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A Study on the Effects of the Teaching-Learning Cycle on English Linguistic Ability Achievement of University Level Students : a Case Study of Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University

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ABSTRACT

The research was to study the effects of "The Teaching-Learning Cycle" (TLC) on the English linguistic ability achievement of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University and to analyze their opinions regarding learning English. The English linguistic ability achievement was determined by a comparison of pre-test scores to post-test scores. The opinions were determined by a comparison of the opinions before and after teaching English by the "TLC" model, surveyed by a rating-scale questionnaire and a self-assessment form. The results indicated that the average scores of the pre-test and the post-test, and also the opinions, were significantly different at the .01 level. The average scores of the post-test were significantly higher than the scores of the pre-test. Moreover, the average opinion of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University towards learning English after teaching by the TLC was significantly higher than before teaching by the TLC model. The findings revealed that the TLC model has a positive effect on English instruction. It may be a result of the efficiency of the model which focuses on the learning process and sequential and systematic improvement of language skills.

Keywords : Effect, English Linguistic Ability Achievement, The Teaching Learning Cycle

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to develop methods of English instruction, and the study is continuing research from "A Study on English Learning Styles and Learning Strategies of Students at Rajabhat Maha Sartakham University" by Sopa (1999).

Students of all programs at Rajabhat Universities have to learn two English courses in the General Education Curriculum (Office of Rajabhat Council, Ministry of Education, 1997). A recent survey of

English achievement of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University indicated low levels of achievement for all students. The English linguistic ability achievement of the regular students was fair, and the English achievement of the weekend students was poor (Academic Supporting Office, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham, 2001).

It is inevitable that many factors affect the English linguistic ability achievement such as instructional material, methodology, time and motivation.

Nunan (1992) claims that teachers can achieve the goals of their language classes if they consider the personal information of learners, such as educational background, beliefs, cognitive style, learning strategies, motivation and attitude. These factors are necessary for language teachers to prepare good learning tasks based on learners' needs.

Objective

The research was to study the effects of "The Teaching-Learning Cycle" (TLC) on the English linguistic ability achievement and the opinions of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University towards learning English under the TLC model.

Research Methodology

Population

The population consisted of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, who studied English for Communication and Information Retrievals in 2/2003. The sample subjects were twenty-one, fourth-year students of the Mathematics Program at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, who studied English for Communication and Information Retrievals in 2/2003. They were selected by the purposive sampling technique.

Research Instruments

1. Ten units were used to teach in a language class designed for the course description of English for Communication and the language activities were based on the learning process of the Teaching-Learning Cycle.

2. An achievement test was used to determine the students' English proficiency. The test consisted of listening, gap-filling and reading while speaking was determined by their situation-based performance of each unit, and writing was determined by their final work of each unit.

    2.1 The listening section consisted of 2 parts : answer the questions with 10 multi-choice items and 10 items of completing the missing word. The test was to measure their ability in listening comprehension.

    2.2 The gap-filling test consisted of 20 items. The test was to measure their knowledge of the most suitable response to each expression.

    2.3 The reading part consisted of three reading passages. The entire reading section consisted of 20 multiple- choice items. The tests were checked for content validity, ambiguity and correctness of language by one native-English speaking teacher and one Thai English teacher from the English Program, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University.

3. The questionnaire consisted of two parts : 1) personal information and 2) twenty items of a 4-rating-scale questionnaire adapted from Willing, K. (1988). Part one was used to find out personal information and part two was used to survey the opinions of students on learning English.

4. The self-Assessment form, a four-rating scale form, was used for the students to assess their English proficiency before and after they learned English by the Teaching-Learning Cycle. The assessment form consisted of 10 topics (units) with four-language-skill assessment.

5. Lesson plans for the experimental group were constructed on the basis of the objectives and goals of the English Program, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University. There were 10 lesson plans of English for Communication. Ten lesson plans were used in ten weeks and each week took 3 periods. The guideline was adapted from "Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating" by Burn, A. (1991) adapted from Callaghan and Rothery, (1988).

Data Collection

Data were collected from the students of the Mathematics Program at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham university in 2/2003.The data collection took thirteen weeks including midterm and final examination. The data were results of English linguistic ability achievement test and questionnaires on their opinions towards learning English. The data of English linguistic ability achievement were collected from the scores of the listening, speaking, reading, writing tests and ongoing assessment. The data was calculated, tabulated and analyzed by means of statistical procedures. The data of the opinions towards learning English were collected by the completed questionnaires and self-assessment forms. This data were tabulated and analyzed by means of statistical procedures.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of the results of an English linguistic ability achievement test and questionnaires on their opinions towards learning English. The arithmetic mean was used to provide the average scores of pre-test and post-test for the experimental group. The standard deviation was used to show the variation of scores. The t-test was used to determine whether there was any significant difference between the achievement of pre-test scores and post-test scores. And the Cronbach's Alpha was determined by SPSS to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaires.

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Results

The results of this research were as follows :

Table 1 Comparison between the average score of pre-test and post-test of English linguistic ability achievement of the experimental group, 4th -year students of the Mathematics Program, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University. (N = 21)

Scores	M	S.D.	df	t	Sig.
Pre-test	36.09	8.41			***
			21	9.18	0.00
Post-test	48.27	12.24			

All twenty-one students took a pre-test and post-test of English linguistic ability achievement. The average score of pre-test and post-test was 36.09 and 48.27. The average score of pre-test and post-test of all students was significantly different.

Table 2 Comparison of the average opinions of all students towards learning English before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle. (N = 21)

Average Opinions	M	S.D.
Before learning by the TLC	2.80	.57
After learning by the TLC	3.16	.71

The research result revealed that the average opinion of the students toward learning English after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle was higher than before teaching by the TLC. The students wanted to be introduced new vocabularies, evaluated their progress, corrected their errors by a teacher and they also wanted to study in pairs or groups.

Table 3 Comparison of the average scores of self-assessment of English proficiency of the students before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle. (N = 21)
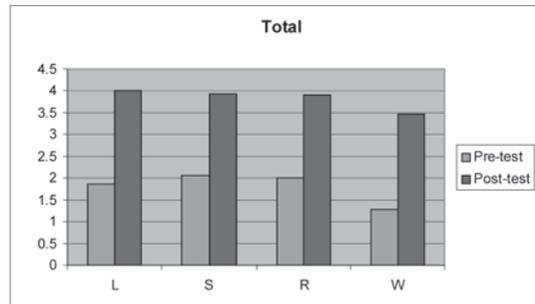
Average Opinions	M	S.D.
Before teaching by the TLC	1.81	.99
After teaching by the TLC	3.73	.57

The research results revealed that the average score of self-assessment of English proficiency of the students after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle was higher than before teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle.

In regard to the instructor, it was found that the average opinion of the students toward the instructor was high. They were satisfied with the up-to-date teaching material and teaching methodology.

Graph 1

Graph 1 Comparison of the average scores of self-assessment of English skills of the students before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle.

The research results indicated that the average scores of self-assessment of English skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, of all students after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle were higher than before teaching by the TLC.

Discussions

This paper discusses only the results of the English achievement, the opinions of students towards learning English and the results of self-assessment of English proficiency before and after teaching by the Teaching -Learning Cycle.

The average score of the post-test of English linguistic ability achievement was significantly higher than the pre-test score. The result may be caused by the efficient learning model. The Teaching-Learning Cycle focuses on a learning process through its four stages. Moreover, the language and content are used in daily life and learners are also provided an opportunity to practice language in communicative situations. Galloway (1993) has asserted that contents and learning activities for communication should be related to daily life and provide students with communicative purposes. Nunan (1991) claims that efficient communicative activities should provide students with an opportunity to interact with language as much as possible.

The average degree of the opinions towards learning English after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle is higher than the opinions before teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle. The result may be caused by the meaningful learning activities. The activities have been designed based on the principles of learner-centered approach, and the learning activities were arranged sequentially and systematically.

The average scores of self-assessment in English proficiency and the four English skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle were higher than before teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle. The well-prepared tasks and activities may have affected their self-assessment of English proficiency. The activities were designed based on the principles of the learner-centered approach, and the learning activities were arranged in an orderly and systematic manner. The study is also continuing research from çA Study on English Learning Style and Learning Strategies of students at Rajabhat Maha Sarakham Universityé by Sopa (1999). It is obvious that the content and learning activities have been designed based on the learners' need. Nunan (1992) has asserted that good language teachers should consider background knowledge, learning styles and strategies and attitude of learners before designing learning tasks or activities.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The study has shown the English achievement of the students before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle was significantly different at the .01 level. In regard to the self-assessment of English skills, it indicated that the average scores of the students before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle were different. The average opinions of the students before and after teaching by the Teaching-Learning Cycle toward

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the English and the instructor who taught English by the Teaching-Learning Cycle were different.

The result indicates that the Teaching-Learning Cycle is an efficient learning model focusing on a learning process to improve language skills through the four stages and each activity of the four stages continuously supports another activity. The learning model may be applied in a language class. Language teachers can design their English lesson and activities by following the principles of the Teaching-Learning Cycle. Moreover, authentic assessment is important to assess the communicative competency, and an ongoing assessment should be used in language classes to measure learners' progress. An interactive learning model, or web-based instruction should be also further studied based on the principles of the Teaching-Learning Cycle. Many learners want to improve their English, but they encounter the problems of time, distance and also budget. Distance learning should be another choice.

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