Examining Students' Listening and Speaking Skills in Thai language after Using LINE Assisted Language Practice

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine students' listening and speaking skills performance after learning by LINE activities to improve listening and speaking skills in Thai language out-of-class. The subjects of this study were 108 participants took a Thai language and culture course at the international university in Thailand and participated in this research voluntarily. Two types of instruments were used in this study: experimental and data collection tools. The first was a LINE application and the second was pre-test and post-test of listening and speaking skills in Thai language. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and t-test. The result revealed that after learning by LINE activities, mean scores of students' listening skill (M = 8.52, SD = 1.15, t (48) = 2.15, p = 0.03) and speaking skill (M = 8.20, SD = 0.82, t (48) = 2.09, p = 0.04) in Thai language were significantly.

Keywords: LINE, mobile-assisted language learning, language skills, Thai language

1. Introduction

The development of mobile chat applications has become a part of our lives and a part of education with the convenience and the ease of use to access whenever and wherever. The movement towards the use of mobile application in language education is on the rise since mobile chat applications provide unique features and functionalities which are helpful for language learning process (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2007; Miangah & Nezarat, 2012). The issue for teachers who are teaching languages and utilizing mobile chat applications is whether those mobile chat applications can support and really encourage students to learn languages (Gonzalez, 2003). It is also significant to question on the effectiveness of mobile chat applications assisted language learning whether students' conversation skills are increased and they are better understood in those languages they have learned.

Nowadays, there are several of language applications in various languages run on mobile devices. Thai language have become one of the interesting languages for foreigners. There are many foreigners are learning Thai language both in Thailand and overseas. Because they are interested in Thailand where is one of the most famous country in South East Asia and has the particularities of traditions and customs that attract foreigners. Some of foreign learners are learning by traditional classroom environment and some of them are learning by online class. There are many kinds of mobile applications which facilitate in Thai language learning for foreigners. However, some of those Thai language applications lack of adequate interaction, immediate feedback, and sufficient opportunities for learning and practicing the skills (Jabeen & Thomas, 2015), particularly for foreign learners in Thai language class.

To better utilize language applications assisted language learning for foreign learners who need more interaction between learners and teacher is to employ language applications which offer simultaneous functions of response such as mobile chat applications. Mobile chat application such as LINE can facilitate language learning since it can be accessed easily (Van De Bogart & Wichadee, 2015). LINE application (http://line.naver.jp/en/) is a freeware app which allow users to make voice call, video call, send text messages, send voice message and share information with friends whenever and wherever they are. And there are little published research of LINE app assisted language learning in the specific areas of language skills which are listening and speaking skills. Therefore, the research objectives of this study was to compare mean scores of listening and speaking skills of students before and after learning by LINE activities between the control group and the experimental groups.

2. Literature Review

The movement toward the use of mobile applications in language education is on the rise (Khaddage & Latteman, 2013) since the new generation of mobile devices provides tremendous opportunities for language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2005; 2011). Students are willing to use mobile applications to receive m-learning instructions (Watanabe, 2012). They have a variety of language applications on their mobile devices for learning (Steel, 2012) and they accepted that language applications are useful for second language learning (Mindog, 2016).

Based on a review of studies, mobile-based language learning activities through the features offered by instant mobile chat application (Tudini, 2003; Jepson, 2005) make such Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) more efficient (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012) such as LINE application which is not use for personal purposes in social network only but it is also excellent for language skills improvement (Van De Bogart & Wichadee, 2015). Because students will be able to converse with other students and a teacher (Jabeen & Thomas, 2015) while practice their language skills. Teacher can use voice or text chat to provide students with practice tasks and in the same way, students can use voice or text chat in order to practice their listening and speaking skills also. Then, students will receive their feedback and comment from teacher after practiced. Listening and speaking are pair skills that learners require to practice when they learn second or foreign language because those pair language skills take place in real life discourse (Tavil, 2010). Even though listening cannot determine success in speaking, listening does have positive correlation toward speaking (Pinem, 2014). A key to communicate effectively is to be proficient in language (Pourfarhad, Azmey & Hassani, 2012) that people can communicate and understand what the interlocutor says.

To assist mobile chat application in language learning, however, teachers need to prepare and manage the practice tasks suit for language learning objectives and goals. Also, teachers need to consider that most students think the enjoyment leads to better learning (Idrissovaa, Smagulovaa & Tussupbekovaa, 2015) in order that teacher can manage the appropriate activities conform to students' needs and make the language class through mobile chat application to be more effective.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

There were 108 first-year foreign undergraduate students taking Thai language and culture course at the first semester of 2017 academic year in an international university in Bangkok, Thailand, and all of them had no background of Thai language before. This research studied of every unit in population, therefore, the random sampling strategy was not employed in this study. There were 78 participants attended in this study on voluntary basis. The participants were categorized into two groups with the similar number of students at 39 students in each group. Experimental group was students who used LINE application to practice their listening and speaking skills in Thai language out-of-class while control group was students who studied as traditional classroom environment. During the study, participants in experimental and control groups needed to attend LINE activities and took post-test at the end of semester. Finally, only a pairs of participants who did pre- and post-tests and joined all LINE activities were included in this study and there were only 25 participants of each group. See Table 1.

Table 1: Numbers of Foreign students in Experimental and Control Groups During the Study

Groups	**Pre-test**	**LINE Activities**	**Post-test**	**No. of subjects**
Experimental	39	39	25	25
Control	39		25	25
Total				50

3.2 Instruments

There were 2 types of research instruments in this study: experimental tools which were used only with experimental group and data collection tools which were used with experimental group and control group.

3.2.1 Experimental tools

3.2.1.1 LINE application

LINE application, a freeware chat application, was used only with the experimental group as an additional tool assisted language practice of listening and speaking skills in Thai language out-of-class. The Content Validity Index (S-CVI) was applied to measure the validity of the LINE assisted Thai language skills practice out-of-class. Four experts who were experienced in the area of educational research, educational technology, language teaching, and familiar with LINE application were recruited to review LINE application which use in this study. The computation of CVI by the four experts yield the same results of the overall scale with the rating of 1.00 which indicated that the instrument was valid to use (Polit & Beck, 2006).

In this study, the functions which are offered in LINE by means of text and voice messages, and information sharing were used for LINE activities. Students in the experimental group were organized into slight number of participants in each LINE chat group in accordance with Tudini (2003) stated that the session which involved slightly smaller chat groups appeared in fact to be more interactive than the larger group session.

3.2.1.2 Practice tasks

The practice tasks were derived from the lesson contents in Thai language and culture course that students who take this course have to learn. The practice tasks were provided only with the experimental group through LINE activities in two practice tasks per week. The activities processed four months which was one semester. The practice tasks consisted of the contents in each chapter of textbook which was used in Thai language and culture course presented in form of basic vocabularies including useful words and phrases, and the basic Thai conversations. Students in experimental group were assigned the practice tasks after they studied in classroom and then they practiced what they learned out-of-class through LINE activities with a facilitator and peers. The brief format examples of the practice tasks which were assigned for students in experimental group are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Example of Practice Tasks Assigned for Students in Experimental Group

LINE Posts, Contents, and Resources		
Week of Post	**Class of study hours**	**Introduction and Greeting**
6th week		**Topic 3: Thai language: Go for shopping – number, clothing and color**
	Class1	1. Practice the useful words and phrases the researcher provided; Number as follow by record as voice message. Number 1-10: 1. Nùèng (1) 2. Sŏng (2) 3. Săăm (3) 4. Sìì (4) 5. Hââ (5) 6. Hòk (6) 7. Jèt (7) 8. Pâet (8) 9. Kâo (9) 10. Sìb (10)
	Class2	2. Practice the conversation dialogue the researcher provided as Q&A; Number and Color *(The italic-underlined letters, students can be change to be their own answer / questions that in the same meaning of dialogue purpose).* Practice1: Q: Khun Aayú thâo Rài Khá? = How old are you? A: *[Phŏm / Chăn]* Aayú …….[*Khráb / Khâ*] = I'm…….years old.

3.2.2 Data collection tools

3.2.2.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test of listening and speaking skills in Thai language

The pre-test and post-test in form of oral test which used to measure listening and speaking skills in Thai language of first-year foreign undergraduate students who studied in Thai language and culture course, were conducted by the lecturer who teaches in this course. There were two parts played in the form of Question and Answer, and Presentation. Because pre-test and post-test were conducted by the lecturer of Thai language and Culture course, the criteria to assess the results from pre-test and post-test was also conducted by the lecturer as the Rubric Score. The Criteria Assessment was divided into six categories: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, background knowledge, and fluency. Pre-test was administered to students in the experimental group and the control group at the first time of class to collect the results of students' listening and speaking skills, prior knowledge, in Thai language before they learn in class and Post-test was administered to collect the results once again after students already learnt all contents in class. The pre-test and post-test were validated the validity with IOC and were verified the reliability with KR-20 by the Department Academic Committee (DAC) of an international university.

Therefore, these pre-test and post-test were certainly valid to use. In this study, the pre-test and post-test were used in both experimental and control groups.

3.2.2.2 Lesson Plan

There were eight chapters of Thai language which was taught in Thai language and culture course. The example of chapter one about 'Greeting and Introduction' which was assigned to the experimental group and the control group are shown as Table 3.

Table 3: The Example of Lesson Plan for Students in Experimental Group and Control Group

Group / **Teaching Strategies**	**Experimental Group**	**Control Group**
Pre-Teaching	- Get students to say hello in Thai language. - Ask students what the greeting words in Thai language that they know. - Ask students how they introduce themselves in Thai language	- Ask students what greeting words in Thai language they have ever heard - Get students say greeting in Thai language with friends
While-Teaching	- Tell students which greeting words in Thai language that common use in daily conversation. - Tell students how to do the self-introduce - Get students try to do greeting and introduce themselves in each person	- Teach students how to pronounce the greeting words and make a self-introduction in Thai language which were provided in textbook - Get students to practice the greeting words and introduce themselves with friends
Post-Teaching	- Students do the practice task in form of basic Thai conversation about greeting and self-introduction based on their application of knowledge they have learned in this chapter	- Students practices to pronounce the greeting words and conversations following the example situations which were provided in textbook

3.3 Data Collection

This study proceeded 4 steps of data collection as shown in Diagram 1.

1) The aim, benefit, and process of this research was explained to foreign students in Thai language and culture course and then grouped students who volunteered to take part in this study into experimental and control groups.

2) Pre-test of listening and speaking skills in Thai language was administered to participants in experimental and control groups before the experimental.

3) LINE application was used only with experimental group to practice listening and speaking skills in Thai language out-of-class following the practice activities which were provided for participants during the experimental.

4) Post-test of listening and speaking skills in Thai language was administered to participants in experimental and control groups after the experimental.

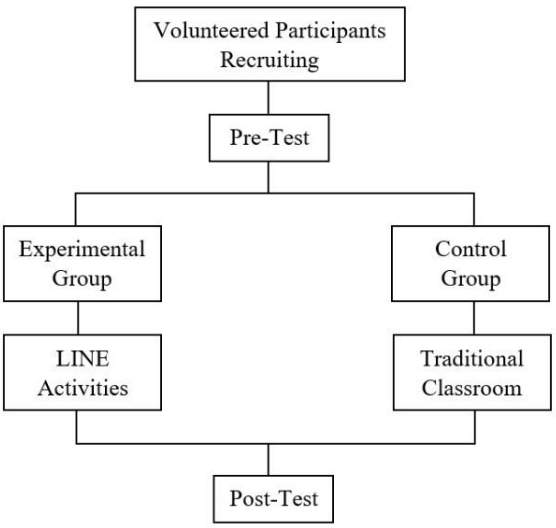

Diagram 1: Data Collection Steps

3.4 Data Analysis

The procedure of data analyses to determine students' listening and speaking skills performance, the scores from pre-test and post-test which were compared between the experimental group and control group were analyzed by descriptive statistics and t-test.

4. Results

Students' listening and speaking skills performance between experimental group and control group

This section compares the post- test mean scores which obtained by the experimental group and by the control group to determine whether there were significant differences in the rates of improvement of listening and speaking skills in Thai language between experimental group and control group. The improvement for the experimental group and control group were presented in mean scores. There were 25 respondents in experimental group and 25 students in control group and the results of post-test scores from both groups were analyzed by means of an independent sample t-test in regard to means, standard deviation, t value, and two-tailed p value. The results were shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4: Students' Listening Post-test Score Comparison of the Experimental Group and Control Group *(n=50)*

		n	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Listening skill	Experimental	25	8.52	1.15	48	2.15	0.03
	Control	25	7.78	1.27			

Table 5: Students' Speaking Post-test Score Comparison of the Experimental Group and Control Group *(n=50)*

		n	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Speaking skill	Experimental	25	8.20	0.82	48	2.09	0.04
	Control	25	7.64	1.04			

As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, the post-test mean score of listening skills for the experimental group (*M=8.52*) was higher than the control group (*M=7.78*). The t value was equal to 2.15 and the two-tailed p value (*p=0.03*) was less than 0.05. Thus, there was significant difference between the post- test mean scores of listening skills between experimental group and control group. Similar to the post-test mean score in speaking skills of the experimental group (*M=8.20*) was higher than the control group (*M=7.64*). The t value was equal to 2.09 and the two-tailed p value (*p=0.04*) was less than 0.05. Therefore, there was significant difference between the post- test mean scores of speaking skills between experimental group and control group.

The results thus defined there were significant differences in students' listening and speaking skills performance between students in the experimental group and the control group. In summary, the experimental group, which practice listening and speaking skills in Thai language through LINE activities out-of-class, had a significant difference in the rate of listening and speaking skills improvement when compared to the control group which practiced only in traditional classroom.

5. Discussion

According to the research results, there was significant differences in students' listening skills performance between students in the experimental group and the control group ($p=0.03$) similar to students' speaking skills performance that was significant differences between both groups ($p=0.04$). Those are firstly leading to confirm the answer of the research question number three that there were significant difference in the listening and speaking skills' improvement between the experimental group and the control group.

To answer the research questions number one and two, the results revealed that there were significant improvement in listening and speaking skills of students who practice through LINE activities because their post-test scores of listening and speaking skills in Thai language were higher than the pre-test scores that students could not do anything at that time they were administered to take the pre-test before the experimental. The reason was students had no knowledge about Thai language before, they then could not do the pre-test. It was different from the post-test that they could do and got high scores because they have more knowledge about Thai language after practiced with LINE activities.

In addition, students gave the feedback to the facilitator that they were satisfied with LINE activities assisted for improving listening and speaking skills in Thai language out-of-class and they accepted that their listening and speaking skills really improve after using LINE activities.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the post-test data in this study confirmed that students' listening and speaking skills in Thai language were improved after using LINE activities. LINE application assisted language skills improvement out-of-class appears the strong potential since students accepted that LINE is not only useful for personal purposes but it is also benefit for academic purposes. And students were satisfied with their higher scores of post-test after using LINE activities. It is important that students have a positive attitude toward LINE assisted language skills improvement. They feel comfortable and enjoy to practice their listening and speaking skills through LINE activities because they could interact with peers and teacher whenever and wherever they are. Their achievement of listening and speaking skills in Thai language then significantly progress.

Apart from LINE which is a cases study presented in this paper, there are several of interactive language applications including online chat applications can also be used to facilitate in language learning and practice out-of-class in order to extend the interactive learning experience beyond the traditional classroom. Today's teachers therefore need more skills and knowledge to integrate mobile technologies in teaching and learning in order to create the innovative learning experiences for students out-of-class. The finding from this study could be utilized to provide a better in mobile applications assisted language learning for further study in the future.

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