pre-frames the replacement of “now” with “nowadays” by recycling “but” in line 108, Extract 65. The pronunciation “de” is replaced by “di” in line 17, Extract 67 of the second group.

In these two meaning-and-fluency contexts, several aspects of the topic or sub-topics are developed collaboratively, yet are mainly led by the teacher. In spite of the teacher’s almost total control over the turn-taking and sequence organisation (as in the first group), the teacher ignores some minor errors produced by the students in order to adopt an extreme meaning-and-fluency focus. The teacher downgrades expectations of the linguistic forms which the students produce and she accepts some minimalised, reduced contributions of pidgins without comment or any attempt at correction or repair. However, there are times when students are aware of their linguistic performance and correct themselves while pursuing development of the topic.

#### ***4.9.4 Epistemic imbalance and topic development***

On the one hand, the analysis has shown how topics in these episodes of meaning-and-fluency environments are developed and intertwined within the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair. On the other hand, in addition to the domain of adjacency pairs such as clarification requests for information about dating customs in Thailand, there is in fact a relationship between topic development and epistemic flow as a resource for sequence expansion. Evidence has been presented that the different epistemic statuses of the female teacher and of the students in the first class is a fundamental element in the construction of interaction and development of the topic. The expression of K- and K+ is used to build or bring forward sequences that are already in play in stepwise topical progressions.

The significance of epistemics in driving sequences of interaction also suggests differences between topics-in-process as they are manifested in the two classrooms. As native-speakers of English, both teachers in these classrooms are supposed to occupy the K- epistemic status relative to Thai culture. However, the female teacher is more skillful in displaying her epistemic stance by positioning herself in terms of this status and using it to initiate sub-topics about aspects of dating in Thailand. When considering the role of knowledge in sequence organisation, as suggested by Heritage (2012), it is possible to see that the female teacher positions herself in a

relatively unknowing (K-) position concerning the topic at hand and then uses this to elicit information from students who occupy the knowing (K+) status and by this means a number of sub-topics are initiated and sequences are developed successfully.

#### **4.10 Summary**

It is commonly the case that what is supposed to happen in the classroom and what actually happens can be significantly different. Breen (1989) differentiates between the task design (task-as-workplan) and the participant's actual performance of the task (task-in-process) in TBLT. Seedhouse (2005) also suggests that "the task-as-workplan is the intended pedagogy, the plan made prior to classroom implementation of what the teachers and students will do. The task-in-process is the actual pedagogy or what actually happens in the classroom. The second definition distinguishes between an 'etic' or external analyst's perspective on human behaviour and an 'emic' or participant's perspective (p. 4)". In the same vein, the analysis of topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts in this chapter has demonstrated that topic shows a double nature. In addition, another significant observation is that the speech exchange system which is established by the teacher has a clear and significant relationship to topic development.

The analysis and discussion of the different speech exchange systems in the classrooms have clearly illustrated how topics-in-process in meaning-and-fluency contexts may diverge enormously; the same task and the same official topic were introduced as a workplan by the two teachers but the way in which the topic is enacted, in terms of the teachers' pedagogical focus and topic-in-process deviate from one another from the start. In this activity, topic has become both an explicit focus of the interaction and an integral part of the organisation of the interaction in relation to the pursuit of the class goals. Topic is thus both vehicle and focus of the interaction. This double aspect of topic enables analysis and evaluation of talk by students and teachers and so topic has become reflexive on many levels in the teaching settings.

In the following chapter, topic development regarding topic-as-workplan and topic-in-process will be further explored in task-oriented contexts.

## Chapter 5.

### Topic Development in Task-Oriented Contexts

#### 5.1 Introduction

In addition to the meaning-and-fluency contexts discussed in the previous chapter, Seedhouse (2004) has also proposed 'task-oriented' contexts in which the teacher introduces a pedagogical focus by allocating tasks to the students and then allowing them to manage the subsequent interactions themselves. In these situations, it is typically the case that the teacher does not play any part in the interaction, although students may ask the teacher for help and clarification when they have difficulty completing the task. Owing to the fact that students generally work in pairs or groups, the pedagogical focus and the nature of the task as interpreted by the students constrains the speech exchange system and patterns of interaction. There is thus a reflexive relationship between the nature of the task as interpreted by the students and the organisation of turn taking and sequence but the objective is to establish understanding in order to accomplish the task. Seedhouse also argued that there is generally no focus on personal meanings or linguistic forms in this context, and it is generally not relevant to talk of topic since the pedagogical focus, and thus also that of the students, is on the accomplishment of the task.

However, in L2 classrooms there is no limitation in principle on the kinds of interaction which could occur and it is additionally not sufficient or accurate to assume that all instances of interaction within a particular L2 classroom context will be identical. L2 classroom contexts should be understood not only as institutional sub-varieties, but also as areas for the unfolding of the relationship between pedagogy and the modes of interactional organisation and thus as the environments through which these aims are realised.

In this chapter, two instances of topic development will be investigated. These occur in task-oriented contexts involving role-play and are performed by two groups of students in the same classroom. Various definitions of 'task' have been proposed, but the most compatible version to the ones analysed herein is given by Peter Skehan (1998a) that a task is goal oriented and the primary focus is on meaning. Task has some real-world relationship, and the success of the task is evaluated by its outcome (Skehan, 1998a, p. 268). However, there are two different and



potentially separate aspects to the construct “task,” namely, the task-as-workplan and task-in-process.

As stated in the previous chapter, these conceptions of task-as-workplan and task-in-process, then, apply to any and all activities that are planned and occur in L2 classrooms since the task-as-workplan is a plan whereas the task-in-process is a communicative event. This chapter, thus, confirms the dual-faceted character of topic derived from the task which reflects the L2 classroom discourse namely: ‘topic-as-workplan’ and ‘topic-in-process’. There is also significant difference concerning what actually happens in terms of topic-in-process between two groups of students working on the same topic-as-workplan.

The chapter argues that in these particular task-oriented contexts, topics are fore-grounded and become the means of organising talk. The characterisation of topic development derived from the data thus demonstrates the concept of task-oriented contexts as opposed to the perspectives proposed by Seedhouse (ibid.). This chapter also argues that the analysis and evaluation of interaction in L2 topics-in-process needs to vary according to the specific pedagogical focus since participation in the development of topic in a role-play must be approached in a different ways to participation in a report on reading comprehension and class discussion.

In the following sections, the researcher will start by glossing a ‘procedural context’ (Seedhouse, 2004) in which the teacher gives procedural information, that is the lesson’s pedagogical focus and how this will be accomplished.

## **5.2 Class 1: Teacher’s Intended Pedagogical Focus 2**

In Extracts 68 and 69 below, students are given a task to complete that involves group collaborative interaction. The participants are the teacher, an individual student and a group of students, who are identified by their initials T, S and Ss respectively.

### **Extract 68**

1        T:        okay::: (2.0) ready? last thing (1.4) so (2.8) there is a  
2                new TV show (0.9) reality show all around the world called

3           looking for love (0.5) okay? (1.4) this sh::ow (0.6) will  
4           start in every country (1.8) PAGE five (2.8) so (0.6) in  
5           your group (1.4) one ↑person (0.4) will be the TV show host  
6           (0.5) what's a host ((writes on the whiteboard)) (6.1) host  
7           right microphone welcome bla bla the talking person (2.0)  
8           one ↑person is looking for ↓love ((writes on the  
9           whiteboard)) (5.9) the candidate(1.1) actually bachelor  
10          (3.5) what's a bachelor (3.6) what's a bachelor ((points at  
11          the whiteboard))  
12          (0.5)  
13    S:     single  
14          (0.7)  
15    T:     single (.) guy or girl  
16    Ss:    [guy]=  
17    T:     =bachelorette?=  
18    Ss:    =[girl]

The procedural context in the extract above can be analysed as a demonstration of the teacher's intended goals for the lesson. The turn-taking system is simple and straightforward, with the teacher holding the floor for a multi-turn constructional monologue (lines 1-11) and giving instructions about the task which the groups will perform. In line 1, the teacher starts by gaining the students' attention with an elongation of the articulation "okay:::", which is followed by a 2-second pause and asking "ready?". The teacher's next utterance, "last thing", functions as the preface to the task. The teacher then references world knowledge in her utterance "so (2.8) there is a new TV show (0.9) reality show all around the world called looking for love". In lines 10, 15 and 17, the teacher makes the discourse more interactive by altering the turn-taking system and checking for understanding by asking display questions about "bachelor/ bachelorette" and as a result the students are able to take turns (lines 13, 16 and 18).

## Extract 69

19 T: one person is single looking for love (1.0) and two people  
20 ((writes on the whiteboard)) (0.6) are contestants (3.8)  
21 okay? (0.7) so everybody decide (.) group of three will  
22 have three contestants (1.0) okay? (1.6) so the ho::st  
23 (0.8) will as::k (.) the contestants ((looks at the  
24 textbook)) (1.2) these questions ((points at the  
25 textbook page)) (0.9) and the bachelor or bachelorette (.)  
26 will write their answers and think (0.8) ↑who will I take  
27 on a date (0.7) and then they will choose one winner (0.9)  
28 okay? (0.4) and then they will plan a date (.) that matches  
29 their country (1.2) and then they will tell the class who  
30 will go on a date and what they are going to do (1.5) okay?  
31 (.) so first who will be the host who will be the bachelor  
32 and who are the contestants.  
33 (3.1)

34 S: teacher (.) what does contestant

35 T: contestants are the two ↑people (0.7) who want to be chosen  
36 (.) for a date (.) okay?

The teacher then returns back to a basic system of monologue which continues to focus on transmission of procedural information about the task (lines 19-32). A long silence of 3.1 seconds in line 33 might be thought to mark the ending, but it is instead followed by a student taking a turn to ask a question regarding the unfamiliar word “contestant”. The teacher thus provides a brief explanation “contestants are the two ↑people (0.7) who want to be chosen (.) for a date” in lines 35-36. The explanation is eventually terminated after a tiny gap and the teacher’s assumption of the students’ understanding with the confirmation check “okay?”.

### **5.3 Topic-as-Workplan**

In addition to the teacher's recounting of procedural information about the task, Figure 2 below, which comes from the students' textbook, also provides a written version of instructions for the task and the topic-as-workplan "The Dating Game", an activity which is similar to "Blind Date", a British dating game show broadcast on television. The instruction includes the official task-related topic whose content reflects the main task structure, and the guided questions in the table below also comprise a series of topics for all students which will be implemented in the actual topic-in-process. Topics are, therefore, lined up ready for use.

Figure 2: Task/Topic-as-Workplan 2: ‘The Dating Game’

**Oral Expression I** **Unit 4 Class 1**

**The Dating Game (optional)**

**Part A**

*You will play “The Dating Game.” One bachelor/ bachelorette will choose a date from three candidates by asking them interview questions. The candidates can tell the truth or make something up. Choose who the bachelor/ bachelorette and the three candidates will be. Then write at least two questions you think the bachelor/ bachelorette should ask. Write questions like the ones below. At the end of the game, the bachelor/ bachelorette should choose one of the candidates for a date and give reasons why that candidate was the best choice.*

<b>What’s your type? (What kind of man/ woman are you attracted to?)</b>	<b>What’s your idea of a romantic date?</b>
<b>What kind of relationship are you looking for?</b>	<b>Say something really romantic to me.</b>
<b>What kinds of presents will you buy me?</b>	<b>What present will you buy me on Valentine’s Day?</b>
<b>When you go out on a date, who usually pays?</b>	<b>If we had only 50 Baht to spend on a date, what would we do?</b>
<b>Your Own Question:</b>	<b>Your Own Question:</b>

This task emphasises students' co-construction of meaning while engaging in interaction and task performance. It is made explicit in the teacher's introduction and in the students' textbook that the aim of the task is for students to replicate the kind of real-world interaction which occurs on a TV show and so the task focuses on meaning in that it requires students to pay attention to the questions and to negotiate their answers with each other. During the task procedure, students' knowledge building is mediated by their use of English in collaborative dialogues conveying information and by participating in a role-play. The pedagogical goal is to enhance students' communicative ability by answering interview questions which require them to express ideas and opinions concerning their own identity, make decisions and to reason. Following this, how the actual topic-in-process is developed in two different groups will be explored.

#### 5.4 Class 1/Group 1: Topic-in-Process 3

Extracts 70-77 below illustrate the first group performing the task. In this task-oriented context, the topic-in-process contains a scenario-driven "dating game" in which each participant is given a role to play (the TV show host, the bachelor/bachelorette and the candidate/contestant) and keeps this role until the end of the scenario. The participants are identified by their initials, H (the host), P (the bachelorette), X and N (the contestants), T (the teacher) and Gr for the whole group. Note that the four students in this group are all male.

##### Extract 70

1 H: Welcome you to the dating game (3.3) the bachelorette is  
 2 ((P's name))  
 3 P: Yeah  
 4 H ah:: ((P's name)) what is your type (1.0) of man  
 5 (1.5)  
 6 P: Yes (0.4) I like a man (0.4) who take (.) care take care  
 7 (1.6) take care of me (0.9) and (1.0) they always love me=  
 8 H: =take (.) take care how  
 9 P: everything=

10 H: =everything  
 11 P: in the bedroo::m [((laughs))]  
 12 H: [((laughs))]  
 13 (1.5)  
 14 P: when we:: go:: to dinner  
 15 H: ah::  
 16 P: yes (.) [yes]  
 17 H: [what] what your idea of romantic-  
 18 (1.6)

In lines 1-2, H takes the role of leading the group task and begins by simply orienting the whole group to the assigned task. This orientation is achieved through the use of task introduction, formulating a complete TCU “Welcome you to the dating game (3.3) the bachelorette is ((P’s name))”, which is followed by P’s acknowledgement “Yeah” (line 3). H then allocates the turn to P by asking “ah:: ((P’s name)) what is your type (1.0) of man” (line 4) which can be read as a topic-initial utterance posed by means of a question. After a 1.5-second pause, in the following turn H’s topic-initial utterance is topicalised by P’s answer “Yes (0.4) I like a man (0.4) who take (.) care take care (1.6) take care of me (0.9)↑and (1.0) they always love me” (lines 6-7).

In line 8, H employs the touched-off utterance that P used in the prior turn to ask “take (.) take care how”. P thus elaborates the topic by providing answers in three separated turns: “everything” (line 9), “in the bedroo::m” (line 11), and “when we:: go:: to dinner” (line 14) which are interrupted by H’s repetition (line 10) and laughter (line 12). Using the change-of-state token “ah::” in line 15, H marks the end of this first topic, and then H’s next topic initial utterance “what what your idea of romantic” in line 17 overlaps with P’s repeated confirmation “yes (.) yes” in line 16.

**Extract 71**

17 H: [what] what your idea of romantic-  
 18 (1.6)  
 19 P: I like a:: a man who:: (0.9) who’s always give me a

20 chocolate (1.0) Chocolate  
 21 (1.1)  
 22 H: [that is romantic] ((T is approaching the group))  
 23 P: [((laughs with hand gesture to T))]  
 24 T: these two::=  
 25 H: =↑Oh:::  
 26 T: that they compete ((P's name)) hu::m who do I like=  
 27 H: =↑Oh:::  
 28 X: mun ja lueak ((points at P))  
       'he will choose'  
 29 N: okay tham mai di  
       'ask again'  
 30 (1.3)  
 31 X: aow mai aow mai ((H's name))  
       'start again, start again'  
 32 (1.1)

In line 17, H initiates the next topic asking “what your idea of romantic”, and this is followed by a 1.6-second pause. P subsequently produces a topically coherent utterance with the answer “I like a:: a man who:: (0.9) who’s always give me a chocolate (1.0) Chocolate” (lines 19-20), and H’s summary assessment “that is romantic” in line 22 can be read as the uptake of P’s contribution to the topic. However, before the group task progresses further, P’s laughter and gestures inform the group that T is approaching. T heard that the group was not following the intended procedures which indicated that the host should ask the contestants. T therefore brings the group back to task guidelines by giving more explanation of the task in lines 24 and 26 and these are acknowledged by H’s receipt “Oh:::” with rising intonation in line 25 and again in line 27.

In the next sequence (lines 28-31), X and N code-switch to L1 shifting from the scenario to reformulate the task agenda. This ‘off-task’ talk starts with X’s explanation in line 28 which means “he will choose” in conjunction with his pointing at P. Taking the form of imperatives, the



reformulations in lines 29 and 31 produced by N and X are directed at H and request that the task be restarted.

### Extract 72

32 (1.1)  
33 H: what what your type? ((laughs))  
34 (3.0)  
35 X: uh:::  
36 (1.2)  
37 H: ((X's name)) what your type?  
38 (1.6)  
39 X: uh:: I like a (0.8) w I like a=  
40 N: =[woman ]  
41 P: [ladyboy]=  
42 X: =I like a ladyboy=  
43 Gr: =[((laugh)) ]  
44 X: [uh:: I can-]  
45 (5.3)  
46 H: I can what?  
47 (1.0)  
48 X: okay  
49 H: I can take care of them  
50 X: ((nods)) (0.8) u m:: (.) I can take care of them uh:::::  
51 such as=  
52 H: =what kind of [relationship]  
53 X: [bedroom ] kitchen and outdoor I can=  
54 P: =I like I door (.) outdoor=  
55 X: =make everything for you=

After a 1.1-second pause, H then takes the floor in line 33 to resume the task, producing the first topic-initial utterance by asking “what what your type?”. In line 35, X is reluctant to provide a response as can be seen in the elongated “uh:::” after a long pause of 3 seconds. H, therefore, encourages X to contribute to the topic by addressing him by name and asking the same question again, this time at line 37. While X is trying to formulate his response saying “uh:: I like a (0.8) w I like a” (line 39), N proposes “woman” as it is clear to him that X is searching for the word starting with “w”. This turn of N in line 40 overlaps with P’s (line 41), which also proposes the word “ladyboy”. These two turns by N and P can be interpreted as repair-initiation, offering two candidate reformulations of the trouble-source (Schegloff, 2000) “w” to maintain the flow of the topic. X’s turn continuation in line 42 aligns with P’s candidate by performing the repair “I like a ladyboy”, and this invites laughter from the whole group.

In line 44, X tries to build on the topic producing “uh:: I can” and cuts off his turn for 5.3 seconds. This incomplete TCU by X is a trouble source, and constitutes a gap to be filled. H then initiates a repair by asking “I can what?” in order to pursue development of this topic by seeking further information from X (line 46). X’s minimal response “okay” in line 48 can be read as an acknowledgement token displaying his comprehension of H’s prior turn. It is noticeable that X completely fails to provide an expanded answer and H thus takes a more active role in maintaining the topic and performing the repair proper by completing X’s unfinished turn with “I can take care of them” in line 49. X subsequently takes up H’s proposed repair with nods and adopts it as his own TCU after a 0.8-second pause, a slightly stretching “um:::” and a tiny gap (line 50).

Following this is X’s elongated “uh:::” and his attempt to elaborate the talk with “such as”. However, H abruptly launches into a new topic asking “what kind of [relationship]” in the next latching turn (line 52) which overlaps with X’s elaboration moving from the general to a more specific answer “[bedroom] kitchen and outdoor I can=” (line 53). At line 54, P self-selects a turn and contributes to the topic by providing his opinion in his latching turn to X’s specific answer saying “=I like I door (.) outdoor=”. Here, P’s replacement of “I door” with “outdoor” also engages in a same-turn self-repair operation. H’s new topic initiation in line 52 is not topicalised by X, as can be seen from X’s commitment to maintain his contribution to the previous topic by completing his turn with “=make everything for you=” in line 55.

### Extract 73

56 H: =Oh ((hand gesture to N)) what kind of relationship (.) are  
57 you looking for ((N's name))  
58 N: I looking for relationship (0.5) that (0.9) lo::ng lo::ng  
59 relationship  
60 P: ((nods)) mmh::  
61 N: I:: want to:: (0.5) ah:: (0.6) le::arn (.) persona-lity (.)  
62 of each other  
63 P: [okay] ((nods))  
64 N: [and ] look if they gonna last (0.7) long  
65 P: ((nods))  
66 (2.5)  
67 H: and what (.) do they have to be like (.) that you will like  
68 them

H produces a change-of-state token/boundary marker “Oh” and this performs a dual-function: to acknowledge X’s prior turn (line 55, Extract 72) without elaborating on it and to mark the end of the previous topic and the beginning of the next topic. This occurs in combination with a gesture directed to his next targeted recipient, N (line 56). H then reformulates his intended topic-initial utterance in a more complete TCU asking “what kind of relationship (.) are you looking for”, and this is followed by addressing N by name (lines 56-57). In lines 58-59, N supplies his response saying “I looking for relationship (0.5) that (0.9) lo::ng lo::ng relationship”, and this is acknowledged by H’s nods together with his minimal “mmh::” (line 60) showing brief agreement. The minimal “mmh::” produced by H can also be interpreted as a continuer functioning to return the floor for N, who continues by saying “I:: want to:: (0.5) a:h (0.6) le::arn (.) persona-lity (.) of each other” (lines 61-62). In line 63, P’s acknowledgement token “okay” combined with a nod show affiliation to N’s prior turn before N finally completes his contribution to the topic in line 64 with “[and] look if they gonna last (0.7) long”.

A pattern noted by Jefferson (1993) is that acknowledgement tokens and pauses precede topic shifts and this can be seen in lines 65-66. This marked shift is indicated by P’s

acknowledgement, made by nodding, which can also be read as a positive assessment of N's previous talk. This is followed by a 2.5-second pause. H then skillfully shifts the topic in a stepwise fashion to a new issue asking "and what (.) do they have to be like (.) that you will like them" (lines 67-68).

#### **Extract 74**

67 H: and what (.) do they have to be like (.) that you will like  
68 them  
69 (0.6)  
70 N: uh a again (.) what?=  
71 H: =what do they have to be like what type  
72 (0.4)  
73 N: oh:::  
74 H: [are they have to be ]  
75 N: [I like the person that] (0.8) have  
76 (1.0)  
77 P: short hair=  
78 N: =have=  
79 H: =short hair [((laughs))]=  
80 P: [((laughs))]=  
81 N: =have lo::ng ha::ir and (.) kind, generous (0.7) cheerful::  
82 H: [ah::]  
83 N: [hu ]morous something like this  
84 H: Oh (0.7) fun to be with  
85 (0.4)  
86 N: yeah um (0.4) feel relaxed to be with  
87 (1.8)

The new topic-initial utterance of H in lines 67-68 does not feature on the list provided in the textbook and this is unexpected by N, as we can see in his trouble understanding H's self-generated question "and what (.) do they have to be like (.) that you will like them". After a 0.6-second pause in line 69, N produces a clarification request in line 70 initiating a repair, which is subsequently followed by H's repair proper reformulating the question. The unfinished turn reformulated by H in line 71 is completed in line 74 after a 0.4-second pause (line 72) and N's acknowledgement "oh:::" in line 73. This overlaps N's contribution to the topic, the incomplete TCU: "[I like the person that] (0.8) have" (line 75). A silence of 1.0 seconds (line 76) is sufficient for P to self-select the next turn to contribute to the topic by giving a candidate expression "short hair" in line 77. In line 78, N is trying to finish his previous turn continuing with "have", but is interrupted by H's repetition of "short hair" and laughter by both H and P (lines 79-80). N is finally successful in contributing to the current topic answering "=have lo::ng ha::ir and (.) kind generous (0.7) cheerful:::" (line 81) and "[hu]morous something like this" (line 83) which coincides with H's minimal acknowledgement token "[a::h]" (line 82).

According to Howe (1991), the repeated lexical items of a previous speaker's utterance (all or partially, with some changes) is a strong indicator of topic closure. This is similar to this, in line 86 N's partially changed repetition "feel relaxed to be with", which is an altered repeat of H's "fun to be with" in line 84 leads to closure after an acknowledgement token "yeah um" and a 0.4-second pause. Additionally, pauses that are one second or longer are extremely common topic-ending indicators. They occur immediately before the introduction of the next topic (Howe, *ibid.*). The subsequent 1.8-second pause is followed by a topic boundary.

### Extract 75

88 H: ((gazes at X)) and when you go on (.) go to a ↑date with  
 89 ladyboy (.) who will hh who usually pay for that  
 90 (1.6)  
 91 X: uh:: (3.5) aow mai di aow mai di  
   'start again, start again'  
 92 H: when you go out on a ↑date (.) who usually pay  
 93 (0.8)

94 X: uh:::: (2.3) usually I (1.2) want to go:: out on a date  
 95 uh:: (2.7) al almost Midnight  
 96 (0.7)  
 97 H: ah=  
 98 X: =uh midnight ah and I will (.) already pay I I (.) I will  
 99 alway I=  
 100 H: =alway pay=  
 101 X: =alway pays anything  
 102 H: oh  
 103 X: uh (0.8) for (.) for him for him I can do (0.9) everything  
 104 H: yeah yeah ((laughs)) (2.3) ((gazes at N)) what kind of  
 105 present (0.9) will you buy to him (1.6) ladyboy=

After the previous topic is shifted, in lines 88-89, H directs the next topic back to X with looking at him while asking “and when you go on (.) go to a ↑date with lady boy (.) who will hh who usually pay for that”. This new topic-initial utterance consists of the touched-off utterance “ladyboy” that they have introduced earlier and also manifests H’s same-turn self repair by replacing “go on” with “go to” and “who will” with “who usually”. It is observable that H performs a somewhat sophisticated topic initiation here, in that he simply uses the prior topically coherent utterance “ladyboy” in a more elaborate fashion to generate the next topic.

After a 1.6-second pause (line 90), X prefaces his contribution with “uh::” and another long pause of 3.5 seconds before code-switching to the L1 and producing a phrase in Thai which means “start again” (line 91). H then repeats the question with some small alterations (line 92). It is apparent in lines 94-95 that X misinterprets H’s topic-initial utterance as being two separate questions. As a consequence, X’s contribution to the topic “uh:::: (2.3) usually I (1.2) want to go:: out on a date uh:: (2.7) al almost Midnight” in lines 94-95 answers the first half of H’s question “when you go out on a ↑date” (line 92). Not making any correction to X’s utterance, H only displays his uptake with a change-of-state token “ah” (line 97). X then continues, providing a response to the whole question in three separate turns (lines 98-99, 101, 103), each interrupted by H’s repetition “alway pay” (line 100) and an acknowledgement “oh” (line 102).

Following Howe, repetition of acknowledgement tokens is a strong indicator of topic closure. Another topic-ending indicator is laughter which often appears in conjunction with other indicators such as pauses. Obviously, the repetition of the acknowledgement token “yeah yeah” produced by H, which coincides with laughter and a 2.3-second pause (line 104), marks the end of the current topic and the beginning of the next, which begins with “what kind of present (0.9) will you buy to him (1.6) lady boy=” which he specifically directs at N with his gaze (lines 104-105).

### Extract 76

104 H: yeah yeah ((laughs)) (2.3) ((gazes at N)) what kind of  
105 present (0.9) will you buy to him (1.6) lady boy=  
106 N: =Oh::: (0.7) for me (1.3) I will buy::: (2.1) I will buy  
107 him a::: (0.9) chocolate  
108 (0.6)  
109 H: ah:::  
110 N: because it's a symbol of (.) romantic  
111 P: oh::: ((nods))  
112 N: ah ya  
113 (0.8)  
114 N: something like that=  
115 H: =oh:::  
116 X: I (.) I will buy jel  
117 (0.8)  
118 P,N: [jel ((laugh))]  
119 P: KY ((laughs))  
120 N: ky jel  
121 P: no need to use ky  
122 P,N,X: [((laugh))]

Again, the touched-off utterance “lady boy” plays a role, this time in H’s next topic-initial utterance directed to N. Even though N never mentions “lady boy” in his contribution to the previous topic, he goes with the flow, assuming that there is already some thought attached to it and responds with the pronoun reference “him” in “=Oh:: (0.7) for ↑me (1.3) I will buy:: (2.1) I will buy him a:: (0.9) chocolate” (lines 106-107). This is acknowledged by H’s change-of-state token “ah::” (line 109) after a 0.6-second pause. In line 110, N continues elaborating his answer saying “because it’s a symbol of (.) romantic”. P’s acknowledgement/change of state token “oh::”, combined with his nod, functions as a positive assessment in line 111 and indicates that the request for information has been met.

After H acknowledges N’s response in the previous sequence with the minimal token “oh::” (line 115), X also self-selects his turn and contributes to the topic by giving an alternative answer reading “I (.) I will buy jel” (line 116). The sequence that follows after a 0.8-second pause is jocular in nature. X’s contribution is met with laughter and repetition, with alteration, of his utterance by P and N (lines 118-120). The next recipient commentary turn produced by P (line 121), “no need to use ky”, is likely to function as a shift implicative preceding topical shift (Jefferson, 1981, 1984, 1993). However, at line 122, joint laughter by more than one participant (P, N and X) replaces a pause as a topic-ending indicator (Howe, 1991).

### **Extract 77**

123 H: uh::: bachelorette (1.1) ((P’s name)) what (0.4) who will  
 124 you choose  
 125 (0.5)  
 126 P: mmhh  
 127 H: why  
 128 (1.6)  
 129 P: uh:: I:: (0.7) think I will choose (0.5) ((points at X))  
 130 ((X’s name)) (1.3) because (1.8) he accept (0.7) everything  
 131 am I  
 132 (0.7)  
 133 H: ah::



134 P: I'm a lady boy and (.) and he accept me  
 135 H: oh::  
 136 P: okay

H steps in here to suggest the final phase of the task by asking P: “uh:: bachelorette (1.1) ((P’s name)) what (0.4) who will you choose” (lines 123-124) and “why” (line 127). P acknowledges H’s question with “mmhh” (line 126) before giving his response in lines 129-131: “uh:: I:: (0.7) think I will choose (0.5) ((points at X)) ((X’s name)) (1.3) because (1.8) he accept (0.7) everything am I”. In line 133, H provides the uptake to P’s prior explanation with a change-of-state “ah::”. P then continues with his justification in line 134: “I’m a lady boy and (.) and he accept me”. The acknowledgement token “oh::” given by H (line 135), which provides no further information relevant to P’s prior talk, is sufficient for the whole group to anticipate that the task is potentially terminable. The casual usage of “okay” by P in the closing line 136 can be understood as a locally occasioned resource available to him for achieving the task.

### 5.5 Class 1/Group 2: Topic-in-Process 4

The next passages illustrate the topic-in-process in a second group performing the same dating role-play. In this group, the host is identified by H, the bachelorette is identified by B, and the contestants are identified by A, C, and D. In contrast to the topic-in-process of the first group, which was affected by the interruption of the teacher, the second group performs their task in the total absence of the teacher and this leads to a different configuration of participants’ roles. The fine-grained details on how the topic is initiated, shifted and ended are also clearly different.

#### Extract 78

1 H: today we have (1.1) a bachelor uh one (0.5) bachelorette  
 2 (0.4) bachelorette  
 3 A: most beautiful girl  
 4 H: yeah she is the most beautiful girl in the world  
 5 A: diew job kor pen meun derm la  
 ‘once we finish it will be the same’

6 H: ah::: ((laughs)) this is the most beautiful girl in the  
7 world (0.4) today she (1.0) she want to (1.1) choose (0.8)  
8 uh:::

9 A: a guy

10 H: a guy (.) from::

11 A: dating

12 H: uh:: from your question

13 B: yes

14 H: that you (0.5) pre↑pare

15 B: tong pen khon tham er  
' do I have to ask '  
16 (0.8)

17 C: chai tee la kham tham  
' yes one question at a time '  
18 H: yeah

19 B: okay

20 H: that you pre↑pare

21 (0.4)

22 B: uh:: (1.0) uh:: (1.2) uh::

23 (1.4)

24 C: ((laughs))

25 H: ↑first (0.5) ((laughs))

26 (1.9)

Extract 78 above is an opening sequence in which participants talk about their organisation of the task activity. This opening sequence is carried out in line with the setting talk described by Maynard and Zimmerman (1984). This is a method of topic initiation that focuses on the immediate environment of the interaction, and this may occasion other topic talk. It is apparent that a topic relating to the task setting is first initiated by H, who introduces a role for

participants involved in the dating game: “today we have (1.1) a bachelor uh one (0.5) bachelorette (0.4) bachelorette” (lines 1-2). H’s same-turn self-repair by replacing ‘bachelor’ with ‘bachelorette’ is furthered by A’s commentary: “most beautiful girl” (line 3). This is acknowledged by H’s turn-initial “yeah” before conveying affiliation with the upgraded commentary: “she is the most beautiful girl in the world” (line 4).

In line 5, A’s code-switching to L1 “diew job kor pen meun derm la” which means “once we finish it will be the same” shows that their talk in lines 3-4 reflected something invented only for this role-play. This recognisably off-task talk of A is acknowledged by H with laughter but it is not topicalised, as can be seen from H’s confirmation through repetition of “this is the most beautiful girl in the world” (lines 6-7). After a 0.4-second pause, H continues with a clarification of the task: “today she (1.0) she want to (1.1) choose (0.8) uh:::” (lines 7-8). In lines 9 and 11, A not only initiates repairs of H’s search for words in lines 8 and 10, seen in the stretching ‘uh:::’ and ‘from::’, but this sequence also display A’s and H’s collaboration in contributing the topic by clarifying the task demands. H’s reformulation of the pronoun “she” to “your” in line 12 suggests that the utterance “uh::: from your question” is specifically directed at B. This can be seen in B’s interruption with the minimal acknowledgement “yes” (line 13), and then H completes her TCU with “that you pre↑pare” (line 14). The process of negotiating the task demand is furthered in line 15, where B code-switches to L1 asking about her role “tong pen khon tham er” (do I have to ask). After a 0.8-second pause, C also in L1 self-selects the turn responding “chai tee la kham tham”, meaning “yes one question at a time” (line 17). This response is confirmed by H’s agreement through the token “yeah” (line 18).

The pattern of topic-ending indicators in sequence, as suggested by Howe (1991), appear in this episode and are comprised of B’s acknowledgement “okay” (line 19), H’s repetition of “that you pre↑pare” (line 20) and a 0.4-second pause (line 21). Taken together, this topic-ending process invites B to initiate the on-task topic, but she seems to be reluctant, as seen in line 22: “uh::: (1.0) uh::: (1.2) uh:::”. After a silence of 1.4 seconds, followed by C’s laughter (line 24), H’s sequence-closing utterance with a rising “↑first”, and a 0.5-pause and laughter (line 25) indicate that the talk now passes to B to construct her first topic-initial utterance.

Setting talk in this case is generally characterised as topical talk available to participants through access to events and objects in their environment and this sort of talk could be interpreted as a relevant preliminary to the task. Therefore, the students’ talk about the task setting in the above

sequence functions as a preliminary to starting talk on the task or topic proper, which will be done in a task-relevant and interactional scenario.

Similar to H in the first group, B also routinely uses questions provided in the textbook as topic-initial utterances. However, a different pattern of topic opener is manifested, as illustrated in the following in-depth analysis of three extracts.

### Extract 79

27 B: um:: (0.5) I would like to ask you about (0.7) um:: (1.0)  
28 [what's your idea of a romantic ↑date]  
29 C: [khon la kham tham, khon la kham tham]  
'one question per person'  
30 (3.9)  
31 C: khon la kham tham tham krai  
'one question per person' 'who do you ask'  
32 B: um:::  
33 H: ((nods)) who's? (2.3) [who's one]  
34 B: [((hand gesture to A))] (2.0)  
35 (A's name) (0.7) I would like to ask you (0.4) a ques some  
36 question (0.8) what's your idea of a romantic ↑date  
37 (1.9)  
38 A my romantic [date idea]  
39 H: [your romantic date]  
40 (0.5)  
41 A: is::: (2.0) nothing too much in a one day in a date=  
42 H: =mm hmm!  
43 A: just (0.5) ah one couple (0.7) have a romantic time  
44 together is enough=  
45 H: =Oh::! Wow!

46 A: [thank you]  
 47 H: [he's a] romantic guy  
 48 B: ((laughs)) thank you so much it was a:: (0.4) good (0.4)  
 49 answer  
 50 H: ahhh

Prompted by the preface “um:: (0.5) I would like to ask you about (0.7) um:: (1.0)” (line 27), B’s topic-initial utterance in line 28 is “[what’s your idea of a romantic ↑date]” which overlaps with C’s code switching to L1, “[khon la kham tham, khon la kham tham]”. After a long silence of 3.9 seconds, C continues, repeating “khon la kham tham”, meaning ‘one question per person’. This is followed by a question “tham krai” (who do you ask). This intervention of C’s and his code switching in lines 29 and 31 is a clarification of the task demands and probably shows that B has not made clear who her questions are directed at.

While B seems reluctant to speak in line 32, as seen in the “um::”, in line 33 H acknowledges C’s prior utterances with a nod and then takes a leading role, asking “who’s?” followed by a 2.3-second pause and another question asking “[who’s one]”. This coincides with B’s gesture to A, addressing A by name after a 2.0-second pause (lines 34-35). Eventually, B’s first successful topic-initial utterance in a complete TCU is “I would like to ask you (0.4) a ques some question (0.8) what’s your idea of a romantic ↑date” (lines 35-36), produced after a 0.7-second pause. After a 1.9-second pause, in line 38, A orients to the topic answering “my romantic [date idea]” which partially overlaps with H’s repetition of B’s fraction in the previous turn: “[your romantic date]” (line 39).

After a 0.5-second pause, in line 41, A continues, giving his response saying “is:: (2.0) nothing too much in a one day in a date=”, and this is interrupted by H’s prototypical passive reciprocity token (Jefferson, 1984) “=mm hmm!” in latched turn (line 42). Therefore, in lines 43-44, A’s contribution to the topic is finally completed with “just (0.5) ah one couple (0.7) have a romantic time together is enough=” which is immediately followed by H’s uptake “=Oh::! Wow!” (line 45). A’s next turn in line 46, which partially coincides with H’s commentary, “[he’s a] romantic guy” (line 47), is designed to mark an end to his talk with “[thank you]”. Consequently, this turn by A, which does not present any form of progress with regard to adding information, provides the sequential resources for B to understand that A does not want to further the talk on that topic.



70 (0.8)

71 C: yes

72 H: ((laughs))

73 (0.4)

74 B: ah what what colour=

75 H: =why men=

76 C: =uh:: red (0.8) I (.) love (.) red (.) rose it's beautiful

77 it's the most beautiful flower [for me ]

78 H: [how many?]

79 B: ((laughs))

80 C: uh::

81 (1.2)

82 H: how many rose?

83 C: ((laughs))

84 H: ninety-nine

85 C: ((laughs)) kao pun kao roi MAI AOW NO

'nine thousand and nine hundred'

86 H: ((laughs))

87 B: ((laughs))

88 H: yeah

89 B: um ok nice answer (0.4) and=

90 H: =next question=

In this extract, the topic proffering sequence (Schegloff, 2007) is managed through pre-question sequences, where participants engage in nominating another speaker. We see in line 51 that B signals to a different participant with the transitional marker “next” in combination with a hand gesture. There is a 1.9-second pause before B asks for the next participant’s name, which is given by H in the next turn. B’s turn-initial utterance in line 53 uses C’s name, and this is followed by her topic-initial utterance in a complete TCU, “I’d like to ask you (0.8) some

question (0.4) uh:: (1.5) what kinds of presents (0.5) will you buy (.) to me?" after a 0.6-second pause (lines 53-55). In line 57, H also takes a leading role in emphasising B's topic by saying "now:: (0.6) present".

In lines 59-60, C aligns with this topic by responding "uh:: (0.8) I think I will buy a (2.0) aria dee a (what should I buy) a flower=" which is instantaneously interrupted by H's somewhat negative uptake made with a rising intonation "=↑ugh::" and further asking "which=" after a 1.2-second pause (line 61). What follows in the next latching turn is B's question asking "=what what kind of flower" (line 62). C provides a response in the following turn, answering "what kind (1.5) some (0.7) rose (1.0) [I will buy]" (line 63), and this is partially overlapped by H's candidate "[jasmine]" followed by her laughter (lines 64-65).

Holt (2010) suggests that "whether a person laughs may not (at least in any straightforward sense) be entirely or primarily to do with whether they find a comment funny, rather it may be to do, at least in part, with the overall sequential and interactional environment of the laughable and the action of the turn in question in terms of its contribution to the trajectory of the talk and the ongoing action sequence" (pp. 1514-1515). Noticeable is the fact that B's laughter in line 67 is directed at H's candidate "jasmine", while H's laughter in lines 69 and 72 are both specifically reacting to C's confirmation of his contribution to the topic in lines 68 and 71. We can see that there is an opportunity here for B to laugh and thus she may have been moving towards the topic ending. It is possible that in this sequence the topic may have come to a close rather quickly but instead B extends the topic, contributing to create a prolonged sequence of questions. This is clearly visible in line 74, after a pause of 0.4 seconds, B carries on asking a question on another aspect of the topic, "ah what what colour=", which is interrupted by H's personal query in an incomplete TCU "=why men=" (line 75).

Latching H's previous turn, C's response in lines 76-77 reads "=uh:: red (0.8) I (.) love (.) red (.) rose it's beautiful it's the most beautiful flower [for me]" also in part overlaps with H's referential question asking "[how many?]" (line 78). It is apparent here that the role is slightly shifted and H gains the floor, asking C follow-up questions (lines 78 and 82) and providing a candidate answer (line 84). B, who is supposed to hold the floor and ask further questions or providing follow-up moves, only laughs, this at line 79.



Holt (ibid.) suggested that the occurrence of shared laughter is often associated with topic termination. A similar pattern can be seen after C provides his answer by contributing to the topic in a jocular tone at line 85, saying “kao pun kao roi MAI AOW (nine thousand and nine hundred) NO”. Taken together, H response with laughter (line 86), B’s reciprocal laughter (line 87) and the “yeah” produced by H (line 88) could serve as a hint that the requirement for C to contribute to the topic is probably now satisfied. The whole sequence thus comes to a close with B’s summary assessment “um ok nice answer”, a tiny pause of 0.4 seconds, and a preface “and” (line 89) which is latched with H’s transitional marker “next question” (line 90) indicating the ‘marked’ shift of topic to the next area.

### Extract 81

91 B: =(D’s name) (1.4) I’d like I would like to ask you (0.4)  
92 mmh  
93 D: yeah?  
94 (2.7)  
95 B: say something really romantic to me  
96 H: [((laughs))]  
97 D: [Oh::::::::::!!] (2.1) you so very beautiful [in ↑my ↑eye]  
98 B & H: [((laugh)) ]  
99 D: you shape look so (0.4) slim (0.4) girl  
100 H: ((laughs)) slim girl  
101 (2.2)  
102 B: okay okay (1.3) more more  
103 D: more?  
104 H: anything else? anything else?  
105 (1.7)  
106 D: I think you in my dream every time (8.8) you look so good  
107 B: mmh  
108 D: you in my dream (0.5) you everything to me

109 B&H: [ ((laugh)) ]  
110 H: Yeah  
111 B: fin (1.5) interesting interesting okay thank you so much  
112 for your answer (.) all of guys=

In lines 91-92, B begins with a prefatory component “I’d like I would like to ask you (0.4) mmh” after addressing D by name and a 1.4-second pause. The upward intonation of D’s acknowledgement token “yeah?” in line 93 is used to invite further talk. After a pause of 2.7 seconds, B’s topic-initial utterance in line 95 is “say something really romantic to me”. This is topicalised by D’s stating “Oh!” (line 97) which occurs at the same time as H’s laughter (line 96). After a 2.1-second pause, D then contributes to the topic saying “you so very beautiful [in ↑my ↑eye] (line 97) which co-occurs with B’s and H’s laughter (line 98). D further provides a contribution in line 99 with “you shape look so (0.4) slim (0.4) girl” which is repeated in part by H with another laugh (line 100). It is notable that a rather long pause of 2.2 seconds is available for D to build on his talk, but he does not. B, in line 102, after acknowledging with the minimal token “okay okay” thus invites D to carry on with “more more” after a 1.3-second pause. H also encourages D to regain the floor saying “anything else? anything else?” (line 104) after D’s confirmation check “more?” in line 103.

D reengages in the talk after a 1.7-second pause, saying “I think you in my dream every time (8.8) you look so good” (line 106) which is slightly interrupted by B’s passive acknowledgement “mmh” (line 107) before moving on to “you in my dream (0.5) you everything to me” (line 108). What follows are several topic-ending indicators appearing in sequence. After the concurrent laughter produced by B and H (line 109), a free-standing acknowledgement token “Yeah” given by H (line 110), and B’s summary assessment “fin (1.5) interesting interesting” (line 111), the current topic is officially terminated by B’s “okay thank you so much for your answer (.) all of guys=” (lines 111-112).

### **Extract 82**

113 H: =and now  
114 (0.6)  
115 B: now (0.5) [I ]

116 H: [you] (1.2) you will decide

117 B: yes

118 H: to (1.1) to choose (1.0) one person fo (0.4) for you

119 (1.0)

120 B: okay it's time to choose

121 Gr: [Ya::: ((laughter))]

122 (2.2)

123 B: ((laughs)) I choose (2.4) ((hand gesture to A))

124 ((A's name))

125 Gr: [Yeah:::] ((claps))

126 B: ((laughs))

127 H: [((A's name)) ((sings)) every nights in my dream:::::]

128 A: [((pretends to cry))]

129 Gr: [((laugh))]

130 B: ((laughs)) I (.) I (.) I choose (.) I choose ((A's name))

131 because ((A's name)) (0.7) is (2.7) kind kind person

132 jing jai nee kao reak wa rai ah

'what is the word for jing jai'

133 (0.6)

134 sincere sincerely person

135 H: yeah:::

136 B: but but ((C's name)) (0.4) uh:: (1.1) um:: actually it's

137 it's a good answer but (0.6) I don't like (.) red rose

138 ((laughs)) sorry=

139 H: =ah not not type for you=

140 B: =yes um and (.) ((D's name)) .hhh

141 chun sung ked dai tung kwam mai jing jai leoi kha

'I can notice insincerity'  
 142 ((giggles)) he his answer is not sincerely (.) sorry  
 143 ((D's name))  
 144 H: and now (0.5) Go ↑Date (.) Go Date Out  
 145 B: =Hey! ((A's name)) shake hand shake hand shake hand  
 146 ((laughs)) thank you thank you  
 147 Gr: [((laugh))]  
 148 A: thank you ((laughs))

In examining how displaying prior experience is used to initiate a topic, Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) observe that speakers rely upon mutually-shared knowledge, for example one another's biography, relationships, interests, and activities in which they are involved. As illustrated in Extract 31 above, the sequence is shifted to the outcome of the dating role-play that the group has been performing. In line 113, H begins with the preface “=and now” to signal that it is time for B, the bachelorette, to choose only one person from the three contestants for her date. After a 0.6-second pause, B's unfinished utterance “now (0.5) [I ]” (line 115) is interrupted by H, who states “[you] (1.2) you will de↑cide” (line 116). B, in line 117, therefore complies with “yes” before H continues to complete her TCU in line 118, saying “to (1.1) to choose (1.0) one person fo (0.4) for you”. Again, in line 120, B offers a confirmation by reformulating H's previous utterance: “okay it's time to choose” after a 1-second pause, and this is agreed on by the whole group through their laughter (line 121).

After long pause of 2.2 seconds, B, beginning with laughter, finally makes her decision which is shown by a combination of embodied conduct and addressing A by name. B's topic-initial utterance reads “I choose (2.4) ((hand gesture to A)) ((A's name))” (lines 123-124) which is considered a newsworthy item as can be seen from the other participants' topicaliser “Yeah” and their claps (line 125). The next sequence exhibits the group's jointly negotiated communicative accomplishment (Glenn, 2003) of humorous speech exchange. This starts with B's laughter (line 126), followed by H's singing and use of A's name (line 127), A's play acting (line 128) and more laughter by the whole group (line 129).

In the next sequence (lines 130-143), B goes on to give her justification in multi-turn constructional monologue, interrupted by H's minimal acknowledgement token “yeah:::” (line

135) and a commentary “=ah not not type for you=” (line 139). This final sequence provides evidence of the shared intersubjective reality within the group that B’s series of topics have been negotiated and that they have successfully accomplished the task set by the teacher. This closing section starts with H summarising “and now (0.5) Go ↑Date (.) Go Date Out” (line 144) followed by B and A making fun of each other, which is mixed with more laughter from the whole group (line 145-148).

## **5.6 Comparison of Topic-in-Process of the Two Groups**

The topics-in-process of the two groups above result from the same intended pedagogical focus and the same topic-as-workplan which in turn comes from the same textbook. Before we compare the topics-in-process of these two groups, we should begin with a discussion about the type of task-as-workplan designed for the students to perform and the teacher to implement.

### ***5.6.1 Task type***

The type of task in this classroom can be classified as a convergent opinion-gap task involving role-playing, following three approaches to classifying tasks: (1) pedagogic; (2) cognitive; and (3) psycholinguistic. Based on a cognitive classification (Prabhu, 1987), this task involves an opinion gap activity which requires students to identify and articulate their personal preferences, feelings, and attitudes in response to questions in the situation of a dating role-play. This is also in line with the pedagogic classification of tasks given by Willis (1996) in that this task requires students to share their personal experiences and allows students to talk freely about themselves. Regarding the psycholinguistic typology of communication task types proposed by Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993), this task falls into these interactional categories:

1. Interactant relationship: this task is two-way as in it students request information (the host in the first group and the bachelorette in the second) from students who hold the information (the candidates) and this must be exchanged in order to achieve the task goal. As we can see from the task/topic-in-process of both groups given above, as a two-way task, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests, are present (Long, 1980).

2. Interaction requirement: the task requires students to request and supply information.

3. Goal orientation: the task is ‘convergent’ in that it requires the students to converge or agree on a single outcome; the bachelorette in each group has to choose one candidate for a date.
4. Outcome options: this task is considered an ‘open’ task because it requires a single outcome, and self-expansions and self-repetitions are used (Berwick, 1990).

In the guided role-play task, the questions and topics are pre-determined and the students are expected to play their particular roles in order to carry out the learning task as well as negotiate the social and interpersonal relationships which exist between the roles (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). It is also clear that the discourse mode, which is similar to an interview, affects the interactive aspects of the task performance, as students have shared points of reference which in this case are the guided questions provided. This role-play task thus leads to a question-and-answer discourse structure which influences considerably the extent to which topics are developed, as the topic-incorporation devices are associated with the questions which have been pre-selected.

### *5.6.2 Topic-in-process*

In a similar fashion to the analysis of topic-in-process in the meaning-and-fluency contexts in chapter four, epistemic imbalance (Heritage, 2012) is also adopted in the analysis of the topic-in-process in task-oriented contexts in this chapter. In this role-play task, information imbalance also plays a role in driving forward the sequence of talk and developing the topic. Each topic-based question is initiated in order to draw on the candidate’s opinions about different aspects of dating. To develop the topic, opinion gaps, functioning as clarification requests, are utilised by the host in the first group and the host and the bachelorette in the second group.

To illustrate, in the first group, H’s clarification requests “take (.) take care how” in line 8 of Extract 70 and “I can what?” in line 46 of Extract 72 arise from his unknowing (K-) position which invites further talk from P and X, and these lead simultaneously to the expansion of the sequence and the development of the topic. A few lines subsequently, after receiving answers to his clarification requests, we can see H’s change of state tokens “ah” (line 15, Extract 70) and “Oh” (line 56, Extract 73), which index a claimed knowledge. Likewise, the topic-based sequences are also expanded from the unknowing epistemic stances of B and H in the second

group. In Extract 80, the clarification requests “what what kind of flower” in line 62, “ah what what colour” in line 74 produced by B and “how many rose?” in line 82 produced by H indicate that there are gaps in information. Therefore, C responds to rebalance the current imbalance in information. This in fact does occur, as seen in H’s acknowledgement “yeah” (line 88) and B’s evaluation “um okay nice answer” (line 89).

However, the epistemic position of the role-play task-oriented contexts are entirely different from the epistemic engine that drives the sequence of talk exhibited in the meaning-and-fluency contexts set out in chapter four. In Extracts 53-65, which illustrate the topic development in the meaning-and-fluency context of the female teacher’s class, after a group report about dating customs in Spain, the sequence organisation is motivated by the teacher’s unknowing (K-) position with the aim of gaining knowledge about dating in Thailand in a normative-epistemic sense. The students occupy the knowing (K+) epistemic status since they are familiar with Thai culture and are able to present knowledge regarding Thai dating customs. Conversely, as stated in the instructions in the textbook, the candidates can either tell the truth or make something up to complete the role-play task, so either approach may develop the topic and turn at talk and this allows students to fake their answers in response to the pre-determined topic-based questions and their peers’ follow-up moves. The role-play is structured as an interview which aims to probe the candidates’ answers, with their being the sole authority on their opinions. Students are thus sanctioned to provide opinions which are either factual or fantastical.

Moreover, an important feature of the task-oriented nature of both groups is the students’ re-setting of the topic, or how they move back to the task agenda. This phenomenon suggests a clear difference with the previous meaning-and-fluency context. In this context, it is acceptable for students to find their own way to orient themselves to the topic. This is done in their L1 (Thai) as seen from lines 28-31 of Extract 71 in the first group, where X reinterprets T’s repair initiation and explains to the group in Thai that P will choose the candidate. This is also followed by N and X encouraging H to re-pose the question. Similarly, in lines 15 and 17 of Extract 78 in the second group, B asks the group about her role in Thai to check if she has to ask questions, which is followed by C’s response with an elaboration in Thai. More of this can be seen in lines 29 and 31 of Extract 79. Here C, using Thai, brings the group back on task by emphasising that B should ask one question per person, and that B needs to address the candidate by name.

In addition, fantasy or imagination is related to the role-play nature of the task performed by these two groups. In the first group, this is apparent when P introduces “ladyboy” in line 41 of Extract 72, and the group finds it funny when P suggests “short hair” to N (line 77, Extract 74), or when X says that he wants to go out on a date at midnight in lines 94-95 of Extract 75. The students seem to find the “ladyboy” topic very interesting as they take it as the topic carrier throughout the task. Taking on this topic, they are able to use their imagination whilst staying on-task. Due to the fact that all participants in this first group are male students, they have decided among themselves that P should act as the bachelorette for this role-play. This reflects the nature of task-in-process in that students are allowed to break out of the male/female stereotypes assumed in the task-as-workplan.

Students’ engagement with the fantasy aspect of the role-play is far more varied in the second group. Right at the start of the setting talk (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984), in lines 3-6 of Extract 78, A’s utterance “most beautiful girl” referring to B in their role-play is concurred with by H, who finds it amusing. More instances demonstrating that students are able to produce turns appropriate to the fantasy can be seen in line 85 of Extract 80, where C responds that he will buy nine-thousand and nine-hundred roses for B, and in lines 97-108 of Extract 81, where D exaggeratedly claims that B is both slim and very beautiful to him.

Even though similar features of how topics are developed in role-play are demonstrated in the task-oriented contexts of these two groups, the different nature of the topics-in-process can also be seen. T, having a task facilitator role, treats the first group as going off the task-as-workplan, and therefore initiates repair in lines 24 and 26 of Extract 71. This results in the group’s re-setting of the topic and the roles of each participant. On the other hand, T does not treat the second group as having trouble with their topics-in-process, so there is neither intervention from T nor a re-setting of the task/topic by the students. Another way in which the second group differs from the first is that their evaluations follow role-played positions, with B adopting the role and behaviour of the teacher in her evaluation strategies (lines 48-49 of Extract 79, line 89 of Extract 80, and line 111 of Extract 81).



## 5.7 Topic Development in Task-Oriented Contexts

### 5.7.1 *Topic-in-process: group 1 vs group 2*

In this section, the researcher starts with the points at which the task-oriented topics of talk of the two groups have been restricted in advance as a result of the official task/topic-as-workplan in the textbook. These restrictions have in addition been made clear in the teacher's instructions. However, the topic-in-process is affected by students' interpretations of the topic-as-workplan and the data here identifies some potential sources of mismatch between the teacher's intentions (procedural and instructional) and the students' interpretations of that.

These two groups work on the same topic-as-workplan, which has an explicit pedagogical goal, though the teacher does not appear to be aware of the existence of a mismatch between her procedural instructions and the instructions given in the textbook. We can see this in Extract 71, where the teacher has to interrupt the first group and explain that she is looking for the host to interview the contestants rather than the bachelor/bachelorette. On the other hand, working in the absence of the teacher, the second group collaboratively interprets the task procedure by following the topic-as-workplan in the relevant unit of the course-book, negotiating their roles in the first setting talk sequence without intervention from the teacher. As a consequence, the students' understanding that the topics are to be initiated by the bachelorette guides their interactions.

The host in the first group recognises that he is expected to take the lead role in the exchanges and therefore he controls the turn-taking system and the group's collaborative extension and shaping of topics. In so doing, he introduces topics, moves to close them and goes on to new ones. The other group members acknowledge their roles as contestants by interpreting and contributing to the topics. At the same time, the constant use of gestures and para-linguistic cues, including nods and laughter, display other group member's alignment with utterances, and backchannels confirm that the bachelorette is the audience for this talk. The host determines when a topic is to be closed by acknowledging the responses with a minimal token (line 15, Extract 70), a minimal token and embodied conduct to nominate the next contestant (line 56, Extract 73 and line 104, Extract 75), a minimal token and a summary of the contestant's prior turn (line 84, Extract 74), or just by stepping in (lines 67-68, Extract 73), and then introducing the new topic.

In contrast, the host and the bachelorette in the second group work more collaboratively in terms of topic pursuit and change. After the bachelorette refers explicitly to a new topic and thus suggests her control, there are times when the host self-assigns responsibility for topic maintenance, asking the contestants follow-up questions (lines 62, 78, 82, Extract 80 and line 104, Extract 81). At the topic boundary, the host gives a commentary (“he’s a romantic guy” in line 47, Extract 79) or an acknowledgement token (“yeah” in lines 88, Extract 80 and line 110, Extract 81), and the bachelorette always has the final say by making a summary assessment and then cutting off the topic.

It is notable that the students who play the roles of the host in both groups and the bachelorette in the second group in these task-oriented contexts make competent use of topic development strategies which mirror the patterns used by the female teacher in the meaning-and-fluency context in chapter four. Clarification requests are some of the most noticeable strategies that the teacher uses to expand the sequence and students in these contexts also adopt them as strategies in pursuing the development of a given topic. In addition, evaluations are observed when the teacher ends the discussion in the meaning-and-fluency context, and when the bachelorette in the second group ends each topic sequence.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that the topic organisation and development embedded in those classroom speech events which are concerned with task-oriented contexts illustrate features that are more authentic and in which students rarely participate when engaged in teacher-fronted discussions, such as in the meaning-and-fluency contexts described in chapter four. These provide students with the opportunity to produce portions of talk that are different from the typical interactional routines of the classroom discourse, e.g. the IRF pattern in which the first move is initiated by the teacher followed by the student response, followed by the teacher’s feedback/follow-up move.

The first TCUs constructed by the hosts in both groups (lines 1-2, Extracts 70 and 78) follow a somewhat similar pattern to the opening remark of an actual TV show and the groups play the game by following the fixed roles of the host, the bachelorette and the contestants. They develop their talk and topics by shaping and repeating the interaction in an interview pattern. Direct questions are thus the predominate form chosen by the host and the bachelorette to initiate topics, and these confirm each contestant as having the floor for some time and their contribution as

being relevant. Throughout each sequence, the contestants make contributions which display their self-disclosure and their identity regarding their preferences and the host (in the first group) and the bachelorette (in the second group) respond by offering their assessments. The topics are developed until the hosts make an explicit closure of the game/task.

At this point, it is also necessary to make clear the different nature of how topics are managed in task-oriented and meaning-and-fluency lessons. More specifically in the female teacher's class, topic and sub-topics progress in a predictable way as the teacher asks follow-up questions and students provide responses regarding the facts about dating customs in Thailand. By contrast, as students are required to express their opinions in the role-play task, they may give answers based on their own lives, or they may make up their answers. Above all, even though the list of questions is equally available to every group to be used as topic-in-process, students have the right to choose which particular topics will be used during their talk-in-interaction. This also demonstrates the double nature of topic which has been described above.

The examination of these two episodes may lead us to reconsider the issue of 'authenticity' or 'naturalness' of language in the classroom. Partially, this is in keeping with findings by Mori (2002) which found that:

*“The language the students were exposed to may be considered authentic with regard to its form (pronunciation, intonation, syntax and semantics heard) and its meaning (social and cultural information obtained), and consequently, the task may be successful. However, the structures of interaction generated in response to the task design did not always reflect what natural discussion or conversation would be like. The instruction and the pre-task planning tended to focus on the form and content of each sequence-initiating action and not on the contingent sequential development of talk”* (p. 340, emphasis added).

On the one hand, the same pattern could be observed in the nature of topic-initiation in this study in which it is pre-designed, and the students need to follow the task-as-workplan or the instruction. On the other hand, it can be argued that these speech events are, to some extent, authentic and natural in that there is negotiation of meaning through clarification requests and confirmation checks. This is to suggest that 'authenticity' or 'naturalness' of language used in the classroom should be viewed as a continuum rather than a dichotomy.

The next section examines in more detail how topics in these episodes are intertwined within the local organisation of turn-taking and sequence.

### *5.7.2 Topic development within turn-taking and sequence organisation*

It is evident that the students in the task-based classroom demonstrate more sophisticated topic organisation and development than those in meaning-and-fluency contexts described in the previous chapter. Due to the fact that the teacher is not involved in the interaction (although there is some intervention in the first group) students generally develop an intersubjectivity that enables them to interact effectively. This is due to the nature of the task and their interpretation of the pedagogical focus and the task/topic-as-workplan. The topic-in-process produced by these two groups demonstrates how various students' actual undertakings, although prompted by the same topic-as-workplan, can be unique. Each topic-based sequence in these two episodes consists of a series of question and answer adjacency pairs. As the first pair part of an adjacency pair used to initiate a topic, a topic-based question sets a frame of reference for how the following turn should unfold or should be understood. That is, the occurrence of a TCU as a topic-initial utterance always allocates the turn to the target recipient, either by direct nomination, or by using embodied actions such as gaze and hand gesture, or by a combination of the two.

The strategies for topic initiation used by both groups indicate some degree of sophistication in their turn designs. Despite the fact that some questions are lifted directly from the list given in the textbook and adopted as topic-initial utterances, the bachelorette's topics, as proffered in the second group, are constructed systematically with the selected question prefaced by a hedging expression "I would like to ask you . . . .", while, in order to initiate a topic, the host in the first group sometimes formulates his own questions.

When a proffered topic has been taken up by the target recipient, it is mutually developed and maintained over a period of talk. The students' contribute to each topic by answering as the corresponding second pair part as relevant. Follow-up questions mark the new focus of the current topic as it is related to that of the recipient's previous turn, while also introducing some new information and an adjacency pair consisting of a topic-based question and answer pair forms the building block for each sequence, with the third move following the question and answer often occupied by an acknowledgement token (e.g. okay, oh, ah), actions displaying

affiliation (e.g. joint laughter, nods), or a commentary. In this fashion, each sequence proceeds with the students asking consecutive questions for some time. What is also noticeable about these episodes is the way in which the students deal with the sequence following a series of question and answer pairs. While each topic-based sequence is directed at a specific person, a closer look shows that the occurrence of spontaneous self-selected interruptions and overlaps break the routine of locally managed questions and answers at any TRP.

Considering topic shifts, there is a tendency in both groups for each topic to be terminated and followed by a new topic. This involves the negotiated closure of the current topic and the sequence marked by topic-ending indicators before a new subject matter is introduced to the next recipient. This pattern predominates in most of the interactions. Within each sequence, however, topic shifts involving stepwise transitions, that is transitions in which the talk moves from a general matter to a more specific element of the same topic, a sub-topic, or a different aspect of the same topic, are also manifested. Additionally, sophisticated topic shifts executed by the host in the first group occur when he nominates next recipient and changes to the new topic but relates this back to the previous talk.

The patterns of ‘marked’ topic shifts employed by students in these two episodes of topic development in task-oriented contexts are as follow:

#### Group 1

- change-of-state/acknowledgement token ‘ah’ (line 15, Extract 70)
- change-of-state/acknowledgement token ‘oh’ + hand gesture (line 56, Extract 73)
- nods as acknowledgement/positive assessment + pause (lines 65-66, Extract 73)
- change-of-state/acknowledgement token ‘yeah’ + repetition with some changes + pause (lines 86-87, Extract 74)
- repetition of acknowledgement token ‘yeah’ + laughter + pause (line 104, Extract 76)
- commentary + joint laughter (lines 121-122, Extract 76)

## Group 2

- acknowledgement token ‘okay’ + repetition + pause (lines 19-21, Extract 78)
- laughter + summary assessment (line 48-49, Extract 79)
- shared laughter + acknowledgement token ‘yeah’ + summary assessment (lines 86-89, Extract 80)
- joint laughter + acknowledgement token ‘yeah’ + summary assessment (lines 109-111, Extract 81)

At the end, the task, the dating role-play, is closed collaboratively. In both groups, the members signal their willingness for the task to come to a close, yet employ different strategies. While the task is terminated using minimal acknowledgement tokens “oh” and “yes” in the first group, a more sophisticated task achievement is manifested in the second group, who use a series of turns involving laughter.

### *5.7.3 Topic development and repair organisation*

In terms of the organisation of repair, various patterns can be seen in the sequences of repair described above. Students perform other-initiated self-repairs (lines 39-42 of Extract 72, lines 67-71 of Extract 74, lines 88-92 of Extract 75 and lines 8-12 of Extract 78); other-initiated other-repairs (lines 44-49 of Extract 72); and same-turn self-repairs. More specifically, the most common patterns of same-turn self-repairs are recycling, replacement and word search and various combinations of these. Recycling, which includes the repetition of syllables, words and phrases, and word searches initiated with ‘uh’ and ‘um’ and sometimes including a pause are the most common practices found in these samples. While replacement appears five times in the second group (lines 1-2 of Extract 78, lines 35-36 of Extract 79, line 91 of Extract 81, lines 134 and 142 of Extract 82), only three replacements are found in the first group. The first replacement is made by P when ‘I door’ is replaced by ‘outdoor’ (line 54, Extract 72). The second replacement is pre-framed with recycling and occurs in lines 88-89 of Extract 75 where H pre-frames the replacement of “on” with “to” and “will” with “usually” by recycling “go” and “who”. The third replacement is in line 123 of Extract 77, when H replaces the question word “what” with “who”.

Apart from the repairs performed by the students, we can also see that the teacher initiates a repair sequence in line 24, “these two”, and line 26, “that they compete (P’s name) hu::m who do I like” (Extract 71), which are made when the teacher is aware that the first group is about to go off-task and is not following the lesson procedures. The teacher treats this as a problem which hinders the group’s completion of the task, so her repair is focused on guiding the group in the direction of performing the task successfully.

The main communicative purpose of repair sequences conducted by the students, particularly the other-initiated self-repairs and other-initiated other repairs, is to resolve linguistic difficulty and help the students reach and maintain mutual understanding so that the conversation can continue with on-going topic contributions. There are also indications that offering of candidate utterances and clarification requests are strategic ways in which a coherent topic could be built and maintained. Conversely, the repairable items which become the focus of attention in the same-turn self-repairs are minor sources of trouble and are thus considered unproblematic with regard to the current topic of conversation. The repair sequences occurring during topic development are therefore part of the process of negotiating and accomplishing the task. There were no instances at all in these two episodes where topics were permanently abandoned due to linguistic or understanding difficulties.

As argued by Seedhouse (2004), there is a reflexive relationship between the pedagogical focus and the organisation of repair; as the pedagogical focus varies, so does the organisation of repair. The goal in this class is for the students to accomplish the task, and meaning is primary in performing the role-play and thus meeting the task goals. The repairs in both groups are thus directed toward the accomplishment of this task. In Extract 72, N and P initiate repair by offering the candidate utterances “woman” (line 40) and “ladyboy” (line 41) when X is searching for a word saying “uh:: I like a (0.8) w I like a” (line 39). After N and P provide these two alternatives, X performs a repair by saying “I like a lady boy” (line 42). The repair therefore aims at helping X to be able to answer fully H’s question “what your type?” (line 37).

Likewise, in Extract 78, when H demonstrates the task demand saying “today she (1.0) she want to (1.1) choose (0.8) uh:::” (lines 7-8) and “a guy (.) from:::” (line 10), A initiates repair proposing the words “a guy” (line 9) and “dating” (line 11) after hearing H’s word search with the elongated “uh:::” and “from:::”. H finally repairs the end of her announcement of the task agenda into “uh:: from your question” (line 12). The reformulation of the pronoun “she” to

“your” is specifically directed to B as the person who asks the pre-designed questions in this role-play task. This also tells us that the mechanism of repair is employed to accomplish the task.

We can also see how repairs are managed to negotiate understanding of the questions that enable students to progress with the task. In Extract 74, when H asks “and what (.) do they have to be like (.) that you will like them” (lines 67-68), N subsequently initiates repair with a clarification request “uh a again (.) what?” (line 70). Thus H’s repairs in lines 71 and 74 are his reformulations of the question asking “what do they have to be like what type ..... are they have to be”. Similarly, in Extract 75, X code-switches to L1 initiating repair in line 91 “uh:: (3.5) aow mai di aow mai di” which means “start again” suggesting that he has trouble either hearing or understanding H’s question “and when you go on (.) go to a date with lady boy (.) who will hh who usually pay for that” (lines 88-89). In line 92, H then provides the repair “when you go out on a date (.) who usually pay”. These repairs are focused on a shared understanding of the pre-designed questions supplied with the task, or in other words the topics-as-workplan, and used to complete the task.

A repair trajectory which appears to be deviant is the other-initiated other-repair in Extract 72 where X cuts off his utterance saying “uh:: I can-” (line 44), so H initiates repair by asking “I can what” (line 46). However, this is only followed by X’s minimal token “okay” (line 48) which is given without any attempt to expand the answer, and therefore H performs the repair proper by proceeding to complete X’s unfinished turn saying “I can take care of them” (line 49). The focus of repair is on the production of specific answer which X, by role-playing a candidate, is responsible for. The form of H’s repair initiation is identical to a clarification request, which is used as a means or device by which the teacher or more proficient L2 user can promote further interactions with a learner (Hall, 2007). H’s other-initiated other-repair, which is the most dispreferred and least common (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977), involves offering the complete utterance “I can take care of them” and is likely to draw X’s attention to an appropriate linguistic form which he may not know.

In conclusion, in these instances of the role-play task, a variety of repair types can be observed. Repairs are primarily conducted by the students since they generally worked on the tasks in groups, although there is one instance of the teacher initiating repair. The focus of repair in these task-oriented contexts is on dealing with problems that hinder the accomplishment of the task.



## 5.8 Summary

In this chapter, a ‘within-type comparison’ (ten Have, 2007) of the interactions made by the two groups collaborative talk has illuminated how variant topics-in-process result from identical topics-as-workplan. Due to the fact that there are two versions of task-as-workplan offered to the students: (1) the text-internal statement of the intended pedagogical focus stated explicitly by the teacher in the procedural context, and (2) the pre-determined task description and a series of topic-based questions given in the textbook, different students interpret the task demand in different ways and their interpretations generate different trajectories for how the topics develop. This makes clear the two distinct concepts of topic-as-workplan, as determined by the textbook and the teacher’s instructions, and topic-in-process, which students bring into being during their talk-in-interaction in the task-oriented contexts. The examination of these episodes raises several points for consideration regarding the implementation of topic-as-workplan as topic-in-process. These will be discussed in chapter six.

The analyses show that topic plays a vital role in accomplishing the task. As noted by ten Have (2007, p. 123), “there are always different ways in which ‘something’ can be done, and that the ‘selection’ from the set of possibilities carries meaning”. Evidently, in these episodes of L2 task-related contexts, the selection of particular topics from the set provided determines the possibilities for how meanings are carried, and how particular real-world interactions are differently replicated.

We have seen in these task-oriented contexts that role-play addresses not knowledge but opinions and desires, and thus topic development rarely constitutes knowledge in the sense of epistemics. The task aims to probe the intimate and private worlds of the student’s opinions, which may be drawn from their imagination and fantasy. A variable approach is therefore necessary in the analysis and evaluation of participation and how topics are developed in role-play task-oriented contexts.

In classroom discourse, it is common for students to follow the pedagogical purpose by adopting ‘on-task’ or ‘task-related’ topical talk predefined by the teacher. From the above findings and discussion, the researcher has, by looking at the micro details of how topic is organised and developed, discussed one area of talk-in-progress in EFL classroom discourse. The study shows that the production of topic development embedded in different L2 classroom contexts (meaning-

and-fluency contexts in chapter four and task-oriented contexts in this chapter) are constituted at two distinct levels.

Furthermore, talk-in-interaction elicited in the classroom may lack features of naturalness and authenticity for the reason that topics have been pre-determined and certain tasks and the pedagogical goals have been set in advance. The sequence-initiating actions involving topic-based questions led by the teacher in the meaning-and-fluency contexts and worked on collaboratively by the students with their peers in task-oriented contexts show that certain topics, aspects of topic or sub-topics establish sequential contexts of talk. However, a more sophisticated topic development in the task-oriented context reflects the fact that the students depend on the contingent development of talk in order to develop the topics and to accomplish the task aim. In this replicated real-world task, the students attend to the moment-by-moment development of talk and make contributions to topics that are relevant to the immediate sequential context and which aim at being natural and coherent and hence, topic becomes the key means of organising talk and the central concept in this institutional talk.

When the pedagogical focus is on meaning and fluency, the aim is on maximising the opportunities for interaction presented by developing the topic of talk. Through the teacher's strategy of using information- and opinion-gaps in the form of clarification requests, the follow-up moves arising from the imbalance of epistemic domains warrant the production of talk as well as the development of the topic. The significance of epistemics becomes clear once the teacher, who does not have the knowledge or information required, determines a turn at talk to convey or request information from student(s) who have primary epistemic status. When the pedagogical focus is on the completion of the task, the speech exchange system as well as the topics-in-process is reflexively oriented to accomplish the task outcome. In the role-play task, the pre-determined topics are developed through opinion-gaps which allow students to provide responses when contributing and to do so based on their imagination and fantasy. All in all, variable approaches are needed in the analysis and evaluation of topic development in these two different L2 classroom contexts.

In order to substantiate the data provided in the analysis of topic development in both chapters four and five above, four extracts illustrating examples of topic-in-process in meaning-and-fluency contexts (adopting the same topic-as-workplan: Dating Customs around the World) in which the other four groups of students in the female teacher's class reported their reading and

group discussion about dating customs in different countries (Iran, Japan and Korea, America, and Australia) can be found in Appendix G (pages 221-228). Additionally, two extracts illustrating examples of topic-in-process in task-oriented-contexts in which two groups of students in the male teacher's class working on the same topic-as-workplan (The Dating Game) can be found in Appendix H (pages 229-244).

## **Chapter 6.**

### **Conclusions**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This concluding chapter presents a brief summary of the key areas covered in the thesis and the major implications of the empirical study are detailed. Firstly, the research process and the outcome of the study are summarised. Secondly, the findings obtained from the data analysis and discussion in chapters four and five are discussed in relation to the research questions posed earlier. Thirdly, the pedagogical implications of the main research findings and how these may improve professional practice in the area of English language teaching are provided. Finally, the contributions of the study to the field and suggestions for future research are considered. In pursuing this goal, a model for approaching topic development in L2 classrooms, which makes explicit the procedures this study has employed, is outlined.

#### **6.2 The Research Process and Its Outcomes**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the aim of this thesis is to present an exploratory study of what happens in institutional speech events occurring between teachers and EFL students and students and their peers in L2 classroom discourse, with a specific focus on one aspect of talk, namely topic development.

In chapter one, the background and significance of the study were introduced. Following this, the existing gap in the research and how this research might fill it were explicated. Next, the research focus and English language education in Thailand, which provides the specific context of the study, were described and finally the research questions and a general outline of the thesis was given.

In chapter two, a review of research into topic from a DA perspective, from a CA perspective, and in relation to language classrooms was provided. How CA might be an appropriate methodology to be applied to the study of classroom interaction was also discussed. The

literature review helped to identify gaps in the research and an overview of how this study will help to fill these gaps completed the chapter.

In chapter three, a detailed justification of the research design was presented. This included the research focus, the research main question and the research sub-questions. Next, the research paradigm and epistemology were explained. The rationale for the research method and the research reliability, validity, and generalisability were discussed. How this study might be triangulated was also addressed. CA institutional-discourse perspectives on L2 classroom and the choice of this research methodological framework were considered and the research settings, ethical issues, research participants, data collection and limitations of the research were covered. Finally, a description of the means of data analysis was given.

Chapters four and five contained the data analysis and the findings relating to the three research sub-questions. These were presented around two key themes: topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts and topic development in task-oriented contexts. Key points and issues concerning the findings of the analysis were discussed in-depth.

This chapter will now answer the research questions by explaining in what ways the findings might fill the previously identified gaps in the research.

### **6.3 Research Questions**

As mentioned earlier, this present study is ‘CA-inspired’, being based on CA principles so that the research is open to discovering phenomena, rather than searching the data for instances of events which conform to some prior theoretic assumption. However, the research attempts to extend current knowledge about topic organisation and development in EFL classroom settings by describing what actually happens in classroom discourse and by comparing it with what is supposed to happen according to the pedagogical focus. The study is, therefore, guided by the main research question which is derived from the currently existing lacunae in the area of topic-based classroom research, that is, no CA work to date has studied the pedagogical purposes in particular classroom contexts and how a given topic of talk relates to this. The main research question and sub-questions are therefore presented again in the following sections, accompanied by brief answers derived from the analysis given in chapters four and five.

**The main research question:** How are topics developed within the reflexive relationship between the institutional goal and the overall interactional organisation of L2 classroom discourse?

The answer to this question has been presented as the main argument of chapter four and then confirmed in chapter five by describing the dual-faceted character of topic in meeting institutional goals with regard to EFL classroom interactions. Topic-as-workplan is the pre-determined pedagogical aim (and the means of achieving that aim) which exists in the classroom material, for example as it appears in the relevant textbook unit. The topic is static, homogeneous, fixed and pre-selected for all teachers and students. In other words, the topic is planned prior to the reality of what the teachers and students do. Topic-in-process, on the other hand, is the actual realisation of this, or what actually happens in classroom discourse. It is contingent, dynamic and constituted by the heterogeneous conversational procedures through which the teachers and students talk a topic into being within their own L2 classroom contexts and the pedagogical-focused activities in which they are engaged. The same topic-as-workplan will therefore not yield comparable results in terms of topic-in-process when performed by different teachers and students. In other words, the same topic-as-workplan will result in different ways of turn-taking organisation with respect to topic-in-process when performed by different teachers and students.

**The research sub-question 1:** How are topics developed within different L2 classroom contexts?

Detailed answers to this question have been provided in chapters four and five. In answering this question, the research data has been selected to investigate how particular topics are developed in meaning-and-fluency contexts and in task-oriented contexts. From the data analysis, it is clear that topics are the explicit focus of the interactions and also integral parts of the organisation of turn-taking, sequence and repair; topics in these L2 classroom contexts are both vehicle and focus of the interaction. As shown in the data analysis, topics enable analysis and evaluation of the classroom discourse by the teachers and students and topic organisation and development is thus not an accessory to turn-taking and sequencing in these examples of institutional speech, but rather features prominently as a construct of practice in L2 teaching and learning environments. However, the analysis and evaluation of interaction in L2 topic-in-process needs to be alert to the specific pedagogical focus and participation in the development of topic in a report on reading

comprehension and class discussion must be approached in a different way to participation in a fantasy role-play.

**The research sub-question 2:** How are topics developed within the interaction between the teacher and students?

In order to answer this question, in chapter four, two instances of topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts which were similar in terms of their workplan but which were performed by two different teachers and classes were compared. Having examined the two different topics-in-process, the findings reveal that the same topic-as-workplan did not yield comparable results in terms of topic-in-process when performed in the different classes. This was due to the teachers' different interpretations and implementations of the pedagogical focus. While one topic-in-process is a complex, fluid and dynamic piece of talk-in-interaction, which is jointly constructed by the teacher, group collaboration and class discussion, the other topic-in-process is limited in terms of turn-taking organisation.

The findings also indicate that information exchanged to achieve epistemic balance provides a key mechanism for the sequential organisation of interaction and development of the topic. The various information, evaluation and opinion gaps derived from the teacher's unknowing (K-) epistemic status were employed to draw on information from the students' knowing (K+) epistemic position. Information is, therefore, the key element that drives the sequence of talk and motivates students' contributions to the topic.

The findings concerning the two different topics-in-process resulting from the same topic-as-workplan can be summarised in the form of two flow charts presented in Figures 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3: Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Context I

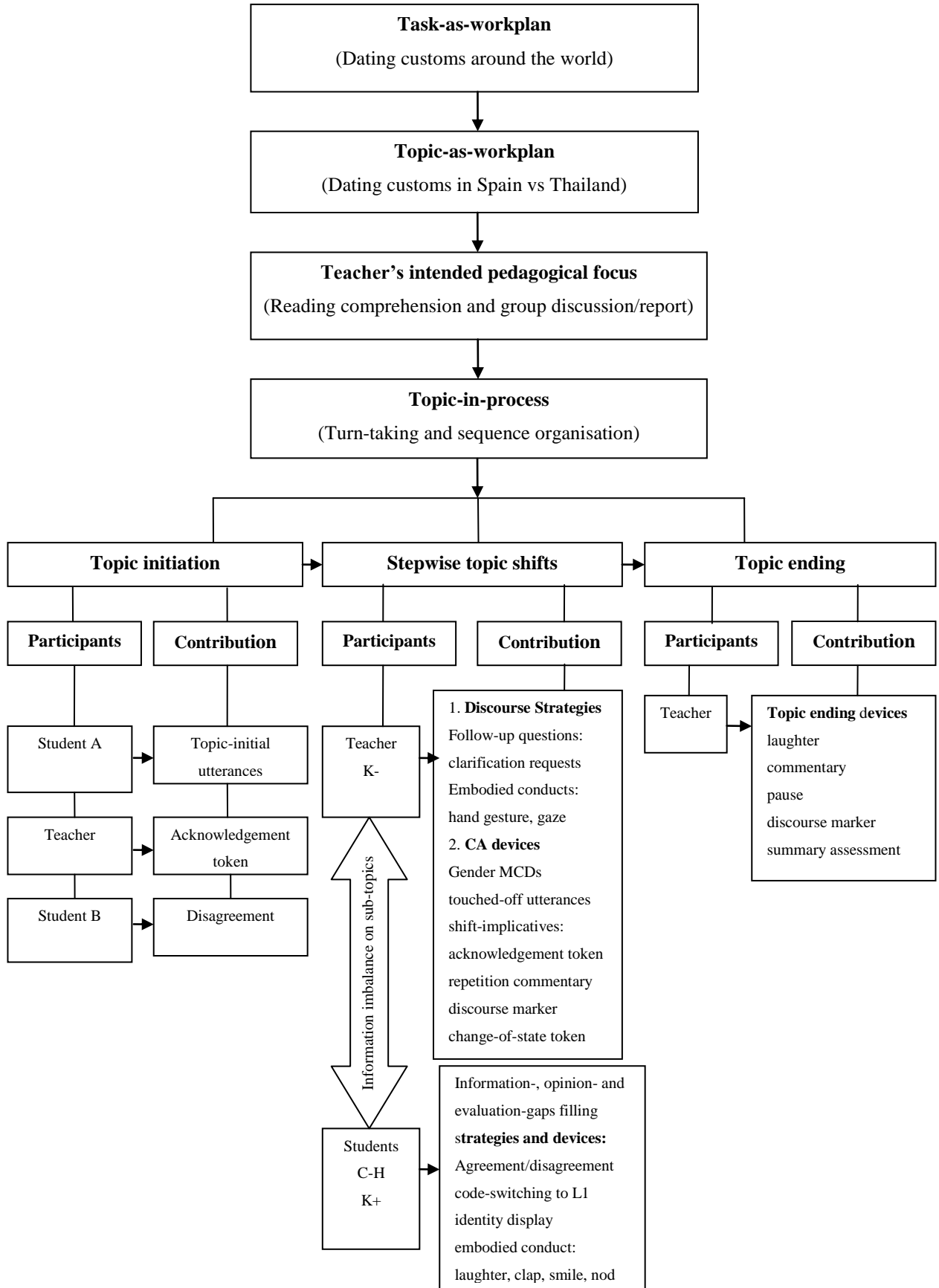
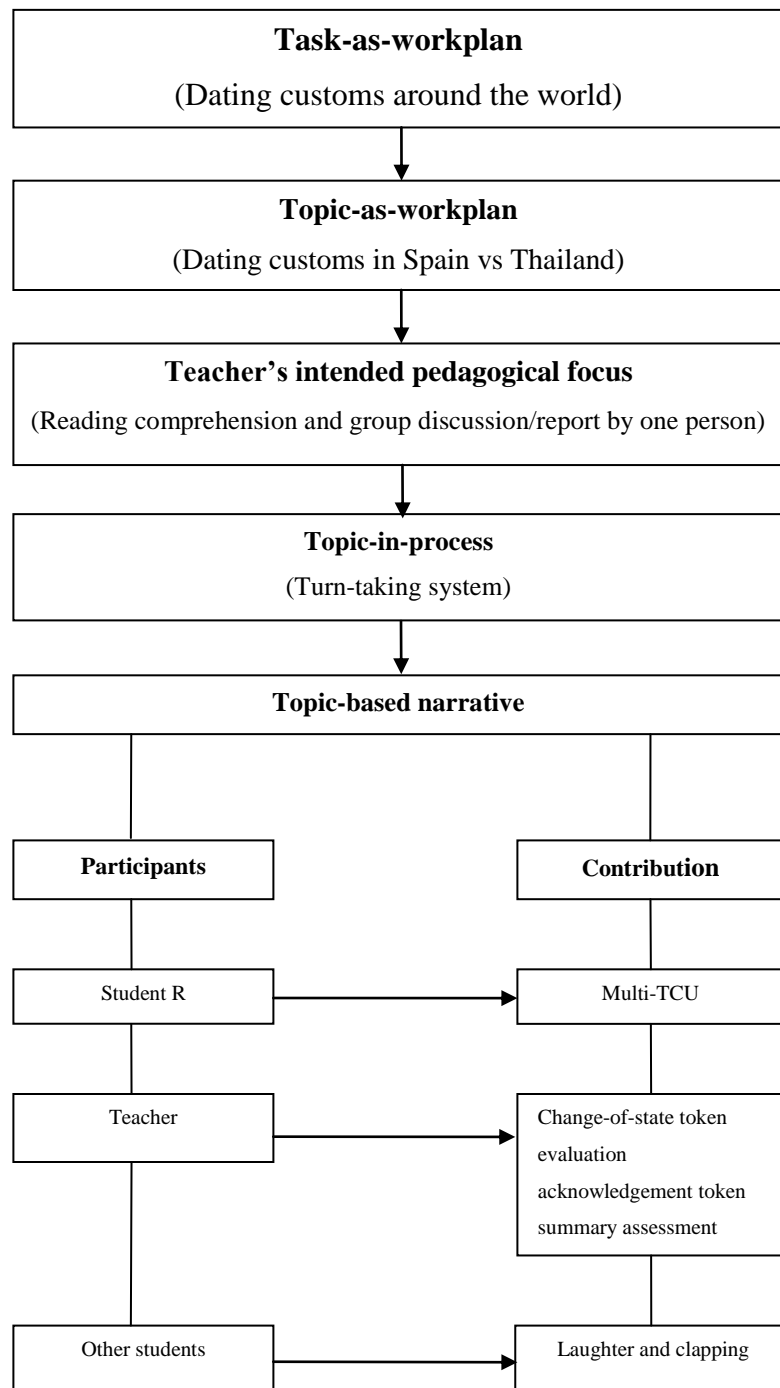




Figure 4: Topic Development in Meaning-and-Fluency Context II



**The research sub-question 3:** To what extent do the students develop topics during their talk-in-interaction in group discussion?

To answer this question, the analysis in chapter five investigated topic development in task-oriented contexts. These entailed two groups of students working on the same task under the instruction of the same teacher. A set of pre-determined topic-based questions were provided for students to select from and then to use to initiate sequences of talk in a convergent opinion-gap role-play task. In both cases, information imbalance played an important role in driving the discussion and developing the topics. In terms of turn-taking, sequence and repair, students demonstrated more sophisticated topic organisation and development than did those in meaning-and-fluency contexts which were led by the teacher. However, due to the nature of the teacher's text-internal statement and the task instructions given in the textbook, in fulfilling the task goals, students were allowed to decide between telling the truth or supplying fictitious information and opinions. The findings show that the turn-taking systems and sequence expansion which arose from a K+/K- imbalance between students were not organised in a normative-epistemic sense. That is, students developed topics based on their imagination.

The findings concerning topic development in task-oriented contexts are presented below in the form of two flow charts.

Figure 5: Topic Development in Task-Oriented Context I

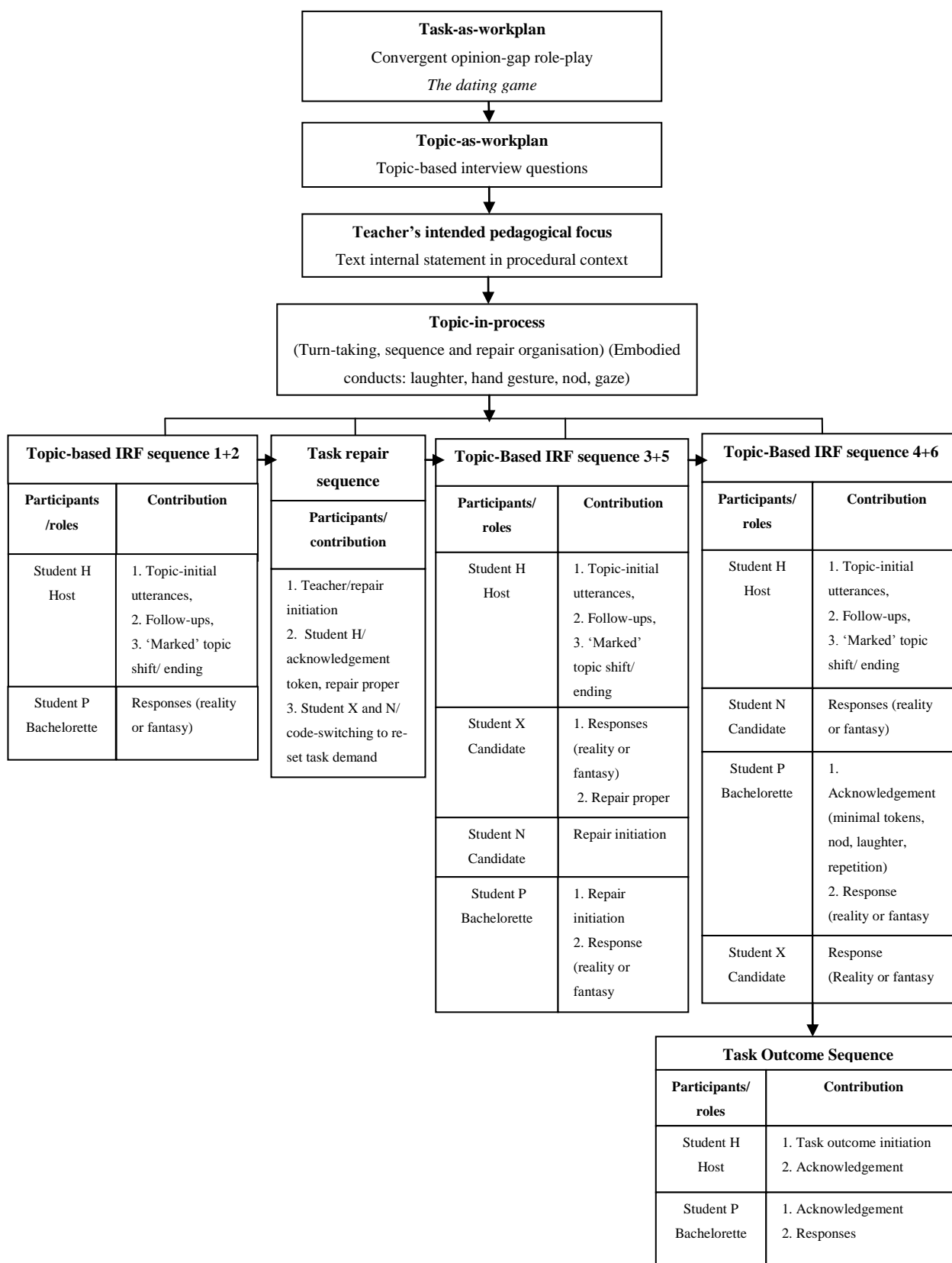
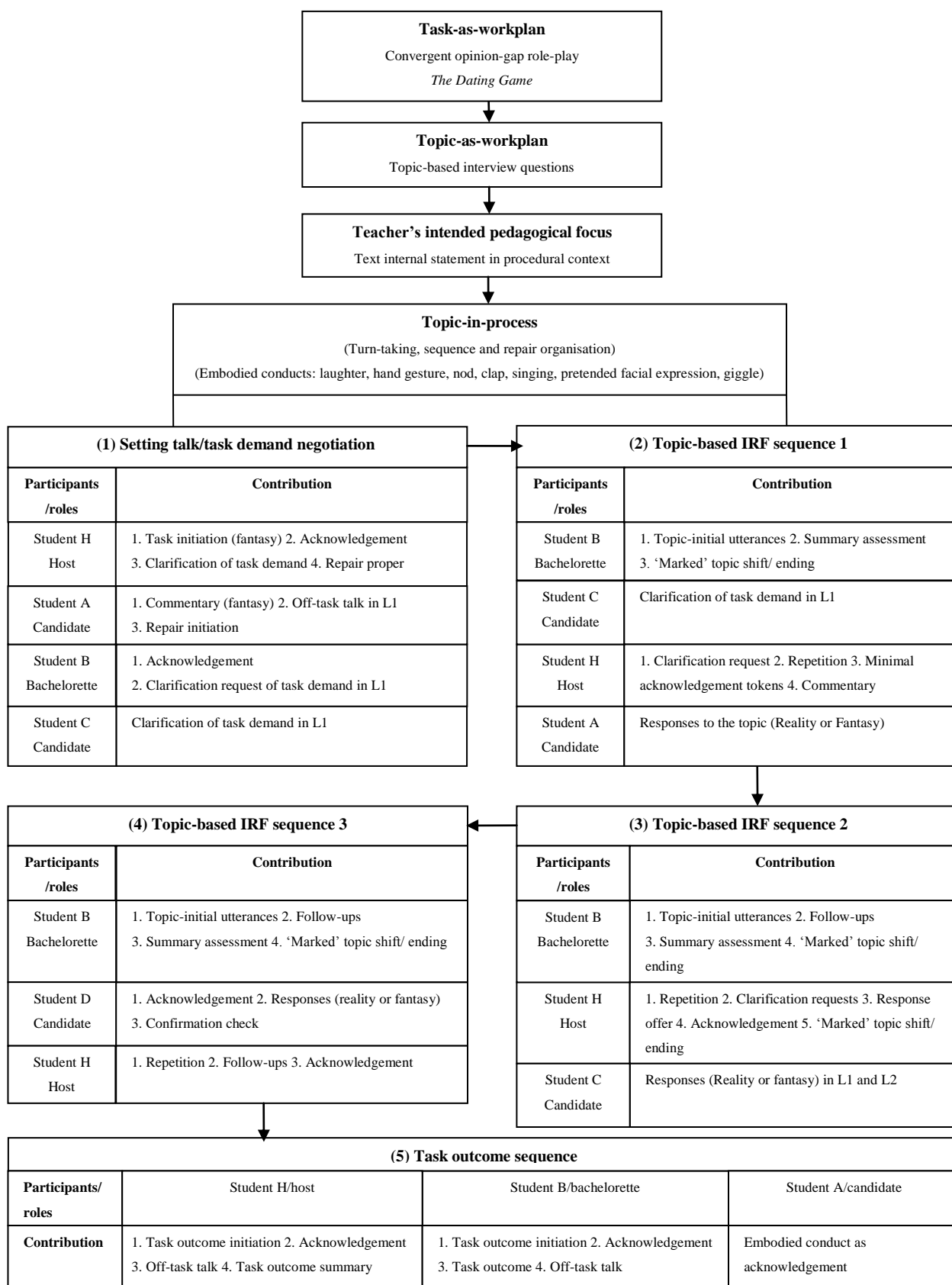


Figure 6: Topic Development in Task-Oriented Context II



## **6.4 Pedagogical Implications**

This research informs four main areas which are pedagogically significant for EFL classrooms. These are: the implications for topic development; the implications for topic and language task design; the implications for evaluation of oral proficiency; and the implications for teacher development.

### ***6.4.1 Implications for topic development and learning opportunities in EFL classrooms***

Despite the fact that language learning is not the focus of this study, there may be reasons for assuming that topic organisation and development as co-constructed by the teacher and students and students and their peers through L2 interaction in EFL classrooms may lead to learning opportunities.

The findings of this study support the conceptualisation of classroom interactional competence (CIC) which Seedhouse and Walsh (2010) propose: “CIC focuses on the online decisions made by teachers and learners, and considers the extent to which these actions enhance learning and learning opportunities” (p. 139). CIC is also defined as “teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning” (Walsh, 2006, p. 130).

The findings of the present study have shown the existence of CIC in chapter four, with the analysis of topic development in the first class in the meaning-and-fluency context. The findings show that the teacher and students understood and were oriented toward the pedagogical goal and displayed CIC through their co-constructed interactions. We have seen during the topic-in-process that both the teacher’s questions regarding the topic and the students’ conversational turns are evidence of CIC, and this results in greater opportunities for learning than are found in the second class, led by the male teacher. These research findings suggest that through the teacher’s support of topic organisation and development, learning opportunities may occur when the students share their ideas and personal experience, negotiate meaning and generate new vocabulary within the context of the discussion. However, if the teacher is not aware of this and fails to build on students’ responses, it is likely that an opportunity for learning will be lost. The argument is that learning opportunities are maximised by CIC which results from mutual understanding through developing the topic in the classroom discourse.

The findings of this present study are also in line with the sociocultural theory of mind (SCT) developed by Vygotsky (1978) and others. This claims that mediated learning can occur through interaction with another person and sociocultural theorists see language learning as dialogically based so ‘participation’ serves to create the intersubjectivity that enables verbal interaction to mediate learning (Ellis, 2003). The two instances of student participation described in task-oriented contexts in chapter five reveal that students assisted each other in contributing to the topic at hand and so to accomplish the task. That this mediation by others in social interaction happened in the L2 classroom context implies that the task and topics may help to provide opportunities for students to learn.

SCT describes a social dimension of the development of new skills and this is that tasks result in ‘collaborative dialogue’ (Swain, 2000) with students engaged in problem solving, and knowledge building taking places both as a result of their employing the L2 to collaboratively address a problem, and consciously attending to the linguistic forms that take place in the utterances they produce. Where tasks result in collaborative dialogue, opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge of the L2 can be expected to occur. This study provides clear evidence of students’ collaborative dialogues in such task-oriented contexts, here a role-play task which required students to work together to accomplish the outcome. In a group situation like this, some students who know less or who have lower levels of L2 proficiency can learn from those who know more or who have higher proficiency and so students will interact with and learn from each other. In this way, opportunities to extend their knowledge and learning occur when they use the L2 to develop topics and to solve communicative problems as they arise.

Above all, Ellis (2003, p. 183) noted that “these opportunities are not created by the tasks themselves but rather by the way in which the tasks are performed by the participants.” This can be emphasised by the evidence in this study which has shown that students’ interaction in the role-play task is based on pre-determined topic-based interview questions. Therefore, it could be argued that the task, the official topic, together with the guided topic-based questions provided students opportunities for learning that may occur through their task/topics-in-process.

#### ***6.4.2 Implications for topic and language task design in EFL classrooms***

The results of chapter five may give guidance to task designers in deciding what kinds of role-play topics will be best for fostering students’ communicative competence.

The discussion in chapter five revealed that at the level of workplan, role-plays which make reference to sexuality and gender-related topics were successful in helping students use their existing skills and knowledge to build interaction during the task-in-process. Dating was clearly a task topic of interest to students and created a context in which students assumed different social roles (hosts, bachelorettes, and candidates) to replicate a TV show, one type of institutional talk, in a stress-free supportive learning environment. Additionally, the interview questions that students used as topic initial utterances were packaged in a way that made sense to them and as a result there appeared to be no issues with task difficulty, despite some discourse repairs being made during the topics-in-process.

However, through a close examination of the actual task/topics-in-process in both groups, it is evident that issues of authenticity should be addressed. The guided role-play task/topic was designed to closely resemble a TV show and thus the topics-in-process were at times developed in a non-epistemic sense. When acting out a dating game, the students started each sequence by introducing the topic-based questions provided. The students who played the role of candidates accepted the topic and elaborated on it by either telling the truth or by inventing a response and this implies that task designers need to be aware that a communicative task such as this kind of opinion-gap may result in semi-authentic tasks/topics-in-process.

The dating game was selected as the task-as-workplan, or the official topic, and was thus the hub of the task-in-process. The pedagogical focus of the task, with the roles of questioner and respondents pre-assigned in conjunction with the topics-as-workplan (the interview questions), influenced students in how they would perform the task and achieve the task outcome. The evidence of sequential organisation and interactional procedures in the task indicates that the students successfully managed their roles by deploying suitable ongoing development of the topic, which provided the context around which the language grew and developed. The topic also provided the motivation for students to express their personal identity in the task.

It can therefore be argued that the evidence and findings of this study provide some insights into the relationship between the topic and task design for English language classrooms. That is, the

topic-as-workplan plays a vital role in the design of role-played tasks and may result in meaningful interactions, either based on fictions or on more genuine communication.

#### ***6.4.3 Implications regarding evaluation of oral proficiency***

Topic management and development is a vital interactional practice in conversation. It is a very important interactional resource (Young, 2003) for language students and is one of the key indicators that we can employ in order to evaluate their oral performance. The results of chapter five support the earlier claim that topic has a ‘dual-faceted character’ as, whilst the topic-as-workplan was stable and homogenous, its realisation was heterogeneous, with students displaying differing abilities in the extent to which they were able to initiate, maintain and close individual topics.

These findings may have some implications for the evaluation of oral proficiency because topic’s double aspect enables evaluation of talk by students in that it is necessary (for straightforward logistical reasons) that they all receive the same input (i.e. the topic-as-workplan) but the way in which this is enacted, in terms of topic-in-process, by the students enables differential evaluation of their oral proficiency. The evidence of topic development in the group role-play task may provide an example of an instrument for evaluating oral proficiency in the form of a multi-party conversation. Teachers could broaden their evaluation strategies to include tasks such as this in order to evaluate students’ topic management ability, since being able to initiate, shift and exit a topic smoothly is an important skill for language students (Wong and Waring, 2010).

In a wider context of language assessment, topic is presented as a vital construct in speaking tests (Seedhouse and Harris, 2010) and is also an important indicator of coherence in most oral proficiency interviews. To illustrate, topic plays an important and integral part in the IELTS Speaking Test, one of the four components of IELTS (International English Language Testing System), the most widely used English proficiency test for overseas applicants to British and Australian universities. Topic is employed in the IELTS Speaking Band descriptors to differentiate levels, and in some cases it is mentioned under ‘Fluency and coherence’. It is used to differentiate band 8 “develops topics coherently and appropriately” from band 9 “develops topics fully and appropriately” (Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2015, p. 397). While high-scoring candidates develop the topic coherently by using discourse markers to connect clauses,



candidates with low scores sometimes struggle to construct a coherent answer (Seedhouse, 2012).

This importance of topic as an indicator of coherence in testing contexts should be an issue of interest to teachers preparing their students for oral proficiency interviews; such as the IELTS Speaking Test mentioned above. The findings of this study may help the teachers by providing some implications for classroom practice that follow-up questions (provided they cohere with the flow of the topic and also of the conversation), either constructed by the teacher (as in the meaning-and-fluency context) or by the students (as in the task-oriented contexts), provide students opportunities to engage with and develop a topic coherently. Then, students may adopt and adapt this skill to develop their speaking ability, more specifically to develop topic coherently and to perform successfully in their speaking tests.

#### ***6.4.4 Implications for EFL teacher development***

From a close examination of the details of interaction between the EFL teachers and students and their shared topic development, the present study has revealed issues relevant to professional development for EFL teachers. In particular, the findings discussed in chapter four may well be important for increasing teachers' understanding of their roles as managers of a social order in the language classroom.

As mentioned above, an awareness of these issues could help to broaden teachers' awareness of the necessity of providing students with opportunities to be engaged orally in particular L2 classroom contexts. This relates mainly to the nature of teacher-fronted activities. In class 1, the topic was initiated by a student but rather than letting the student keep the topic, the female teacher instead regained control in pursuit of a particular pedagogical goal. The topic and order of speakership were therefore organised from the outset in an explicit and predictable way. This is in line with Markee (2000), who states that teacher-led classroom talk is an unequal power speech exchange system, in which teachers have privileged rights to assign topics and turns to students and also to elaborate on and evaluate the quality of students' contributions. On the other hand, the male teacher exerted far less control in class 2. The teacher did not work to build the topic but only provided minimal acknowledgement and summary assessment, and thus

the space of interaction and the speech exchange system with reference to topic development was narrowed.

It appears likely that the female teacher was aware of the students' contributions and was able to build on students' responses and follow-ups. The teacher facilitated opportunities for interaction through eliciting ideas from the students, by allowing students to self-select their turns, they were able to develop the topic, and by giving students the ability to share in the development of the topic, the space of interaction was expanded. It is likely that this led to increased opportunities for learning of the L2.

Chapter four thus has significant implications for EFL teacher development in that teachers need to provide students with relevant opportunities for oral participation when appropriate. Teachers should therefore be aware of students' participation and regard this as part of their pedagogical focus in that they need to lead students' interaction in order to challenge them to go beyond their existing level of proficiency. These findings can act as guidelines for EFL teachers, since they show teachers' strategies for increasing student participation in the development of a particular topic by expanding interactions to different aspects of the topic and sub-topics. Overall, the findings obtained in this chapter could be useful for helping EFL teachers become aware of their roles, and thus implementing these guidelines may well benefit their professional development.

## **6.5 Research Contributions**

The present study makes several contributions to research in the field of English language teaching and to CA research on topic in language classrooms. Language teaching in Thailand has faced many criticisms, including those related to teachers' lack of knowledge about the communicative approach (Saengboon, 2004), and their inability to design effective communicative tasks and to match students' abilities to class materials and content (Bilasha and Kwangsawad, 2004; Kanoksilapatham, 2007). The findings of this thesis may be used to help pre-service and in-service EFL teachers tackle these problems.

### *6.5.1 Contributions to research into English language teaching*

This research extends the knowledge about EFL teachers' implementation of CLT, in particular those who live in Thailand, and it is hoped that this will increase their awareness of teaching strategies that could help provide students with more opportunities to develop their English speaking skills. To be more specific, chapter four's analysis and discussion of topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts revealed that the teacher's use of clarification requests in the follow-up moves provided evidence that Thai EFL students engaged enthusiastically in the ongoing topic development. The findings of this investigation also provide additional evidence to complement claims about the role of information imbalance put forward by Heritage (2012). Underlying this, a K+/K- information imbalance between the teacher and students will help to expand classroom interaction. Taken together, by asserting the topic of talk from a K- position through clarification requests, teachers can create openings for further interaction and thus assist students in developing their English speaking ability. Furthermore, the evidence and findings of topic development in the meaning-and-fluency context also suggest means by which teachers can relate particular topics-as-workplan in the materials to students' lives by taking into account their current English skills, personal opinions, experiences and real world contexts.

With regard to the chapter five findings on topic development in task-oriented contexts, these provide evidence of the reflexive relationship between communicative tasks and topics, which teachers can employ to create and maintain speaking environments in the formal classroom setting. This might prove to be particularly valuable in fostering students' communicative competence and giving them the confidence that they have ability in the L2 to do things on their own, that is, the ability to expand on the topic of the day's lesson through interaction. This should help students increase their independence from the teacher and encourage them to work collaboratively. Students may then apply the skills practiced in the classroom to perform similar roles in situations encountered outside the classroom.

In spite of the fact that it is not possible to draw conclusions concerning the effect of topic on student interaction, the empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of the effect of a dating topic incorporating an aspect of life in society, personal experiences, feelings and

desires on students' speaking performance in an opinion-gap role-play task. In addition, Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (2009) argue that:

*“From an interactionist perspective, most classroom activities or instruments for data collection are not an efficient means to assist language learning in the classroom or to study the processes of L2 comprehension and interlanguage modification, as they do not guarantee conditions for goal-oriented or negotiated interaction in which learners can take an active role”* (p. 172, emphasis added).

The findings of this thesis could be used to help in identifying or developing such activities that opens up opportunities for collaboration between teachers and researchers. The study has demonstrated the use of a communicative task that provides opportunities for students to negotiate meaning and exchange information/opinions, not limited to only one direction of information flow - from answer-supplying student to question-asking teacher.

The main focus of the present study is the investigation of topic development in relationship with the institutional goal through the exploration of the organisation of interaction between teachers and students in different L2 classroom contexts. As discussed in chapter one (section 3), English in Thailand is taught and learnt as a foreign language, and students have limited exposure to the real use of English. However, the findings of this research concerning the transformation of topic provide practical applications that teachers may adapt and adopt in order to expose their students to more life-like interactions in the classroom. Although the present study looks specifically at EFL teaching and learning at a university in Thailand, the contributions provided from this study may be applied to EFL contexts elsewhere.

### ***6.5.2 Contributions to CA research on topic in language classrooms***

As regards contributions to CA research into language classrooms, the findings obtained from the current study, conducted using the CA institutional discourse perspective, build on the literature on topic development, which is a relatively under-researched area, especially as it occurs in EFL classroom contexts. In fact, this is the first study to investigate how particular topics are developed in reflexive relationships with the pedagogical focus. This is also the first

study reporting topic development in the L2 classroom contexts of meaning-and-fluency and task-oriented (Seedhouse, 2004). These distinguish the present study from previous CA studies conducted in the area of topic-based analysis, especially those in classroom settings. For instance, Stokoe (2000) studied the production of topical talk in seminar context of university students in the UK. Gan, Davidson and Hamp-Lyons (2008) examined the production of topical talk in group oral assessment situations by secondary English as a second language students in Hong Kong, whereas Campbell-Larson (2014) conducted a longitudinal study examining conversation topic management by Japanese university students. Neither these studies used the research stance adopted here.

The findings of topic development in task-oriented contexts of this current research reflect a similar view with students of English as a second/foreign language as in the studies undertaken by Gan, Davidson and Hamp-Lyons (2008) and Campbell-Larson (2014), in which students develop topic using whatever language resources are available. The participating students in this present study and in Campbell-Larson's were at the same level of second or third year non-English majors. However, the study by Campbell-Larson shows a noticeable change in the ways of managing the non-predesigned topic from a narrow band of interactional strategies to a more plentiful interactional behaviors by Japanese students of English over the course of an academic year, whereas the current study provides additional evidence with respect to how the pre-determined topics are developed in a particular task by Thai university students.

The present study also confirms the previous findings by Stokoe (2000) and Gan, Davidson and Hamp-Lyons (2008) in that the negotiation of topicality starts with students' clarifying the task demand or with the 'setting talk' (Maynard and Zimmerman, 1984); a method to initiate a topic by focusing on the immediate environment of the interaction. Despite the students' talk is related to the topic following the tutor/teacher's agenda to accomplish a specific task, these previous CA studies show features of topical organisation in institutional settings that are more similar to ordinary conversation and to demonstrate students' 'real-life' interactional abilities that they may display disinterest and close down the particular topic once occasioned. On the other hand, the findings of this investigation complement the earlier studies by extending knowledge on how topics are organised and developed in a fantasy role-play, although the task mirrors the real-world to some extent.

Moreover, the key strength of this study as we have seen throughout the data presentation, analysis and discussion of chapter four and chapter five is that epistemic or information imbalance plays a vital role in propelling talk forward and thus in developing the topic in progress. In chapter four, evidence has been presented that information-, opinion-, and evaluation-gaps were the strategies implemented by the female teacher to support talk on the official topic. This came from her unknowing (K-) epistemic status as a foreigner and by having the students assume the knowing (K+) position, as Thais. In accord with Heritage (2012, p. 48), "... K- and K+ claims can be used to build or otherwise forward sequences that are already in play, often in stepwise topical progressions", the teacher overtly stepwise shifted from one aspect of topic or sub-topic to another through the use of clarification requests. This led to an expansion of sequences and the development of topic as the students, occupying the K+ status, provided information, opinions or evaluation concerning aspects of the topic at hand. Each sequence of the sub-topic was opened through the teacher's K- position and terminated through a response by the students indicating that a gap in information had been filled and the imbalance in information had been equalised. In contrast to information requests motivated by the teacher's K- status, which aimed at drawing factual information from students or asking about their own opinions on dating customs in Thailand, chapter five showed that conversational sequences were launched and expanded from predetermined topic-based questions and through students' requests for information and responses to those requests.

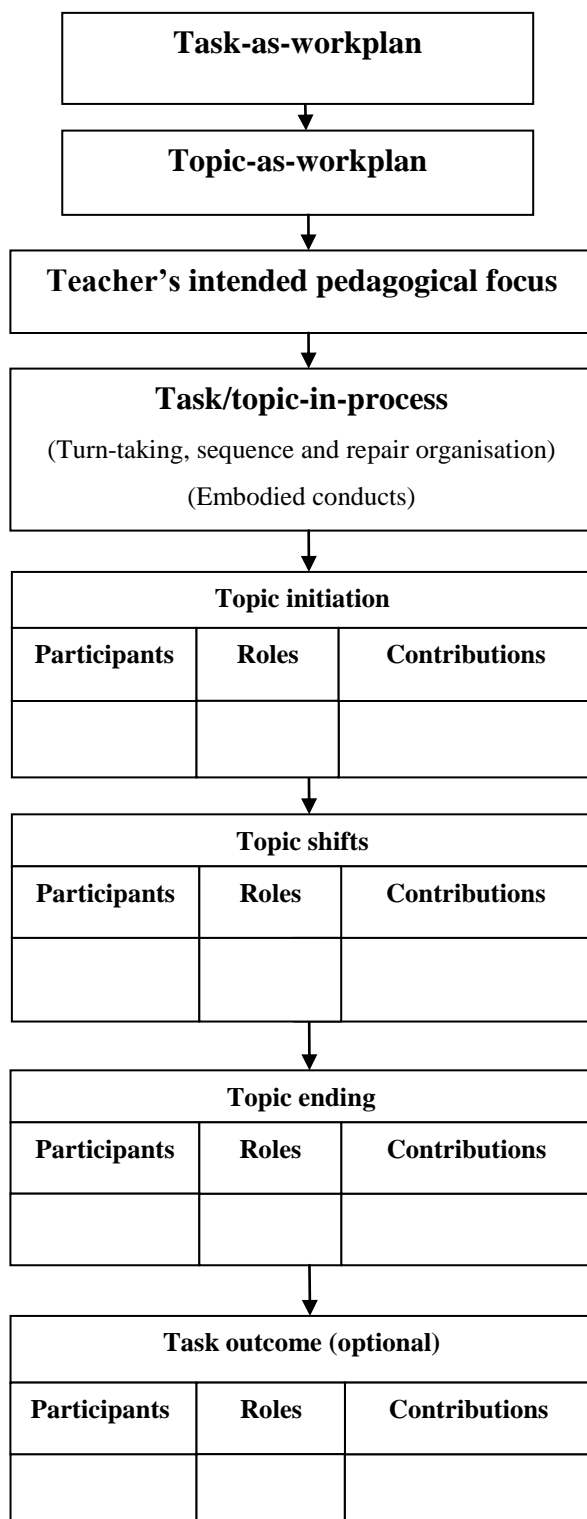
This leads to the conclusion, as well as significance of the findings or contribution of the study that topic delivers epistemic balancing, and this study has demonstrated, for the first time, that this is highly relevant to EFL classroom interaction. As we have seen, the teacher may or may not have knowledge about dating customs in Thailand, but deploys the unknowing position in order to provide opportunities for students to develop the topic. This research contributes to existing knowledge concerning epistemic imbalance and territories of knowledge emphasised by Heritage (2012):

*"Thus we may speak of a principle of epistemic congruency in which the epistemic stance encoded in a turn at talk will normally converge with the epistemic status of the speaker relative to the topic and the recipient..... Epistemic status can be dissembled by persons*

*who deploy epistemic stance to appear more, or less, knowledgeable than they really are” (p. 7, emphasis added).*

Last but not least, another contribution made by this research is a model, illustrated in the flowchart below, which may serve as an analytical tool for future CA studies to topic development in L2 classrooms.

Figure 7: Framework for the Exploration of Topic Development in L2 Classrooms





## 6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

A great deal remains to be discovered about how topic is adapted, and thus further research into the institutionality of interaction should probe more closely the role of topic in relation to institutional goals. Some suggestions for further research can be made concerning the notion of topic as discussed in this study. For example, further study focusing on topic-based analysis might investigate how teachers in EFL classrooms employ topic-as-workplan when they provide students with instructions. It would then be possible to compare the intended pedagogical focus provided by teachers and those displayed in the teaching materials. It would also be possible to discover students' topic-in-process in different types of task.

With regard to topic development in meaning-and-fluency contexts, the findings show that the topic of talk is developed and the sequence of interaction is expanded by the teacher's strategy of making clarification requests in the follow-up moves. In this respect, the findings revealed that information-, opinion-, and evaluation-gaps are created by the existence of the teacher's K-position with regard to different aspects of the topic. This indicates an expanding space of interaction and that implies opportunities for learning. Further research might therefore be needed in order to look at how learning occurs within the development of topic.

With regard to topic development in task-oriented contexts, further investigation is also required into how topics are developed in different types of task in EFL classrooms. This study thus suggests that researchers will need to explore tasks and topics and how learning takes place through the development of topic by adopting CA institutional discourse methodology as a framework for the micro analysis of interactions.

Further research in relation to topic-based analysis might also be adopted in different contexts. Given that this study is mainly concerned with topic development in EFL classrooms at the university level in Thailand, similar studies might be conducted to examine the role that topic plays in relationship with the learning goals for contexts involving other languages, as well as other subjects at different levels and in different settings. This study only shows how a particular topic is developed by non-English major students. It would also be interesting to compare how different topics are developed, and comparative studies are also needed to examine how topic management occurs across different proficiency levels.

## References

- Abdesslem, H. (1993) 'Analyzing foreign language lesson discourse', *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31(3), pp. 221-235.
- Allwright, D. and Bailey, K. M. (1991) *Focus on the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Antaki, C. (1995) 'Conversation analysis and social psychology', *Social Psychology Section Newsletter*, Winter, pp. 21-34.
- Antaki, C. (2002) "'Lovely': Turn-initial high-grade assessments in telephone closings", *Discourse Studies*, 4(1), pp. 5-24.
- Arminen, I. (2000) 'On the context sensitivity of institutional interaction', *Discourse and Society*, 11, pp. 435-458.
- Atkinson, J. M. and Drew, P. (1979) *Order in court: The organisation of verbal interaction in judicial settings*. London: Macmillan.
- Atkinson, J. M. and Heritage, J. (eds.) (1984) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, W. (2008) 'A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness', *RELC Journal*, 39(1), pp. 131-146.
- Beach, W. (1993) 'Transitional regularities for "casual" "okay" usages', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 19, pp. 325-352.
- Becker, S. H. (1982) 'Culture: A sociological view', *Yale Review*, 71, pp. 513-527.
- Berwick, R. (1990) *Task variation and repair in English as a foreign language*. Kobe University of Commerce: Institute of Economic Research.

- Bilasha, O. and Kwangsawad, T. (2004) 'Factors influencing Thai teachers' abilities to adapt CLT in their classrooms: A collaborative action research study', *Thai TESOL Bulletin*, 17, pp. 1-10.
- Boden, D. (1994) *The business of talk*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boden, D. and Zimmerman, D. H. (eds.) (1991) *Talk and social structure: Studies in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boonkit, K. (2010) 'Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English', *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, pp. 1305-1309.
- Breen, M. (1989) 'The evaluation cycle for language learning tasks', in Johnson R. K. (ed.) *The second language curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 187-206.
- Brinton, B. and Fujiki, M. (1984) 'Development of topic manipulation skills in discourse', *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, 27, pp. 350-358.
- Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983) *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Button, G. and Casey, N. (1984) 'Generating topic: The use of topic initial elicitors', in Atkinson M. J. and Heritage J. (eds.) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 167-190.
- Button, G. and Casey, N. (1985) 'Topic nomination and topic pursuit', *Human Studies*, 8, pp. 3-55.
- Button, G. and Casey, N. (1988/1989) 'Topic initiation: Business-at-hand', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 22, pp. 61-92.
- Campbell-Larsen, J. (2014) 'Topic in talk in interaction: A longitudinal study of Japanese learners of English', *Bulletin of the Research Institute, St Andrews University*, 39 (3), pp. 171-199.

- Carroll, D. (2005) 'Vowel-marking as an interactional resource in Japanese novice ESL conversation', in Richards, K. and Seedhouse, P. (eds.) *Applying conversation analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 214-234.
- Connor, U. (1996) *Contrastive rhetoric: cross-cultural aspects of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, G. (1989) *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, G. (1990) *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coulthard, M. (1977) *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Longman.
- Coulthard, M. (1985) *An introduction to discourse analysis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Essex: Longman.
- Crow, K. B. (1983) 'Topic shifts in couples' conversations', in Craig, R.T. and Tracy, K. (eds.) *Conversational coherence: Form, structure and strategy*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 136-156.
- Dakin, J. (1973) *The Language laboratory and language learning*. London: Longman.
- Drew, P. and Heritage, J. (1992a) *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Drew, P. and Heritage, J. (1992b) 'Analyzing talk at work: an introduction', in Drew, P and Heritage, J. (eds.) *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 3-65.
- Drew, P. and Holt, E. (1988) 'Complainable matters: The use of idiomatic expressions in making complaints', *Social Problems*, 35, pp. 398-417.
- Drew, P. and Holt, E. (1995) 'Idiomatic expressions and their role in the organization of topic transition in conversation', in Everaert, M., van der Linden, E. J., Schenk, A. and Schreuder, R. (eds.) *Idioms: Structural and psychological perspectives*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, pp. 117-132.

Drew, P. and Holt, E. (1998) 'Figures of speech: Figurative expressions and the management of topic transition in conversation', *Language in Society*, 27, pp. 495-522.

Egbert, M. M. (1997) 'Some interactional achievements of other-initiated repair in multi-person conversation', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27, pp. 611-634.

Egbert, M. M. (1997) 'Schisming: The transformation from a single conversation to multiple conversations', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 30 (1), pp. 1-51.

Ellis, R. (2003) *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2009) 'Task-based research and language pedagogy'. in Van den Branden, K, Bygate, M. and Norris, M. J. (eds.) *Task-based language teaching: A reader*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 109-129.

Fisher, E. (1996) 'Identifying effective educational talk', *Language and Education*, 10(4), pp. 237-253.

Foley, J. (2005) 'English in Thailand', *RELC Journal*, 36 (2), pp. 223-234.

Ford, C. E. (2013) 'Conversation analysis and turn taking', in Chapelle, C. A. (ed.) *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd. [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0216>. (Accessed: 8 January 2013).

Ford, C. E., Fox, B. A., and Thompson A. S. (2002) 'Constituency and the grammar of turn increments', in Ford, C. E., Fox, B. A. and Thompson, S. A. (eds.) *The language of turn and sequence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 14-38.

Fox, B. A., Benjamin, T. and Mazeland, H. (2013) 'Conversation analysis and repair organization: Overview', in Chapelle, C. A. (ed.) *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd. [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1314>. (Accessed: 22 March 2013).

Gan, Z., Davison, C. and Hamp-Lyons, L. (2008) 'Topic negotiation in peer group oral assessment situations: A conversation analytic approach', *Applied Linguistics*, 30(3), pp. 315-334.

- Gardner, R. (1987) 'The identification and role of topic in spoken interaction', *Semiotica*, 65 (1/2), pp. 129-141.
- Gass, S. and Varonis, M. (1984) 'The effect of familiarity on the comprehension of non-native speech', *Language Learning*, 34, pp. 65-89.
- Glenn, P. (2003) *Laughter in interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greatbatch, D. L. (1988) 'A turn-taking system for British news interviews', *Language in Society*, 17(3), pp. 401-430.
- Grundy, P. (2000) *Doing pragmatics*. London: Arnold.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982) *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, J. K. (2007) 'Redressing the roles of correction and repair in research on second and foreign language teaching', *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(4), pp. 511-526.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1970) 'Language structure and language function', in Lyons, J. (ed.) *New horizons in linguistics: An introduction*. London: Penguin, pp. 140-165.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1973) *Explorations in the functions of language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hauser, E. (2006) 'Teacher reformulations of students' answers during an episode of pedagogical talk', *Bulletin of the University of Electro-Communications*, 19(1/2), pp. 93-99.
- Heath, C. (1986) *Body movement and speech in medical interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, J. G. (1984) 'Language contact and language change', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13, pp. 367-384.
- Hellermann, J. (2007) 'The development of practices for action in classroom dyadic interaction: Focus on task openings', *Modern Language Journal*, 91(1), pp. 83-96.
- Heritage, J. (1984a) *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Heritage, J. (1984b) 'A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement', in Atkinson, M. J. and Heritage, J. (eds.) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 299-345.
- Heritage, J. (1985) 'Analyzing news interviews: aspects of the production of talk for an overhearing audience', in van Dijk, TA. (ed.) *Handbook of discourse analysis*. Vol. III. London: Academic Press, pp. 95-117.
- Heritage, J. (1997) 'Conversation analysis and institutional talk: Analysing data', in Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*. London: SAGE, pp. 161-182.
- Heritage, J. (2005) 'Cognition in discourse', in te Molder, H. and Potter, J. (eds.) *Conversation and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 184-202.
- Heritage, J. (2012a) 'Epistemics in action: Action formation and territories of knowledge', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 45(1), pp. 1-29.
- Heritage, J. (2012b) 'The epistemic engine: Sequence organization and territories of knowledge', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 45(1), pp. 30-52.
- Heritage, J. and Atkinson, J. M. (1984) 'Introduction', in Atkinson, J. M. and Heritage, J. (eds.) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-15.
- Heritage, J. and Clayman, S. (2010) *Talk in action: Interactions, identities, and institutions*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Heyman, R. D. (1986) 'Formulating topic in the classroom', *Discourse Processes*, 9, pp. 37-55.
- Holt, E. (2010) 'The last laugh: Shared laughter and topic termination', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, pp. 1513-1525.
- Holt, E. and Drew, P. (2005) 'Figurative pivots: the use of figurative expressions in pivotal topic transitions', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 38(1), pp. 35-61.
- Hosoda, Y. (2006) 'Repair and relevance of differential language expertise', *Applied Linguistics*, 27(1), pp. 25-50.

- Howe, M. (1991) 'Collaboration on topic change in conversation', *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics*, 16, pp. 1-15.
- Hudson, R. A. (1980) *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hurting, R. (1977) 'Toward a functional theory of discourse', in Freedle, R. O. (ed.) *Discourse production and comprehension*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, pp. 89-106.
- Hutchby, I. and Wooffitt, R. (1998) *Conversation analysis: Principles, practices and applications*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Hutchby, I. and Wooffitt, R. (2008) *Conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Jefferson, G. (1981) 'Caveat speaker: A preliminary exploration of shift implicative reciprocity in the articulation of topic', End of grant report to the Social Science Research Council [Great Britain].
- Jefferson, G. (1984) 'On stepwise transition from talk about a trouble to inappropriately next positioned matters', in Atkinson, M. J. and Heritage, C. J. (eds.) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 191-222.
- Jefferson, G. (1993) 'Caveat speaker: Preliminary notes on recipient topic-shift implicature', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 26(1), pp. 1-30.
- Jefferson, G. (2004) 'Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction', in Lerner, H. G. (ed.) *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 1-23.
- Johnson, K. E. (1995) *Understanding communication in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2007) 'Navigating pathways to success in ELT', *Journal of English Studies*, 3, pp. 6-25.
- Keenan, E. O. and Schieffelin, B. B. (1976) 'Topic as a discourse notion: a study of topic in the conversation of children and adults', in Li, C. N. (ed.) *Subject and topic*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 335-384.



- Kennedy, J. (1996) 'Classroom explanatory discourse: a look at how teachers explain things to their students', *Language Awareness*, 5, pp. 26-39.
- Keyuravong, S. (2010) 'Insights from Thailand', in Johnstone, R. (ed.) *Learning through English: Policies, challenges and prospects: Insights from East Asia*. British Council.
- Khamkhien, A. (2010) 'Teaching English speaking and English speaking tests in the Thai context: A reflection from Thai perspective', *English Language Teaching*, 3(1), pp. 184-190.
- Koshik, I. (2002) 'Designedly incomplete utterances: A pedagogical practice for eliciting knowledge displays in error correction sequences', *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 35(3), pp. 277-309.
- Lazaraton, A. (2004) 'Gesture and speech in the vocabulary explanations of one ESL teacher: A microanalytic inquiry', *Language Learning*, 54(1), pp. 79-117.
- Lemke, J. L. (1990) *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Liebscher, G. and Dailey-O'Cain, J. (2003) 'Conversational repair as a role-defining mechanism in classroom interaction', *Modern Language Journal*, 87, pp. 374-390.
- Long, M. (1980) *Input, interaction, and second language acquisition*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Long, M. (1983) 'Inside the "black box"', in Seliger, H. and Long, M. (eds.) *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, pp. 3-36.
- Long, M (1983a) 'Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation in the second language classroom', in Clarke, M. and Handscombe, J. (eds.) *On TESL '82: Pacific perspectives on language and teaching*. Washington D. C.: TESOL.
- Long, M. (1983b) 'Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input', *Applied Linguistics*, 4, pp. 126-141.
- Macbeth, D. (2004) 'The relevance of repair for classroom correction', *Language in Society*, 33, pp. 703-736.

- Markee, N. (2000) *Conversation analysis*. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Markee, N. (2005) 'The organization of off-task classroom talk in second language classrooms', in Richards, K. and Seedhouse, P. (eds.) *Applying conversation analysis*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 197-213).
- Markee, N. (2008) 'Toward a learning behavior tracking methodology for CA-for-SLA', *Applied Linguistics*, 29, pp. 404-427.
- Maynard, D.W. (1980) 'Placement of topic changes in conversations', *Semiotica*, 30, pp. 263-290.
- Maynard, D.W. and Zimmerman, D. H. (1984) 'Topical talk, ritual and the social organisation of relationships', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 47(4), pp. 301-316.
- McCarthy, M. (1991) *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McHoul, A. W. (1978) 'The organization of turns at formal talk in the classroom', *Language and Society*, 7, pp. 183-213.
- McHoul, A. W. (1990) 'The organization of repair in classroom talk', *Language and Society*, 19(3), pp. 349-377.
- Mehan, H. (1979) *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mondada, L. and Pekarek Doehler, S. (2004) 'Second language acquisition as situated practice: Task accomplishment in the French second language classroom', *Modern Language Journal*, 88, pp. 501-518.
- Mori, J. (2002) 'Task design, plan and development of talk-in-interaction: An analysis of a small group activity in a Japanese language classroom', *Applied Linguistics*, 23(3), pp. 323-347.
- Mori, J. (2004) 'Negotiating sequential boundaries and learning opportunities: A case from a Japanese language classroom', *Modern Language Journal*, 88(4), pp. 536-550.

Mori, J. and Hayashi, M. (2006) 'The achievement of interculturality through embodied completion: A study of interactions between first and second language speakers', *Applied Linguistics*, 27, pp. 195-219.

Mori, J. and Zuengler, J. (2008) 'Conversation analysis and talk-in-interaction in the classroom', in Martin-Jones, M., de Mejia, A. M. and Hornberger, N. H. (eds.) *Encyclopedia of language and education, volume 3: Discourse and education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Springer, pp. 15-27.

Morris-Adams, M. (2014) 'From Spanish paintings to murder: Topic transitions in casual conversations between native and non-native speakers of English', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 62, pp. 151-165.

Mortensen, K. and Wagner, J. (2013) 'Conversation Analysis: Overview', in Chappelle C. A. (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd. [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1339>. (Accessed: 2 February 2015).

Myers, G. (1998) 'Displaying opinions: Topics and disagreement in focus groups', *Language in Society*, 27, pp. 85-111.

Newton, J. (1991) 'Negotiation: negotiating what?', *SEAMEO conference on language acquisition and the second/foreign language classroom*, Singapore: RELC, April.

Nonkukhetkhong, K., Baldauf Jr., R. B. and Moni, K. (2006) 'Learner centeredness in teaching English as a foreign language', *26 Thai TESOL international conference*. Chiang Mai, Thailand, 19-21 January, pp. 1-9.

Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC). (1999) *National Education Act of B.E.2542(1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002))*. Bangkok: ONEC, Ministry of Education Thailand. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.onesqa.or.th/en/publication/nation\\_edbook.pdf](http://www.onesqa.or.th/en/publication/nation_edbook.pdf) (Accessed: 20 May 2013).

Olsher, D. (2004) 'Conversation analysis and the study of interactional competence', *CA as applied linguistics: Crossing boundaries of discipline and practice at the American Association of Applied Linguistics conference*, Portland, OR, 1-4 May.

- Psathas, G. (1995) *Conversation analysis: The study of talk-in-interaction*. London: Sage.
- Pica, T., Kanagy, R. and Falodun, J. (1993) 'Choosing and using communication tasks for second language instruction', in Crookes, G. and Gass, S. (eds.) *Tasks and language learning: Integrating theory and practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 9-34.
- Pike, K. (1967) *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behaviour*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Pomerantz, A. M. (1984) 'Pursuing a response', in Atkinson, M. and Heritage, J. (eds.) *Structures in social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 152-163.
- Prabhu, N. S. (1987) *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T. (2001) *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, K., Ross, S. and Seedhouse, P. (2012) *Research methods for applied language studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Sacks, H. (1992) *Lectures on conversation volumes one and two*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sacks, H. (1995) *Lectures on conversation volumes one and two*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sacks, H. and Schegloff, E. A. (1973) 'Opening and closing', *Semiotica*, 8, pp. 289-327.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A. and Jefferson, G. (1974) 'A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking in conversation', *Language*, 50, pp. 696-735.
- Saengboon, S. (2004) 'Second language acquisition (SLA) and English language teaching (ELT)', *PASAA*, 35, pp. 11-34.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1982) 'Discourse as an interactional achievement: Some uses of 'uh huh' and other things that come between sentences', in Tannen, D. (ed.) *Analyzing discourse: Text and talk. Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, pp. 71-93.

- Schegloff, E. A. (1987a) 'Analyzing single episodes of interaction: An exercise in conversation analysis', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 50, pp. 101-114.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1987c) 'Between macro and micro: contexts and other connections', in Alexander, C. J., Giesen, B., Münch, R. and Smelser, J. N. (eds.) *The micro-macro link*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 207-234.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1990) 'On the organization of sequences as a source of 'coherence' in talk-in-interaction', in Dorval, B. (ed.) *Conversational organization and its development*, Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, pp. 51-77.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1997c) 'Whose text? whose context?', *Discourse & Society*, 8, pp. 165-187.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2000) 'When "others" initiate repair', *Applied Linguistics*, 21(2), pp. 205-243.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2007) *Sequence organization in interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G. and Sacks, H. (1977) 'The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation', *Language*, 53, pp. 361-382.
- Schegloff, E. A. and Sacks, H. (1973) 'Opening up closings', *Semiotica*, 7, pp. 289-327.
- Schutz, A. (1962) *Collected papers I: The problem of social reality*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhof.
- Seedhouse, P. (1996) *Learning talk: A study of the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom from a CA institutional discourse perspective*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of York.
- Seedhouse, P. (2004) *The interactional architecture of the language classroom: A conversation analysis perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Seedhouse, P. (2005) "'Task" as research construct', *Language Learning*, 55(3), pp. 553-570.
- Seedhouse, P. (2012) 'What kind of interaction receives high and low ratings in Oral Proficiency Interviews?', *English Profile Journal*, 3(1), pp. 1-24. [Online]. Available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S2041536212000025>. (Accessed: 22 October 2016).

Seedhouse, P. (2013) 'Conversation analysis and classroom interaction', in Carol A. C. (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Malden, Massachusetts, USA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd. [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0198>. (Accessed: 20 May 2013).

Seedhouse, P. (2013) 'Conversation Analysis', in Bayley, R., Cameron, R. and Lucas, C. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 91-110.

Seedhouse, P. and Almutairi, S. (2009) 'A holistic approach to task-based interaction', *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), pp. 311-338.

Seedhouse, P. and Harris, A. (2010) 'Topic development in the IELTS Speaking Test', *IELTS Research Reports*, 12, IDP: IELTS Australia and British Council, Melbourne, pp. 55-110.

Seedhouse, P. and Supakorn, S. (2015) 'Topic-as-script and topic-as-action in language assessment and teaching', *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), pp. 393-413.

Seedhouse, P. and Walsh, S. (2010) 'Learning a second language through classroom interaction', in Seedhouse, P., Walsh, S. and Jenks, C. (eds.) *Conceptualising 'learning' in applied linguistics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 127-146.

Sidnell, J. (2011) *Conversation analysis: An introduction*. Chichester: Wiley.

Silverman, D. (2006) *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Sage.

Sinclair, J. and Coulthard, M. (1975) *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London: Oxford University Press.

Skehan, P. (1998a) 'Task-based instruction', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18, pp. 268-286.

Slimani, A. (1989) 'The role of topicalization in classroom language learning', *System*, 17(2), pp. 223-234.

Stokoe, E. (2000) 'Constructing topicality in university students' small-group discussion: A conversation analytic approach', *Language and Education*, 143, pp. 184-203.

Strauss, A., Schatzman, L., Ehrlich, D., Bucher, R. and Sabshin, M. (1973) 'The hospital and its negotiated order', in Salaman, G. and Thompson, K. (eds.) *People and organizations*. London: Longman.

Svennevig, J. (1999) *Getting acquainted in conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Swain, M. (2000) 'The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue', in Lantolf, P. J. (ed.) *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 97-114.

ten Have, P. (1999) *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide*. London: Sage Publications.

ten Have, P. (2007) *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Sage Publications.

Terasaki, A. K. (2004). 'Pre-announcement sequences in conversation', in Lerner, G. H. (ed.) *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 171-223.

Van Avermaet, P. and Gysen, S. (2006) 'From needs to tasks', in Van den Branden, K. (ed.) *Task-based language teaching: from theory to practice*, Cambridge: CUP, pp. 17-46.

Van Avermaet, P. and Gysen, S. (2009) 'From needs to tasks: Language learning needs in a task-based approach', in Van den Branden, K., Bygate, M. and Norris, J. M. (eds.) *Task-based language teaching: A reader*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 143-170.

Van Lier, L. (1988) *The classroom and the language learner*. New York: Longman.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walsh, S. (2002) 'Construction or obstruction: teacher talk and learner involvement in the EFL classroom', *Language Teaching Research*, 6(1), pp. 3-23.

- Walsh, S. (2006) *Investigating classroom discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Walsh, S. (2011) *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. London: Routledge.
- Waring, H. Z. (2008) 'Using explicit positive assessment in the language classroom: IRF, feedback, and learning opportunities', *Modern Language Journal*, 92(4), pp. 577-594.
- Watson Todd, R. (1998) 'Topic-based analysis of classroom discourse', *System*, 26, pp. 303-318.
- West, C. and Garcia, A. (1988) 'Conversational shift work: A study of topical transitions between women and men', *Social Problems*, 35, pp. 551-575.
- Widdowson, H. G. (2007) *Discourse analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, J. (1996) *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman Pearson Education.
- Wong, J. and Waring, H. Z. (2009) "'Very good" as a teacher response', *ELT Journal*, 63(3), pp. 195-203.
- Wong, J. and Waring, H. Z. (2010) *Conversation analysis and second language pedagogy: A guide for ESL/EFL teachers*. New York: Routledge.
- Wongsothorn, A., Hiranburana, K. and Chinnawong, S. (2003) 'English language teaching in Thailand today', in Ho Wah Kam, and Wong R. Y. L. (eds.) *English language teaching in East Asia today: Changing policies and practices*. Singapore: Eastern University Press, pp.441-453.
- Yabuuchi, A. (2002) 'Topic transition in casual conversation: An association model', *Semiotica*, 138(1/4), pp. 235-258.
- Young, R. (2003) 'Learning to talk the talk and walk the walk: Interactional competence in academic spoken English', *North Eastern Illinois University Working Papers in Linguistics*, 2, pp. 26-44.
- Young, R. F. and Miller, E. R. (2004) 'Learning as changing participation: Discourse roles in ESL writing conferences', *Modern Language Journal*, 88, pp. 519-535.



Zimmerman, D. (1992) 'Achieving context: Openings in emergency calls', in Watson, G. and Seiler, R. M. (eds.) *Text in context: Contributions to ethnomethodology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 35-51.

Zimmerman, D. H. and West, C. (1975) 'Sex roles, interruptions and silences in conversation', in Thorne, B. and Henley, N. (eds.) *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, pp. 105-129.

Zuengler, J. and Bent, B. (1991) 'Relative knowledge of content domain: An influence on native-non-native conversations', *Applied Linguistics*, 12, pp. 397-415

# Appendices

## Appendix A. Letter Requesting Permission to Collect Research Data



**School of Education,  
Communication and  
Language Sciences**

King George VI Building  
Queen Victoria Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
United Kingdom

03.07.14

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to request your permission for Sumita Supakorn, a full time student in the Integrated PhD in Educational and Applied Linguistics programme, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University, to conduct a research for her doctoral thesis involving 'Topic Development in EFL Classrooms: A Conversation Analysis Institutional Discourse Perspective'.

This research project will be conducted under my supervision and the supervision of Dr. Adam Brandt. Sumita will provide you with a copy of her research proposal which includes copies of the participant information sheet and participant consent form, as well as a letter giving details of her research data collecting process.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 8873 and email: paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Seedhouse".

Professor Paul Seedhouse

Professor of Education and Applied Linguistics

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Newcastle University

tel: +44 (0) 191 222 6000  
fax: +44 (0) 191 222 8170

The University of Newcastle upon Tyne trading as Newcastle University



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES  
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

2009

## Appendix B. Participant Information Sheet



### Participant Information Sheet

---

**Title of Research Project:** **Topic Development in EFL Classrooms: A Conversation Analysis Institutional Discourse Perspective**

**Researcher:** Sumita Supakorn, PhD candidate, IPhD Educational and Applied Linguistics, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University, United Kingdom, Email: s.supakorn@ncl.ac.uk

#### **Participant selection and purpose of study:**

You are invited to participate in a study of topic development in English as a foreign language classrooms. This study deals with the co-construction of classroom topics by teachers and learners whilst they interact. The main purpose of this study is to investigate how topics are related to the overall architecture of interaction in classroom discourse, how topics are developed in different varieties of second language classroom contexts, and what precisely the teacher and the students do in relation to topic development.

#### **What your participation will involve:**

Your participation will involve taking part in a series of lessons, each of which will be approximately 60 minutes long, which will be audio- and video-recorded. Your class will be recorded 3 times using 2 cameras mounted on tripods and placed at the front and back of the classroom. You will be asked to ignore the audio/video recordings and to participate in class as usual. If you are a student, a small audio recorder will also be used to record group discussions in which you participate. If you are a teacher, you will also be asked to provide the researcher with copies of (or allow the researcher to make copies of) your lesson plans, course books, teaching materials and other related documents.

Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop your participation at any time without giving reasons. You will not be penalised for withdrawing, nor will you be questioned on why you have withdrawn. There are no risks in participating in this study, and you will not benefit personally from participation.

**Confidentiality and disclosure of information:**

All data obtained will be confidential and will be available only to the researcher and to the research supervisor, who will use it solely for research purposes. These recordings are anonymous so your name will not be linked to recordings and it will not appear in any presentations or publications that are written as a result of this study. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your name in the transcripts and in the analysis, and all information you provide will remain strictly confidential. All recorded data and transcripts will be stored on the researcher's hard drive, an external hard drive and on DVD discs. Copies of the DVDs will also be submitted to the main research supervisor.

**Feedback to participants:**

At the completion of the study, all participants will be most welcome to discuss the research findings with the researcher. It is hoped that this study will help build an understanding of classroom interactional organisation and will have implications for the further development of educational practice.

**Your consent:**

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time by informing the researcher in advance of the start of the recording process. If you do not wish to be recorded, you will be sat to one side of the classroom, away from the camera and audio recordings. This will have no consequences for your class work.

If you have any queries concerning the research project, please feel free to e-mail the researcher, Sumita Supakorn, at [s.supakorn@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:s.supakorn@ncl.ac.uk) or contact the main research supervisor, Professor Paul Seedhouse at [paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk), School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, United Kingdom.

## Appendix C. Participant Consent Form



### Participant Consent Form

---

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and about my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand that I can withdraw at any time without being required to give reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned about why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) have been clearly explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and only if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I understand that what I have said or written as part of this study may be used in reports, publications and other research documents which are not attributed to me personally.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this consent form.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Researcher:**

SUMITA SUPAKORN  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D. Participant Debriefing Sheet



### Participant Debriefing Sheet

---

**Title of Research Project:** **Topic Development in EFL Classrooms: A Conversation Analysis Institutional Discourse Perspective**

**Researcher:** Sumita Supakorn, PhD candidate, IPhD Educational and Applied Linguistics, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University, United Kingdom, Email: s.supakorn@ncl.ac.uk

#### **Aims and methodology of the research project:**

This research aims to understand and to show how one aspect of interaction - topic organisation and development - unfolds in English as a foreign language classrooms. Conversation analysis institutional discourse methodology will be used to examine topic development through a micro-analysis of naturally occurring classroom interactions. The ultimate goal is to uncover precise details of teacher's and learners' interactions by examining the ways in which topics are developed and co-created in relation to pedagogic-focused activities within different second language classroom contexts. It is expected that the overall finding will be that turn-taking, sequencing and lexical choice are organised in relation to the description of topic development (initialisations, shifts, and endings).

Your participation in this research project is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns or should you be interested in seeing the transcripts and any findings or insights arising from the study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Sumita Supakorn, at s.supakorn@ncl.ac.uk. Alternatively, you are free to contact the main research supervisor, Professor Paul Seedhouse at paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, United Kingdom, or the Graduate Research School, Newcastle University at pgrads@newcastle.ac.uk.

## Appendix E. Jeffersonian Transcription Conventions

### Jeffersonian Transcription Conventions

(Modified from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984)

[	Beginning point of simultaneous speaking (of two or more people)
]	End point of simultaneous speaking
=	Talk by two speakers which is contiguous (i.e. not overlapping, but with no hearable pause in between)
OR	continuation of the same turn by the same speaker even though the turn is separated in the transcript
(0.2)	The time (in tenths of a second) between utterances
(.)	A micro-pause (one tenth of a second or less)
wo:rd	Sound extension of a word (more colons = longer stretches)
word.	Fall in tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
word,	Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses)
wor-	An abrupt stop in articulation
word?	Rising inflection (not necessarily a question)
<u>word</u>	(underline) Emphasised word, part of word or sound
↑word	Rising intonation
↓word	Falling intonation
°word°	Talk that is quieter than surrounding talk
<b>hh</b>	Audible out-breaths
<b>.hh</b>	Audible in-breaths
w( <b>hh</b> )ord	Laughter within a word
>word<	Talk that is spoken faster than surrounding talk
<word>	Talk that is spoken slower than surrounding talk
(word)	Approximations of what is heard
((comment))	Analyst's notes'
'word'	Idiomatic translation of Thai utterances



## **Appendix F. Recording Data and Transcripts Not Included in the Analysis**

All audio and video recording data and transcripts of the data which is not included in the analysis can be found in the USB stick attached to this appendix.

## Appendix G. Examples of Topic-in-Process in Meaning-and-Fluency Contexts

### Extract 83: Dating customs in Iran

The participants are identified by their initials, T (the teacher), P, H and N (the students participating in the discussion), and Ss (the students as a whole).

- 1 T: Okay: (0.2) who would like to start (0.2) [Iran?]
- 2 P: [↑oh ((laughs))]
- 3 T: Okay (.) I would like your listeni:ng (.) you can finish
- 4 late:r (0.3)↑guys
- 5 (0.2)
- 6 N: Pharaoh ((hand gesture))
- 7 T: Okay (.) tell us about dating in Iran.
- 8 N: kor bok pai kon wa pen yung ngai
- 'just tell what it is about'
- 9 P: in Iran=
- 10 T: [yes]
- 11 N: [it is]
- 12 P: they are ↑again (.)↑oh ((giggles)) it's a it is ↑again the
- 13 law (.) to date in Iran.
- 14 T: Is that different from Thailand?
- 15 P: a::h=
- 16 N: =yes=

17 P: =yes it different because in Thailand they don't have a:h  
18 [a law]  
19 N: [a law]  
20 P: like this but (.) in the past we cannot (.) go to date  
21 together e::r=  
22 H: =tradition=  
23 P: =without=  
24 H: it's a tradition=  
25 P: =tradition=  
26 T: =Ah::=  
27 N: =but now it's it's legal (.) it's no law [about this] it's  
28 free.  
29 P: [it's free]  
30 H: [it's free]  
31 P: on the beach  
32 Ss: [((laughter and claps))]  
33 (0.5)  
34 T: Okay very good u:m (.) anything else?  
35 (0.5)  
36 P: an:d (.) it's in Iran (.) their families introduce  
37 them to each oter and someone=  
38 N: =sometime=

39 P: a courtship a courtship follow.

40 T: What's a courtship.

41 P: a::h

42 T: What's a courtship.

43 P: make for love.

44 T: So a courtship is a very official (.) guys it's a very

45 official relationship where the family is involved (.) so

46 if you have a boy↑friend or a girl↑friend you're ↓dating

47 (.) but if you h have an official boy ↑friend and your

48 family is always there and you cannot be together alone

49 that is courting (.) it's a very old-fashioned in some

50 countries (.) right? they cannot be alone ↑together they're

51 not boyfriend and girlfriend (.) but they will get married

52 because their families bring them together (.) ok? (.)

53 ↑very good (.) anything else?

54 P: finish.

55 T: finish thank you Iran.

56 Ss: [((applause))]

#### **Extract 84: Dating customs in Japan and Korea**

The participants are identified by their initials, T (the teacher), S (the student participating in the discussion), and Ss (the students as a whole).

1 T: Japan and Korea (.) guys (.) come on.

2 S: not ready=

3 T: =go ahead=

4 S: =I'm not ready ((laughs))

5 T: = it's this five (.) you're ↓ready.

6 S: okay ((giggles)) a::h most most teen e::r mo e:r mo:st e::r  
7 high school don't date or go to paty but spend their times  
8 stu e:r studying instead.

9 T: [okay, it's that what]

10 S: [and and ] Japan e:r and and Korea dating um  
11 begin in colled (.) but Thai e:r mod teen Thailand e:r when  
12 go out a date e:r go e:r they they go to: shopping mall and  
13 cinema and waterfall and (.) park yes (.) yes.

14 T: okay good very good

15 Ss: [((applause))]

16 T: [wait wait, he's not finished]

17 S: [and they ((laughs)) sorry ] (.) they are dating begin  
18 in e:r after study in colled (.) yes

19 T: A:h and in Thailand (.) do people date in high school?  
20 S: e:r after high school.

21 T: After high school? because-

22 S: ah: tradition

23 T: Tradition?=  
24 S: =yes [((laughs)) ]  
25 T: [but sometimes] okay ↑very good.  
26 S: [((laughter and applause))]

### **Extract 85: Dating customs in America**

The participants are identified by their initials, T (the teacher), A and B (the students participating in the discussion), and Ss (the students as a whole).

1 T: ↑America, what is important  
2 (0.5)  
3 A: ( )  
4 T: well, dating (.) everybody can talk  
5 A: girl and boy start dating in their early teen (.) in Thai  
6 they also start date in the early teen=  
7 T: =same age=  
8 A: =especially in high school=  
9 T: =ah:: okay good [next ↑person]  
10 A: [a:nd ] common place to go on date  
11 in America was cinema, nightclub, party, scenic spot, but  
12 in Thai e:r common place is cinema, restaurant and coffee  
13 shop and ( ).  
14 T: ↑Very good (.) next [↑person]

15 B: [er: ] in in America men usually ask  
16 woman (.) out on a date but woman can ask men out too=  
17 T: =okay=  
18 B: =but in Thailand Thai pe er: Thai girl (.) won't ask men  
19 [out on a date]  
20 T: [won't ask ]↑Why not  
21 (0.3)  
22 T: Tradition?=  
23 B: =tradition  
24 T: okay (0.2) next person? (0.5) ladies (0.2) anything else?  
25 (0.4)  
26 A: laew kor after date=  
'and then'  
27 T: =er huh=  
28 A: =in America they ((laughs)) usually to =  
29 B: =good bye kiss=  
30 T: [goodbye kiss]  
31 A: [goodbye kiss]  
32 T: =and in Thailand?  
33 A: Thailand [just say goodbye]  
34 B: [they say goodbye]  
35 T: =They just say goodbye

36 Ss: [((laughter and claps))]  
 37 B: an::d  
 38 A: and wish and wish together that you meet more people =  
 39 T: = Ah:: the common dating in Thailand they don't kiss=  
 40 B: =you can meet more people =  
 41 T: = Ah:: okay good ↑job.  
 42 Ss [((applause))]

### **Extract 86: Dating customs in Australia**

The participants are identified by their initials, T (the teacher), C and D (the students participating in the discussion), Gr (the assigned group), and Ss (the students as a whole).

1 T: Australia  
 2 C: in Australia and Thai it's: (.) some a little bit same in  
 3 teenager will go out in a large group (.) with friend do  
 4 not separate or go in pair.  
 5 T: ↑Good  
 6 C: um: and but in Australia girl will (.) ask boy out=  
 7 T: =okay=  
 8 C: =but in Thailand it unsuitable.  
 9 T: [ah: okay] and  
 10 C: [yes ] and (.) aria eik wa=  
 'what else?'



11 D: =often dinner=  
12 C: =oh:: at the first date the coople shouldn't (.)  
13 go out on the dinner alone (.) ((hand gesture)) [together]  
14 T: [okay: ]  
15 Gr: friends should go  
16 C: should let friend go with her  
17 T: ah: so in Thailand your friend goes with you=  
18 Gr: =[yeah]  
19 T: [So two] girls and one boy [and he pays for every date]  
20 Ss: [ ((laughter)) ]  
21 T: [WOW okay very good ((claps))]  
22 Ss: [yeah ((laughter and claps))]

## Appendix H. Examples of Topic-in-Process in Task-Oriented Contexts

### Extract 87: The Dating Game: Group 1/ the male teacher's class

The participants are identified by their initials, A, B, C and D (the students participating in the task) and Gr (the whole group).

- 1     A:     Er:: Nui (0.7) ((clears throat)) (2.0) er:: I will ask her  
2             I will ask you about er (2.1) um::: what present will you  
3             buy me on Valentine's Day  
4             (2.8)  
5     B:     I will buy er postcard to you  
6             (1.2)  
7     A:     Postcard=  
8     B:     =Er huh  
9     A:     Why?  
10            (0.6)  
11    B:     Because I like to I like to send send postcard (0.3) to  
12            everyone  
13            (0.4)  
14    A:     Oh:::  
15    B:     Okay  
16            (2.9)  
17    A:     Yim ((a student's name)) (5.7) What kind of (0.2)

18 relationship (0.5) er:: are you looking for

19 C: ((laughs))

20 B: Relationship

21 (1.4)

22 C: hhh::: (1.2) Er:: (1.9) the reshe (0.3) the relationship

23 (0.9) er: what (0.3) I looking for (2.0) I looking for

24 hhh er (0.8) a friendship (1.5) friend friendship to (0.6)

25 er go together=

26 A: =Ah::

27 (12.2)

28 A: Ah:: what kind of present will you buy me

29 (1.1)

30 D: Arai na Arai na=

'What? What?'

31 B: =[present ]

32 A: =[What kind of] [present] will you buy me=

33 D: [Oh::: ] (1.6) I want (0.5) buy ah:: (3.4)

34 I want buy ah:: (0.4) CD from Korea have ah:: (0.6) Super

35 star from Korea (0.3) ah handsome and cutie boy from Korea

36 (1.0) to you

37 (16.0)

38 A: Your turn

39 (0.8)

40 D: O::kay (2.9) what's kind of relation ah relationship are

41 you looking for

42 (2.3)

43 D: What kind of relationship looking for

44 (1.7)

45 B: Stingy and economical

46 (2.3)

47 D: Huh?

48 (2.4)

49 B: Relationship?

50 D: Er Khuam Sampan

'relationship'

51 (1.4)

52 B: (laughs)

53 (11.7)

54 B: Extrovert

55 D: Extrovert oh::

56 B: don't don't describe don't describe athibai mai dai=

'couldn't explain'

57 D: =Oh

58 (9.2)

59 B: What kind of relationship are you looking for  
60 D: How many type of relationship  
61 Gr: ((laughter))  
62 D: I don't know ah pass next questions  
63 A: Pass=  
64 B: =(laughs)  
65 (1.1)  
66 B: What kind of er present (0.9) will you buy (0.8) me  
67 (0.8)  
68 D: Er:: (2.6) I will (2.8) buy::: (2.6) ah::: (1.3) a CAT for  
69 you=  
70 B: =Okay hhh=  
71 D: =I know you're a cat addict=  
72 B: =Cat addict ((laughs))  
73 D: I know you're like er lovely kitty yeah so I will buy buy  
74 you a Cat  
75 B: A cat  
76 D: Yeah  
77 B: Okay thank you  
78 (2.2)  
79 D: What what present will you buy me on Valentine's Day  
80 A: Er Valentine Day I will:: buy you ah (1.8) chocolate

81 ((laughs)) (3.0) because chocolate is ah (2.0) s::: signal  
82 to show you are so very sweet  
83 D: Thank you  
84 A: ((laughs))  
85 (23.0)  
86 C: Ah: (1.5) .hh (2.2) I will love you as long as stars are  
87 above you=  
88 Gr: =OH::: ((laughter))  
89 B: Tokrob la tokrob la ((laughs))  
`I'm defeated'  
90 C: I will love you as long as stars are above you  
91 (4.5)  
92 B: Ni lae aow khon ni  
`Choose this one'  
93 D: romantic mak  
`So romantic'  
94 A: I will ( ) you about place in Chiang Mai  
95 D: Okay thank you  
96 B: Your own question  
97 A: Own question ruh  
`right?'  
98 (6.6)



120 B: ((laughs))

121 D: Face face face

122 C: Face

123 (2.3)

124 B: Why

125 C: Because Confident I don't think

126 (5.0)

127 B: Huh? Say something really romantic to me

128 (5.0)

129 C: I don't think about it ah

130 (2.1)

131 D: Just friend

132 (2.6)

133 B: Oh (3.1) Say something really romantic to me

134 (1.7)

135 A: ( ) ((Korean words)) (2.5) Because ah (1.6) what it

136 means er we have a couple (3.2) we are ah we got marry?

137 (0.9)

138 C: NO ((laughs))

139 B: Say something really OH=

140 A: =we got marry?

141 B: OH::: Will you marry me?



142 A: ( ) ((Korean words))

143 Gr. ((laughter))

144 B: Okay

145 (1.2)

146 C: What kind of present will you buy to me

147 (1.7)

148 D: I want buy (0.9) ah:: (1.1) flower

149 C: ((laughs))

150 D: to:: (1.5) you

151 (8.4)

152 C: And you?

153 B: Ah I will buy postcard to you because I like to send

154 postcard to everyone

**Extract 88: The Dating Game: Group 2/ the male teacher's class**

The participants are identified by their initials, T (the teacher), E,F,G and H (the students participating in the task), and Gr (the group as a whole).

1 E: What your type (3.0) kor tob si (2.7) ah  
'just answer'

2 (1.7)

3 F: What

4 G: What kind of man

5 (4.5)

6 F: You ask me=

7 T: =You're the bachelor here?

8 F: Yeah he he-

9 T: He doesn't want to be? Who wants to be the bachelor

10 bechelolette

11 H: Nu ((a student's name))

12 F: ((laughs))

13 T: Okay what you have to do is ask these questions to all

14 three girls

15 Gr: Oh

16 T: And then you think about what's your favourite answer

17 E: Laew jum wai

'then remember'

18 (2.6)

19 F: Write on notebook (3.0) Okay

20 E: What's your type

21 F: Um:: I:: I need a handsome and have a glasses man

22 G: ((laughs))

23 T: Um Handsome man with glasses

24 G: ((laughs)) (1.9) plien kam tham

'change the question'

25 E: Oh:

26 T: So you ask the same question to all

27 F&G: Oh:

28 T: Same question

29 F: Tong thuk khon  
'ask everyone'

30 (1.6)

31 E: What's your type

32 G: I like a (1.5) small:: guy ah

33 E: Small

34 G: Small small guy laew kor bab ah white skin  
'and then'

35 arai praman nia  
'something like that'

36 F: Something like that=

37 G: =Something like that

38 E: What's your type

39 H: Perfect man

40 Gr: ((laughter))

41 (1.5)

42 E: Laew kor plien kham tham=  
'And then change question'

43 F: =Yes=  
44 E: =laew kor tham khon mai  
`and change person`  
45 (3.0)  
46 F: what's your idea of::  
47 E: Er:: er (2.7) What's your idea of a romantic date  
48 (1.6)  
49 F: Um:: (1.9) wha Listen listen to music with someone  
50 (13.2)  
51 E: What's your: idea of romantic date  
52 (2.7)  
53 G: I:: (1.6) I have to go to a walking street with him (1.2)  
54 and we have walk and walk together  
55 Gr: EIW::  
56 (6.1)  
57 E: What's your idea of romantic date  
58 (1.5)  
59 H: I: ha:ve to eat the dinner with him and (1.8) and has the  
60 candle (1.8) with the dark  
61 (1.7)  
62 F: UM (1.0) romantic  
63 H: ((giggles))

64 (4.6)

65 E: Lueak aow nai kor dai chai pao=  
 'Choose any question?'

66 G: =Yes

67 (31.9)

68 E: What kind of present will you buy me

69 (5.1)

70 F: Will you buy me I'm a I'm a pretty and beautiful woman I:  
 71 am: a (1.0) friend I am friendly and I have a motorcycle  
 72 (1.5) Will you drive er will you ride motorcycle for me? Eh  
 73 eh (1.4) present tua eng  
 'myself'

74 E: Oh:: (11.5) What kind of present will you buy me

75 (2.0)

76 G: I have a lot of money (0.6) and I can take you to anywhere

77 F: Eiw

78 G: Around the world

79 F: Eiw

80 G: and I can (0.9) give you everything

81 (0.6)

82 F: Eiw

83 H: Ni ni ben phuchai ru phuying kha

'Are you a guy or girl?'

84 Gr: ((giggle))

85 (3.1)

86 E: What kind of (0.5) present will you buy me

87 (1.9)

88 H: I want to buy the pets (1.8) ah for give to you ah example

89 the bunny

90 (15.3)

91 E: When you go out a date (0.8) who (1.8) who arai

'what?'

92 G&H: Usually pay

93 (1.2)

94 E: When you go (0.8) on hh a date (0.9) who usually pay

95 (1.5)

96 G: Sharing sharing

97 (1.4)

98 F: Sharing

99 (12.5)

100 F: Ask ask

101 E: When you go: out on a date who: usually pay

102 (6.0)

103 F: Sharing

104 (2.7)

105 G: Don't copy my answer ((laughs))

106 F: We can share an expense (3.6) but (2.0) I::

107 (5.9)

108 G: Sixty per cent sixty per cent sixty forty

109 F: But I want to:: pay (1.6) less than you

110 (7.9)

111 E: When you go out on a date (0.7) who usually (0.9) pay

112 (2.6)

113 H: I will ( ) expenses on our date

114 (19.3)

115 T: So you just asked [this last question?]

116 H: [ Let's date ]

117 H: We finished=

118 T: =You finished you asked the same questions for each person?

119 F: Yes=

120 T: =Okay

121 F: Ask all question?

122 T: Yeah he needs to ask each each question to each of you okay

123 so this one ask this to each person

124 (12.0)

125 E: Say something really romantic to me

126 (4.3)

127 F: Okay er dancing under (.) the moon (3.4) in romantic place

128 (17.1)

129 T: You have to think about which which girl give you your

130 favourite response

131 (1.5)

132 F: OH:::

133 T: So you you're going to choose which one to date

134 (33.7)

135 F: This:: this role ah ask three people or one people

136 T: Every Everyone

137 F: Oh okay=

138 T: =Asks to each person and thinks about their answers and

139 then chooses favourite answer

140 F: Oh

141 (7.4)

142 T: Remember all of you all three of you really want to date

143 him really want to date him so you think about what does he

144 want to hear so say the right thing

145 (13.4)

146 E: Say something really romantic to me

147 (2.5)



148 G: I LOVE you BABY I need YOU ((animated voice))  
149 Gr: ((giggle))  
150 (6.5)  
151 E: Say something really romantic to me  
152 H: I will to live with you when you want to me  
153 Gr: ((giggle))  
154 F: As Ask me again