

The Positive Effects of Using Simulations in Teaching English Conversation; a case study centered on students attending Sakon Nakhon Technical College in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine students' English speaking ability, and their confidence in speaking in English through the use of classroom simulations with the aim of discovering students' levels of satisfaction toward learning through simulation exercises.

This study employed a purposive sampling technique which focused on thirty five students with mixed abilities drawn from Diploma 3, Accounting Group 3 and Academic English 2 students attending Sakon Nakhon Technical College in summer classes conducted during 2012. Five lesson plans were used as a basis for assessing simulation situations, and data were collected using speaking English Ability Evaluation, and English-speaking Confidence evaluation forms. Students were also requested to complete individual Satisfaction Evaluation forms. Qualitative analysis of "pre and post" simulation exercises was then conducted to enable comparative outcomes to be assessed. The findings revealed that students' English speaking ability after using simulation situations increased with a significant difference level of 0.01. The students' confidence in speaking English also improved with a significant difference level of 0.01. The students' satisfactions toward learning by using simulation situations were at the highest level.

Keywords: English language teaching; simulation exercises; education; Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

The ASEAN community is coming. It' seem that the labor market needs to have the persons who have ability to communicate in English. Office of Vocational Education Commission (VEC) has established a new

vocational program for vocational certificate and diploma to promote the use of English in order to communicate more. The focus is to improve the English language skills of students to be ready for the ASEN.

However, developing English skills to communicate with native speaker is

increasing. But the teaching of English still focuses on memorization and grammar too much. Perhaps the lack of methods or the right teaching techniques in order to allow the students to speak up. Because of all of the above the researcher observed the students and analyzes that student lack of confidence in speaking English because teachers are outdated and using old method. The activity instruction does not motivate learners. The researcher is aware of such problems to study how to provide instruction in the course of their responsibility to teach effectively using simulation as a technique to develop the ability to speak English. By simulating real life situations into the classroom. Try to make the most realistic. The students learn Copping, wise, decisions, and solve problems. The selection of English words used in the conversation correctly. The researchers expect the results of the simulation will allow students to speak English with fluency and accuracy in language use as well as confidence in speaking English even more.

OBJECTIVE

This research has 3 main objectives as follow:

- 1) To examine the students' English speaking ability.
- 2) To examine the confidence of vocational education certificate 3 students in speaking English through the use of simulations.

- 3) To investigate the students' satisfaction toward learning by using simulation situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basically, a simulation is a problem-driven activity which occurs in a clearly described realistic setting. In a simulation students are given a task to perform or problem to solve together with the necessary background information and environment in which to do it. The learner responds to the task and acts within the constraints of the environment to complete it.

Most teachers are familiar with role-plays and simulations share a lot in common with this technique. Both are interactive learning events but generally role-plays involve learners taking the part of characters which are not their own while participants in a simulation behave as themselves. They therefore apply their own background and first language experiences to a situation. In addition, role-plays are often set up to practice particular language functions in a highly controlled context and are relatively simple and short. Simulations, on the other hand, provide a realistic setting for more extensive interaction in which students can get more personally involved.

More and more ESOL teachers are using simulations because they are the ideal technique for language learning, providing an

environment which allows learners to use the language creatively and communicatively. There seem to be five main advantages:

Motivation - simulations encourage motivation because they ensure that communication is purposeful, rather than artificial. Participants are involved as they identify with their roles and have the freedom to choose the meanings they want to express (eg Gardner & Lalonde, 1990). Because students can bring their background experiences into class and make their own decisions, more interest and excitement is created in learning.

Fluency development - A tenet of communicative teaching is that people learn by doing (eg Allwright, 1984). Fluency is encouraged in simulations because learners are emerged in a language-rich environment where language use is centered on immediate communicative needs. The context requires that language is subordinate to an activity and so attention is focused on the situation rather than form; the communication of meaning taking precedence over the practice of language elements such as grammar and pronunciation. In a simulation language use is an aspect of the communication necessary to perform tasks and not a test of correctness.

Integration of skills - A critical feature of a communicative methodology must be that it involves what Littlewood (1981:17) calls

"whole-task practice", the use of a range of language skills in realistic situations. Simulations provide the opportunity to learn the pragmatic skills of using language appropriately, to develop the nonverbal components of language and to acquire intercultural and interpersonal competence in a second language. Participants learn that successful communication is a jointly achieved accomplishment involving a range of skills. Simulations can also help develop cognitive abilities such as analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing information.

Active participation - simulations provide a unique means of encouraging learners to respond actively and to participate with their fellows. Stevick (1976:33-44) has argued that absorbing students in interaction encourages attendance to input, an essential requirement for language acquisition (eg Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Learning is more effective the more it engages the learner and simulations seek to achieve this.

Reduced anxiety - simulations reduce the stress associated with learning and using new language (eg Jones, 1982). This is partly due to the shift in classroom roles and partly the low cost of making errors compared with error consequences in the real world. Not only do simulations offer a relatively safe environment for making mistakes, but they also promote an egalitarian atmosphere because there is no error correction to

undermine confidence and divert attention to utterance form. Students are not judged, corrected or evaluated and this reduces their anxieties about linguistic performance with a consequent improvement in achievement. Moreover, there is less stress involved than playing the role of someone else.

In sum, simulations motivate learners, encourage interaction and provide opportunities for purposeful communication. In doing so they encourage active participation in learning, assist retention and give students a better understanding of communicative choice and linguistic complexity. In addition, the familiar focus on linguistic elements is replaced by an integration of linguistic and reasoning abilities. Hyland, K. (1993)

Simulations fit well with the recent emphasis on action learning and "tasks" as both a communicative instructional technique and concept of curriculum planning (eg4 Candlin, 1987; Nunan, 1989). This is because they provide a means of integrating various tasks into a coherent and believable whole.

Essentially a task is a complete communicative activity which involves learners in comprehending and using language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989:12). Tasks have a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified procedure and a range of outcomes. They are seen as a compelling and effective means for realising fundamental

principles of communicative language learning, such as those discussed by Canale and Swain (1980), Widdowson (1983) and others who stress the importance of pragmatic aspects of communicative competence. In these terms simulation provides an optimal environment for communicative language learning. The technique offers teachers a means of setting up larger scale tasks and creating a structured context for linking sub-tasks that involve data-gathering, problem solving or decision making.

Simulations have a four part structure: Preparation, introduction, activity and debriefing. What this actually means is set out in Fig. 1

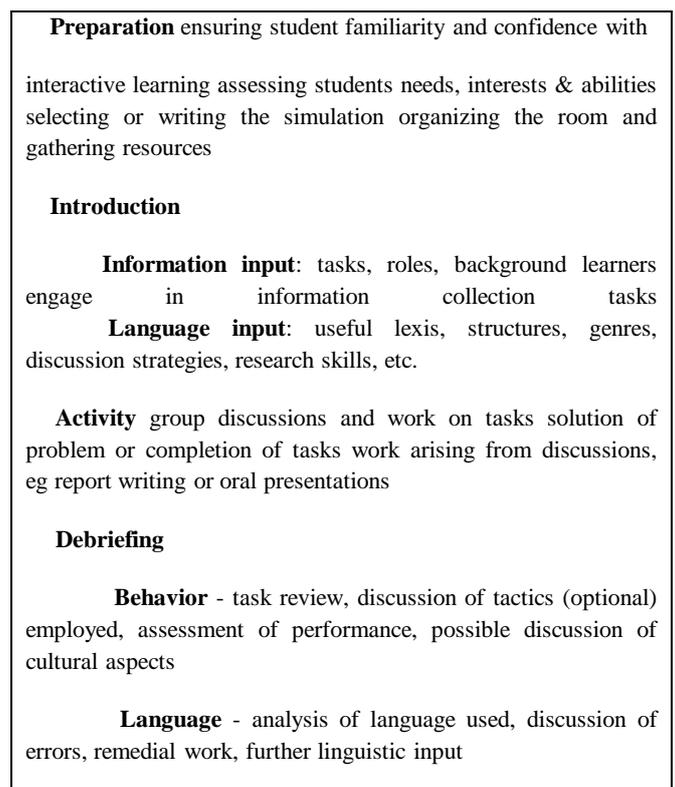


Fig.1: The structure of a language learning simulation

Preparation involves the teacher in both assessing student needs and abilities to ensure a suitable scenario and organizing materials to provide authenticity. The second stage consists of information input. The participants are told what the task is, their roles, the nature of the situation and any constraints. Part three is the activity itself. The key activities are decision-making, problem-solving and interacting and these are the participants' responsibility. The teacher observes student performances and manages the activity as a "controller". Stage four may be considered optional for elementary learners, but consists of a debriefing where the activity is evaluated. The teacher helps students understand the exercise, review the language used and build on weaknesses.

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Population

The population in this study is third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College who study in English conversation², summer 2555

2. Sample used in this research. is third year students of accounting in summer year 2555

3. The instrument used in the research.

1. Lesson plans of English conversation² using simulation for the third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College.

2. The instrument used for data collect are assessment of ability in speak English, assessment of confidence in speaking English and, assessment of satisfactions toward learning by using simulation.

Data Collection

The effect of using simulation. To develop the ability and confidence in speaking English of third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College by researchers are a step in the experiment.

1. Teacher orientation guide to the simulation. The functions of language and language patterns.

2. Assess the ability and confidence to speak English before student audiences learning script.

3. Conducted target groups. The study 5 lesson plans for simulation.

Learning plan 1 Making telephone calls.

Learning plan 2 Asking for help.

Learning plan 3 Buying and Selling Things.

Learning plan 4 Personal Interests.

Learning Plan at 5 Suggesting places.

The plans will be taught by four hours, including 20 hours spent teaching of two weeks.

4. Teachers and students study objectives. The structure of the simulation and set of teaching materials.

5. During the course of the simulation, the researchers studied three scenarios as long as 1) before the second trial) period between trials 3) after the experiment.

6. After completing the course, individual learning plans. Teacher evaluation of student learning. The ability to speak English, and the confidence to speak English.

7. After completing the course, all 5 lesson plans and assess their ability to speak English. And assess their confidence in the prospects of the students speak English as an assessment after learning simulation.

8. Scores from assessments can learn to speak English. And assess their confidence in speaking the language of the student. In order to analyze the results before and after learning through simulation.

9. The lead researcher of the test scores. Before and after the using simulation, and during the course of the simulation. To analyze and compare the differences.

Data analysis

The study analyzed two types of quantitative analysis by evaluating talent. Confidence in speaking English and satisfaction with the simulation evaluation and analyzing qualitative data and target group are 35 student.

The statistics used for data analysis.

The researcher analyzed the data using statistics as follows.

1. Basic Statistics

Data analysis, ability to speak English. And confidence in speaking English Diploma Year 3 students use basic statistics follows.

1. Percentage (Percentage)

2. Mean

3. SD (Standard Deviation)

2. The statistical t-test

In a comparative analysis of the results, the ability to speak English, and confidence and satisfaction through the simulation of third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College before and after learning the planning of activities, learning activities and simulations in the course of English conversation².

3. The statistical t-test (Dependent Samples) used to analyze the differences between the test results.

First class (Pre-test) and after (Post-test) using the t test. Two independent groups (t-test. A Dependent Samples)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students have the ability to speak English after studying at the higher. According to the study, the ability of students to speak English third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College.

TABLE 1: assessment of ability in speaking English

Ability to speak English	before		After		Different points
	Total points (35)	S.D.	Total points (35)	S.D.	
1. Fluency in spoken	80	0.45	144	0.32	64
2. Using a vocabulary	66	0.67	146	0.38	80
3. grammar	63	0.86	151	0.47	88
4. accent	57	0.59	118	0.49	61
5. Interpretation	64	0.70	140	0.59	76
Total	330		699		369

The study found that students' average score was higher than the previous simulation statistically significant level.01 This is because the researchers created a simulation that highlights the learners. Students learning Cooperative (Cooperative Learning) and learning continuously. Trained to use language correctly consistently. The grammar patterns of language and terminology as a hands-on experience for the students to think and decide for themselves how to communicate and behave like in the situation in accordance with the guidelines of the Organization of Teaching Department (2544.

5) that as a group learning activities. The learning between students in groups based on the exchange of classified information is a social structure. Students are responsible for their own learning as well as learning of the group. Interacted with each other in their work. Supporting support each other's success helping to develop the learning skills of the students to rise. Like the concept of Wilaiporn Thanasuwan(2550: 3) that learning by allowing students to help each other. It is taught that one friend can help a friend directly. The teachers are consulted and supervised students at all times. To help develop learning skills to rise. This is consistent with the field Khemmani (2552: 1) The said activity is aimed at practitioners. Teaching a student-centered learning. Students and teachers play a greater role. The teacher is a counselor. Offer guidance on the preparation and implementation tasks (Task) for use in teaching only. As a result, the group played a key role in managing their own learning more.

This is why it says that. Simulation helps students get guidance. And provide guidelines for the use of English. Making communication between instructors and students and between the students themselves is ongoing. Learning process develops the ability to speak English to a higher class than before.

Students have the confidence to speak English after learning scenarios with higher education.

TABLE2: assessment of confidence in speaking English.

Confidence	Before		After		Different points
	Total points (35)	S.D.	Total points (35)	S.D.	
Asked the class: When you do not understand about the language. You will ask the instructor immediately	51	0.505	113	0.426	62
Dare to answer the question: When the professor asked about the language. Answer questions immediately	60	0.458	124	0.657	64
Assertive: Do not feel fear when speak incorrect in front of foreigners	76	0.452	131	0.610	55
Chat with foreigners: nervous or excited when speaking.	51	0.505	123	0.612	72
Participants: Participants interested in English and a sense of fun Although speak badly	77	0.719	136	0.403	59
Help your friends: When you do not understand English or say something wrong to suggest immediate help	65	0.429	141	0.785	76
Interest in English: Interest news or English music. To remember vocabulary or pronunciation	63	0.405	146	0.568	83
Development: Practice speaking English using exercise books, tapes, CDs, video chat	79	0.741	149	0.657	70
Total	522	1.837	1063	2.787	541

Studies have confidence in speaking English third year students of Sakon Nakhon Technical College found that student scores after learning scenarios, higher education, a significant statistical level. 01 is like. This is because the researchers simulated the atmosphere in learning to relax. Students can learn without anxiety assertive confidence in using the language. Learning can be fun Friendly with friends and instructors to motivate and encourage learners. Show appreciation and encouragement to learners' pride in their work. This will give the students more self-confidence. Garments that corresponds to noon (2540: 6) proposed that concept. Activities that prepare teachers. The activity is focused on giving the students practical ideas and activities to enhance the students' motivation has been involved in more activities. Instructor role in the learning process. As assistant Consultation Advice and encouragement to learners as a result, learners' peace of mind. Fun to learn more as well as Sumitra Andre Watanakul (2540: 3) says that studying independently help build confidence to students. Because the study was provided in a relaxed environment. The opportunity to use the language freely. There will be less anxiety No fear or anxiety to speak. Have confidence in yourself, to convey emotions.

The students' satisfaction toward learning by using simulation situations at a high level.

According to the study, satisfaction of students in the third year of Sakonnakhon technical college. The study found that students using simulation scores. The average satisfaction level This is because the researchers used the simulation focused on the development of the English language to understand the story. Overview of media content using gestures presentations, which are basic to learn. Prior to understanding the structure and elements of vocabulary and different oriented language learning meaningful. In line with real-life student awareness.

What are studying how relevant to them. The atmosphere of the class better. Suwit correspond to the concept of Value and Value Plan (2552: 3) that the use of simulation in teaching. Consider the content to be taught. Regardless of background, regardless of the student's particular psychology. Creating a positive attitude towards learning. Gives students a sense of satisfaction. And eager to learn, as well as NatayaArrow Pat Sang Chai (2545: 4) discussed implementation scenarios to be defined with a clear aim of developing such an intellectual concept. And reasoning Or further developed, such as mental and emotional attitudes and moral values as well, with Supa Pahn torture (2549: 2) that the simulation. Should take into account the difficulty of the language used. The situation must be tailored to the learner. The fun and

the students feel good and satisfied with the report.

TABLE 3: assessment of satisfactions toward learning by using simulation

	List	Satisfaction		
		\bar{X}	S.D.	แปลผล
	<u>Preparation</u>			
1	Explained the simulation	4.171	0.956	High
2	Assignments	4.682	0.842	Highest
3	Allow students to participate in the preparatory	4.686	0.751	Highest
4	Consultation	4.142	0.824	High
5	For more detailed information	3.855	0.756	High
	<u>Simulation</u>			
6	Suited to today's business and society	4.144	0.766	High
7	Facilitated	4.344	0.824	High
8	To allow students to participate	4.322	0.787	High
9	To allow students to perform many roles	4.454	0.942	High
10	To sum up the situation	4.632	0.811	High
	<u>Time of event</u>			
11	Period show	3.987	0.697	High
12	a summary discussion	3.882	0.854	High
	<u>Evaluation</u>			
13	Evaluation criteria	4.326	0.665	High
14	A valuation form	4.111	0.742	High
15	Fairness in grading	4.333	0.714	High
	Total	4.271	0.795	High

It said that Implementation simulation used in the teaching of English. It simulates real-life situations into the classroom. Students have to show their ability to be accepted by their friends. Teachers and students have fun. Tireless to learn thus satisfying students to learn by simulation

CONCLUSION

The principal advantage of the simulation technique for language learning is it provides students with a realistic environment in which they can develop a range of communicative and interactive skills. Learners need to use the linguistic system creatively and appropriately if they are to obtain proficiency in English and as a result simulations are particularly useful in contexts where students have few opportunities for contact with native speakers. Realistic, high output communication practice in the classroom is essential for all students however because it represents a pedagogically necessary stage in the learners ability to transfer formal classroom learning to the real world. While they may seem a daunting prospect to teachers unfamiliar with them, simulations deserve a central place in our repertoire of language teaching methods.

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