Using Mimes and Mini Acts to Improve Chinese Speaking Skills of Grade 7 Thai Students

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Abstract

With a one-group Pre/Posttest design, the study aimed to explore whether mimes and mini acts could improve Chinese speaking skills of Thai students and whether students were satisfied with a one-month-long course. The mixed-methods approach was adopted to collect data from the three instruments: quantitative data from 1) the Pre/Posttest, 2) the Semantic Differential Scale, and qualitative data from 3) the Observation Checklist. The sample group consisted of 40 students selected by opportunity sampling.

The Pre-test and the Post-test results showed that the mean scores of students rose 9.70 from 19.00 to 28.70. Scores of other skills (i.e. expression and body language, teamwork, creativity, topic,) accompanying speaking skills (i.e. fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary) resulting from mimes and mini acts were higher in the Post-test than in the Pre-test. The qualitative data from the Observation Checklist analysis revealed five aspects--teaching, the teacher's personality, the learning environment, the teaching materials, and facilities that showed high students' satisfaction. The Semantic Differential Scale (scale 1-7) indicated most of the students in this class showed a statistically significant high level ($x = 5.95$ to $\bar{x} = 6.60$) of satisfaction. It can be concluded from the findings that mimes and mini acts improved students' Chinese speaking and satisfied students.

Keywords: Mimes, Mini acts, Teaching speaking skills, Student satisfaction

Introduction

With the development of China and the improvement of its international status, there has been a worldwide "Chinese fever" (Ju, 2019). More than 60 countries and regions worldwide, such as Russia, Australia, and Ireland, have included Chinese in primary and secondary school exams or college entrance examinations. South Africa, Mauritius, Tanzania, Zambia, and other countries include Chinese in their national education systems (Jin, 2019).

Southeast Asia is the second-largest Chinese-language region globally, with over 20 million Chinese speakers (Srichampa et al., 2018). Thailand, a Southeast Asian country close to

China is deeply influenced by the economy and culture of China. Thailand is among the top 3 countries with a population of 7,630,000 speaking Chinese. It means one in 10 people is studying Chinese. Chinese has become Thailand's second most important foreign language after English (Chayakul, 2017).

Contextually, many factors influence Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand. Trade and tourism are two major factors propelling Chinese influence in Thailand because of the enormous population, and unlimited business opportunities of China, and the Chinese are attracted by the beautiful scenery in Thailand (Guo et al., 2020; EveryCRSReport, 2019). Other factors, such as culture and technology, add to the closer relationship (Zhao, 2017).

Thus, learning Chinese is important for Thai people. To learn Chinese as a foreign language for communication, attention is often given to the mastery of speaking skills. According to Koran (2015), developing speaking skills is a complex process. Kawinkoonlasate (2019) states that in the globalization era if people want to fulfill their desires, they must express their thoughts fundamentals of the language, a system for expression. Therefore, for Thai students who learn Chinese, speaking skills are important and must be treated first (Guo et al., 2020).

It is hard for students to speak fluently and correctly at the beginning stage because of some challenges: the main factor is the mother tongue, which students always rely on. Naturally, students often think in their mother tongue, and make many inter-language mistakes while speaking the target language (Nanyan, 2018). Teaching is also an important factor; boring teaching makes students sleepy in class (Kawinkoonlasate, 2019). Primarily, students do not have enough time to practice speaking to get a good grasp of foreign language speaking both in and after class (Helen, 2017). Abrar et al. (2018) conclude that students' speaking challenges were from language barriers, the learning environment, language practice and psychological factors. Koran (2015) also mentions the psychological factor that most students keep silent in the classroom or outside because of anxiety or other psychological reasons. In brief, both the students themselves and the teachers are significant factors in skills improving Chinese speaking.

There are four problems of Grade 7 Thai students, who were the sample group of the study at Samkhok School, as reported by the class teacher, Y. Saruta (personal communication, January 20, 2021): First, students liked funny classes, but most Chinese teachers only asked students to read. As a result, they felt bored and were not motivated to learn. Second, Chinese speaking practices were only limited to what was suggested in the textbooks. Third, students studied Chinese as a school subject, and they were not interested in it. Fourth, students could only speak Chinese when books were open. Without the books, they could not understand what the teacher said. Students could not produce the language by themselves.

In order to solve the problems that hindered students' Chinese speaking skills improvement, mimes and mini-acts were chosen as the activities in the speaking class based on the belief that in miming, students use gestures and facial expressions to express their ideas without any words, thus reducing anxiety and enabling students to build up their confidence. Using only body language in class helps students to overcome negative emotions like shyness, worry, and anxiety and feel safe enough to utter sounds in the target language later. In this way, their study interests will be motivated (Rafsanjani et al., 2020). Using gestures is also an excellent

way to help students remember faster in a relaxing learning environment (Mahmoud, 2020). Hertia and Tiarina (2014) find that acting out as a guessing game to attract students' attention makes students enjoy speaking in various situations. Non-verbal communication plays a vital role in the Chinese language learning process. When students master the right mouth shapes of the 39 vowels, they can pronounce them easily (Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, Halliday (2004) acknowledges that the language learning process involves integrating other factors, such as the psychology of learning and the affective domain. It is the connection between speaking with other aspects; Arnold and Brown (1990, p. 10) point out the necessity of creating learning situations that lower inhibition and ego barriers to encourage communication. Similarly, mini-acts as short acted-out stories with dialogues encouraged students to create their own stories and dialogues that matched the contexts. To make students act out successfully, students could not only lift anything from the textbooks when students create their own stories with their teams, their interest and motivation increase. Dufeu (1994, pp. 89-90) stated that students would not feel embarrassed when they were in a climate of acceptance as they were using the target language.

Research objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out whether mimes and mini acts could improve the Chinese speaking skills of Thai students

2. To find out whether students were satisfied with a one-month-long course

Research hypothesis

Students would get better scores in the Post-test after the intervention lessons of mimes and mini acts.

Literature review

The review is presented in two parts: The theories related to speaking skills, namely Cooperative Language Learning and the significance of the Affective Domain in Language Learning, and the four keywords that were reviewed were mimes, mini-acts, as well as Chinese speaking skills improvement and students' satisfaction.

1) The underlying theories

1.1 Cooperative language learning

Cooperative Language Learning essentially involves students learning from each other in groups, which focuses on working with teachers and students rather than the group configuration (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Crandall (1999, pp. 226-245) clearly explains five benefits of this theory: reducing anxiety, promoting interaction, providing comprehensible input and output, increasing self-confidence and self-esteem and increasing motivation. This theory was adopted in this study because it could address the problems of Thai students of nervousness and fear of losing face.

Elson (1989), Morrison (1989), Ehrman (1999, p. 79) express similar views about speaking: "Cooperate learning reduces learners' risk of being shamed when they speak before in public because of perceived inadequacy".

1.2 The Affective Domain

"Language learning does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill." Krashen (1992) mentions that it is vital to concern students' psychological perception. According to his effective domain hypothesis (Krashen, 1992). "Positive affect is necessary for language acquisition to take place." (Ricardo, 2019). Nunan (1999, pp. 232-233) holds a similarly opinion and defines motivation a key consideration in determining the preparedness of learners to communicate. He pointed out that success and perception of progress over time, inspired and interesting teaching, perceived relevance of materials, knowledge about the goals of the instructional program, and appropriate feedback were all motivated students' learning.

In summary, although these theories are used in response to English language learning, in this study, which is on Chinese speaking skill development, the theories can also adopt these theories as to their theoretical framework.

2) Major keywords of the study

2.1 Mimes

Mimes were developed from pantomimes (acting out without words to convey the meaning intended). They are used to encourage students to participate in narrative, characterization, communication, and subtext/thought process to fully understand the narrative, subtext, and characters (Leabhart, 1989). It is very important now as a teaching technique because it is an effective way to motivate students to act in class and make them aware of its importance as a form of communication (Trinity College London, 2017). Learners are required to concentrate, focus and, inventiveness, key skills and techniques, attend to gestures, manipulation of objectives, storytelling, movement, and character physicalization (Cambridge Technicals, 2021). In addition, although no words are uttered in the mime activity, the meaning will be apparent as to what is happening.

Mimes in this study were simple acts showing the meaning of individual words or phrases. In other words, miming is a technique used for vocabulary teaching and learning. For example, for words such as for the words "新年快乐" (which means blessings for the new year), students should mime setting off firecrackers, going to visit their relatives and lifting their fists with both hands on their chest to express good wishes, or getting a red envelope from the relatives. This expressed the meaning of "新年快乐" with mimes in the study.

2.2 Mini acts

Mini-acts refer to short dramas with words (Chayanuvat, 1996). In the language learning process, mini acts express something in the form of a mini-story Mini acts help convey meaning and compensate for speech difficulties (Goldin-Meandow & Singer, 2003) and when students take their roles, they do not feel it is difficult to produce the language.

According to Chayanuyat (1996, pp. 120; 130), the following six benefits are used to explain mini-acts: Teachers do not talk the whole time and will never fall into the trap of too much TTT (Teacher-Talking-Time). Students must do planning and each of them helps to create a mime or a mini-act actively in class. Students work in groups and get ideas from each other. Students use their imagination and integrate the things that exist in real life to display what they learned from the classes. Students enjoy the activities in groups without the teacher's interference. A group of mixed abilities of students can share their skills to perform their mini-acts in class successfully.

The study, therefore, was conducted to find out whether mini-acts could deliver these benefits to promote teamwork, creativity, and student-centered learning besides the linguistic skills such as fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary and grammar or accuracy. In the study, students were asked to understand and play the various scenes of the Spring Festival with mini acts.

3) Speaking skill improvement

The essence of the language is speaking (Hsu, 2017), "Speaking" means expressing thoughts, opinions, or feelings orally. In language learning, speaking is a process that builds and shares meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in any context (Chaney & Burk, 1998). Zekeri (2004) says: "Oral speaking skills are the number one skill that college graduates find useful in the working world."

Mastering the speaking skills, the speaker can deliver exact information through the mouth in this communication process. According to Alvarado (2017), there are 5 components of speaking skills which students need to master: comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Comprehension is the ability to respond to others according to understanding others' words or repeating others' words in the speaking process (Harris, 1974). Fluency means when students speak, they do naturally, although with some hesitations, but not stop the conversation from finding the words they want. Fluency is usually affected by translating from the mother tongue to the target language (Harris, 1974). Pronunciation shows that students speak the language in correct tones, phonemes, and rhythm. This component is important to make the process of speaking easy to understand (Harris, 1974). Vocabulary is the first step to learning language speaking (Helen, 2017). Speakers cannot express themselves if they don't have sufficient words. Grammar is the way to make students speak the language accurately. Richards and Rodgers (1986) state that grammar ability is students' ability to manipulate the language structure appropriately.

These five speaking competencies are vital and basic skills behind an appropriate and effective communication process. However, the most important thing for students speaking is

that language learner should open their mouths and speak a lot rather than listen. To get the learners to practice production and interaction, the teachers' teaching activities in the classroom are very important. Besides, language teachers should not ignore affective factors (Arnold and Brown, 1999, p. 11).

Theoretically, many teaching techniques have been tried out. Implementation of information gap activities could improve the students' speaking ability and, students are active in interacting with their teachers and other students (Defrioka, 2017). In the speaking class with the picture strip stories technique, Novianda (2017) states that applying picture strip stories in the speaking class definitely improved students' scores. Similarly, experts suggest that teachers should design more speaking activities to improve students' oral production, but the materials should not be translated into the students' mother language (Azeez & Azeez, 2018). One of the most common activities is role-playing: it brings social situations into class, and students obtain a new way to practice speaking and learn from other students to improve their speaking skills and performance (Kawinkoonlasate, 2019). Role-play is considered a practical activity in a speaking class because it helps students overcome negative emotions and motivates them to study (Supriyani, 2018).

In short, these activities require students to produce the language themselves in various situations for which they have to select the appropriate language to convey their ideas. In this study, mini-acts are short role-plays in which students have to perform their roles as expected in such situations.

4) Students' satisfaction

Students' satisfaction is their short-term attitude toward educational experiences, equipment, and services, and their satisfaction with this educational process is affected by many factors (Supriyani, 2018). The factors which affect students' satisfaction from the literature review are listed below.
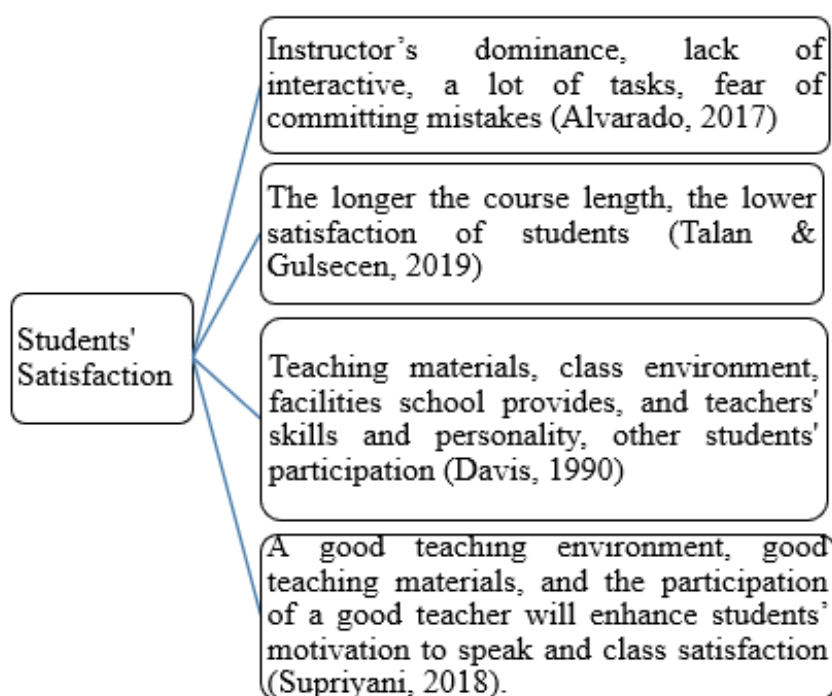
Figure 1 Factors showing students' satisfaction with the lessons

Based on Figure 1, students increase their motivation to learn with supportive learning environments and suitable learning materials. They enjoy learning by doing in interactive classes where they feel safe to make mistakes.

Research methodology

The objectives of this study were to explore whether mimes and mini acts could improve the Chinese speaking skills of Thai students and whether students were satisfied with a one-month-long course with a one-group Pre/Posttest experimental research. The study was conducted at Samkhok School, which provides Chinese courses to students from primary to high school. There are 800 Grade 10 students at this school. All the students are divided into each class randomly. One group of 40 students was selected as the sample group using one group Pre-Post Test design based on the opportunity sampling (Burns & Bush, 2000). The three research instruments consisted of:

1. One Group Pre/Post Test was selected as the research design to compare students' scores at the beginning and end of the course to determine whether the students' Chinese speaking skills improved.

2. The Observation Checklist was used to record what happened in the class, students' behaviors, and feelings to analyze students' feelings from the observers' perspective.

3. The Semantic Differential Scale was designed to collect the students' satisfaction by choosing the words that reflected their feelings from eight pairs of opposites.

The Item‑Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to evaluate questionnaire items based on the score range from ‑1 to +1. Total points for each item must have a consistency value equal to or above 0.67 to 1 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). IOC results of the three instruments in this study were assessed at above 0.67. Both the IOC results of the Pre-test and Post-test were 1; the IOC result of SDS was 0.93, the observation IOC result was 0.88. Thus, the three instruments used in the study showed high validity high scores.

1) Intervention:

The study was conducted in one month with 8 lessons of the Chinese Spring Festival, each lesson lasting 60 minutes. The scenes, words, phrases, sentences were common ones used in the Spring Festival. Because many Chinese Spring Festival words and phrases were developed in the past and not expressed directly, students were required to use mimes to understand the meaning of the words or phrases, and then speak them in their mini-acts in the specific scenes of the Spring Festival. An example is the scene "拜年". It means, from the first day to the fifth day of the Spring Festival, relatives and friends visit one another. When they meet, people are normally asked to speak "新年快乐", but to the elder, the younger should speak "身体健康". Then the house owner will serve the guests with sugar, melon seeds, peanuts, And so on, while the elder will give red envelopes to the younger people. In the lesson, the teacher first used mimes to help students understand "身体健康". The teacher acted like an elderly about 100 years old but still has a strong body holding a big peach crutched with a gourd. After watching the mimes, students learned to speak the word. The same steps were carried out with other words. At last, the students watched the introduction of "拜年" video, in which the words or phrases were in this scene with mini acts. The main steps of the teaching lesson plan are shown below:

Table 1 Teaching lessons

Lesson	Activity
1	1. 40 students are divided into 10 small groups 2. The Pre-test
2	1. Students watch the video of the origin of "年,' master the scenes "大扫除,' "贴春联" 2. Students pick the words one by one and the teacher answers with mimes and mini acts. 3. The teacher acts out the scene and speaks the word 新年快乐.
3	1. Students watch the video of the Spring Festival Customs, master the scenes "除夕,' "拜年" 2. Students pick the words one by one and the teacher answers with mimes and mini acts 3. The teacher acts out the scene and speaks the word 身体健康.

Lesson	Activity
4	1. Students watch the video the Best wishes of Spring Festival, master the scenes "祭祖" 2. Students pick the words one by one, and the teacher answers with mimes and mini acts. 3. The teacher acts out the scene and speaks the word 恭喜发财.
5	1. The teacher mimes, and students speak to review the words or phrases 2. The Post-test

2) Research instrument design

1.1 The pre/post test

The content of the Chinese speaking Pre-test was adapted from the teaching materials used in class about the Chinese Spring Festival. The Pre-test included two parts:

The first part (2 minutes) of the test was miming. Students picked up three pieces ("新年快乐,' "恭喜发财,' "身体健康") which are mostly used in the Spring Festival of rolled paper from a box. These phrases of Spring Festival are usually used in the Spring Festival with good meanings. For example, "恭喜发财" is sent to their best friends, relatives, and people around to wish them good jobs or prosperous businesses so that they become more affluent than before. One member of the group mimed other students who guessed what words were being mimed. The mimes were assessed by the mime analytical rubric.

Table 2 The mime analytical rubric

No.	Aspect to assess	Description				
		4 pts	**3 pts.**	**2 pts.**	**1 pt.**	**0 pt.**
1	Expression and Body Language	1. Vivid facial expression 2. Appropriate gestures 3. Clearly showing the meaning intended	1. Acceptable expression 2. Some appropriate gestures 3. Showing the meaning intended partially	1. Facial expression hard to understand 2. Confusing gestures	1. Wrong facial expression 2. Wrong gestures used	No miming
2	Teamwork	1. Working in teams with the group's best efforts	1. Working in teams with some working	1. Working in teams with the group's best efforts	1. Group cannot work well together	No miming

No.	Aspect to assess	Description				
		4 pts	**3 pts.**	**2 pts.**	**1 pt.**	**0 pt.**
		2. Showing attempt to successfully completing the task	harder than others 2. Showing partial attempt to successfully completing the task	2. Showing unclear attempt to successfully completing the task	2. No help and support for group success shown	
3	Creativity	Group showing creativity in presenting mimes	Group showing some creative idea in presenting mimes	Group showing simple and ordinary way in presenting mimes	Group using the wrong style in presenting mimes	No miming
4	Topic	Appropriate topic that matches the word to mime	Acceptable topic that matches the word to mime	Topic showing no careful thought about how to mime	Wrong topic for the mimed word	No miming
Total						
Grand total						

The second part was asking students to act out the scenes from the Chinese Spring Festival, which they would learn about in class. There are 5 Spring Festival ("大扫除,' "除夕,' "贴春联,' "拜年,' "祭祖") scenes which Chinese are familiar with. Students picked up a rolled piece of paper and created a complete mini-story of their own creative design. Students need to present their stories in 3 minutes. The performance was assessed by the rubric of the mini-act shown below:

Table 3 The mini-act analytical rubric

No.	Aspect to assess	Description				
		4 pts	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pt.
1	Expression and Body Language	1. Vivid facial expression 2. Appropriate gestures 3. Clearly showing the meaning intended	1. Acceptable expression 2. Some appropriate gestures 3. Showing the meaning intended partially	1. Facial expression hard to understand 2. Confusing gestures	1. Wrong facial expression 2. Wrong gestures used	No mini-act presented
2	Teamwork	1. Working in teams with the group's best efforts 2. Showing attempt to successfully completing the task	1. Working in teams with some working harder than others 2. Showing partial attempt to successfully completing the task	1. Working in teams with the group's best efforts 2. Showing unclear attempt to successfully completing the task	1. Group cannot work well together 2. No help and support for group success shown	No mini-act presented
3	Creativity	Group showing creativity in presenting mimes	Group showing some creative idea in presenting mimes	Group showing simple and ordinary way in presenting mimes	Group using wrong style in presenting mimes	No mini-act presented
4	Topic	Appropriate topic that matches the word to mime	Acceptable topic that matches the word to mime	Topic showing no careful thought about how to mime	Wrong topic for the mimed word	No mini-act presented
5	Accuracy	1 or 2 mistakes in acting out a mini-story	3 or 4 mistakes in acting out a mini-story	5 or 6 mistakes in acting out a mini-story	Too many mistakes	No mini-act presented

No.	Aspect to assess	Description				
		4 pts	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pt.
6	Fluency	Speak naturally and in strings of connected words	Signs of some hesitations and stop to think	Many pauses in order to search for words	Pauses interrupting the flow of speaking	No mini-act presented
7	Pronunciation	Clear and correct pronunciation	Many words are pronounced clearly but some are not clear	A few words are pronounced clearly but some cannot be understood	Few words are clear and many are not understood	No mini-act presented
8	Vocabulary	Appropriate vocabulary matching the story	Acceptable vocabulary matching the story	Inappropriate vocabulary, some not right for the context	Wrong vocabulary for the contact	No mini-act presented
Total						
Grand total						

In the Post-test, the content was the same as in the Pre-test. In the first Miming part, (2 minutes), students picked up three pieces ("新年快乐," "恭喜发财," "身体健康") of rolled paper from a box (they might get different words). One member of the group mimed other students who guessed what words were being mimed. The mimes were assessed by the mime analytical rubric (Table 2).

The second mini-acting part asked students to act out scenes from the Chinese Spring Festival, which they learned about in class. The same 5 scenes of the Spring Festival ("大扫除," "除夕," "贴春联," "拜年," "祭祖") were given. Students picked up a rolled piece of paper to find out the scene to create a complete mini-story in 3 minutes. They should combine what they learned in the class, like best-wishes sentences, phrases, and custom behaviors, to show what people do and speak in those situations. The performance was assessed by the rubric of mini-acts (Table 3).

1.2 The observation checklist

The observation method is the most commonly used in behavioral science. It is a process of recording students' behavior without questioning or communicating with them (Bakeman & Quera, 2011). In this study, the observer was a Chinese language Thai teacher who has taught

Chinese for three years. She was briefed on what the research would like her to observe and how to use the checklist. The observer was briefed by the researcher about what was expected of the observations. Then she was invited to the class from the beginning to observe all the lessons. She would not communicate directly with the students but record all the important events she saw in the class, especially how the teacher conducted her lessons and how students worked together in groups. However, the students would not find her a stranger because she was a teacher at that school.

This activity was very beneficial for the teacher because she could not see everything that happened by herself. Besides, the researcher could not question and communicate with her students directly to know how students felt about the lessons. Using observation can provide information about the students' behavior while in class, especially for shy students who avoid participating in group activities or have some language difficulties (Bakeman & Quera, 2011). This observation checklist contained the topics representing the factors that may affect students' satisfaction from several studies and activities (Hartanto, 2017). The observation checklist was designed to collect data from 5 aspects: teacher, students, teaching materials, teaching environment, and facilities.

Table 4 The observation checklist

The observation checklist	
Date:	**Observer:**
Observation object	**Record examples**
Teacher (Teaching, personality)	The teacher gives students stickers to motivate students to speak in the class.
	The teacher answers students' questions slowly with mimes and mini acts and explains carefully.
Students (Performance, emotion)	Students sit quietly and pay attention to the teacher's teaching.
	Students put up their hands and stand up to answer questions in class.
Teaching materials	Students can use some words or sentences in certain scenes.
	Materials are various and different from class to class. Students get different colorful teaching materials.
Environment	No one does other things but only talks about the Spring Festival in the class.
	The class is clean and is designed to match the topic of teaching.
Facilities	The class has media such as whiteboard, marker, and duster.

The data collected from the observation notes were analyzed by using the Three Cs Coding System: Coding, Categorizing, and Concept (Lichtman, 2013).

1.3 The semantic differential scale

The semantic differential scale was initiated by Osgood (1959). The semantic differential scale is a type of questionnaire for psychological measurement. It is an instrument used to collect research participants' perceptions or attitudes. The original semantic differential questionnaire was a seven-point scale containing bipolar, contrasting adjectives. The intervals of the scales are supposed to be of equal distance (Ploder & Eder, 2015). Semantic differential questions ask where the participants' position is on a scale between two bipolar adjectives, such as "Happy-Sad," "Boring-Interesting," or "Like-Dislike." In this study, the scale was divided into 7 levels with 10 items. The data of the semantic differential scale of each pair was calculated an average score and the percentage of mean score to analyze which level was most chosen by the students (Rosenberg & Navarro, 2017). The scale chosen by the students indicated how much they were satisfied with the class in that aspect.

Analysis and interpretation of the collected data

The comparison of the Pre/Post Test results showed clearly that mimes and mini acts could improve the students' Chinese speaking skills. The data of the 10 groups of students from the mimes and mini-acts rubrics scores showed how much their Chinese- speaking skills improved. See the table below.

Table 5 Paired samples test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pretest- Posttest	-9.70 19.00 28.70	5.36 4.14	0.92	-11.78	-7.62	-10.55	9	0.01

In the paired t-test, a significant difference of 0.01 means a significant difference between before and after the intervention, and students could improve their Chinese speaking skills. The mean of the Post-test was 9.70 points more than that of the Pre-test. It indicated that the students obtained higher scores after the study, and the S.D. (5.36) in the Pre-test was bigger than S.D. (4.14) in the Post-test. It showed in the Post-test that students' scores were clustered closer to the mean than those in the Pre-test, which means the group performance was better than in the Post-test. Thus, it can be concluded that mimes and mini acts helped students improve in their Chinese-speaking skills.

Figures 2 and 3 clearly show the student improvement in mimes and mini acts skills based on the mean scores from the rubrics. Look at Figure 2 below.
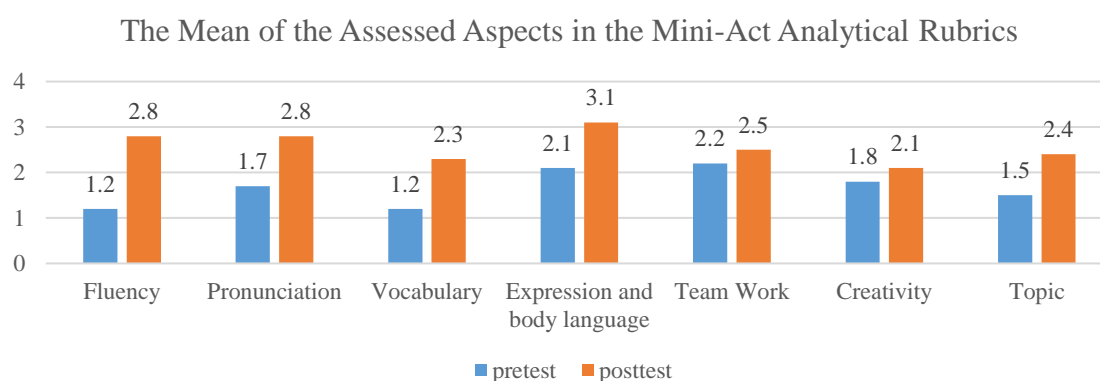
The Mean of the Assessed Aspects in the Mini-Act Analytical Rubrics

Figure 2 The mean scores of the assessed aspects in the Mini-Acts Analytical Rubrics

According to the comparison of 7 aspects of the mini acts in the Pre-test and Post-test mean scores, all sub-skill scores of mini acts in the Post-test were higher than those of in the Pre-test.
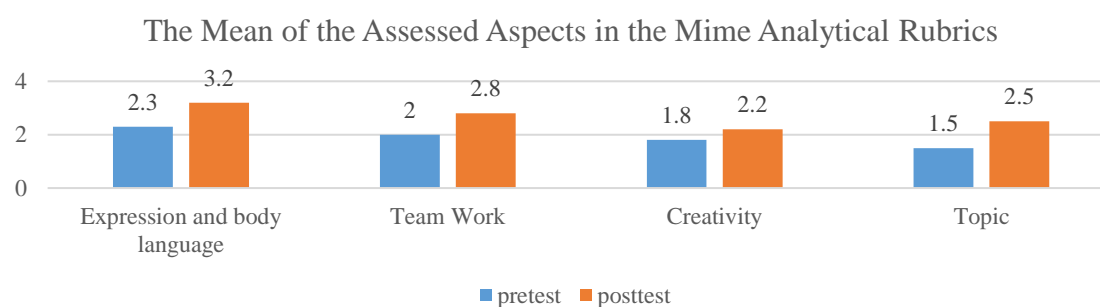
The Mean of the Assessed Aspects in the Mime Analytical Rubrics

Figure 3 The mean scores of the assessed aspects in the Mime Rubrics

Four skills were assessed in the mime analytical rubric. All sub-skill scores of mini acts in the Post-test were higher than those in the Pre-test.

Based on Figure 4, the rubric scores of mimes and mini acts were higher than those of the Pre-test, which means in this study, mimes and mini acts were helpful in students' Chinese speaking skills improvement.

The observation checklist mainly recorded what the observer saw in the class. Notes were made on the activities of the students and the teacher during the eight lessons. The details of the records were coded into five categories. The actual words from the checklists indicate the following keywords. Actual words and frequencies used by the observer are listed below.

Table 6 The observation analysis table

Categories	Frequencies	Some actual words
Teaching way	32	"Teacher mimes...and asks students to speak it". "Teacher uses mini acts to explain the meaning of ...". "Students mimes...ask for help to speak it". "One group presents...with mimes, other students speak what they present". "One group presents the...scene with mini acts"...
Class atmosphere	27	"Students greet the teacher happily". "Students mimes… positively and asks teacher's help to pronounce it". "Students are quiet and keep their eyes on teachers direction". "Students stand up and leave their seat when play games". "When some students make mistakes, some students correct at once". "Students exaggerate the... act to laugh other students".
Teacher's personality	22	"Teacher at class early". "Teacher responds with smile". "Teacher explains patiently". "Teacher explains... many times without anger". "Teacher plays games with students". "Teacher praises.." "Teacher encourages..."
Teaching material	10	"Spring Festival song 新年好呀". "Writing Chinese word 福. "Paper-cutting 春". "short video about "Kong Fu". "The origin of 年", "Spring Festival Customs". "Best wishes of Spring Festival.."
Facilities	5	"The space is small for students to act out". "The equipment of technology insufficient".

1) Teaching

Based on the recorded details of the lessons, the teacher taught in the way expected. She made it her responsibility to explain the lessons or complete the assignments as clearly as possible.

2) The teacher's personality

These words show that the teacher is kind and patient, and responsible for enhancing student learning. This shows that the teacher has a good understanding of her students. She tries to facilitate more than directly teaching.

3) The class atmosphere

In the aspect of the study environment, one obvious point is the changes in the relationship between the students and the teacher. From the first lesson to the last lesson, some examples of students' behavior in class, it can be concluded that the class atmosphere was fun and lively. Students did not feel stressed or intimidated. Besides, they were not afraid of the teacher.

4) The Teaching Materials

For the teaching materials, the warm-up materials and teaching materials are different. The teacher chose to use the materials well to prepare students for the lessons and deliver the lessons.

5) The facilities

The facilities were mentioned four times in the same sentence. This shows that there is a need for more space for a class using mimes and mini acts, especially when the class was significant with 40 students.

To sum up, what was found from the observation checklists revealed what happened in the class where mimes and mini‑acts were used to enhance students' Chinese speaking skills. The topics that emerged included five aspects: 1) Teaching, 2) The Teacher's Personality, 3) The Class Atmosphere, 4) The Teaching Materials, and 5) Facilities.

In conclusion, the five aspects also supported that students were satisfied with the mime and mini-act lessons.

The semantic differential scale was designed with ten pair items, and the data was taken from the responses of 40 students who chose the number for each pair that genuinely reflected their feelings.

Table 7 Students' satisfaction level of semantic differential scale in mean scores and percentage

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Mean
			Most Negative ------------------ Most Positive						
Unhappy					4	8	28	Happy	6.60
Boring				4	5	10	21	Interesting	6.20
Stressful		1	1	3	4	11	20	Relaxed	6.08
Unclear			4	3	4	9	20	Clear	5.95
Unfair			1		3	10	26	Fair	6.50
Impatient				5	5	9	21	Patient	6.15

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Mean
Useless				3	1	11	25	Useful	6.45
Difficult				2	4	7	27	Easy	6.48
Dull		1	1	1	7	8	22	Enjoyable	6.15
Traditional				2	3	6	29	Novel	6.55

The table showed a scale from 1 (the lowest/ most negative) to 7 (the highest/ most positive). From the results of each item mean scores, 40 students had a strong feeling of "Happy" with a 6.60 score, even though the lowest score of the pairs is 5.95, "Unclear-Clear," Students felt mimes and mini acts were "Novel," it scored 6.55. For "Unfair-Fair,' the mean score is 6.50. The scores for "Difficult- Easy" and "Useless- Useful" are very close, are 6.48 and 6.45 respectively. For "Impatient-Patient" and "Dull-Easy," [I am not sure if the quotation right but correct following the reviewers] both of them have the same score of 6.15. The mean score of 40 students for "Boring-Interesting" is 6.20, and "Stressful-Stress" is 6.08.

The average score ranged of 40 students' satisfaction was from $\bar{x}$=5.95 to $\bar{x}$=6.60. They were very close to the ideal highest score 7, which represented the highest level of satisfaction, which means students had a high level of good feelings. In other words, students showed a high level of satisfaction with the mimes and mini acts in a Chinese-speaking class.

The results of the semantic differential scale were in line with the results of the observation checklists: students were satisfied with the study and held a high level of satisfaction with the Chinese-speaking class with mimes and mini acts.

Findings and discussion

The analysis of all the data in this study emphasized the importance of the mime and mini-act teaching techniques, resulting in students' satisfaction with the teaching of the Chinese language and the learning process.

The first research question was to find out whether mimes and mini acts could improve the Chinese speaking skills of Thai students. Figure 4 below presents the skills that mimes and mini-acts can improve.
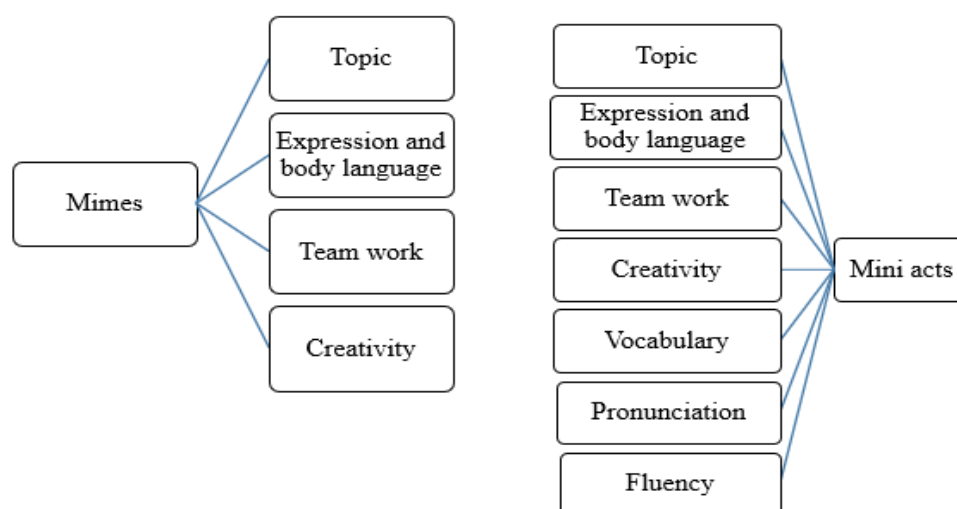
Figure 4 Mimes and mini acts skills

Mini-acts are found to improve three more significant aspects of speaking, which are vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency, than mimes. Therefore, if students' foreign language speaking ability is low, mimes can help students feel confident. For mimes, students need to think about how to act. Mimes can help students of any ability level improve their speaking skills (Lesson Plans and Activities, 1998). Therefore, using and integrating body language should not be ignored by teachers teaching a foreign language (Azeez, & Azeez, 2018). The findings are in line with several of experts in language learning (Nunan, 1992; Dufeu, 1994; Chayanuvat, 1996; Arnold & Brown, 1999; Crandall, 1999; Helen, 2017; Supriyani, 2018; Kawinkulasate, 2019).

Mini-acts are similar to using drama in language classes. It provides students with interesting and different ways to integrate their language learning process (Alvarado, 2017). Hertia and Tiarina (2014) found that using acting-out as a guessing game with mime attracts students' attention and develops student interest, making students enjoy practicing. More than just in speaking a foreign language, the act of speaking itself involves eye contact, facial expression, posture, and head movements (Supriyani, 2018). Therefore, a lack of activities directed toward the development of spoken language will result in poor speaking development (Bautista & Ruiz, 2017).

The second research objective was to study students' satisfaction with the one-month-long course. The observation notes indicated that students were active and positive in the class. The percentage of the semantic differential scale showed that students were satisfied with the class and held a high level of satisfaction. From the observation data analysis and semantic differential results in the study, the mimes and mini acts in class greatly influence students' satisfaction.

With the mimes and mini acts, students had more time to collaborate with their peers. They could do many activities by using body language to interact with the teacher, and the students were happy during the test. This is in line with the most frequently reported advantage of the role play classroom, that is, the improvement of student learning performance (Akçayır &

Akçayır, 2018). Similar views are plenty: students are speaking more in a face-to-face learning environment, and there is academic engagement in the drama class (Talan & Gulsecen, 2019).

Another finding is that students, when collaborating with groups, could improve their t e a m w o r k skills. In the cooperative learning environment, they created what they found interesting content by themselves and helped one another study better by producing the best products. That's why, at the end of the presentation, students displayed a good mime and a mini-act in the group show. Thus, their collaborative effort made the learning environment more enjoyable, interactive, interesting, and effective (Nurmiati & Hasan, 2020). What's more, students' minds became more broadened and creative in the relaxing group learning atmosphere. It also helped increase student engagement and improve student performance (Hyun et al., 2017; Crandall, 1999).

Recommendations

In the process of oral teaching, teachers must effectively use mimes and mini-acts to practice Chinese speaking as they make the class fun and active, while reducing the fear of speaking Chinese in class. Mime should be used first to help students gain confidence in speaking in a language speaking class. Teachers who teach speaking should be aware of the influence of cooperative language learning on students. They enjoy teamwork and learning from one another. Besides, it is recommended that they realize that students can be motivated to learn if their affective domain is paid attention to. Advanced and complex mimes and mini-acts may be studied as exercises or supportive activities for speaking skills.

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