การพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ
โดยใช้การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี*
The Development of English Speaking Ability using Task-Based
Learning of Undergraduate Students

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ ศึกษาและเปรียบเทียบความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ โดยใช้การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนโดยใช้การเรียนรู้ แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติของ นักเรียนระดับปริญญาตรี กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้คือ นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีปีที่ 1 มหาวิทยาลัยภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ ภาคเรียนที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2562 จำนวน 30 คน ได้มาโดยวิธีการ สุ่มแบบกลุ่มแบบแผนการวิจัย เป็นการวิจัยเชิงทดลองแบบกลุ่มเดียว ทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ประกอบด้วย แผนการจัดการเรียนรู้ จำนวน 10 แผน และแบบทดสอบวัดความ สามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ และมีค่าความเชื่อมั่นของแบบ ทดสอบอยู่ที่ 0.96 การดำเนินการทดลองใช้ระยะเวลา 10 สัปดาห์ สัปดาห์ละ 2 ชั่วโมง รวมทั้งหมดจำนวน 20 ชั่วโมง สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ร้อยละ ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน การทดสอบที แบบกลุ่มเดียวและการทดสอบทีแบบไม่อิสสระ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นักศึกษามีคะแนนความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ก่อนเรียนเฉลี่ย 135.66 คะแนน คิดเป็นร้อยละ 45.22 และหลังเรียนเฉลี่ย 212.24 คะแนน คิดเป็นร้อยละ 70.75 เมื่อทดสอบความแตกต่างของค่าเฉลี่ย พบว่า ความสามารถด้านการพูด ภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาที่ได้ รับการสอนโดยใช้การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติหลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนและนักศึกษาได้คะแนนการพูด ภาษาอังกฤษหลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียน

คำสำคัญ: ความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ; การเรียนรู้แบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ

Abstract

The purposes of this research were to study and compare the English speaking ability before and after using task-based learning of undergraduate students. The samples consisted 30 undergraduate students from Northeastern University, Muang, Khon Kaen, in the first semester of the 2019 academic year. They were selected by cluster random sampling. The design of this research was a one group pretest-posttest design. The research instruments included 10 lesson plans and an English speaking ability test, reliability of 0.96. The experiment lasted 10 weeks, 2 hours a week, or 20 hours in total. Statistics used in the study were mean, percentage, standard deviation, one-sample t-test and t-test for dependent samples.

The findings of the research were: the students' pretest and posttest scores on the English speaking ability test were 135.66 or 45.22 percent and 212.24 or 70.75 percent respectively and their posttest score for speaking ability was higher than their pretest.

Keywords: English speaking ability; task-based learning

1. Introduction

English has been one of the most important languages in the world since most people all over the world use English to communicate with others from foreign countries. In some countries, people use English as an official language and while others do not, it is still useful for communication. People can transfer culture from one generation to another as well as from one nation to another using English. Therefore, it can be said that English is an international language which is intermediary for people around the world to communicate and understand each other (Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand, 2008, p. 9). English is also the third most widely spoken language in the world after Chinese and Spanish. It has extended throughout the world and continues to be a major language (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000, p. 7). Crystal (2003, p. 1) mentions that English is a global language because, wherever we travel, we will see English signs and advertisements. Crystal (2003, pp. 68-69) also claims that there are

around 1,500 million speakers who use English as a native, a second, or a foreign language. It was estimated that 750 million people are first or second language speakers, while the rest of 750 million use English as a foreign language. English also serves as an important tool for education and access to knowledge.

In Thailand, now English plays a more important role than in the past. This can be presumed from the proliferation of international schools. Furthermore, English is being extensively used as the language of instruction in numerous international universities in Thailand. Since 2015, Thailand has participated in the ASEAN community and English has been the official language for communication of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). ASEAN (2008, p. 29) states that "The working language of ASEAN shall be English" which is relevant to Grzega's (2009, p. 50) statement that English is as a door-opener to other languages and cultures. It serves as a tool for successful global communication (Grzega & Marion, 2007). At present, the education system has been reformed. Teaching of various educational institutions has been conducted according to the curriculum of each faculty and it has also determined that the learners have 5 competencies and the important competencies of the learners is the ability to communicate. The ability to communicate refers to the ability to listen, speak, read and write a foreign language to the fullest extent according to all five learning standards. (Chaimeerang, 2021, p. 70) Hence, Thai people need to gain more English competence to use in their education and work to look for better opportunities in their lives. Thus, being ready for English com-munication is essential and one should prepare thoroughly. As a matter of fact, English fluency has become an important advantage for anyone pursuing employment in busi-ness, industry or technology in Thailand. Accordingly, the purpose of learning English in our secondary schools is to qualify students to communicate so that they can enter the labor market and to handle the challenges of higher education as well.

Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Bailey & Nunan, 2005, p. 2). Thus, it is an oral skill that is important to convey information to others. It has usually been compared speaking and writing, both being considered "productive skills", as contrasted to the "receptive skills" of reading and listening (Harmer, 2007, p. 199). Speaking is also closely associated to listening as two interrelated

ways of completing communication. The objective of teaching speaking is to encourage people to accurately communicate and interact with others to achieve their goals and to use language fluently. Speaking is important in communication and the development of this skill is very important for pursuing higher education, various occupations and for life (Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, 2001, p. 2). It can be seen that English has significance for diverse purposes and people with the ability to use English proficiency is very necessary in order to take advantages of desirable opportunities and to fulfill one's life.

According to the test scores of undergraduate students enrolled in an English communication in daily life course are quite low. Students have some problems with pronunciation, frequent gross errors and very heavy accents that make understanding difficult. Thus they need to improve their English speaking ability.

There are often other aims that the teacher might have when the spoken language is the focus of classroom activity. For instance, the teacher may use tasks to help the students gain an awareness of, and to practice some aspects of linguistic knowledge (Hughes, 2013, p. 6). Accordingly, one of the key language teaching methods is to use task-based learning as a tool to promote classroom speaking. As Willis' (1996, p. 137) experiment showed task-based learning has become one of the significant alternatives for teachers and is viewed to have a positive effect on learners' English competence.

Willis (1996, p. 137) states that students who have experimented with task-based learning in many parts of the world reported that they gained confidence in speaking and interacting quite soon after beginning a task-based course and enjoyed the challenge of doing tasks. Moreover, they can cope with natural spontaneous speech much more easily. Additionally, they become far more independent learners. The steps of teaching English speaking task-based learning consists of 3 stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. This research study will utilize the task types based on Willis (1996, pp. 26-27), i.e., listing tasks and comparing tasks.

The researcher has considered that solving students' English speaking problems using task-based learning may help students with difficulties in spoken English. Therefore, the researcher would like to employ task-based learning with undergraduate students

from Northeastern University to determine whether this method can improve their speaking ability. Additionally, the research findings may be guidelines for teaching English speaking in Thailand in the future.

2. Purposes of the study

1. To study the English speaking ability of undergraduate students using task-based learning before and after studying.

2. To compare the English speaking ability of undergraduate students using task-based learning before and after studying.

3. Methodology

Population and Sample

1. Population

The population in this study was 231 undergraduate students who enrolled in an English Communication in Daily Life Course in 4 classrooms at Northeastern University, Muang, Khon Kaen.

2. Sample

The sample in this study was 30 undergraduate students studying in an English communication in daily life course (GE10304) in the first semester of the 2019 academic year at Northeastern University, Muang, Khon Kaen. They were selected by cluster random sampling using the classroom as a sampling unit.

Research Instruments

1. Lesson plans for teaching English speaking using task-based learning consisted of 10 units for 2 hours a unit. Ten lesson plans were developed to teach speaking English using task-based language learning.

2. An English speaking ability test was developed by the researcher based on Hughes (2003, pp. 131-132) to examine the ability of students in 5 aspects: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Data Collection

The researcher collected the data in the first semester of the 2019 academic year.

The details of data collection are as follows: 1. The pretest was done using the English speaking ability test before teaching using task-based learning. 2. The teaching program was conducted using the ten lesson plans. 3. The posttest was done using the English speaking ability test which was the same as the pretest after the teaching process was completed. 4. The data from the pretest and the posttest was analyzed.

Data Analysis

1. Undergraduate students English speaking ability was analyzed using Mean ($\bar{x}$), Percentage, and Standard Deviation (S.D.).

2. The differences of the pretest and posttest English speaking ability results were compared using t-test for Dependent Samples.

4. Results of the study

The findings of the research were as follows:

1. The students' average English speaking ability pretest and posttest scores were 135.66 or 45.22 percent and 212.24 or 70.75 percent, respectively.

2. The students' posttest score speaking ability was higher than their pretest score.

5. Discussion

This study was experimental research with a one group pretest - posttest design. It aimed to study and compare students' English speaking ability before and after using task-based learning. The research findings can be summarized as follows:

1. According to the study and comparison of the first year undergraduate students English speaking ability before and after using task-based learning, it was found that students' average pretest and posttest scores were 135.66 or 45.22 percent and 212.24 or 70.75 percent, respectively. These findings support the hypothesis. The students' posttest score on English speaking ability was significantly higher, at the .01 level. It was found that task-based learning promoted undergraduate students' English speaking ability. Two conclusions are presented as follows:

Firstly, teaching English speaking using task-based learning helped students in developing their spoken English. They practiced English speaking by listing and comparing

tasks. These findings supported the ideas Willis' (1996, pp. 26-27) in that listing tasks tend to generate a lot of talk as learners explain their ideas and comparing tasks. The information was of a similar nature but from different sources or versions and was used to identify common points and differences. It can be seen that it is also relative to Willis' statement (1996, pp. 35-36) that task-based learning gives all learners chances to benefit from noticing how others express similar meanings and practice negotiating turns to speak. Afterward, students reported their doing tasks in English which required them to plan their work and be more confident in speaking English.

The development of English speaking ability using task-based learning helped students gain higher scores. The reason might be teaching English speaking using task-based learning activated the students' basic knowledge by instruction on the important vocabulary, language structure and language use. This could facilitate the students to practice and bring it to use in performing tasks. It is related to Richards, Platt & Weber (1986, p. 289) who stated that using tasks in language learning involves activities or actions which are carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. Skehan (1998, p. 271) explained that the principles of task-based learning is utility making it "useful" for students to perform the target structures.

Secondly, when performing tasks in pairs or small groups facilitated students also enjoyed the challenge of doing tasks and found many of them fun. They practiced other skills such as listening, reading and writing skills including speaking English focusing on using English language in real situation and solve language problems. Furthermore, it can facilitate students interact with other people without being self-consciously. This finding is supported by Willis' (1996, p. 35-36).

In teaching English using task-based learning, the researcher followed Willis (1996, p. 38) 3 stages. It continuously provided students chances to practice language. Starting with the pre-task, the teacher instructs the students about new vocabulary and structures. Then the students learn and understand how to use them. After that they bring this knowledge to task cycle. They performed the tasks, i.e., listing and comparing tasks working in pairs or small groups. After that, they report their tasks in front of the class. This stage could facilitate them to learn how to plan their work and gain more

confidence in speaking English which is consistent with Willis (1996, pp. 35-36). For the last stage, language focus, the students all helped to analyze the language structure from the task, discussion of errors and correcting the language. Then practiced speaking using the correct vocabulary and sentences from the analysis by speaking them all together to their language correct and fluent usage. This improved their English speaking. This is supported by Ellis (2003, pp. 276-278).

This study was consistent with the study of Intanam (2015) in that using task-based learning has a significant impact for Mattayomsuksa 1 students in improving speaking ability. The findings of this research were the students' pretest and posttest scores on English speaking ability were 52.15 % and 77.33 % respectively. The findings indicated that the students' posttest score on English speaking ability was significantly higher than that of the pretest at the .01 level. It also confirmed to the previous study of Haritakul (2015) who developed English speaking using task-based learning of Mattayomsuksa 2 students at Udonpittayanukoon School. The findings of this research were the students' pretest and posttest scores on English speaking ability were 41.37 % and 72.89 % respectively. The results shown that the students' English speaking ability was found significantly different at the .01 level. The mean score on the posttest was higher than that of the pretest. Additionally, it was consistent with overseas research study of Pashaie & Khalaji (2014, p. 54-65) who explored the effect of open task outcome on speaking improvement of high school students. To achieve this, 60 female high school students, in Malayer, Iran, participated in the study. To measure the participants' level of speaking at the pre- and post-tests, open questions (8 items) was applied. The results of an independent t-test revealed that the participants' levels of speaking fluency in the experimental group was significantly higher than those in the control group (P = 0.05).

Consequently, it can be stated that task-based learning facilitated and motivated students to use the language to speak effectively and confidently. After studying by using task-based learning, the students' speaking posttest scores were higher. Therefore, it can be concluded that using task-based learning can enhance students English speaking.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. Recommendations from the study

In order to make use of this study, the researcher proposes that it is from the research results, the students' posttest score speaking ability was higher than the pretest score. The reason might be that task-based learning could facilitate and motivate students to use the language in speaking effectively and confidently. Therefore, task-based learning should be promoted in teaching English speaking.

2. Recommendations for further study

Some suggested avenues for further productive research include:

2.1　Researchers should implement task-based learning activities to develop other English language skills, for instance, writing, reading and listening.

2.2　Researchers should promote and apply task-based learning with other task types, for instance, reasoning-gap tasks, opinion-gap tasks, pictures and picture stories tasks, sharing personal experiences tasks, etc. It can be more variety for students to develop their language proficiency.

2.3　Researchers should investigate teaching spoken English using task-based learning at other educational levels of students.

7. Knowledge Assets

The researcher concluded the knowledge assets from the development of English speaking ability using Task-based learning of undergraduate students is as follow:
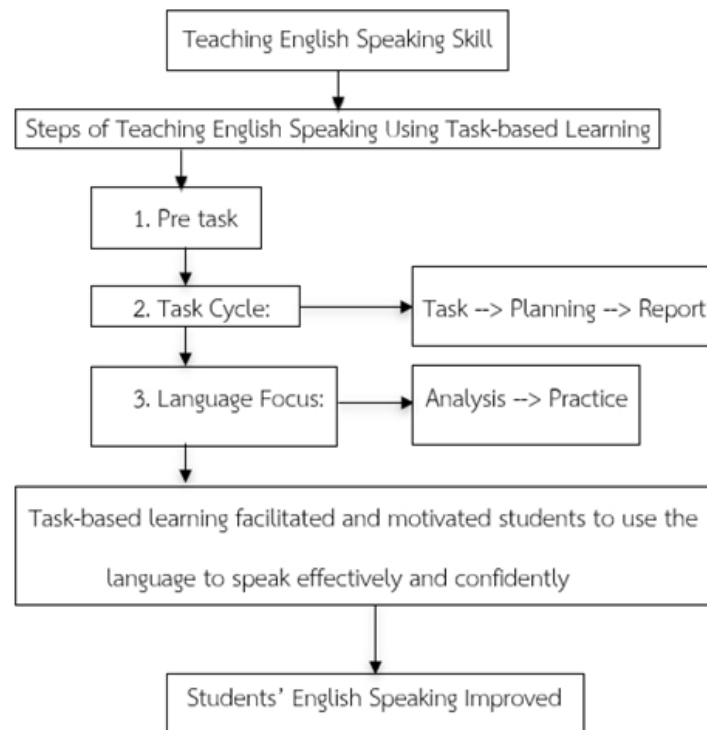
Figure 1 Knowledge Assets

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