

A Development of English Listening and Speaking Skills Through Natural Approach for Grade 9 Students at Watsidok School, Phrae

Pornsawan Kaewthammanukul¹ and Henry Yuh Anchunda²

Naresuan University^{1,2}

Corresponding Author, E-mail: Pornsawanka64@nu.ac.th

Abstract

The objectives of this research were 1) to compare the English listening and speaking skills of grade 9 students after using Natural Approach with the A2 level of the CEFR. 2) to study the satisfaction of grade 9 students on using the Natural Approach.

This research was an experimental research with the one-shot case study design. The samples were purposively selected class of 13 ninth grade students at Watsidok School, Phare Province during the second semester of the academic year 2022. The research instruments were: 1) 6 lesson plans using the Natural Approach. 2) 4 sections of the English listening and speaking assessment test and 3) the students' satisfaction questionnaire on the Natural Approach. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and percentage.

The research results showed that 1) students' English listening and speaking skills after using the Natural Approach are at the A2 level (39.48%) of the CEFR. 2) the satisfaction of grade 9 students on the Natural Approach was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.51$, S.D.= 0.63).

Keywords: Natural Approach; English Listening Skill

* ได้รับบทความ: 6 มีนาคม 2566; แก้ไขบทความ: 28 เมษายน 2566; ตอรับตีพิมพ์: 22 มิถุนายน 2566

Received: 6 March 2023; Revised: 28 April 2023; Accepted: 22 June 2023

Introduction

English has become an international language because it is the lingua franca of global communication. Rao (2019) explains that English is the first language for the majority of the population in several countries, over 375 million people use English as their first language and the over 750 million people worldwide use English as a second language. In addition, English is the official language of nearly 70 countries and the main language in many states around the world. Moreover, Dusadee Rangseechatchawan (2019) claims that it is the 21st century era in nowadays, the world has developed rapidly in terms of economy, society and technology, especially in communication due to the use of technology Allow people to communicate without borders. For this reason, it is necessary to learn English. Not only to be used in communication, but also in education. Learning English can promote understanding of a variety of languages, cultures and world views, which allows learners to access various knowledge more easily and more widely, and have a vision of living in today's society very well (Chayapon Chomchaiya et al., 2022).

However, a study of the English skills of Thai students in different areas has revealed that most Thai students have very low English skills. Education First has released the results of the English Proficiency Index for 2021, which shows that Thailand ranks 100th out of 112 countries that do not use English as a formal language. (EF English Proficiency Index, 2021). Most of the problems that affect the use of English can occur because the language learning process does not follow the language learning principles that start with listening and speaking. Mintra Puripunyanich (Cited in BBC News Thailand, 2018) explains that most Thai teachers use a language teaching curriculum that mainly focuses on grammatical structures instead of focusing on learners using English to communicate. By teaching English in this way, students often do not realize the importance of using English to communicate and lack motivation to learn English. As a result, students are unable to improve their English listening and speaking skills as they should. For these reasons, these are all problems and obstacles that affect students' learning of English in various skills, whether reading or writing.

From observing and researching behavior while teaching English courses at Watsridok School, it was discovered that grade 9 students could not communicate effectively in English and had communication skills below the A2 level of the CEFR. In the 2021 school year, grade 9 students have an average score of 29.12 points in language for communication, which is lower than the national average of 30.74 (National Educational Testing Service, 2022). As an English teacher, the researcher tries to investigate and explore acceptable ways and methods to develop learners' English language skills, especially listening and speaking skills, that would enable learners to have communication skills at the A2 level or above and follow the CEFR criteria for Thai students in grade 9.

The researcher has studied approaches and found that the "Natural Approach" is a teaching approach that was developed based on the theory of perception from Stephen D. Krashen's Second Language Method and Terrell's Natural Method. The Natural Approach is one of the concepts that emphasizes the development of communication skills by emphasizing listening skills first. The learners may not be able to speak or write in the early stages. It is a gradual approach to teaching when listening to information in a language or comprehensible input that can be understood. When the learner is ready, they will be able to speak and communicate on their own. It is a teaching approach that focuses on teaching the meaning of words and phrases rather than grammar rules. It is also a teaching approach that focuses on providing a friendly, relaxed, and stress-free classroom atmosphere. To encourage learners to develop a good attitude, confidence and reduce anxiety in the use of the language for learners (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Therefore, this Natural Approach is suitable for language teaching for learners who want to improve their listening and speaking skills for communication. For these reasons, the researcher is interested in a Natural Approach to encourage grade 9 students at Watsidok School, to have effective listening and speaking skills for communicating with a positive attitude toward learning English.

Research Objectives

1. To compare English listening and speaking skills of grade 9 students after using Natural Approach with the A2 level of the CEFR.
2. To study satisfaction of grade 9 students on using the Natural Approach.

Research Methods

This study was an experimental research. The study was conducted and developed using the following research methodology steps.

Participants

The participants of this study are 13 students who are a purposive sampling selected from ninth grade students who are studying in the second semester of 2022 from Watsridok School, Phrae Province.

Research instruments

The research instruments consist of 1) 6 lesson plans using the Natural Approach. 2) 4 sections of the English listening and speaking assessment test and 3) the students' satisfaction questionnaire on the Natural Approach. And these research instruments were designed and developed as follows:

1. The lesson plans by using Natural Approach.

The researcher analyzed related approaches, authentic and learning principles, learning steps, and learning curriculum to design and develop the Natural Approach lesson plans. Then, the lesson plans were validated by experts using a 5 point rating scale. Each item of the lesson plan that failed to elicit its objective was revised.

2. The English listening and speaking assessment test.

The researcher studied and analyzed the related English listening and speaking assessment tests that have been conducted by Anchunda and Kaewurai (2021) in order to design and develop the Natural Approach English listening and speaking assessment test. The Natural Approach English listening and speaking assessment test consists of 4 sections.

There is a section for picture description, conversation, interview, and role play. Next, the researcher also studied and analyzed a scoring rubric that conducted by Anchunda and Kaewurai (2021), which was used to evaluate the English listening and speaking skills. Both the English listening and speaking test and a scoring rubric were validated by experts using IOC. Any item that failed to elicit its objective was revised.

3. Students' satisfaction questionnaire on Natural Approach.

The researcher studied and analyzed related to design and development of the students' satisfaction questionnaire on Natural Approach. The students' satisfaction questionnaire consists of 10 items in which the respondents indicate their level of agreement to a statement usually in five points: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. The student satisfaction questionnaire was validated by experts using IOC. Any statement in the questionnaire that failed to elicit its objective was revised.

Data collection

1. The researcher introduced the implementation of the Natural Approach to the students.

2. During the Natural Approach implementation process, students were given three stages of Natural Approach lessons. A pre-production stage is the first stage, which is the stage of developing students' listening skills. The following stage is early production, which is the stage of developing students' listening and speaking skills. And the last stage, Speech-emergent phase stage, the stage of developing students' full listening and speaking skills.

3. After the Natural Approach implementation process, the students rated their personal satisfaction level on the students' satisfaction questionnaire. Then, the English listening and speaking skills Test was assessed and evaluated by three English experts from Watsridok school

4. The researcher collected and analyzed the data.

Data analysis

For different sections of the English listening and speaking assessment test, a scoring rubric with a rating scale of 1-5 was employed. which were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation (S.D.), and percentage. The percentage of listening and speaking scores is used to compare English listening and speaking skills with the CEFR level, whereas the students' satisfaction questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation (S.D.).

Research Results

1. The result of studying and comparing English listening and speaking skills of grade 9 students after using Natural Approach with the A2 level of the CEFR.

Table1 Comparison of students' listening and speaking skills after using Natural Approach with the CEFR level.

Test sections	n	scores	\bar{x}	S.D.	percentage	CEFR level
Picture description	13	20	8.48	2.36	42.44	B1
Conversation	13	20	8.05	2.51	40.25	B1
Interview	13	20	7.74	2.62	38.70	A2
Role-play	13	20	7.30	2.56	36.53	A2
total	13	20	7.89	2.60	39.48	A2

The results show that grade 9 students had an average listening and speaking test score of 7.89 (S.D=2.50) which is 39.45% after using the Natural Approach. When the listening and speaking scores were compared with the level of the CEFR, it was found that the grade 9 students had average English listening and speaking skills after using the Natural Approach at the level of A2

2. The results of the satisfaction of grade 9 students on using the Natural

Table 2 The average level of students' satisfaction on using Natural Approach

Students' satisfaction	n	\bar{x}	S.D	level
total	13	4.51	0.63	highest

The results revealed that the satisfaction of grade 9 students on using the Natural Approach were at highest level (\bar{x} = 4.51, S.D = 0.63).

Discussion of Research Findings

1. The result of studying and comparing English listening and speaking skills of grade 9 students after using Natural Approach with the A2 level of the CEFR.

The result of using Natural Approach to develop English listening and speaking skills showed that all students in the experimental group were at the A2 level of CEFR, which is the level of grade 9 students. This is a reflection that using Natural Approach was effective enough to develop students' English listening and speaking skills. Due to the teaching method, the steps of the Natural Approach are followed. That is, 1. The pre-production stage, which is the stage of developing listening comprehension skills. 2. The early production stage is the stage of developing speaking skills. Students have to produce some language in the form of single words and short phrases. 3. The speech emergence stage is one of extending production into longer stretches of discourse and encourages students have to give the singular words and short phrases will transform into longer ones a speech (STEVIE, 2022). The findings also consisted of the study conducted by Amiruddin (2020) whose study on "The Effectiveness of Natural Approach on Language Learning in Higher Education" found out that the students in higher education with a Natural Approach have better English proficiency levels than those who are not. It is more effective than conventional approaches, methods, etc. in improving the English language proficiency level in higher education. It is also consistent with a study on " The Effectiveness of Using Natural Approach to Improve Students' Interaction Ability at The Second Grade of Sman 4 Pinrang" conducted by Lestary and Sani (2018), where the results showed that using Natural Approach, students could participate in

performing instructions and conveying responses during teaching and learning process. These descriptions can show the effectiveness of using Natural Approach to improve students' interaction ability.

2. The results of the satisfaction of grade 9 students on using Natural Approach.

The students' satisfaction on using the Natural Approach in the experimental group was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.51$), which means that the students expressed responded positively to the use of the Natural Approach to develop their English listening and speaking skills. The reasons for this high satisfaction and positive feedback were that the students directly grasped the Natural Approach and enjoyed it because they were taught in an interesting and appropriate way. The teaching materials used included a variety of activities such as games, quizzes, etc. Natural Approach also provided a classroom environment that was familiar to the learners and appropriate to their conditions. Anchunda and Kaewurai (2021) states that doing language activities that students are comfortable with can enhance their language learning. By reducing anxiety and stress, students will feel more at ease in the classroom. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Phimthip Duangjit (2018) on the topic of "The Development of Listening and Speaking of Performance and Satisfaction Grade Five Students Taught Through a Computer Assisted Program Based on the Natural Approach," which claimed that the students who were taught through this approach had a high level of overall satisfaction. Furthermore, it is also consistent with a study on "Development of English Listening-Speaking Skills through Natural Approach for Prathomsuksa 2 Students Sahakornnikomklua School" conducted by Wichet Suapoomee (2020), where the results showed that students satisfied with the use of Natural Approach at high levels.

Based on the results and explanation of the research, it can be concluded that the use of the Natural Approach was effective in developing the English listening and speaking skills of students at the A2 level of the CEFR. This Natural Approach supports and provides opportunities for students to express their listening and speaking skills without hesitation in communication. In addition, the Natural Approach increases students' satisfaction with English language learning because it provides students with interesting

and appropriate activities and the results of satisfaction questionnaires were at the highest level. Therefore, using the Natural Approach is one of the approaches that effectively improves students' English listening and speaking skills in a different way than usual.

Suggestions

1. Recommendations for Application

1.1 The Natural Approach includes a variety of activities to improve listening and speaking skills in English. Before starting the activities, the learner should be given an explanation and demonstration so that all learners understand the rules and the process of the activities. In order to carry out the learning activities successfully in accordance with the learning objectives.

1.2 There are several activities in a Natural Approach class. The planning of activities for each activity must consider its appropriateness and practicality in relation to the duration.

2. Recommendations for Further Research

2.1 To make the evaluation of English listening and speaking skills more efficient, one of the English experts should be an English native speaker.

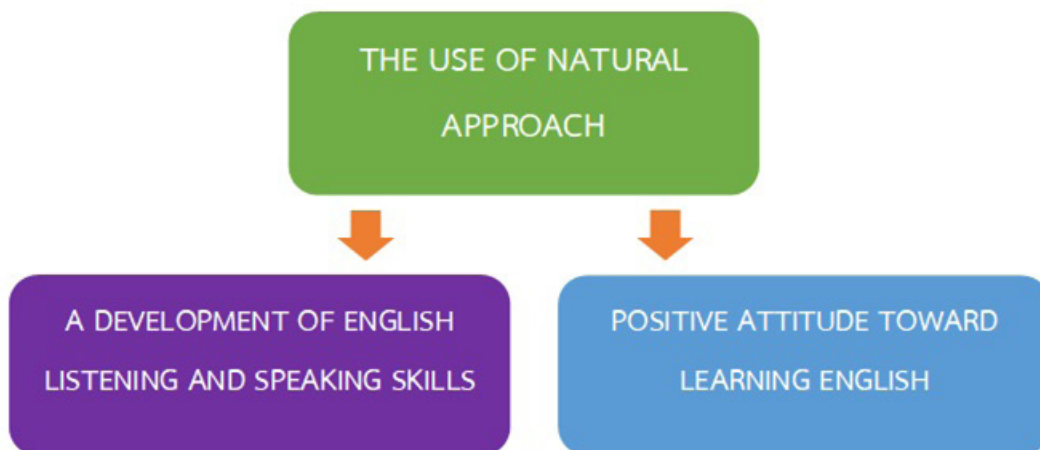
2.2 The further research should be conducted on the development of English listening and speaking skills through Natural Approach in other grade participants.

2.3 The further research should be conducted to compare the development of English listening and speaking skills through Natural Approach with the development of English listening and speaking skills through other approaches.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

From the study of the development of English listening and speaking skills through Natural Approach for grade 9 students at Watsidok School, Phrae. The findings can be summarized as the students' English listening and speaking skills were successfully improved through the use of Natural Approach. This approach is beneficial and effective in encouraging and facilitating students to express their English listening and speaking

skills through communication with a positive attitude towards learning English. the diagram is as follows:



Picture 1 Originality and Body of Knowledge

References

- Amiruddin, M. (2020). The Effectiveness of Natural Approach on Language Learning in Higher Education. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 619, 120-129. Doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.211219.023
- Anchunda, H. Y., & Kaewurai, W. (2021). Instructional model development based on collaborative and communicative approaches to enhance lower secondary students' English-speaking skills in Thailand. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(2), 287-292.
- BBC News Thailand. (2018, November 5). Why have Thai people's English scores been so low for 8 years?. Retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-46093794>
- Chayapon Chomchaiya, Sirinya Pipatsrisawat, and Nutthaporn Owatnupat. (2022). English Communication Development by Using Self-Directed Learning. *Panyapiwat Journal*, 14(1), 347-361.

- Dusadee Rangseechatchawan. (2019). Developing English Instructional Model by Integrating Instructional Innovation to Promote 21st Century Skills (Research reports). Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Rajabhat University.
- EF English Proficiency Index. (2021). The world's largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills. Retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://www.ef.com/ca/epi/>
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. Oxford: Pergamon
- Lestary, D. and Sani, A. (2018). The Effectiveness of Using Natural Approach to Improve Students' Interaction Ability at The Second Grade of Sman 4 Pinrang. *Inspiring: English Education Journal*, 1(2), 87-102. Doi: 10.35905/inspiring.v1i2.842
- National Educational Testing Service. (2022). O-NET Test Results of Grade 9 in the Academic Year 2021. Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <http://www.newonetestresult.niets.or.th/AnnouncementWeb/Login.aspx>
- Phimthip Duangjit. (2017). The Development of Listening and Speaking of Performance and Satisfaction Grade Five Students Taught Through a Computer Assisted Program Based on the Natural Approach. *Prae-wa Kalasin Journal of Kalasin University*, 5(2), 277-294.
- Wichet Suapoommee (2020). Development of English Listening-Speaking Skills through Natural Approach for Prathomsuksa 2 Students Sahakornnikomklua School. *Journal of graduate studies Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University*, 5(2), 51-62 .
- Rao, P. S. (2019). The Role of English as a Global Language. *Research Journal of English (RJOE)*, 4(1), 65-79.
- STEVIE, D. (2022). Natural Approach to Language Learning. Retrieved January 17, 2022, from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/natural-approach-to-language-learning/>