

Task-Based Language Teaching in Education in ASEAN Course for Student Teachers Mathematics English Program

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Abstract

Education in ASEAN means the course for students, learn about the evolution of education management, analyze the curriculum, teaching and learning of the countries in ASEAN and students are required to use English in this course. The objectives of this research were to study the achievement, to study the students' language ability, and to study the attitudes towards on learning by Task-based Language Teaching. The research samples were 21 third year Mathematics English Program students from Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University under the Royal Patronage in the second semester of the 2017 academic year. The design of this study was the one group pretest-posttest design. Tools used in this research were Task-based Language Teaching Lesson plans, English language test, the achievement test and the attitudes towards questionnaire. Time taken for this experiment was 36 hours. From evaluating the knowledge of students on the Education in ASEAN by using Task-based Language Teaching, students had the average score from total 50 scores in pretest and in the achievement test equal to 15.61, and 38.19 respectively. The students had the average language ability score from total 60 scores in pretest and posttest equal to 15.90, and 43.85 respectively. After the study, the students had better achievement and had gained abilities in vocabulary, grammar and speak English for communication. Students have a very positive attitude and they are highly satisfied toward learning by Task-based Language Teaching. The highest level and high level of their satisfaction stand at 80.95, and 19.05 respectively.

Keywords: task-based language teaching

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Introduction

From past to present, teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has had a positive impact on most Thai students' English skills. Most students have opportunities to learn and practice their language skills only in their classrooms, which is one of the important reasons why they lack opportunities to practice their English in real life situations. It is evident that the provision of opportunities for students to practice their language skills is extremely scarce. Worse still, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that teachers have a limited time to lay the foundation on which students' grammatical knowledge is built. Despite the fact that Thai students nowadays have more opportunities to practice their English by themselves due to their access to technology and the Internet, the problem found among them is the lack of their basic speaking skills, which is instrumentally important in communication. According to the author's direct experience in teaching English program's students at the university level, one of the responses that often comes out of these university students is "they understand what is said, but do not know how to either respond to questions or explain in English." This response is indicative of the inadequacy of the time spent on practicing their speaking skills inside and outside of their classrooms, despite them having learnt English since elementary school.

The Ministry of Education has since been aware of this existing problem and announced the reform of the English teaching and learning geared towards Thailand's education, so as to enable students to utilize the English language in communication and as an instrument to seek more knowledge in the foreseeable future.

According to the abovementioned policy, it has urged the university to plan their lessons by focusing more on communication. A teaching approach, which focused on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, was changed into that which now focuses on communication skills in real life situations based on the contexts, topics, and roles of concerned parties.

According to the abovementioned methods, they demonstrate that communication-based language teaching does not create teaching methods itself; however, it is a language teaching guideline that could lead to other various teaching methods such as Content-Based Instruction and Task-Based Language Teaching. Content-Based Instruction is a language teaching approach that encourages the use of a target language as an instrument in a variety of subjects. With regard to Task-Based Language Teaching, it is a language teaching approach that focuses on communication which varies according to particular tasks. Students will be able to practice four English skills. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) talked about the Task-based Language Teaching functions as an exemplary teaching method that clearly focuses on communication as students can apply their language skills to real life situations. In other words, students are equipped with the desired skills, especially when they need to exercise them to successfully complete their anticipated tasks. Task-Based Language Teaching is regarded as an extremely appropriate method as it not only enables students to develop their language skills and have motivation to study English, but this teaching approach also focuses on the processes that allow teachers to apply it to students at all levels.

Model of Task-Based Language Teaching

Breen (1987) perceives tasks as “any structural language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task.”

Willis (1996) talked about the models of Task-based Language Teaching by outlining their three steps as follows:

1. Pre task: This is a step in which teachers will get their students ready before they carry out their tasks. For English language teaching during this step, teachers will elicit students’ previous knowledge of grammar and vocabulary germane to the content, after which they will teach them vocabulary and grammar that they need to use to complete their tasks. If students are good memorizing grammar and vocabulary, finishing tasks will be easier. Therefore, if teachers realize that students have limited English proficiency, they must spend more time on this step.

2. Task cycle: This step allows students an opportunity to put their knowledge acquired in the first step into practice to carry out their assigned tasks. Each task may be assigned to either a pair or a group of students so that they can practice working with other students and attempt to be responsible for their assigned tasks. Task cycle can be divided into three 3 sub-steps as follows:

2.1 Carrying out tasks: Teachers will divide students into groups to complete their tasks within the specified timeframe. They will notify their students of when time is up and ask them to divide their duties within their groups to prepare for the presentation of their reports. While students carry out their tasks, teachers are tasked to monitor and make note of students’ use of language. If students need language-related assistance, they can ask their teachers.

2.2 Planning presentation of reports: When students run out of time to finish their tasks, they can share their responsibilities to prepare for the presentation of their reports.

2.3 Presenting reports: Students prepare the presentation of their reports in groups by using the vocabulary and structure of language that they study in the first step. While students present their reports, teachers will monitor and make note of their use of language for future reference.

3. Post task or language focus: It is the last step in Task-based Language Teaching as it will take place after students present their reports. It can be categorized into two sub-steps as follows:

3.1 Language Analysis: Teachers will bring their information on students’ use of language and write them on the whiteboard so that students can revise and examine the accuracy of their use of language. Afterwards, if there are still any errors, teachers will correct them. Again, if students have further questions, teachers can also elaborate further. Students will then note the vocabulary and structure of language in their books.

3.2 Skills Practice: This is a step in which teachers will allow students to practice their language skills by using new vocabulary.

In the aforementioned context of teaching learning, researcher has provided the lesson plan and activities in relation to Task-based Language Teaching by based on English in the course of Education in ASEAN.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were as follows.

1. To study the achievement.
2. To study the students' language ability.
3. To study the attitudes towards on learning by Task-based Language Teaching.

Sample

The research samples were 21 third year Mathematics English Program students from Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University under the Royal Patronage in the second semester of the 2017 academic year.

Content

This research aimed to study the achievement in the course of Education in ASEAN. The course is offered in Bachelor of Education, learn about the evolution of education management, analyze the curriculum, teaching and learning of the countries in ASEAN and students are required to use English in this course.

Variables

Independent variables include the activity of Task-based Language Teaching on Education in ASEAN course.

Dependent variables include;

1. The students' achievement.
2. The students' language ability.
3. The attitudes towards on learning by Task-based Language Teaching.

Methodology

The design of this study was the one group pretest-posttest design.

Research tools

Tools used in this research were Task-based Language Teaching Lesson plans, English language test, the achievement test and the attitudes towards questionnaire.

Data collection

Data was collected by researcher, applied Task-based Language Teaching in real classroom with the students who attended the course of Education in ASEAN in the second semester of the 2017 academic year. Time taken for this experiment was 36 hours. Before the learning, students were required to evaluate the knowledge on the

Education in ASEAN and language ability. The activity was divided into two parts. The first part provided the general information, the basis of the education system of countries in ASEAN and the knowledge framework of Task-based Language Teaching to students in order to make a clear understand. The students were allowed to ask questions when they had an understanding of the framework and principles of Task-based Language Teaching. The second part was the learning activities by using Task-based Language Teaching. Three steps of learning by using Task-based Language Teaching were Step 1 Pre task, Step 2 Task cycle; divided into three sub-steps including carrying out tasks, planning presentation of reports and presentation of reports and Step 3 Post task; divided into two sub-steps including language analysis and skills practice. After the learning had been finished, students were required to take the English language test, the achievement test and the attitudes towards questionnaire.

Data analysis

With regard to the analysis of data, researcher analyzed the achievement test, English language test, and the attitudes towards questionnaire by using basic statistics in finding frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Conclusion and discussion

From evaluating the knowledge of students on the Education in ASEAN and language ability by using Task-based Language Teaching, it was found that the students had the average of the achievement after studying is higher than before. From total scores 50, the average score in pretest is 15.61 whereas in the achievement test equals to 38.19. The average of the language ability of students from total scores 60, the average score in pretest is 15.90 whereas in posttest is 43.85. The students had better achievement and gained abilities in vocabulary, grammar and English for communication. They had more ability to learn and use English language to communicate after Task-based Language Teaching was introduced to the classroom. Task-based Language Teaching was a teaching method that allowed students to practice their language skills and learn through their groups. In addition, not only could they practice their language, but they could also exercise a variety of other necessary skills. Students were also more enthusiastic about participating in activities, trying harder to communicate in English, despite stumbling upon difficult vocabulary. Skehan (1996) said that, Task-based Language Teaching is an attempt to address one of the dilemmas of language teaching how, on the one hand, to confront the need to engage naturalistic learning process, while, on the other, to allow the pedagogic process to be managed in systematic manner. Students were highly attitudes toward learning by using Task-based Language Teaching. The highest level of their satisfaction stands at 80.95 and high level of their satisfaction stands at 19.05. Because they were allowed to learn, design, and plan the presentation of their reports on their own. These made them easier to understand the contents and found that Task-based Language Teaching enabled them to develop their English proficiency in vocabulary, grammar and speak English in communication. Huang (2016) studied about the Application of Task-based Language Teaching Method in a Comprehensive English Class in China, The results revealed that the majority of the students recognized a positive relation of Task-based Language Teaching to their motivation for English study in terms of an enhanced interest in and enjoyment of the language itself, more active participation in

classroom activities and strengthened study autonomy as indicated by the increased time spent on preparation for and completion for tasks. Most students also identified a growth in their language skills, especially their speaking and writing skills, information retrieval abilities, and a better understanding of cultures due to the communicative nature of the approach.

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