CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to present a discussion of the findings. The effectiveness of the five communicative tasks, a comparison of English speaking proficiency results using the five communicative tasks and students' attitude towards the five communicative tasks were discussed. Then the limitations of the study and the recommendations for further studies were proposed respectively.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of the five communicative tasks in improving the English speaking proficiency of Mattayonsuksa 6 students in Nongbuapittayakarn School with the standard criteria 80 / 80.

2. To compare the differences between the English speaking proficiency results for each communicative task.

3. To investigate the students' attitudes towards the five communicative tasks.

Hypothesis

The five communicative tasks can improve English speaking proficiency of Mattayomsuksa 6 students at different levels.

Research methodology

This study was One group experimental research study focused on the five communicative tasks including Jigsaw, Information-gap, Decision-making,

Problem-solving and Opinion-exchange contributing to students' English speaking proficiency and which task gained the most effective.

    1. Population was 64 students who enrolled in the English listening and speaking course in Nongbuapittayakarn School.

    2. The sample was 25 students of Mattayomsuksa 6/9 students who enrolled in the English listening and speaking course in Nongbuapittayakarn School using purposive selection.

    3. Variables

      3.1 Independent variable was teaching speaking using the five communicative tasks: Jigsaw, Information-gap, Decision-making, Problem-solving, and Opinion-exchange.

      3.2 Dependent variables

      The dependent variables were:

      3.2.1 The students' English speaking proficiency

      3.2.2 The students' attitude towards the five communicative tasks

    4. Contents

    There were 10 lesson plans teaching speaking using the five communicative tasks.

    4.1 Greeting

    4.2 Places in My Town

    4.3 On Vacation

    4.4 Birthday Party

    4.5 Desert Island

    4.6 Environment

    4.7 At the Movies

    4.8 School Rules

    4.9 Outstanding Student

    4.10 Farewell

5. Research instruments

 5.1 10 Lesson plans using the five communicative tasks

 5.2 Speaking proficiency test

 5.3 Students' attitude questionnaire

6. Duration of the experiment

 This experiment was conducted within ten weeks, two hour-sessions a week or totally 20 hours. It was carried out in the second semester of the academic year 2010.

7. Data analysis

 The data obtained from the speaking test and students' attitude questionnaire were analyzed using three types of statistics as follows:

 7.1. The basic statistics used to analyze the data were:

  7.1.1 Percentage was used to analyze the effectiveness of English speaking proficiency using the five communicative tasks.

  7.1.2 Mean was used to analyze the scores of pretest and posttest.

 7.2. The statistics used to evaluate the quality of the instrument was the Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC (Tirakanan, 2005: 148)

 7.3. The statistics used to analyze hypothesis were:

  7.3.1 Paired simple t-test was used to analyze the differences of the scores prior to and after the teaching program.

  7.3.2 One-Way ANOVA was used to analyze whether the overall test Mean scores of the five communicative task groups were different from each other and LSD (Least Significance Differences) was used to analyze the Post hoc test results in order to determine which pair was different.

Conclusion

A comparison of English speaking proficiency using the five communicative tasks of Mattayomsuksa 6 students in Nongbuapittayakarn School can be summarized as follows:

1. The effectiveness of the five communicative tasks on students' English speaking proficiency of Mattayomsuksa 6 students in Nongbuapittayakarn School with the standard criteria 80 / 80. The findings confirmed by the percentage of the five communicative tasks could be ranked respectively: 1) Information-gap (80.70 / 92.50), 2) Jigsaw (81.00 / 86.00), 3) Problem-solving (80.00 / 80.50), 4) Decision-making (81.30 / 79.50), 5) Opinion-exchange (82.60 / 70.50). There were two tasks: Decision-making and Opinion-exchange for which the effectiveness was lower than the standard criteria. Among the five communicative tasks, the Information-gap task showed most effective gains.

2. A comparison of the differences of the English speaking proficiency results using the five communicative tasks and to examine the paired differences between the five communicative tasks. The findings showed that the English speaking proficiency results using the five communicative tasks were significantly different at the .01 level. It was obvious that the results of English speaking proficiency using the five communicative tasks were different. This finding was in accordance with the hypothesis.

3. Students' attitudes towards the five communicative tasks. The findings showed that students gained positive attitude after experiencing the teaching program. The average score of the overall attitude was at 3.64. Overall, the students' attitude towards the five communicative tasks was greatly improved.

Discussion

A typology of the five communicative tasks consisted of Jigsaw, Information-gap, Decision-making, Problem-solving, and Opinion-exchange. All of these tasks were designed appropriately to the English listening and speaking course in order to enhance the speaking proficiency of Mattayomsuksa 6 students in Nongbuapittayakarn School. The course syllabus was relevant to the local curriculum which promoted students to understand the language easier. Students were assigned to perform the tasks in pairs or in groups of five which encouraged them to engage in speaking activities. Students with

high language proficiency helped those with low language proficiency and the activities provided the opportunities for low language ability students to perform the oral communication with increased confidence. The findings of this study were consistent with Slavin (1990) who claims that integrating learners of mixed-ability working together help them succeed in the task. The sample had achieved their speaking in the English listening and speaking course and they could use the knowledge from the English language classroom in the actual situations in accordance with these findings.

1. The findings from testing the effectiveness of the five communicative tasks on students' English speaking proficiency revealed that these five communicative tasks had a different impact on students' speaking proficiency. The effectiveness of these three tasks: Jigsaw (81 / 86), Information-gap (80.70 / 92.50), Problem-solving (80 / 80.50) was higher than the standard criteria 80 / 80. It was noticeable that the characteristics of these three tasks encouraged the sample to engage in speaking activities. Besides employing the grammar, vocabulary, and expressions provided in the classroom, the sample seemed to employ appropriate communication strategies when the communication broke down (Hedge, 2000). For example, they used non-verbal cues such as nodding or shrugging when they wanted the other group members to stop or continue the discussion. Moreover, paraphrasing could be used whenever they wanted to obtain a clear understanding of the sentences (You mean you will go to 7-11 shop at PTT gas station?). Another example was that the sample used the confirmation check (Dörnyei, 1995), "Is that right?". Surprisingly, L1 (Thai or even the local dialect) was frequently used when they couldn't respond to the statement immediately ("Bor Man Der" which means "It's not true"). The group members, who had low language ability in speaking, stammered with wrong grammar. Yet, they seemed to be confident in speaking, and the communication could be continued ("I..I..Okay aou neighbo.. neighbo… neighbo….good people" means "I agree that our neighbors are good people"). It was obvious that the group finished the task with enjoyment. In addition, the speaking materials such as pictures motivated them to continue their oral communication.

On the contrary, the effectiveness of the other two tasks, Decision-making (81.30 / 79.50), and Opinion-exchange (82.60 / 70.50) was lower than the standard criteria 80 / 80. It was obvious that the characteristics of these two tasks were quite more difficult than the first three tasks and they were not familiar to English speaking in Thailand EFL classroom where students always had limitations in expressing opinions. In this study, students experienced more fear, lacked confidence and got high anxiety which was resulted in their language inhibition. This was consistent with Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's study (1986) in that high anxiety can make learners get discouraged, lose faith in their abilities, escape from participating in classroom activity, and even give up the effort to learn a language well.

For Decision-making task, the sample engaged in speaking aimed towards a single outcome, but there were a number of options available to choose. The sample sometimes failed to connect the meaning after presenting the ideas. In addition, the group members used avoidance strategy, especially, those with low language ability because they misunderstood the information whereas those with high language ability used paraphrasing and mime, or asking for explanation to confirm the information they heard before continuing the discussion in order to achieve the task. A communication gap was occurred once in a while; however the group could manage the task which was consistent with Ton's study (1989) in that learners who used asking for help, paraphrasing, and avoidance to negotiate an understandable meaning from the message.

For Opinion-exchange task, the characteristic of the task provided little opportunity for interaction. It was notice that the group members could express their ideas as much as they wanted while the others might just keep listening until the task came to the end. Since the outcome could not be expected to be right or wrong, then the group discussion seemed to be quiet. This was consistent with Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's study (1986) in that learners failed to be enthusiastic and they sometimes

refrained from engaging the other group members who tried to present their opinions all the time.

Overall, the five communicative tasks could help enhance the learners to improve their English speaking proficiency. These findings confirmed the ideas proposed by Doughty & Pica (1985); Long & Porters (1995) ; Gass & Veronis (1994); and Dörnyei, (1995) in that the five communicative task could positively affect students' English speaking and also enhanced students' speaking proficiency.

The findings from comparing differences on the relative effectiveness between the five communicative tasks showed that the Information-gap task was the most effective. This was consistent with Pica, Doughty & Falodun's study (1993) in that Information-gap was shown by them to provide greatest opportunity for the learners to produce the target language. Also, it motivated communication among classroom language learners. Consequently, information could be exchanged in two ways and resulted in clearer and deeper understanding. Besides, the results were also consistent with previous studies such as Pimsri's study (2004) in that to assist the learners to be effective in English speaking using the integration of information-gap principle and role-play activities. Pimsri investigated the development of communicative English learning and teaching activities using information-gap principle and the role-play techniques. A group of 72 Mattahayomsuksa students in Bannadee Kai-Sawangwittaya School formed the sample group. The findings were that the English speaking ability of the experimental group was higher than the control group at the significantly different at the .05 level. This finding was also consistent with Klanrit's study (2005) in that the effectiveness of the two communicative activities, Information-gap and Role-play, in developing students' speaking proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL). Klanrit's study was conducted in a language classroom of 38 students in Thailand and 9 target participants were selected as 3 high, 3 medium, and 3 low, based on their language proficiency level. This study revealed that using the two communicative activities had a significant impact on improving EFL students' speaking proficiency.

It could be concluded that the five communicative tasks provided opportunities for the sample to practice speaking with friends both in pairs and in groups which helped them, enjoy, feel relaxed, gain confidence, and not to be shy when they spoke with incorrect grammar. The five communicative tasks provided the sample a chance to develop their speaking fluency continually since the lesson plans were developed from easy to difficult based on the local curriculum. The classroom organization and learning process led to students' progress and their enjoyment of participation. Most importantly, the contents were relevant to the students' life and they could apply the knowledge from the classroom to the outside world which appeared to be consistent with Johnson's study (1982) in that the learners can communicate immediately after they hear the language and then they respond to it in natural ways.

2. The results obtained from the comparison of the differences between the English speaking proficiency results for each communicative tasks and examining the paired differences between the five communicative tasks revealed that the English speaking proficiency results using the five communicative tasks were significantly different at the .01 level. It is concluded that the results in speaking proficiency for communicative tasks was different. In other words, each communicative task affected on students' English speaking proficiency differently.

However, there was at least one pair which did not differ, Decision-making and Problem-solving. The reasons why these two tasks were not different can be explained as follows. First, the characteristics of these two tasks are quite difficult. Second, the sample was not familiar with speaking tasks like Decision-making and Problem-solving. They were never trained to perform tasks like these in an English language classroom although the teachers had engaged them in debate or discussion. They would probably need sufficient information to negotiate the meanings; therefore they were faced with language barrier. Moreover, they lacked confidence, were anxious, and were unwilling to participate in interaction. Besides, discussion skills were rarely found to practice among Thai students (Brown, 2006; Mackenzie, 2005 and Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

3. Students' attitudes towards the five communicative tasks

The findings from the students' attitude evaluation indicated that the five communicative tasks could enhance students' attitude. The sample strongly agreed that they had fun and enjoyed doing speaking activities using the five communicative tasks and also, they gained more confidence while doing the speaking activities which confirmed the suggestion made by Dulay, Burt & Krashen's study (1982) in that attitudes and feelings are the main factors to help learners succeed in second language learning. The teaching program motivated them to participate in doing the activities since the activities encouraged them to produce the target language (Gardner, 1985). Moreover, they strongly agreed that English speaking activities using the five communicative tasks provided them pleasure while speaking. In addition, they agreed that English speaking activities using the five communicative tasks encouraged them to communicate in various situations. The students' attitudes towards the five communicative tasks were greatly improved.

The results of the study indicated that the five communicative tasks, Jigsaw, Information-gap, Decision-making, Problem-solving, and Opinion-exchange could enhance students' speaking proficiency. The students gained more knowledge and confidence in their abilities to produce the target language both at school and their daily lives. Besides, they had good attitude towards English. Their English language learning helped increase their effectiveness on employing the target language in actual communication situations.

Limitations of this study

There are some limitations found in this study as follows:

1. Teaching English listening and speaking using the five communicative tasks still need to improve for better effectiveness for some tasks: Decision-making and Opinion-exchange which their effectiveness was not accordance with the standard criteria. For this reason, the sample should be encouraged to engage in speaking

activities continually. Also, teachers should be trained to involve in teaching speaking techniques such as debate and discussion and then apply them to employ in speaking classes. Besides, motivation and confidence are the essential factors to overcome the students' fear and their inhibition.

2. Time constraints. The sample had a lot of activities to participate in during the second semester such as the academic exhibition, sport event, provincial annual fair, Christmas and New Year celebration. All of these festivals interfered the training hours and also some of the members of each communicative tasks group had to join some events as class or school representatives. Therefore, the researcher needed to arrange the time and appoint the sample in advance. For those teachers who finished their courses also provided their time for the sample to this study.

Recommendations for further studies

According to the results discussed earlier, some suggestions are proposed here for further studies.

1. The teacher's role should be developed in order to facilitate the classroom environment, especially in speaking classes where the teacher must concentrate on speaking English and have students speak English as much as possible.

2. Teaching materials should be designed and constructed appropriately in accordance with recent second language teaching theory and research findings because they are found to be the major factors to motivate and encourage students to engage in speaking activities.

3. Group interaction should be promoted in English language classrooms since mixed-abilities students can help one another perform the activities. All members of the group have been an equal part of success.

4. Interactive program should be recommended in assisting with the practice of speaking English. Students should be encouraged to involve themselves in more interaction with the target language.

5. In order to gain better data, the bigger group of the sample is highly recommended for further studies because the distribution of scores in the group can indicate the sample's ability more validly.