

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purposes of this study are to implement lessons using task-based activities to promote speaking-listening skills of undergraduate students at Chiang Mai University, and to compare their speaking-listening skills before and after using task-based learning activities.

Details of the method used are as follows:

1. Subjects
2. Instruments
3. Data Collection
4. Data analyses

3.1 Subject

The subjects of this study were 13 undergraduate students who took course 001310 (Oral Expression II) in section 4 during the first semester of the academic year 2003. The objective of this course was to enhance students' oral and aural skills by providing opportunities

for them to participate in speaking-listening activities using English as the target language. Since this course was an elective one, students from all Faculties and majors were eligible to take it. The only prerequisite required upon registering was to receive a passing grade in the course 001210 (Oral Expression I). The students in section 4 were from 5 different Faculties: Humanities, Education, Economics, Science and Social Science; 10 majors: French, Information Studies, Mass Communication, English Education, Industrial Education, Business Administration, Economics, Biology, Public Administration and Sociology and Anthropology. There were 10 female students and 3 male students.

The amount of years students spent studying English ranged from 7 to 14 years.

3.2 Instrument

The instruments used in this study are as follows:

1. Lesson plans using task-based activities
2. Lesson plan evaluation form
3. Reflection writing
4. Oral presentation
5. Interview

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The details of each instrument are as follows:

3.2.1 Lesson Plans Using Task-Based Learning Activity

Before constructing the lesson plans, the researcher conducted a needs survey to find out students' personal information and learning styles (see Appendices A-B). The students were asked to complete the needs survey on the first day of class. The needs analysis showed that 70% of the students were dependent learners and wanted the instructor to provide patterns and examples before performing the tasks. To comply with students' needs, pre tests were given to students before the pre-task stage to check whether students had sufficient knowledge on the topic. Since they were both visual and auditory learners, the pre tests were designed according to students' learning styles. The details of survey results are shown in Appendix C.

All twelve lesson plans were constructed by using Willis's task-based framework (see Appendix D). Each lesson plan contained the three stages which were pre-task, task cycle and language focus. Before beginning the pre-task stage, the instructor provided pre tests in forms of grammar exercises for students to do. This was to ensure that they had enough background knowledge to perform the given tasks in each lesson. If results from the pre test showed that students

lacked the necessary knowledge or skills needed to perform the scheduled task, the instructor would have to re-teach the vocabulary or clarify grammatical patterns given in the pre-task stage. Lessons that needed additional clarifications were lessons 1, 3, 4 and 5 (see Table 2 for content details).

During the pre-task stage, vocabulary sheet, grammar patterns, and pictures or dialogs related to the content were given to students. Students planned their strategies in groups for performing tasks in the task cycle stage. At this point, the instructor could provide more assistance to students if they needed it. Lessons that needed the instructor's assistance were lessons 2-5 (see Table 2 for content details).

In the task cycle stage, the students from each group performed the task while the instructor monitored the students by taking the role of a facilitator. As students took turns performing in their own group, they had the opportunities to learn from their peers' performances as well.

For the language focus stage, students discussed about their experiences during the task cycle stage. Students had the

opportunities to share problems and came up with solutions to those problems within their groups.

Before finishing the lesson, students were asked to write a reflection about the content, activities used, any problems they encountered during the task cycle stage and how the problems could be solved (see Appendices K-L).

The content and activities used in each lesson were from the English Department designed for the course 001310. They were designed for the instructors to use in the regular course 001310 (Oral Expression II). But for this study, the researcher followed only the content and activities but designed lesson plans using Willis's task-based framework. The details of content for each lesson and the time for assessments are listed in Table 2. An example of one of the lesson plans using Willis's task-based framework is presented in Table 3.

3.2.2 Lesson plan evaluation form

The lesson plan evaluation form was designed for both the instructor and the students to assess the effectiveness of each lesson plan (see Appendices E-F). The six parts assessed for every lesson were the terminal objectives, content, pre-task, task cycle, language focus and task.

Table 2: Details of Lesson Content

	Content	No. of Period	Task
1	Moving into a house	1	Sharing opinions
2	Complaining about neighbors	1	Making complaints
	Role Play 1	Assessment	
3	Going shopping	1	Requesting services
4	Outing	1	Making and refusing invitations
5	Seeing a doctor	1	Describing symptoms
	Role Play 2	Assessment	
	Election Speech	Assessment	
6	Gossiping	1	Giving personal opinions
7	Telling a story	1	Using past tense
	Impromptu Speech	Assessment	
8	Cockroach terminator	1	Giving instructions
9	Meeting	1	Making suggestions and decisions
10	Job interview	1	Asking and answering questions
11	Asking questions	1	Creating questions for different situations
12	Matfield Reporter	1	Reporting news
	Role Play 3	Assessment	

Table 3: Comparison of content developed by the English Department and a lesson plan using Willis's task-based framework developed by the researcher

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lesson 1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moving Into Houses</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Instructions</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lesson 1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moving Into Houses</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lesson Plan Using Willis's Task-Based Framework</u></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor asks students who share the same accommodation to get into groups and prepare to report to the class about their budget and their accommodation. 2. Instructor gives sheet <i>#1 Things to be done in the house</i> which has the language pattern for using There is/There are, will definitely, might have to, need to and sheet <i>#2 Vocabulary</i> which contains nouns and verbs related to the content of the lesson. 3. Instructor asks each group to describe what they see in sheet #1 using the language pattern There is/There are and vocabulary in sheet #2, e.g. <i>There are a lot of beer bottles under the cupboard.</i> 4. Instructor ask students in the groups: Q: <i>What are you going to do about those beer bottles?</i> A: <i>I</i> will definitely might have to need to <i>throw them away.</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor gives students pre test to check students' previous knowledge about the content. <p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Task Stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Instructor gives sheet <i>#1 Things to be done in the house</i> which has the language pattern for using There is/There are, will definitely, might have to, need to and sheet <i>#2 Vocabulary</i> which contains nouns and verbs related to the content of the lesson. At this stage if results from pre test show students' lack of knowledge in the content, the instructor will re teach the language pattern and clarify words in the vocabulary list. <p style="text-align: center;">Task Cycle Stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Instructor asks students who share the same accommodation to get into groups and asks each group to make up sentences describing what they see in sheet #1 using the language pattern provided and vocabulary in sheet #2, e.g. <i>There are a lot of beer bottles under the cupboard.</i> The instructor then asks students in each group what they will do about the problems they see. <p style="text-align: center;">Language Focus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. After all the students have the opportunity to practice using the language pattern, each student discusses with their peers the mistakes they made during the task cycle stage. <p style="text-align: center;">Reflection Writing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. After discussion, each student reflects on their performances by writing down what they learned from the lesson, problems they encountered during the task cycle stage and possible solutions to those problems.

The instructor and the students conducted the lesson plan evaluation at the end of each lesson.

The effectiveness of each lesson plan was determined by the following mean score interval:

Mean score	Effectiveness
4.50-5.00	Very effective
3.50-4.49	Effective
2.50-3.49	Moderately effective
1.50-2.49	Fairly effective
0.50-1.49	Less effective

Mean of the passing criteria was 2.50

3.2.3 Reflections writing

After finishing each lesson, reflections were written by both the students and the instructor. For the students, they focused on what they learned from the lesson, the appropriateness of the activities given, problems encountered and the solutions. The students' reflections were written in Thai to help them feel more comfortable in expressing their opinions. As for the instructor, the emphasis was on

teaching techniques used in each stage. Therefore, the format of reflection writing for the instructor was based on Willis's task-based framework which consisted of pre-task stage, task cycle stage and language focus stage (see Appendices M-N).

3.2.4 Oral presentation

Another way to evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons using task-based framework was to assess students' speaking-listening skills during the semester. Therefore, oral presentations through role plays were used to assess students' speaking-listening skills (see Appendices G-H). The situation for each role play was designed to assess what students had learned from previous lessons (see details in Table 2). Students of mixed levels were grouped together for each role play. For election speech and impromptu speech, all students individually performed in front of class and received complete assessment from their peers and the instructor. Details of all assessment tasks are in appendix J.

The rubrics used for students' speaking-listening skills consisted of 5 points scales and 3 criteria which were fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility. Details for each criterion are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Rubrics for Assessing Students' Speaking-Listening Skills

Scale	Fluency
5	Smooth delivery on the whole with appropriate expressions.
4	Has to search for desired meaning some of the time but mostly fairly smooth delivery.
3	Has to make an effort for much of the time. Rather halting delivery and fragmentary. Fair range of expression.
2	Long pauses while searching for the desired meaning. Frequently fragmentary and halting delivery. Almost gives up making the effort at times. Limited range of expression.
1	Full of long and unnatural pauses. Very halting and fragmentary delivery. At times gives up making the effort. Very limited range of expression.

Scale	Accuracy
5	A few minor grammatical and lexical errors but most utterances are clear with no confusion.
4	A few grammatical and lexical errors but only one or two major errors causing confusion.
3	Several grammatical and lexical errors, some of which cause confusion.
2	Many basic grammatical and lexical errors causing a breakdown.
1	Serious pronunciation errors as well as many basic grammatical and lexical errors.

Scale	Comprehensibility
5	The speaker's intention and general meaning are clear.
4	Most of what the speaker says is easy to follow. Clear intention with only some interruptions to help convey the message or to seek clarification.
3	The listener can understand a lot of what is said, but must seek some clarification.
2	Only small bits (usually short sentences and phrases) can be understood; need considerable effort by the listener to understand what the speaker is saying.
1	Hardly anything of what is said can be understood. Even when the listener makes a great effort or interrupts, the speaker is unable to clarify anything that has been said.

The quality of students' speaking-listening skills was determined by the following mean score interval:

Mean score	Quality
4.50-5.00	Very good
3.50-4.49	Good
2.50-3.49	Moderate
1.50-2.49	Fair
0.50-1.49	Poor

Mean of the passing criteria was 2.50

3.2.5 Interview

Students were interviewed before and after using task-based learning activities to assess their speaking-listening skills. The interview was also recorded so the researcher could recheck the students' replies. On the first day of class, all 13 students were asked to provide personal information as well as academic opinions concerning their use of the English Language (see Appendix I). On the last day of class, the students were once again asked the same questions they had had on the first day of class. The purpose was to see if there was an improvement in students' speaking-listening skills after learning through lessons using task-based learning activities.

The speaking-listening skills from pre interview and post interview were assessed by the following mean score interval:

Mean score	Quality
20.50-25.00	Very good
15.50-20.49	Good
10.50-15.49	Moderate
5.50-10.49	Fair
0.50-5.49	Poor

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 On June 5, 2003, 13 students who took course 001310 (Oral Expression II) in section 4 were given a pre-interview which consisted of 5 questions. The pre-interview was conducted in a form of recorded interview by the instructor. The students gave their consent to the recording of the interview.

3.3.2 Twelve lesson plans using Willis's task-based framework were implemented from June 19, 2003 to August 28, 2003. Each lesson plan took 80 minutes to execute. At the end of each lesson, both students and instructor completed the lesson plan evaluation forms and wrote reflections concerning the lessons.

3.3.3 Students' speaking-listening skills were assessed both individually and in groups by the instructor and their peers in a form of oral presentation through five assessment tasks which took place during the months of June to September.

3.3.4 On September 2, 2003, students were given a post interview which consisted of the same 5 questions used in the pre-interview. The post interview was conducted in a form of recorded interview by the instructor.

3.4 Data analyses

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows) was used in the statistical analyses of the data. The mean (μ) and the standard deviation (σ) were used to analyze the data obtained from the lesson plan evaluation forms, oral presentations and interviews.