การเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพทักษะความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษตามกรอบมาตรฐานซีอีเอฟอาร์ โดยการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน กรณีศึกษา นักศึกษากลุ่มแกนนำ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี
Enhancing English Proficiency Based on CEFR Through Activity-Based Learning: A Case Study of UDRU Leader Students

ชลิดา เสน่ห์เมือง[1]
Chalida Sanemueang[1]

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยฉบับนี้ต้องการศึกษาประสิทธิภาพทักษะความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษผ่านการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน ตามกรอบมาตรฐานซีอีเอฟอาร์ ของนักศึกษากลุ่มแกนนำมหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัย ดังนี้ 1) เพื่อศึกษาสภาพปัญหาที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อประสิทธิภาพทักษะความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษ 2) เพื่อยกระดับภาษาอังกฤษตามกรอบมาตรฐานซีอีเอฟอาร์ของนักศึกษา ผ่านการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน และ 3) เพื่อศึกษาเจตคติของนักศึกษาต่อพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษผ่านการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน การวิจัยได้แบ่งการดำเนินการออกเป็น 3 ระยะ โดยระยะที่ 1 ศึกษาปัญหาและผลกระทบการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา ระยะที่ 2 ดำเนินการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษผ่านการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน ระยะที่ 3 วัดผลเจตคติของนักศึกษาต่อการจัดกิจกรรมพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ ผ่านการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน กลุ่มตัวอย่างของงานวิจัยในครั้งนี้ คือ นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีทั้งหมด 35 คน ที่ผ่านการเข้าร่วมโครงการพัฒนาทักษะดิจิทัลและภาษาอังกฤษทั้งหมด และจะเป็นนักศึกษากลุ่มแกนนำในการส่งเสริมทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถามสภาพปัญหาและผลกระทบของพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษา แผนการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน ด้วยการเน้นทักษะการอ่าน การฟัง และไวยากรณ์ ทั้งหมด 9 แผน แผนละ 2 ชั่วโมง รวมทั้งสิ้น 18 ชั่วโมง ข้อสอบวัดทักษะความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษระดับมาตรฐานสากลด้วยระบบดิจิทัล เป็นผลระดับภาษาอังกฤษตามมาตรฐานซีอีเอฟอาร์ก่อนเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมและหลังเข้าร่วมกิจกรรม โดยวัดทักษะการอ่าน การฟัง และไวยากรณ์ และแบบวัดเจตคติต่อการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ความแตกต่างของ

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[1] ศูนย์ภาษา สำนักวิทยบริการและเทคโนโลยีสารสนเทศ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี ; Language Center, The Office of Academic Resources and Information Technology, Udon Thani Rajabhat University, Thailand; e- mail: Chalida.sa@udru.ac.th

ระดับผลภาษาอังกฤษผ่านการทดสอบด้วยสถิติวิลคอกซันเน้นในทักษะการอ่าน การฟัง ไวยากรณ์ และภาพรวมของทุกทักษะ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า จากผลการทดสอบทักษะภาษาอังกฤษก่อนกิจกรรมและหลังการจัดการเรียนรู้ผ่านกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน นักศึกษาที่เข้าร่วมโครงการมีการพัฒนาระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05 และนอกจากนี้นักศึกษามีเจตคติต่อการจัดการเรียนรู้เสริมสร้างประสิทธิภาพทักษะภาษาอังกฤษแบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐานอยู่ในระดับดีมากโดยมีค่าเฉลี่ย ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$ = 4.67) ซึ่งช่วยเสริมสร้างการกระตือรือร้นในการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษให้เพิ่มขึ้นนอกจากนั้นผลเจตคติต่อความพึงพอใจต่อการพัฒนาระดับภาษาของตนเองของนักศึกษาอยู่ในระดับดีมากด้วยค่าเฉลี่ย ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$ = 4.62) แสดงให้เห็นถึงทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่อกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้และการมีส่วนร่วมในการเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพผลการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

คำสำคัญ: การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบกิจกรรมเป็นฐาน, ประสิทธิภาพทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ, เจตคติ, ซีอีเอฟอาร์, มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the impact of the activity-based learning method (ABL) on the English language proficiency of students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University based on CEFR levels. The study aimed: 1) to study the English proficiency of UDRU students, 2) to enhance the English proficiency, aligned with CEFR levels through the ABL method, and 3) to investigate the students' attitudes towards each ABL activity. The research was structured in three phases: in phase I, a survey was conducted to pinpoint the English language difficulties faced by UDRU students; in phase II, three ABL activities were conducted to enhance students' English proficiency; and in phase III, students' attitudes were assessed towards these ABL activities. The samples were 35 undergraduates with diversed skills levels who completed the six courses of the Digital and Language program and will be taking on future leadership roles in the English language program. The research instruments were student survey questionnaires of factors affecting student English proficiency, 9 activities based on the ABL method focusing on reading, listening, and grammatical skills which were conducted 2 hours per each, in a total of 18 hours, the pretests and the posttests of English proficiency based on English Discoveries program and CEFR levels, and the attitude questionnaires towards the ABL activities. The statistical measurement used for data analysis was the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, emphasizing three skills: reading, listening, and grammar, as well as measuring overall English proficiency. The findings revealed that there was a significant enhancement in English proficiency across the three skills following the ABL activities, with a statistical significance level of 0.05. In addition, the study observed important feedback in students' attitudes

towards the ABL activities, which were rated at the highest level as significantly improving students' active participation in English. The students expressed positive satisfaction with their English advancement, which was rated at the highest level, illustrating the positive attitudes towards the ABL activities to enhance English performance outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Activity-based learning (ABL), English proficiency, Attitudes, CEFR, Udon Thani Rajabhat University (UDRU)

Background

With today's digitalization and technology, proficiency in English language has become an essential competency due to its role as a universal language. Crystal (2003) highlighted that English has become a global language due to its widespread use and impact on various essential contexts. Primarily, English language acts as the universal lingua franca, facilitating international language across diverse fields. For instance, English is required for career advancement in the business realm. Similarly, in the science and technology realm, English language is used to convey most technological advancements and innovations. In the realm of diplomacy and international relations, English acts as a dominant influence because it is extensively spoken on a global scale. Mastery of English is critical, especially in the academic realm where it not only serves as the medium of instruction in most leading global universities and institutions, but it is also crucial for accessing and disseminating knowledge.

However, mastery of English is typically considered to be below average in Thailand. The Education First English Proficiency Index or EF EPI (2023) revealed that in 2023 English proficiency in Thailand was ranked 101st out of 113 countries. Within the Asian continent, Thailand is positioned at 21st out of 23 countries and the country scored 416 out of 700, indicating a very low level of English language proficiency. According to the ETS TOEIC report on test takers worldwide (2022), the mean score for the test on speaking performance in Thailand was 101 out of 495. The mean score for the test on listening performance was 302 out of 495, and for reading performance was 225 out of 495, for a total of 526 scores. It indicated a low-middle level of English proficiency based on the TOEIC scores and corresponded to a basic user level of A2 based on the CEFR scale. Despite this, English language has become a mandatory component in Thai education, being promoted from kindergarten through the university levels. Nowadays, English proficiency is a requirement for school and university. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESRI) mandates an English proficiency

level for undergraduate students at B2 of CEFR levels. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) was formed by the Council of Europe (2011) as a standard reference or guideline to describe the achievements of learners in languages and to provide a common foundation for creating language teaching, language learning materials, and assessment. The CEFR framework outlines a "Global Scale" of six levels, ranging from A1 and A2 (Basic user) to B1 and B2 (Independent user), and up to C1 and C2 (Proficient user). The six levels include skill competencies to communicate effectively, knowledge for learning and communicative situations, and context language being used.

Based on the researcher's observations in instructing English at the tertiary level, it has been observed that the majority of Thai students perform at a low level of English proficiency. Waluyo (2019:51-71) reported that the majority of university students had a basic user level (A1 and A2) of English proficiency based on the CEFR scale, similar to the reports from Education First (EF) in 2023 and Education Testing Service (ETS) in 2022. There are several factors which affect English proficiency in Thailand, for instance, Oeamoum & Sriwichai (2020:592-601) mentioned that the lack of success in Thais' English language was due to factors such as insufficient study hours, outdated curriculum, ineffective teaching aids, the need for real-world context, and engaging teaching techniques. The various difficulties of Thai learners include comprehension in reading texts, grammatical structures, tense usages etc. Additionally, fear and lack of confidence in using English hinder students from actively striving to enhance their language acquisition. Similarly, Nithideechaiwarachok et al. (2022:273-290) found that factors like cultural understanding, attitudes, and motivation hinder students from reaching the required proficiency level. Therefore, to enhance students' English proficiency, the teaching methods and strategies play a crucial role in motivating students through active learning. Activity-based learning (ABL) is a teaching method that emphasizes active participation and students' engagement in the learning process through hands-on activities, projects, and experimental tasks (Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009:220-229). The development of activity-based learning has been influenced by educational philosophers such as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget, who proposed the experiential and child-centered approaches and applied them in the classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s. Activity-based learning stands out as an effective educational method that prioritizes the active engagement of learners over passive learning methods, which were traditionally employed in Thai educational styles. Johnson et al. (2014: 85-118) found that the ABL method enhanced students' cooperation and communication skills. Anwer (2019:171-187) highlighted how activity-based teaching developed student motivation

and enhanced academic achievement. It also attracted students and played a positive role for better results in learning. Ahmed & Solomon (2019:44-53) noted that the ABL method had a positive effect on students' achievement and the ABL could enhance students' understanding, responsibility, learning motivation and academic achievement. Similarly, Deeudom (2022) showed an improvement in students' reading comprehension after participating in the ABL activity.

Udon Thani Rajabhat University (UDRU), situated in the northeastern region of Thailand, primarily enrolls students from the local areas who have graduated from nearby schools. These schools and areas often face limitations in learning resources including technology, and language courses. Recognizing these circumstances, this study aims to investigate the problems and challenges faced by UDRU students in enhancing their English skills and to cultivate students' motivation for English language learning. Hence, enhancing English proficiency through activity-based learning becomes imperative for bridging the proficiency gap, achieving equality with other leading educational institutions, and equipping students with enhancement in English language skills for future endeavors.

Research Objectives

1. To study the factors affecting English proficiency of Udon Thani Rajabhat University students

2. To examine the development of English proficiency of Udon Thani Rajabhat University students after participating in the activity-based learning method

3. To investigate students' attitudes towards the activity-based learning method of each activity

Research Questions

In this study, the primary research question and the sub-questions are outlined as follows: Can the activity-based learning method (ABL) effectively enhance the English proficiency of Udon Thani Rajabhat University students?

1. What factors impact the English language proficiency of Udon Thani Rajabhat University students?

2. Are there significant differences in students' English proficiency before and after the implementation of the activity-based learning method (ABL)?

3. What are the students' attitudes towards the activity-based learning (ABL) activities?

Research Design

The study was divided into three phases:

Phase I: In this initial phase, the research involved a 20-statement survey questionnaire of factors affecting English proficiency language in Udon Thani Rajabhat University. These 20 statements were validated through the Index of Content Validity (IOC) and their reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Phase II: This stage featured experimental research, utilizing a one-group pretest-posttest design. The experiments consisted of 9 lesson plans based on the ABL activities, focusing on reading, listening, and grammar skills, and the pretests and posttests of English proficiency assessment via the adaptive English Discoveries program based on CEFR levels. The data analysis on English language achievements were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test via the SPSS to examine the differences and English improvements on CEFR levels after the participation in the ABL activities.

Phase III: In the final stage, the experiment utilized a 20-item questionnaire to gauge students' attitudes towards the activity-based learning method of each activity.

Population and Samples

The samples of this study were 35 undergraduates selected from a population of 65 who successfully completed all six courses in the Digital and Language program in Udon Thani Rajabhat University. The gender distribution of the population was 49% male and 51% female, encompassing six faculties: education, management sciences, science, humanities and social sciences, technology, and nursing. The 35 samples were selected using simple random sampling, following the instructions provided by Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) with a precision of ±5% and a confidence level of 95%. The sample distribution included sophomores (29%), juniors (40%), and seniors (31%) who were considered to assume leadership roles in the project's future.

Research Instruments

Three data collection methods are employed in the study:

1. Survey questionnaire

A survey questionnaire focusing on factors affecting the English proficiency of students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University. The survey questionnaire, adopted by Zhou (2018), consisted of twenty statements on a five-point Likert's rating scale. The value of the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was 1.00 for every statement and the value of reliability using the Cronbach's α coefficients was .812 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The result of Cronbach's **α** coefficients

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Statements
.813	.812	20

2. Activities based on the ABL method

The activities were implemented using the ABL method. The three activities included story-telling, role-plays, and language games intended to enhance reading, listening, and grammatical skills. The ABL activities were derived from various studies, that utilized different techniques to improve language skills. Gaya (2018:980-989), employed digital storytelling to enhance the vocabulary, while Yuliani & Hartanto (2022:221-232) used role-plays to improve students' English ability. Similarly, Liu & Ding (2009:140-143) and Yoniswan (2020:1-9) also utilized role-plays in teaching English to improve the English ability. Additionally, Aslanabadi & Rasouli (2013:186-195) employed language to enhance English proficiency. Among these, the three activities using the ABL method were modified and employed in the study. Each activity consisted of 3 units, lasting 2 hours. The value the IOC was 1.00 for every activity. The contents used in the three activities are aligned with B1-B2 CEFR levels according to the MHESRI mandate.

3. English Proficiency Placement Test

The English proficiency placement test from the English Discoveries program (a computer adaptive test) was used as the pretest and posttest. The program adapted into a standardized test to assess reading, listening, and grammatical skills. The score was represented as CEFR levels, separately for each of the three skills. The overall of the three skills was represented as placement level.

4. Attitude questionnaire

An attitude questionnaire regarding the ABL method, was adapted from Sriburee (2017) and consisted of 20 items based on a five-point Likert's rating scale. The value of the IOC was 1.00 for every item.

Data Collection

The following section describes the three phases in which the data were collected in accordance with the research guideline, as follows:

Phase I: Survey questionnaire

1.1 A survey questionnaire consisting of 20 statements, outlined the factors affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students.

1.2 A letter was obtained granting permission to undertake the low-risk study by the Office of Research Ethics of Udon Thani Rajabhat University (UDRU).

1.3 Questionnaires were completed by students who were enrolled in six courses of the Digital and Language programs at UDRU.

1.4 All data including questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted.

Phase II: Experimental Research

2.1 The students used the English Discoveries program to take the computer-adapted standardized pretest for a duration of 1.30 hours.

2.2 The researcher implemented the three activities using the ABL method. The experimental research lasted 9 periods, each lasting 2 hours, 18 hours in total.

2.3 The students used the English Discoveries program to take a computer-adapted standardized posttest for a duration of 1.30 hours.

2.4 All data from pretest and posttest were analyzed and interpreted.

Phase III: Attitude questionnaire

3.1 An attitude questionnaire was administered after finishing each activity.

3.2 All data from each activity were analyzed and interpreted.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed all data from the survey questionnaire regarding factors affecting the English proficiency, the pretests and posttests, and the attitude questionnaire towards the ABL method. The data were statistically analyzed as follows:

Phase I: In the survey questionnaire, the researcher analyzed data using mean ($\bar{x}$), percentage, and standard deviation (S.D.) to explore the problems affecting the English proficiency among UDRU students. The data were interpreted according to level of agreement using the criterion of Srisa-ard, (2010:103) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The Interpretation of Level of Agreement

Mean score value range	Level of Agreement
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly agree
3.51 – 4.50	Agree
2.51 – 3.50	Neutral
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly disagree

Phase II: The researcher examined the differences of the students' English proficiency before and after participation in the three activities towards the ABL method. The data were analyzed using a Wilcoxon-signed rank test, analyzed by SPSS. In this phase, the statistics of the pre-posttest scores were analyzed and aligned with the CEFR levels. The data of CEFR levels were statistically interpreted as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The Interpretation of the Results based on CEFR Levels using English Discoveries
Program

English Discoveries Results	CEFR levels	Interpretation
First Discoveries or Basic 1	A1	1
Basic 2 and Basic 3	A2	2
Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2	B1	3
Intermediate 3 and Advanced 1	B2	4
Advanced 2 and Advanced 3	C1	5

Note adapted from English Discoveries program (www.edusoft.co.th)

Phase III: The researcher analyzed data to investigate students' attitudes towards the ABL method for each activity using mean $(\overline{X})$, percentage, and standard deviation (S.D.). The data were interpreted according to level of agreement using the criterion of Srisa-ard, (2010:103).

All of the data collected from phase I, II, and III were analyzed and interpreted by SPSS.

Research Results

The study results were presented according to the research objectives as follows:

1. Survey results affect the English language proficiency among UDRU students

Table 4 The Interpretation of Survey Questionnaire on Factors of English Proficiency

Factors	Mean $(\overline{X})$	Percentage (%)	S.D.	Level of agreement
Instructional Management	4.62	48.10	0.28	very high
Linguistic Deficiency	4.51	21.80	0.31	very high
Facilities and Surroundings	4.49	13.40	0.38	very high
Materials and Curriculum	4.40	16.70	0.31	high
Overall factor	**4.50**	**100**	**0.26**	**very high**

Table 4 presents the findings of the survey questionnaire on factors affecting English language. The analysis indicates an overall factor, with a mean score $(\overline{X})$ of 4.50, at a very high level. The most significant factor relating to the English proficiency of UDRU students was instructional management, with a mean score $(\overline{X})$ of 4.62, accounting for the largest percentage *(48.10%)*, whereas the linguistic deficiency, with a mean score $(\overline{X})$ of 4.51 and a percentage of 21.80%, was the second factor affecting the English proficiency. The factor of facilities and surroundings was interpreted as at a very high level with an average $(\overline{X})$ of 4.49, and the factor of materials and curriculum was at a high level with an average $(\overline{X})$ of 4.40.

2. Results and comparison of proficiency scores in English before and after participating in the ABL activities using English Discoveries program

Table 5 The Statistical Comparison of Three Skills and Overall Skill in English Proficiency on Pretests and Posttests

Skills	Pretest				Posttest			
	($\overline{X}$)	S.D.	Median	Frequency	($\overline{X}$)	S.D.	Median	Frequency
Reading	1.51	.742	1	A1, 22 (62.9%) A2, 8 (22.9%) B1, 5 (14.3%)	2.71	.710	3	A1, 2 (5.7%) A2, 8 (22.9%) B1, 24 (68.6%) C1, 1 (2.9%)
Listening	1.54	.741	1	A1, 21 (60%) A2, 9 (25.7%) B1, 5 (14.3%)	2.46	.657	3	A1, 3 (8.6%) A2, 13 (37.1%) B1, 19 (54.3%)
Grammar	1.09	.284	1	A1, 32 (91.4%) A2, 3 (8.6%)	1.46	.657	1	A1, 22 (62.9%) A2, 10 (28.6%) B1, 3 (8.6%)
Overall (Placement)	1.29	.458	1	A1, 25 (71.4%) A2, 10 (28.6%)	2.17	.382	3	A2, 29 (82.9%) B1, 6 (17.1%)

Table 5 illustrates the improvement of English proficiency across reading, listening, and grammar skills, as well as overall proficiency, following the ABL method using the English Discoveries program. Posttest results indicated a significant improvement in overall mean scores ($\overline{X}$), increasing to 2.17 from lower pretest averages of 1.29 and standard deviations generally decreasing. Correspondingly, the median proficiency level enhanced from 1 to 3, interpreted as A1 to B1. The distribution of CEFR levels among 35 students showed a substantial shift post-intervention, with 82.9% at A2 level and 17.1% reaching B1 level. Analyzing different linguistic skills, the posttest mean scores of reading, listening, and grammar improved to 2.71, 2.46, and 1.46 respectively, showing an enhancement from the pretest scores. Additionally, the frequencies of CEFR levels for three linguistic skills exhibited higher levels in the posttest, with a decrease in the proportion of students at lower levels A1 and A2 and an increase at higher levels A2, B1, and C1, presented in the table.

Table 6 The Statistical Comparison by Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test of Three Skills in English
Proficiency after the ABL activities

Linguistic Skills	Negative Ranks	Positive Ranks	Ties	Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading (story-telling)	0^a	25^b	10^c	-4.513^b	.000*
Listening (Role-play activity)	0^a	23^b	12^c	-4.344^b	.000*
Grammar (Language games)	0^a	12^b	23^c	-3.357^b	.001*
Placement (Overall)	0^a	31^b	4^c	-5.568^b	.000*

**p<0.05, (the scores of posttests – pretests in three skills and the overall proficiency)

Table 6 presents the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test outcomes for different linguistic skills improvement after participating in different ABL activities. Each linguistic skills: reading by story-telling, listening by role-plays, grammar by language games, and the overall of linguistic skills (placement). From the results using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, the negative ranks showed the number of students where posttests were lower than the pretests, the positive ranks showed the number of students where the posttests were higher than pretests, the ties showed the number of students where the posttests were the same as the pretests. The negative ranks from Table 6 indicates there was no decrease in performance while the positive ranks of reading, listening, grammar as well as overall proficiency indicates increases in performance for 25, 23, 12, and 31 students, respectively. On the other hand, there were 10, 12, 23, and 4 students with ties where no change was observed. However, focusing on the results of each linguistic skills, there was a statistically significant difference between the pretests and posttests on the reading skills through the story-telling activity at a level of 0.000, the same as the statistically significant difference on the listening skills through role-plays. Besides, there was a statistically significant difference between the pretests and posttests on the grammar skills through language games at a level of 0.001. Therefore, the overall language proficiency (placement) showed a statistically significant level at 0.000, with the test statistics values by Wilcoxon signed-rank test at -4.513 on the reading skills, -4.344 on the listening skills, -3.357 on the grammar skills, and -5.568 on overall linguistic skills, indicating substantial improvements by post-intervention. It demonstrated the effectiveness of the three ABL activities: story-telling, role-plays, and language games in enhancing linguistic proficiency.

3. Results of students' Attitudes Towards each Activity using the ABL Method

Table 7 The investigation of students' Attitudes Towards each ABL Activity

Satisfaction Categories	Activity	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Contents	Story-telling	4.82	0.164	very high
	Role-plays	4.69	0.201	very high
	Language games	4.62	0.240	very high
Overall in Contents		**4.71**	**0.147**	**very high**
Instructional Management	Story-telling	4.81	0.175	very high
	Role-plays	4.66	0.158	very high
	Language games	4.56	0.302	very high
Overall in Instructional Management		**4.69**	**0.145**	**very high**
Skill Improvement	Story-telling	4.74	0.144	very high
	Role-plays	4.66	0.203	very high
	Language games	4.48	0.275	high
Overall in Skill Improvement		**4.62**	**0.148**	**very high**
Facilities and Media	Story-telling	4.70	0.249	very high
	Role-plays	4.69	0.366	very high
	Language games	4.57	0.367	very high
Overall in Facilities and Media		**4.65**	**0.178**	**very high**
Assessment	Story-telling	4.84	0.260	very high
	Role-plays	4.65	0.242	very high
	Language games	4.50	0.391	very high
Overall in Assessment		**4.66**	**0.155**	**very high**
Average of Students' Attitudes towards the three activities = 4.67				**very high**

Table 7 demonstrates the students' attitudes towards the three ABL activities. An overall mean score of students' attitudes towards the three activities using the ABL method, was interpreted as at a very high level with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.67. For each activity within the satisfaction category, the highest level of satisfaction is the category of contents, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.71, follow by the category of instructional management, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.69, the category of facilities and media, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.65, the category of assessment, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.66 and the category of skill improvement, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.62. From the study, it can be discovered that the students were very satisfied with the three activities using the ABL method.

Conclusion

The study was conducted in three phases to 1) study factors affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students, 2) enhance the English language proficiency by conducting three activities using the ABL method, and 3) investigate students' attitudes towards the

three activities using the ABL method. The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. The findings of the survey questionnaire identified that there were four key factors affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students: instructional management, linguistic deficiency, facilities and surroundings, and materials and curriculum. The overall factor, with a mean score ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.50, was interpreted at a very high level. The most important factor that affected the students' English proficiency was instructional management, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.62, followed by linguistic deficiency with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.51, facilities and surroundings, along with materials and curriculum, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.49, and 4.40 respectively.

2. The study examined students' English proficiency through pretests and posttests using the English Discoveries program, a computer adaptive program, and reported the results aligned with CEFR levels. The activities were conducted in three activities using the ABL method and emphasized different skills. The mean score of posttests on each English skill was higher than the mean score of pretests, and the frequency of CEFR levels on each activity was developed. The experiment showed that the majority of students' levels of English proficiency based on CEFR levels were improved after participating in the three ABL activities, with a statistical significance level of 0.05.

3. The study of the attitude questionnaire showed that the students' attitudes towards the three activities using the ABL method were indicated at a very high level, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.67.

Discussion

According to the mentioned findings above, a more profound discussion follows:

1. Results of the factors affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students

The first objective of the study was to study the factors affecting English language among students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University. The analysis identified 4 key factors affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students: instructional management, linguistic deficiency, facilities and surroundings, materials and curriculums. Of these, instructional management was the most important key factor influencing the language acquisition, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.62 and followed by linguistics deficiency, with an average ($\overline{\mathbf{X}}$) of 4.51, respectively.

Instructional Management Factor

The study found that the most English classes employed a passive learning approach, where students were not actively encouraged to engage in classroom activities. Students lacked opportunities and engagement to create their ideas, creativity, and knowledge. Furthermore, the provided instructions do not align with the practical significance or requirements of the English language. These factors could contribute to the development of English language obstacles among UDRU students. Similarly, the study by Nguyen et al. (2021: 211-220) found that the instructional management, especially the instructional methods in English could affect the students' capability to learn a second language.

Linguistic Deficiency Factor

The study identified a deficiency in English proficiency across the four skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking as important factors to students' ability to improve their English proficiency. A deficiency in English enhancement in undergraduate students may be caused by various aspects. For example, in terms of speaking and listening abilities, the survey questionnaire highlighted that the limited opportunities for interaction with native speakers, and inadequate practice in using the English language in everyday situations could hinder their proficiency. In terms of grammatical ability, the limitation of background knowledge, and the advanced level in grammatical structures were identified. In terms of reading ability, the understanding of the contexts, and lack of vocabulary, cause the most effects on the English enhancement. Lastly, in terms of writing ability, a lack of experience in writing passages, and insufficient mastery of grammatical structures were recognized as the factors to enhance the English language.

Facilities and Surroundings Factor

Facilities and surroundings were identified as a factor affecting the English proficiency of UDRU students. The limitation of facilities support, such as a few numbers of laboratories, supplies, and English programs contributed to students' lack of familiarity with the English language. As Sianipar et al. (2023:330-334) pointed out that educational facilities and amenities play a crucial role in fostering student enthusiasm and motivation for learning, ultimately impacting learning outcomes and student achievement. Similarly, the study by Irsani et al. (2023:1007-1012) confirmed that the learning environment profoundly influenced the students' ability to learn English, particularly, vocabulary.

2. Results and comparison of proficiency scores in English before and after participating in the ABL activities using the English Discoveries program

The second objective of the study was to examine the development of English proficiency of UDRU students using the activity-based learning method. This was achieved through the three ABL activities: story-telling, role-plays, and language games which were conducted over 9 periods. Each ABL activity was designed to enhance a specific English skill: story-telling focused on reading, role-plays focused on listening, and language games focused on grammatical skills. The evaluation of proficiency improvements was conducted using pretests and posttests using a standardized test of the English Discoveries program. In the story-telling activity, which emphasized reading skills and spanned three periods. In the first and second periods, students received instruction and completed the assignments. In the final period, students engaged in group activities and created their group activities by applying the ABL technique and presenting their works to peers. The results showed a significant improvement in reading skills, with twenty-five out of thirty-five students achieving higher proficiency scores on posttests, and no students showing a decline in performance. This means that the ABL method impacts English development and language acquisition, which is supported by the studies by Gaya (2018:980-989), and Zakaria & Aziz (2019:319-332). Similarly, the role-plays, which focused on the listening skills and followed the same three-period structure, demonstrated positive outcomes. Twenty-three out of thirty-five students enhanced their listening proficiency scores following the activity, with no declines performed. This activity underscored the efficacy of the ABL method in fostering improvements in English listening skills, as supported by studies from Yoniswan (2020:1-9), Liu & Ding (2009:140-143), and Hoofd & Liangpanit (2022:115-121). The last activity was language games, which focused on the grammatical skills and mirrored the structure of the previous activities. From the result, it showed that some students showed improvements in grammatical proficiency, whereas no declines performed. Similarly, the studies by Derakshan & Khatir (2015:39-47), Aslanabadi & Rasouli (2013:186-195), and Dolati and Mikaili (2011:1218-1224) found that games were not only used to enhance the English ability but also to create students' motivation. On the other hand, several students maintained the same scores pre-and posttests, in contrast to the story-telling and role-play activities. This mix results suggests that while ABL can enhance grammatical skills, the complexity of grammatical structures may pose challenges for some students. Furthermore, an analysis of the comparison of the three skills revealed that students significantly enhanced in reading and listening than in grammatical skills. The complexity of grammatical structures based on CEFR scale and the higher levels of proficiency required may hinder more significant advancements. However, the study found that the integration of the ABL method into educational

activities particularly improved English proficiency of the students. Thirty-one out of thirty-five students showed increased proficiency levels after participation, while only four remained at their initial levels. These findings underscored the potential of ABL to significantly enhance English language skills among students.

      3. Results of students' attitudes towards the ABL method

      The final objective of the study was to investigate students' attitudes towards the ABL method across various activities. For this purpose, a 20-item attitude questionnaire was administered after the completion of each activity. The results indicated that students exhibited a very high level of enthusiasm towards the storytelling activity, as well as the role-plays, while the language games activity also received favorable evaluations. This suggests that students expressed great satisfaction with all ABL activities, similar to the studies by Maneerat et al. (2021: 101-114) and Nguyen (2023: 282-293), which suggested that active learning techniques, not only improve English ability, particularly in speaking, but also engage students' positive perceptions and learning environment. Additionally, the highest satisfaction scores were correlated to the relevance of the ABL activities to everyday life, as shown by the highest mean scores. These activities were beneficial in enhancing students' English proficiency and in fostering their motivation and positive attitudes towards the English language. The majority of students were satisfied with their advancements in the English language following each activity. Consequently, these findings suggest a correlation between students' improvements in English proficiency and satisfaction, indicating that positive attitudes towards an educational activity are likely to enhance performance.

Recommendations for future research

      According to the findings and insights from the study concerning the impact of activity-based learning (ABL) at Udon Thani Rajabhat University, there are several recommendations for future research and educational practices that can be outlined to further enhance English language learning and teaching methodologies. These recommendations attempt to build and enhance the achievements of the ABL approach, overcome the problems, and investigate new methods for boosting students' language proficiency. Firstly, there is an opportunity to blend digital tools and online platforms to engage students more effectively, encourage self-study and support ongoing language practices outside the classroom. Secondly, the study revealed the difficulties in improving grammatical skills through the ABL method; future research should develop and more focus on grammar-oriented ABL activities. These activities should aim to simplify complex

grammatical structures and provide various learning stages to build proficiency effectively. Finally, it is recommended to undertake long-term studies to assess the impact of the ABL method on language proficiency. Such studies would provide deeper insights into the long-term benefits of this approach and its potential to significantly improve language skills.

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