

Using Communicative Activities to Enhance English Speaking Skills of The First-Year High Vocational Students at Prachinburi Technical College

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Abstracts

This research aimed 1) to improve speaking skills achievement of first-year high vocational students at Prachinburi Technical College using communicative language activities, and 2) to investigate students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities. The quasi-experimental with one-group pretest-posttest to examine the students' speaking skills was employed in this research. The participants were 34 first-year high vocational students who enrolled in English for communication course in the first semester, in the Academic year of 2022. Four research instruments were implemented: 1) pre-test and post-test, 2) seven lesson plans with 4 topics, 3) speaking evaluation form, and 4) questionnaire. The purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed using mean average, standard deviation, and dependent t-test. The satisfactory questionnaire data was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. The results were found that: 1) the difference between the pre-test and post-test after using communicative language activities, the students' speaking skills were significantly different ($sig = 0.00, p < 0.05$). The average mean score of students' post-tests (13.15) was higher than the pre-test (7.88), 2) The students' satisfactions towards using communicative language teaching was high with an overall average of 4.40 and the standard deviation was 0.49. According to the results, using communicative language activities is effective in enhancing students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Communicative Language Activities; English Speaking Skills; High Vocational Student

Introduction

“The 21st century is the world of information technology”; the internet has changed the world to be “the global village”. People all around the world can learn from each other through social media as they are in the same places. According to P21 one of the core subjects is English which is essential for learners in the 21st Century. Nowadays, English is the international language for communication and it is an important tool to communicate in all aspects of global society, business, education, technology, medication, entertainment, and so on. And also, many companies use English as an official language, and English ability is required when applying for work. Especially speaking skills that are more important than other aspects, people worldwide communicate by speaking English. Therefore, it can be said that English-speaking skills become an important tool for communication in a global society, students should have more opportunities to speak English, and they should be provided simulation in speaking English in their classroom to enhance their English-speaking skills to prepare them to get more opportunities on their future job or any chance in their life.

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English for communication is one of the compulsory subjects for first-year high vocational students, which are expected to communicate daily with other people. According to English is the standard language for people to speak to others who speak English for many purposes. And also, In the world, many countries use English as a medium of communication

According to the Vocational Education Commission curriculum for certificate students in 6 semesters, English subjects are provided with 6 credits, 1 credit for each semester. Regarding English subjects which have been implemented every semester, thus students are expected to be able to speak English fluently and accurately.

Currently, first-year high vocational students, who were the certificate students last semester and provided to study English subjects with 6 credits still cannot speak English as expected, they cannot respond in English, they cannot ask in English though they have some questions, they cannot even use classroom language which is simple sentences with the teacher. They always keep silent when the teacher asks questions as they have no opportunity to speak English in their everyday life or even in their classroom. Moreover, they always speak Thai to their classmates and teachers in English classrooms. In addition, activities in English classrooms do not support them to speak English as they should be. They are provided with studying from books, more writing, and reading than speaking, and they lack encouragement and self-confidence to speak English as same as stated that the most important language skill that is used in everyday life is speaking but for Thai students, their English-speaking skills are very low. According to students in an EFL classroom cannot use English in real-life situations. Lack of self-confidence and avoid communicating with foreigners as they are unable to communicate appropriately and correctly. If this phenomenon continues, it is difficult to get opportunities required for people who can speak English as Harahap, Ramadani, Sanuisi, Sinaga, & Tampubolon (2021:8) pointed out that students who are not being able to speak English will encounter difficulty in finding work.

According to the reason stated above, the researcher has been interested in the development of English-speaking skills by using communicative language activities to enhance the English-speaking skills of first-year high vocational students at Prachinburi Technical College.

Research Objectives

The research aims to fulfill the two following purposes.

1. To improve speaking skills achievement of first-year high vocational students at Prachinburi Technical College using communicative language activities.
2. To investigate students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities.

Research Methodology

This research used the quasi-experimental with one-group pretest-posttest to examine the students' speaking skills before and after using communicative activities. This chapter presents the research methodology which includes four parts: (1) research population; (2) research instruments; (3) data collection; and (5) data analysis.

Table 1 Research Design

O ₁	X	O ₂
Pre-test: Ten questions with 4 picture cards.	Treatment: Three communicative language activities were implemented according to the seven lesson plans.	Post-test: The same Ten questions with 4 picture cards.

1. Research Participants: The participants were 36 first-year high vocational students who enrolled in English for communication course at Prachinburi Technical College, in the Academic year 2022. They were selected by using the purposive sampling method.

2. Research Instruments: There are four research instruments in this research.

2.1 Pre-test and post-test with 10 questions and 4 picture cards.

2.2 Seven lesson plans with 4 topics including asking and giving personal information, asking and giving directions, talking about the weather, and telling the time.

2.3 A speaking evaluation form was adapted from *Testing English as a Second Language* which consists of four aspects:

- pronunciation
- grammar and vocabulary
- fluency
- comprehension

Each aspect was evaluated on five rating scores ranking from 1- 5 (least - highest).

This form was created to evaluate students' speaking skills before and after using communicative activities.

2.4 A questionnaire was adapted from Phisutthangkoon (2012:54) which was created to investigate students' satisfaction towards using communicative activities. There were 10 Likert-type items including five points rating scale as follows:

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

Additionally, all research instruments were validated and piloted with 10 first-year high vocational students before implementing and inspected the validity by three experts which resulted in a high degree of congruence at.....

3. Data collection

3.1 A pretest was provided to the students to evaluate their speaking skills.

3.2 7 lesson plans with communicative language activities were used in an English classroom with 36 students.

3.3 A post-test was provided after using communicative language activities.

3.4 The satisfaction questionnaire with 10 questions was conducted.

3.5 The data and statistical analysis were calculated by SPSS.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed using mean average, standard deviation, and dependent t-test.

4.2 The satisfactory questionnaire data was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale as follows:

4.51 – 5.00 Excellent
3.51 - 4.50 Very Good
2.51 - 3.50 Good
1.51 - 2.50 Fair
1.00 - 1.50 Poor

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research includes the theory of communicative language teaching, communicative activities, and speaking skills as follows.

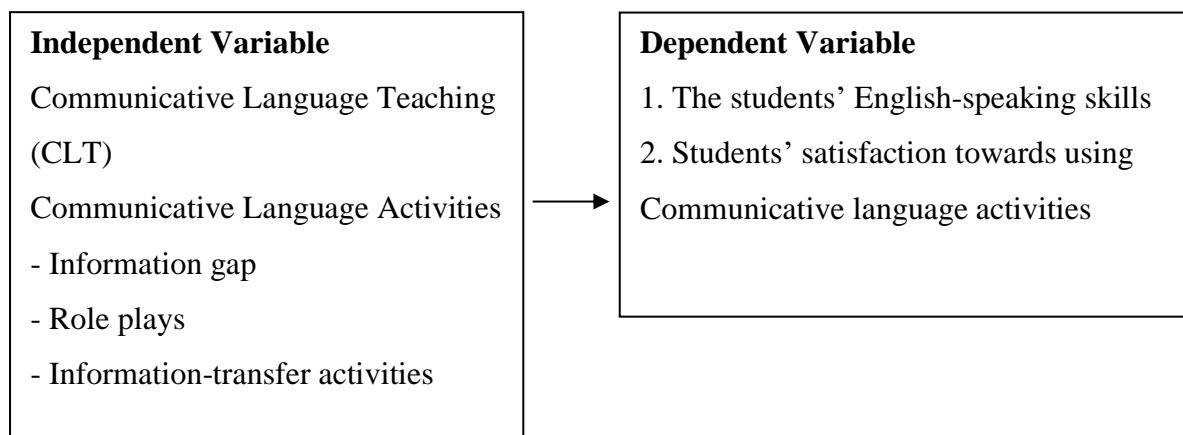


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results

This section shows the data analysis of using communicative language activities to enhance speaking skills. The participants were 34 first-year high vocational students in the Academic year of 2022 at Prachinburi Technical College. The results were presented as follows:

Table 4.1 The comparison of mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	13.15	34	2.664	.457
Pretest	7.88	34	2.772	.475

Table 4.1 shows the result of the comparison of mean scores before using and after using communicative language activities. The achievement scores of the post-test were higher than the pre-test.

Table 4.2 The comparison of achievement

Paired Samples Test									
Paired Differences									
		Std. Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Posttest - Pretest	5.265	2.005	.344	4.565	5.964	15.313	33	.000

Table 4.2 shows the comparison of mean scores before and after using communicative language activities. The pre-test and post-test achievement scores are significantly different at 0.05. The different mean scores of the post-test and the pretest were 5.265, the t-test was 15.313 and the standard deviation was 2.005.

Table 4.3 The mean scores and SD scores of the students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities

The students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Communicative activities are interesting.	4.59	0.49	Excellent
2. Communicative activities can encourage me to speak English.	4.44	0.50	Very Good
3. Communicative activities help me to improve my English-speaking abilities.	4.41	0.49	Very Good
4. Communicative activities help me to understand the conversation.	4.24	0.42	Very Good
5. Communicative activities help me to improve my vocabulary.	4.26	0.44	Very Good
6. Communicative activities help me to improve my pronunciation.	4.38	0.49	Very Good
7. I enjoy communicative activities in class.	4.38	0.49	Very Good
8. I have more confidence to speak English after I participated in communicative activities.	4.21	0.58	Very Good
9. I have more chances to speak English in communicative activities.	4.47	0.50	Very Good

10. Communicative activities help me speak English more fluently and with accuracy.	4.65	0.48	Excellent
Average	4.40	0.49	Very Good

Table 4.3 shows the student's satisfaction after using communicative language activities. The overall average was 4.40 which demonstrated that students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities at a high level. The question number 10; communicative activities help me speak English more fluently and with accuracy and the question number 1; communicative activities are interesting were the questions that the students gave the highest score at 4.65 and 4.59. The question number 8; I have more confidence to speak English after I participated in communicative activities was the question that the students gave the lowest score at 4.21. Moreover, the students gave the opinion about using communicative language activities that these activities helped them study without stress and made them relax while doing activities with friends.

Discussions

The research aimed 1) to improve the speaking skills achievement of first-year high vocational students at Prachinburi Technical College using communicative language activities, and 2) to investigate students' satisfaction towards using communicative language activities. The conclusions and discussions are as follows:

The Difference between the Students' Speaking Scores on the Pre-test and Post-test

The results of this research indicated that the difference between the pre-test and post-test after using communicative language activities, the students' speaking skills were significantly different (sig = 0.00, p<0.05). The average mean score of students' post-tests (13.15) was higher than the pre-test (7.88). According to the results, the students' speaking skills were improved after using communicative language activities. As there are different types of activities to provide them with opportunities to improve their speaking skills in the target language and especially their self-confidence. Similar to Pariyanuch and Natthicha (2017), students speaking skills were improved because of using communicative language activities.

Students' Satisfaction towards Using Communicative Activities

The results of this research revealed the overall average was 4.40 and the standard deviation was 0.49. According to the student's satisfaction towards using communicative language activities in the classroom, the highest mean score was item 10 (M = 4.65, S.D. = 0.48); communicative activities help me speak English more fluently and with accuracy and followed by item 1 (M = 4.59, S.D. = 0.49); communicative activities are interesting. Due to these results, it can be implied that using communicative language activities provided the students with great opportunities to speak English to each other and the activities also helped them speak fluently and with accuracy. Moreover, the activities are interesting because there are many activities that provided them to talk, discuss, and do activities with friends. Likewise, Muhassin (2016) revealed that the students give positive satisfaction in using communicative activities in the teaching-learning process.

Recommendation

Suggestions for further studies

These recommendations might be beneficial for English teachers and researchers who are interested in implementing communicative language activities in the classroom.

1. Listening and speaking skills should be improved in a classroom at the same time.
2. Interviews should be included in research instruments to correct in-depth information.
3. Communicative language activities should be implemented in ESP courses.

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