



วิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการเพื่อพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดของนักเรียนอาชีวศึกษา โดยใช้กิจกรรมภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร

An Action Research for Improving Speaking Ability of Vocational Students Using Communicative Language Teaching Activities

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were (1) to examine the problems of teaching English speaking ability to vocational students, and (2) to investigate the possible solutions of teaching speaking using CLT activities with cycles of an action research. The participants of the study were 25 vocational students, majoring in hotel and service. They were selected by purposive sampling. The study was divided into 2 phases. The first phase examined the problems associated with the students' speaking abilities and the second phase investigated possible solutions of teaching speaking using CLT activities. Data were collected using an observation form and semi-structured interviews. Pre-test and post-test were also used to study the effects of CLT activities on speaking ability. The data were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and content analysis.

The results revealed that phase 1 indicated that the traditional teaching style focused on memorizing dialogues and practice was not appropriate for the vocational context. Phase 2 yielded that after the implementation of CLT activities, the pre-test and post-test scores showed that the participants' speaking ability improved significantly in four aspects included pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and fluency.

KEYWORDS: ACTION RESEARCH / SPEAKING ABILITY / COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยครั้งนี้เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาปัญหาของการสอนภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของนักเรียนอาชีวศึกษา และ 2) หาแนวทางการแก้ปัญหาการสอนทักษะการพูดโดยกระบวนการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการ กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ นักเรียนอาชีวศึกษาสาขาวิชาการโรงแรมและบริการ จำนวน 25 คน ได้มาโดยการเลือกแบบเฉพาะเจาะจง การวิจัยครั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยได้แบ่งการศึกษาออกเป็น 2 ระยะ โดยใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติ การในการศึกษาปัญหาและหาแนวทางในการแก้ปัญหา โดยวิธีที่ 1 ศึกษาปัญหา และในวิธีที่ 2 แก้ปัญหา โดยใช้รูปแบบการสอนกิจกรรมภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้ประกอบด้วย แบบสังเกต พฤติกรรมการเรียน และการล้มภาษาณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง แบบทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนใช้เพื่อศึกษาผลของการจัดกิจกรรมภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้ค่าเฉลี่ย ล้วนเป็นมาตรฐานและการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาเชิงบรรยาย

ผลการวิจัย พบว่า ในระยะที่ 1 รูปแบบการจัดการเรียนสอนแบบเดิมไม่เปิดโอกาสให้ผู้เรียนได้ใช้ภาษาในการใช้ในสถานการณ์จริง จึงไม่เหมาะสมกับการสอนผู้เรียนในบริบทอาชีวศึกษา และในระยะที่ 2 ปรากฏว่า หลังจากการใช้กระบวนการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการรวมกับรูปแบบการสอนภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร เมื่อเปรียบเทียบคะแนนก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียน พบว่า นักศึกษาสามารถพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ซึ่งครอบคลุม 4 ด้าน ได้แก่ การออกเสียง คำศัพท์ ไวยากรณ์ และความคล่องแคล่ว

คำสำคัญ: วิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการ / ความสามารถด้านพูด / กิจกรรมภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร

Introduction

Speaking is a critical ability that allows the speaker to ensure that the listener clearly understands the conversation and the listener can comprehend the meaning of the words (Nunan, 2005). English speaking ability is important for Thai students to communicate with people from other countries. Moreover, Thailand is now one of the ASEAN free trade countries, which requires that all participants speak English.

Teaching English language in a vocational context aims to equip students with the ability to communicate in English in real life situations and specific purposes (The Office of Vocational Education Commission, 2019). However, the vocational certificate education curriculum indicates that the students are required to study English for only two hours a week. Thus, the time allocated for English courses is not sufficient for students to practice the language, especially in terms of speaking ability. Moreover, if graduates still lack of speaking ability, this is a barrier for working in tourism, hospitality, industry, business, and restaurants. However, in the classroom, it is apparent that the students have low motivation and unable to speak English effectively. They also have few opportunities to use the language in a real-life situation.

Previous studies have examined how to improve students' speaking ability in a vocational college. For example, vocational students have deficiencies in their speaking ability and have a limited repertoire of specific job-related vocabulary and grammar (Phisutthangkoon, 2014; Riyanto, 2015). Furthermore, Nunthaboot (2012) also found that vocational students' problems in speaking come from the students themselves, the teachers, and the curriculum. Indeed, the students have low motivation to speak English and have no chance to use English in real-life situations and specific purposes.



Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered one of teaching approaches that provide students with the opportunity to communicate in real-life situations and actual contexts. CLT focuses on the use of the target language and the improvement of speaking ability (Richard & Roger, 2004). CLT also emphasizes the use of language for a wide range of different purposes and functions, varying the use of language according to different settings and participants, producing and understanding different types of text, and maintaining communication even when there are limitations in one's language knowledge (Richards, 2006). Moreover, the activities used in CLT, such as role-play and simulation play important roles in improving speaking ability. The situations and the roles are designed to represent a real-life situation so the students know the functions of English in real life. Simulation activities also provide students with the opportunity to create the environment and situation themselves, and students have opportunities to use language freely based on the tasks that they have been given.

Several studies have investigated how to improve speaking skills (Ratih 2016; Aalaei 2017; AL-Garmi & Almuhammadi, 2019). Overall, the findings from these studies indicated that CLT activities can improve speaking abilities. The results also highlighted the positive effects of implementing communicative language teaching to improve students' speaking ability.

Accordingly, a simple model of the cyclical nature of the typical action research process was implemented in this study. Each cycle has four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting" (Kemmis & Taggart, 1992). The classroom action research initially involves a researcher's attempt to identify a problem which happened in a classroom, set the plan, design techniques or methods to solve the problem, and implement the plan. Therefore, the researcher focused on a particular classroom aiming at finding the solution for the problem which takes place there. Action research is a development tool for teacher that involves observing or gathering other data about a class through interviews, case studies, and questionnaires. A teacher can establish a cycle of identifying problems, planning changes in response, implementing changes and gathering and analyzing data to evaluate the implementation." Indeed, Latief (2008) argued that Classroom Action Research (CAR) or Action Research (AR) is research that is designed to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. Cheng (2015) investigated a case study of action research on communicative language teaching. The purpose was to examine the effects of practicing CLT in a mixed English conversion class, whether L1 should be used in CLT classroom promptly and if students improved their learning attitudes after two-cycle individual action research (AR) had been conducted. Mahmuda (2015) also studied the improvement of students' speaking ability through case presentation at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Libureng Bone. Moreover, Saputra, (2018) investigated the use of CLT in the process of teaching speaking. The results of the studies showed an improvement in speaking ability after the implementation of CLT. Together, these studies provide evidence that various types of action research can facilitate a student's speaking ability. Furthermore, the cycle of action research helps to identify problems and solutions in the classroom.

Overall, several studies have been conducted on improving speaking ability, but few studies have focused on improving the speaking ability of vocational students by using CLT activities in a vocational context. Thus, the aim of this study was to improve the speaking ability of vocational students majoring in



hotel and service through the cycles of action research using CLT activities, including role-play and simulation.

The purposes of this study were:

1. To examine problems associated with teaching speaking ability.
2. To investigate possible solutions for these problems using CLT activities.

Literature Review

1. Speaking ability

Speaking is one of the four skills of English besides reading, writing, and listening. Like writing, speaking is categorized as a productive skill meaning that the focus of this skill is on producing language rather than receiving it (Spratt, et al. 2005). Producing language requires that learners are able to construct verbal and written language. In general terms, speaking is defined as an interaction between two speakers consisting of a speaker and a listener. This general idea has been translated to operationalized definitions for research. For instance, Nunan (2005) defines speaking as productive oral skill that consists of producing verbal expressions to transmit meaning. Speaking is more difficult than other skills because it occurs in real-time and the speaker cannot revise or change what they say at that time.

2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) begins with a theory of language as communication and aims to develop learner's communicative competence based on the approach of teaching called the communicative approach. The goal of CLT or communicative activities (CA) was to develop students' communicative competence (Richard & Rodger, 2004). It also makes use of real life situations that necessitate communication (Galloway, 1993). Communicative activities have an important role in creating opportunities and activities for students to practice the language for a communicative purpose. Typically, two major activity types are used functional communication activities and social interaction activities (Littlewood, 2002).

Functional communication activities are aimed at developing certain language skills and functions, which involve communication. Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, the use of dialogues, role-play, and simulation. Role-play activities range from highly controlled dialogues, less controlled dialogues, and free controlled dialogues. The students simple rehearse dialogue performance from easily to highly complex simulated scenarios such as a speaking task. Dialogues are primarily used to provide speaking practice but can also develop listening. The teacher can use dialogues to introduce and practice a function, structure, or vocabulary, and to illustrate degrees of politeness, levels of formality, and values and attitudes of the target culture. The teacher can also work with students to analyze written dialogues for any of these features. Dialogues are useful for listening to and practicing pronunciation, intonation, and other phonological features. Like drills, they are usually materials for guided, rather than free, language practice (Spratt, et al, 2005). Conversely, role-play might be an activity where students improvise rather than rely on practiced dialogue (Ladousse, 1995). The simulation technique



embraces the students' learning styles and this can be advantageous in improving their speaking skills abilities. The teacher can prepare the activities with the simulation technique in the classroom involving a complex interaction between group and individuals based on a simulation of real life and experience (Brown, 2000).

In summary, CLT was an approach that focuses on using a target language in a real-life situation. CLT relies on communicative activities, which consisted of role-play and simulation, to improve students' speaking ability. These activities also provide students with the opportunity to use the target language in real-life situations.

3. Action Research

Action research was a research design constructed to improve the quality of learning in the classroom (Latief, 2008). Action research can be used to help general development or to resolve specific problems with teaching or learners. The result of one cycle was used to determine the need for the following cycle until the problems are solved (Kemmis & Taggart, 1988). A model of action research consisted of four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & Taggart, 2002). Similarly, Stringer (1996) classified action research into three steps as follow Look: gather data, define and describe the situation/problem; Think: Explore and analyze the problem and findings; Act: Plan, Implement and Evaluate. This study used these steps of action research to examine the problems and possible solutions for teaching English speaking in a specific classroom.

Research Methodology

1. Participants

This study was conducted in a vocational college in the northeastern part of Thailand. The participants of this study consisted of twenty-five vocational students in the vocational college. They enrolled in the course entitled English Listening and Speaking 2 in the first semester of the 2019 academic year. The sample students were mixed ability majoring in Hotel and Service and they were selected through purposive sampling.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 Observation form

An observation form was designed to observe students' behavior toward learning speaking activities and teaching process in the classroom. The form used in planning stage of phase 1 (cycle 1). It consisted of nine items based on behavior and dealt with the participant's opinion on the improvement in their speaking ability and learning in the classroom.

2.2 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview was also designed to elicit the problems occurred in the speaking class. It was used during the observing stage in phase 1 (cycle 1) of the study. The participants were interviewed related to how they learn speaking ability in the classroom. There were eight items of the interview questions written in Thai. The quality of the instrument was evaluated in terms of objectivity



and validity by the experts. The experts evaluated each item according to the objectives. Content analysis was used to analyze the data from the semi-structured interview.

2.3 English speaking Pre-test and Post-test

A pre-test and a post-test were used to investigate students' speaking ability before and after the implementation CLT activities. The pre-test was used during the acting stage in phase 2 (cycle 2) of the study. In the same way, the post-test was used during the observing stage in phase 2 (cycle 3). The test was a situational test, which covered front office, food and beverage topics. The researcher assessed the participant's speaking ability using an English speaking rubric. The test items were evaluated by three experts using the evaluated form. There were three inter-raters to assess students' improvement in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. The data of a pre-test and a post-test were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation.

3. Data Collection Procedures

This study was an action research that applied teaching approaches of CLT activities (Littlewood, 1981). This study was conducted in two phases covered three cycles of an action research.

Phase 1 (Cycle1): The implementation of an action research mentioned by Kemmis & Taggart (1988) said that the aim of this phase was to examine the problems associated with English speaking as follow;

1.1 Planning: the researcher provided the activities in the planning stage which consisted of (1) making the lesson plan about the front office; (2) designing the teaching process using the traditional teaching method which was the audio-lingual; (3) preparing the material related to the front office; and (4) preparing the observation form to see the students' behavior toward learning speaking activities in the classroom in order to elicit the problems of teaching learning process;

1.2 Acting: (1) the researcher started the class by greeting the student and they showed what material they have to learn; (2) the researcher introduced the topic that students had to learn; (3) the researcher asked the students to identify some information about the front office; (4) the teacher asked students to practice the sentences related to the front office and speak in front of the class; (5) the researcher summarized the lesson after the students have finished speaking in front of the class; and (6) the teacher finish the class;

1.3 Observing: the observation was conducted by the researcher in order to see students' behavior during teaching and learning process. After the activities were done semi-structured interview was used to ask the students opinion toward teaching learning process;

1.4 Reflecting: reflection was a feedback stage from the teaching and learning process. The reflection phase helped the researcher to make a decision about the learning process and elicit the problems that occurred among and after the teaching and learning process. The problems of teaching and learning gained from this stage were used in the lesson plan in phase 2 of the study.

Phase 2 (cycle 2 and 3): the aim of this phase was to investigate the possible solutions to the problems identified in phase 1. This phase involved the implementation of two cycles of action research.



Cycle 2

2.1. Planning: according to the problems identified in phase 1 shown that teaching and learning English speaking skills were unable to allow students to practice the skills in the classroom. Thus, a lesson plan of role-play activity was designed to solve the problems. The principles of the CLT teaching procedure were employed. The role-play activity was implemented to improve the students' motivation because the students' motivation in speaking ability was exceptionally low. It is likely that the motivation of the students in the class was the primary factor affecting their success in their speaking ability. Then, the first lesson plan was designed and the topic was the front office using role-play activity. The lesson plan contained the steps of CLT activities which included pre-communicative and communicative activities (Littlewood, 1981).

2.2. Acting: before the implementation of CLT activities, the participants completed the pre-test, which covered four situations including making a reservation, checking in, menu, and ordering food. Then, each participant selected one situation and had a conversation with the researcher. Then, three inter-raters checked the students' speaking ability using the speaking ability rubrics as the criteria. The three inter-raters consisted of three English teachers; one native speaker who is American and two specialists in English teaching at school who is an English teacher for a Thai vocational college;

2.2.1 Role-play: in this stage, the students were divided into five groups and each group consisted of five students. Each group gained a situation related to the front office activities for example making a reservation, check-in and check-out. Then, the students were allowed to practice their role-playing. To prepare the students before the implementation of CLT procedure, the researcher asked them about the role of each person or situation. Games were used to motivate students before the CLT activity. Then, each group was given the time to practice dialogues with fully controlled scripts, semi-controlled scripts, and non-controlled scripts related to front office activity. Finally, each group performed their assignment using the role-play activity

2.3 Observing:

2.3.1 Role-play: the students worked in pairs or groups with the given situation and the researcher provided more time for them to practice the language. As the students practiced the activity through role-play, they could pronounce and memorize the words. They had more confidence in the classroom environment which became freer and more active. The researcher also gradually increased the difficulty and made the game more versatile. To motivate and encourage the students, the teacher awarded points to the best students and groups;

2.4 Reflecting: after the implementation of CLT activities, the data gathered from pre-test and were evaluated. The data were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and content analysis. The results of the reflecting were used to plan the lesson in cycle 3.

Cycle 3

3.1. Planning: according to the problems identified in cycle 2 shown that there were problems related to the students' motivation, grammar, and fluency when speaking English. Thus, a lesson plan of simulation activity was designed to solve the problems. The principles of the CLT teaching procedure



were also employed to design the lesson. The topic of the lesson plan was food and beverage service using a simulation activity;

3.2 Acting:

3.2.1 Simulation: the researcher asked the students to make groups of five. Then, each group practiced the situation provided. The situations related to food and beverage including making a reservation for a table, ordering food, and complaining about the food. In this stage, the CLT teaching procedure was also implemented. The students had to help their group to create the environment and dialogue related to food and beverage situations. Next, they had to set up the environment and situation related to their topic. They had to prepare the authentic material used in the presentation for example tables, chairs, glasses, dishes, and some food. The researcher provided more time for them to practice and finally allowed them to present their assignment;

3.3 Observing:

3.3.1 Simulation: according to the problems that occurred in the former activity related to the students' motivation, grammar, and fluency when speaking English. Students still showed problems with grammatical fluency and were unable to use grammatically correct sentences or speak fluently because of limited time. As such, the second lesson plan was designed to improve students' factors mentioned above. Following this simulation phase, the participants completed the post-test which was identical to the pre-test. There were three inter-raters to check students' speaking ability;

3.4 Reflecting: after the implementation of CLT activities, the data gathered from pre-test and were evaluated. The data were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and content analysis.

Results

The results are presented according to the instruments used in each phase of the study. Hence, the results of an observation form, semi-structured interview and pre-test, post-test are presented respectively. (Table 1)

Table 1: Results of the observation form

No.	Problems	Source of problems
1.	Students were not really active in joining the class.	S
2.	Some students were not really attentive in the class.	S
3.	Students had no chance to practice speaking	S
4.	The teacher did not tell the objectives of the lesson	T
5.	The teacher did not arrange the activities well.	T
6.	The teacher did not give enough guided practices, so the students were not ready to speak using English.	T
7.	The class activities were not encouraging and challenging.	T
8.	The teaching method did not motivate students in practicing speaking	T
9.	The teacher did not create good rapport and encouraging class atmosphere	T

Note: *S refers to student and *T refers to teacher



From table 1, the results from the observation indicated that the main cause of the problem was the teacher. The objectives of the lesson were not delivered before the class, so the students were unable to be aware of the goal they must accomplish by the end of the class. The arrangement of the lesson and activities were not well in terms of time allocation and the attraction of the activities. The teacher did not give enough speaking activities such as vocabularies, pronunciation, fluency, etc. There was no encouraging and motivating atmosphere in the classroom. Therefore, students had no chance to practice speaking. Thus, the teaching and learning processes was not flow effectively.

The semi-structured interview

The participants reported that they felt bored while engaging in speaking class. The activities did not arouse students' motivation of speaking and they also had no chance to practice how to speak effectively. In addition, the topics that they participated in did not support their needs. Hence, these results are shown in table 2 as follows;

Table 2: Results of the semi-structured interview

Students	Problems	Teacher Reflections
Student A	“I got bored while I was attending the class because the teacher assigned students memorized only the vocabulary and did the exercise”	Teacher should manage the class that students involved in the activities. In addition, the activities could improve students' speaking ability
Student B	“I had low motivation in practicing speaking because the teacher asked students to read on the book and did only exercise.”	Teacher studied previous study related to the teaching approaches that able to motivate students in learning speaking.
Student C	“I had no chance to practice speaking because the teacher did not provide a time for me to practice speaking.”	Teacher provided opportunities and time for students for practicing speaking in a real situation and specific context.
Student D	“Topics did not relate to hotel and service because teacher provided only general topics that I had learned already.”	The topics should relate to students' requirements and they could use a language in real situations and specific purposes.
Student E	“The teacher's teaching did not appropriate in a vocational context because she taught only words by words, she did not let students to join activities.”	Teacher's teaching method for example CLT activities appropriated for teaching in vocational context.

From table 1 and 2, the results indicated that the traditional teaching style which focuses on memorizing dialogues and practice was ineffective. Through memorization and drills affect the students were lacked the opportunity to produce and practice the language in real situations for specific purposes. Moreover, this kind of teaching was not appropriate for vocational students who learn English for real life situations and specific purposes. After analyzing the causes of the problems, the researcher continued to determine that the problems needed to be solved as soon as possible since CLT approach was



student-centered approach. From the identified problems, the problems were solved in phase 2 of the study which was the implementation of CLT activities using the cycles of an action research. The results of the study in phase 2 (cycle 2 and 3) which elicited from the pre-test and post-test are presented as follows;

The speaking ability pre-tests and post-tests

Table 3: A Comparison of the overall mean scores on speaking ability pre-test and post-test

English speaking ability	n	Mean	S.D.	%	t-test	p-value
Pre-test	25	6.92	1.93	32	22.98	0.00*
Post-test	25	12.40	2.84	62		

Note: statistically significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 shows the findings from the English speaking ability pre-test and post-test. The inspection of the graph reveals that the mean scores of the post-test ($M = 12.40$) are higher than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 6.92$). A paired t-test revealed that this difference was statistically significant ($t = 22.98$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4: The mean scores of pre-test and post-test on four aspects of speaking ability

Speaking Ability	Test	Mean	S.D.	N	df	Mean Difference	t-test	Sig.
Pronunciation	Pre-test	1.72	.614	25	24	1.56	13.377	.002
	Post-test	3.28	.678					
Vocabulary	Pre-test	1.76	.723	25	24	1.36	9.714	.000
	Post-test	3.12	.927					
Grammar	Pre-test	1.84	.624	25	24	1.16	10.474	.000
	Post-test	3.00	.816					
Fluency	Pre-test	1.60	.577	25	24	1.40	9.899	.000
	Post-test	3.00	1.00					
Average	Pre-test	1.73	.635	25	24	1.37	10.866	.000
	Post-test	3.10	.856					

Table 4 reveals that the students perform better on all four aspects of speaking ability when they compare post-test and pre-test. Before CLT, students had a low level of speaking ability with an average score of ($M = 1.73$). Then, after learning through CLT activities the mean score improved on all aspects, with an average score of ($M = 3.10$). The highest mean score of the post-test among the four aspects was the score for pronunciation ($M = 3.28$), followed by vocabulary ($M = 3.12$), grammar ($M = 3.00$) and fluency ($M = 3.00$).

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study first identified problems associated with teaching speaking in the classroom. The findings from the semi-structured interview indicated that the traditional teaching method was not



appropriate for teaching English speaking skills. Traditional teaching did not provide an opportunity for students to practice a language used in real life situations and for specific purposes. These results confirmed previous studies showed that traditional teaching, namely the audio-lingual method, can help students to memorize and drill with dialogue but this method did not provide an opportunity for students to practice a language in a real situation and specific purposes (Anggraini, 2018).

The effect of CLT activities on improving speaking ability

The present study also revealed that the students' English speaking ability was significantly different after implementing CLT activities. Specifically, the score of the post-test were significantly higher than the score of the pre-test. This finding of the present study supported the previous results which indicated the implementation of CLT activities including role-play and simulation, were could increase students' speaking ability (Aalaei, 2017). Importantly, scores on all four aspects of speaking were improved based on the CLT activities which were implemented in this study.

Before learning through role-play activities, many students had a problem with pronunciation. Students were unable to pronounce words, such as "reservation", "receptionist", "recommendation" correctly because they were not familiar with these words and they worried when they had to pronounce or stress the words. During the role play, the teacher acts as a facilitator to help the students familiarize themselves with these vocabularies. Furthermore, the teacher let them practice the dialogue including controlled dialogue, less-controlled dialogue, and freedom. After the students took part in each role, they had practiced the words, sentences, and dialogues with fixed structures. Thus, they could pronounce the words automatically. The simulation exercise also improved students' pronunciation. According to Syafitri (2017), students' pronunciation was improved significantly in English speech following simulation activities. Most of the students enjoyed studying in the classroom and were relaxed because they felt like they were studying at home. The simulation helps the students to improve their pronunciation as the dialogue that the teacher assigned was similar to real-life dialogue. The teacher assigned them the situation for practicing in the group and the students helped each other in the group to create the environment in the situation. Students also significantly improved on the vocabulary aspect following CLT activities. This finding is consistent with the previous studies on the beneficial effects of role-play activities (Rahman & Maarof, 2018) and simulations (Syafitri, 2017) on vocabulary. During the role-play, students can use the vocabulary, sentences, or any kind of dialogue related to the assignment freely. They have more time to practice and remember the vocabulary from the dialogue given. Consequently, role-play performances helped students to enrich their vocabulary knowledge and build their accuracy. This result is in accordance with the conceptual framework proposed by Richards (2006) that role-playing allows a wider range of language functions and language varieties to occur than would normally occur within a classroom. During the simulation activity, the teacher assigned the groups with a situation that was similar to a real situation. For example, students have to prepare a reservation on a table consisting of food and beverages for ordering and complaining about the food. Then, the teacher asked them to practice the vocabulary using authentic materials in pairs or in groups. Students were then able to discuss with each other and provide the teacher with feedback.



The result of the present study showed that students also improved their grammar after learning using CLT activities. During the role-play activity, the students have more time to practice using correct grammar. For example, they knew how to use ‘making + a reservation’, ‘would like’ instead of ‘want’. Students were also able to discuss with the teacher to facilitate their learning. The findings also indicated that both students and teachers had positive attitudes towards using pseudo role-play for teaching grammar in context, which was consistent with previous research (Qing, 2011). During the simulation exercise, Students who lack grammar knowledge were encouraged to take part in the situation assigned by the teacher. This activity therefore supported them to use a language in a real situation. They tried to create the dialogue from the situation given. For example, they use ‘check him in’ not ‘check-in him’. In addition, the students learned some verbs that are frequently used in front offices and food and beverage topics. This result is in accordance with the conceptual framework proposed by Harmer (1998) that the simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. The simulation enriches learning process and makes the academic setting a real life-like situation which is one of the fundamental conditions for effective and efficient language learning.

Finally, students’ fluency was also improved after participating in CLT activities. During the role-play, the students have the opportunity to practice the dialogue or topic related to the real life situation and become familiar with the real situation. As such, the role-play activity met the students’ needs and students were therefore enthusiastic to practice the dialogue. Students were able to practice speaking many times as well as role play with the teacher. Together, this helped the students speak fluently. The simulation also encouraged students to speak fluently. The main aim to improve fluency is to get the students to speak. One way to achieve this is for the teacher to reduce their contributions. In the simulation activity, the teacher provided students with the opportunity to take a monitoring role, to observe how the students can cope when speaking spontaneously and to note, not only their errors, but also their language needs. Indeed, previous research shown that teaching and learning through simulation techniques can improve the ability of students to speak fluently (Mustari, 2016). According to the improvement of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency using CLT activities including role-play and simulation, the result of the study is in accordance with the conceptual framework of CLT theory. They are focused more on real-world communication with a variety of languages. The form of grammatical patterns was focused less on CLT (Harmer, 1998). Moreover, communicative activities have an important role in creating opportunities and activities for students to practice the language for a communicative purpose (Littlewood, 2002).

In conclusion, the findings of the current study show that CLT activities significantly improve students’ speaking ability. Activities such as role-play and simulation are useful activities and are effective in helping students to improve their speaking ability in four aspects including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency.



Recommendations

The results of this research indicate that action research is useful for teachers to find solutions for solving problems in teaching languages in the classroom. The CLT approach is recommended as an alternative teaching method for English teachers in all vocational colleges who would like to help students improve their English speaking ability. Future research in this field should manage the time allocated for such activities. Indeed, activities such as role-play and simulation can take more time than traditional teaching activities. Therefore, more time should be provided for students to take part in role-playing and simulation to ensure that the beneficial effects of these activities are seen.

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