ABSTRACT

Inside the language classroom, the way the teachers teach directly affects the students' learning. This is particularly true in a traditional, teacher-centered classroom, because most of the classroom speech is from the teachers' side. Teachers, however, need not be authoritarians, but can be both coordinators and facilitators in the classroom. How the teacher gives explanations, conducts drills, and interacts with the students by the use of the target language is of the utmost importance for the students to achieve their goal of learning.

This thesis investigates how a second language is used to teach a third language, that is, how English is used as a medium language for teaching Chinese. It studies how the teacher controls the shift of languages back and forth, and how IRF Exchange and Sequence are utilized in the classroom by three instructors in the Department of Business Chinese at Assumption University of Thailand. The research questions for the study were: (1) What are the functions for which English and Chinese are used in the discourse of the three classrooms under study, and how do they shift in the course of the semester? and (2) What existing problems are solved or left unresolved by the way the functions are carried out by the three teachers? The data sources consist of recordings of each teacher's class at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the semester. In each of these three time periods two weekly class sessions were recorded. One of these sessions was transcribed at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the semester for

intensive analysis of each teacher's performance. Through these transcripts, how the teachers used English or Chinese, or both English and Chinese, is analyzed in a Teacher's Behavior Matrix. How the teachers conducted drills or interacted with the students is presented by reference to I-R-F Exchange and Sequence structure. Both the Behavior Matrix and the Exchange and Sequence structures are taken from Sinclair and Brazil (1982). In order to gain supplementary information, the teachers were interviewed in the middle and at the end of the semester in order to be aware of the teachers' beliefs about the functions of the languages they used in the classroom.

As each teacher has her own way of performing the different functions for the use of English and Chinese in class, in the end, the results of the study show that amongst the three teachers, Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 always used the I-R-F Exchange and Sequences in both English and Chinese, while at the beginning and in the middle of the semester, Teacher 2 mostly used both English and Chinese for Explanations.

Toward the end of the semester, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 increased the amount of target language use; however, Teacher 2's class still had less practice in the target language compared with Teacher 1 and Teacher 3's classes, and the increased amount was still far from reaching the ideal of using only the target language in the classroom. Moreover, in Teacher 3's class, even though Chinese was used the most frequently, as she found that the students were not able to respond to some of her questions toward the end of the semester, she reverted to the function of

Explanation in both English and Chinese, rather than using more communicative strategies.

The data from the transcripts showed that, in the three teachers' classrooms, one essential problem that was left unresolved was the lack of authentic communication because the teachers focused too much on the textbook. Thus, most of the teachers' teaching, examples and practice were directly from the lesson. Since all the instruction stuck closely to the lessons in the textbook, the lessons were all very teacher-centered and did little to achieve the goal stated in the course description of developing the students' communicative abilities in Chinese.