ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS OF TASK–BASED IMPLEMENTATION IN AN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

ปัจจัยสำคัญที่ส่งผลต่อความสำเร็จของวิธีการสอนแบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติในชั้นเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

Nantana Wichitwarit[1]

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine whether task-based instruction would promote students' English learning of undergraduate learners at Panyapiwat Institute of Management. Participants were 36 first-year students who studied English as a compulsory subject. The instruments used for collecting data were lesson plans, instructional materials, interview and teacher's journal. A qualitative analysis of oral and written data derived from interviews and teacher's journal indicated some essential elements contributing to the success of task-based implementation: (1) generating motivation in students, (2) promoting cooperative learning, and (3) limitations of the intervention. Considerations to minimize limitations, which could be done preceding the intervention for the fruition of implementation, were also discussed.

Keywords : task-based instruction, motivation, cooperative learning, teacher's roles

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยนี้ เพื่อศึกษาว่าการสอนแบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติส่งเสริมการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาระดับอุดมศึกษาของสถาบันการจัดการปัญญาภิวัฒน์หรือไม่ กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้แก่นักศึกษาปีที่ 1 จำนวน 36 คน ในชั้นเรียนปกติ เครื่องมือวิจัยที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล ได้แก่ แผนการสอน สื่อการสอน การสัมภาษณ์ และบันทึกหลังการสอน การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพจากการสัมภาษณ์ และบันทึกหลังการสอน พบว่า มีปัจจัยสำคัญบางประการส่งผลต่อความสำเร็จของการใช้วิธีการสอนแบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ ได้แก่ (1) การสร้างแรงจูงใจในการเรียนของนักเรียน (2) การส่งเสริมการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบร่วมมือ และ (3) ข้อจำกัดของการสอนแบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ การอภิปรายผลนำเสนอสิ่งที่ควรพิจารณาเพื่อลดข้อจำกัด ซึ่งสามารถกระทำก่อนการสอนเพื่อประสิทธิผลของการจัดการการเรียนการสอนด้วยวิธีนี้

คำสำคัญ : การสอนแบบเน้นงานปฏิบัติ แรงจูงใจ การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบร่วมมือ บทบาทของครู

[1] Full-time lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts Email: nantanawic@pim.ac.th

1. INTRODUCTION

"What kind of teaching approach should best promote second language learning?" For several decades, Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been widely adopted in place of traditional instructional language curriculum as its ultimate goal is to develop competency of applying language in real communication (Hall, 2011; Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Ellis, 1997). Recently, task-based instruction (TBI) or task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been implemented more in English classrooms as it represents a realization of CLT philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology (Nunan, 2004). Task-based language teaching provides learner-centred environment in which students are encouraged to work together to accomplish a task goal. In completing a task, students are required to use the target language to communicate for meaning. Interaction between learners and learners and learners and teacher, task-aid materials, and teacher's support are also integral to task-based setting (Ellis, 2003, Nunan, 2004). This is likely to promote language competency and learning motivation of second language learners especially those who are lacking confidence in English communication. Thus, task-based language teaching was implemented in this study to investigate if it would enhance PIM students' learning and to examine students' perceptions towards task-based language teaching.

Framework of the study

This study took place in a classroom of 36 first-year students who majored in Retail Business Management of Panyapiwat Institute of Management (PIM) students. Task-based instruction was implemented during a 12-week term in English for Work course.

Case study and action research were adopted as research methods in this study. Figure 1 outlines the framework of this study.
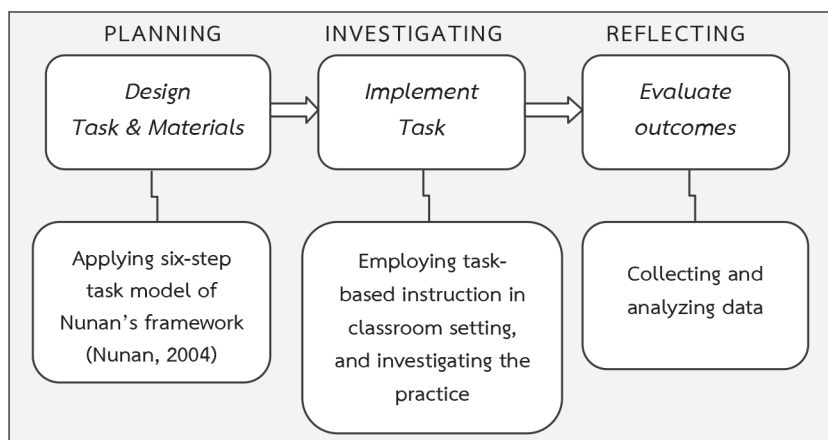

Figure 1 Framework of the study

There were three stages in the process of conducting the study. Firstly, during the planning stage, a series of tasks was designed and incorporated within each lesson plan. Instructional materials were recreated to match the lesson. Task-based instruction model of Nunan (Nunan, 2004) was adopted for designing task and teaching materials. Nunan's six-step procedure for task design includes: schema building, controlled practice, authentic listening practice, focus on linguistic elements, provide freer practice, and introduce the pedagogical task. Secondly, at the investigating stage, the innovation was implemented in the classroom. As the teacher/researcher, I investigated my own practice and entered self-reflections in my journal. At the last stage, reflecting, the findings were derived from data collection and data analysis.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore how task-based instruction would promote students' English learning; and

2. To investigate student perceptions of task-based instruction.

Research questions

1. How does task-based instruction enhance students' learning?

2. How do students perceive task-based instruction?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Definitions

Ellis (2003) describes task as a useful device for planning a communicative curriculum. Ellis defines task as *"a workplan that required learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed"* (Ellis, 2003, p. 16). Nunan (2004) defines a pedagogical task as a piece of classroom work that aims for learners to deploy their grammatical knowledge to express the meaning. Skehan (as cited in Widdowson, 2003). describes that a task or an activity must meet the following criteria: focus on meaning initially; set up a goal to work towards; evaluate the outcome; and relate to real-world. As the teacher/researcher, I define task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI) as classroom activities which provide rich support to enable learners to apply grammatical knowledge in communicative task.

2.2 Theoretical background

As for its noteworthy features, task-based language teaching has been favoured by a rich and growing research agenda (Nunan, 2004). Task-based language teaching has been strongly supported by both psycholinguistics theories and the sociocultural theories as reviewed in Nunan (2004); Ellis (2003); Lightbown and Spada (1999).

Early Psychological theorist, Steven Krashen (Krashen, 1982) proposed five hypotheses or 'monitor model': (1) the acquisition-learning hypothesis, (2) the natural order hypothesis, (3) the monitor hypothesis, (4) the input

hypothesis, and (5) the affective filter hypothesis. Krashen's hypotheses have been highly influential in adopting communicative language teaching (CLT) or task-based language teaching (TBLT) in classroom practice (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Krashen stands for 'strong' interpretation of CLT based on the ground that communicative ability in second language is acquired through subconscious rather than conscious learning. The implication of Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis to task-based instruction is that task-based classroom activities primarily focus on interaction for meaning or task completion rather than on learning form or grammatical rule. Learners are encouraged to engage in meaning-focused in communicative tasks rather than form-focused drills; hence, class time is devoted to opportunities for subconscious learning rather than conscious acquisition. According to the natural order hypothesis, regardless of their first language, language learners appear to acquire key grammatical features of a target language in a particular order no matter of what order these features have been presented through formal instruction. TBLT is highly supported by the natural order hypothesis as it is apparent that there is no sequence of linguistic features presentation in task-based setting. Similar to the implication of acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis claims that to maximize opportunities for acquisition, learners should be encouraged to engage in meaning-focused tasks rather than to monitor their output. That precisely coincides with task-based setting that class period is

devoted to meaning-focused tasks. TBLT is also in line with the input hypothesis. Krashen asserts that in the early stage of acquisition process, learners acquire language by only exposure to comprehensible input which is a little beyond their current level of competency that he calls 'i + 1'. He states that input is the source of acquisition and reception (listening and reading) should precede production (speaking and writing).

Nevertheless, Krashen's hypotheses did not receive solid support from many teachers and researchers. It has been greatly criticized for a failure of providing prominent evidence proved by empirical research for its effectiveness. A doubt remains for the stance of 'strong' interpretation of CLT whether primary focusing on meaning with regardless on form will successfully promote language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

Recently, traditional psycholinguistic perspectives have been challenged by sociocultural theorists. It is based on the Russian psychologist, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's cognitive theor suggests that language development results from social interactions between individuals. Evelyn Hatch (1992), Teresa Pica (1994) and Michael Long (1983) (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) argue that language competence could be acquired through conversational interaction and interaction is essential for second language acquisition. Long mentions that Krashen's input hypothesis was agreeable for that comprehensible input could contribute to

language acquisition. However, he argues that interactional modification is necessary because it makes input comprehensible. Beginning-level learners are precluded from acquisition unless there are cases of interactional modifications Jim Lantolf and others (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) claim that second language learners improve their linguistic knowledge when they interact and collaborate with more advance speakers. Long (1991); Ellis (2003), as well as Nunan (2004) hold a similar perspective, arguing that task-based teaching is not only the accomplishing of a strong version of CLT. Form-focused instruction should also be included for full fruition of implementation. Nunan (2004) pins a point that form-focused instruction has a place in 'strong' TBLT as it is highly interrelated to meaning. He states that form focused instruction could be done initially as 'pre-communicative stage' to enable the learners to use the target language to communicate for meaning on the grounds that it is unrealistic to ask learners to deploy language that has not been explicitly or implicitly introduced. Long (1991) and Ellis (2003) assert that focus on meaning entirely is insufficient for language learners to achieve high levels of grammatical competence. Learners need to attend to form during communication interaction for the benefit of target language comprehension and production. However, it is argued by the 'strong' version's proponents, Willis and Willis (2007) as they state that focusing on form and meaning at the same time is difficult for learners. The communication is unlikely to

be 'real' as learners are thinking about 'form'. In this case, it would be a practice rather than communicative task. My position, supporting the perspectives of Long (1991); Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004), is that second language learners could not make the communication meaningful within a specific context if they have too limited linguistic knowledge to generate it for meaning.

2.3 Advantages task-based instruction

Advantages of task-based instruction are enormous. In task-based setting, the quality of learner speech and variety of speech acts can increase as learners have rich opportunities to practice the language under the same conditions that they would apply in real-life contexts. Motivation and enjoyment can increase in supportive learning of learner-centred environment within a task-based classroom. Tasks are greatly based on group/pair work which allows students to interact with each other and become active learners. They are encouraged and supported by teacher to work together for task completion. In such cooperative learning, positive interdependence, social integration and learning can increase (Ellis, 2003).

Lightbown and Spada (1999) suggest that classroom settings in which learners find they enjoy learning is where the content is interesting and relevant to their needs and the atmosphere is supportive. This can increase levels of motivation. In a task-based classroom, learners are encouraged to participate in task activities. They are active learners rather than passive

ones. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), motivated learners are 'active' learners who actively participate in class, show great interest in the subject-matter, and put an effort on learning. Positive attitudes and motivation could lead to success in second language learning.

As task-based instruction highly deploys group-based work which provides many potential benefits, students can improve their positive independence, social skill, collaborative skill and learning (Ellis, 2003). Nevertheless, putting students to work together in group does not mean all students are disposed towards participating in group/pair work. Ellis (2003) suggests that the potential to make the best of group activities rest on the extent to which group work results in cooperative learning. The effectiveness of group/pair work in task-based instruction lies in ensuring the quality of the interaction which engages learners to work collaboratively. Scaffolding is crucial as well as students' attitude to working together. Ellis (2003) cites that there is little second language studies directed addressed these concerns. He proposes 8 possible ways to foster student cooperation in group/pair work (Ellis, 2003). First, students must be orientated to the task. Students need to have strong commitment to work together to accomplish task goal. Second, students need to understand that group achievement hinged on how well they contribute in group work. It was suggested that each group member is assigned a specific role. Third, group

should be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous with composing of four members. Fourth, in one-way information-gap tasks, the student with the lower proficiency should take role of information giver to enhance collaboration. Fifth, physical arrangement of students should also be considered. When students form a group, they should be seated in a way that they can easily work together and maintain eye contact. Sixth, collaborative skills could be trained for effective collaboration strategies, for example, how to disagreement and negotiate meaning. Teachers should monitor if students are able to use such strategies in group work. Seventh, teacher should let student working in the same group for several weeks. Students require time to develop ability to work effectively with others as well as the positive interdependence. Lastly, teacher's roles apart from teaching should include modeling, collaboration, observing and monitoring the students' performance, and intervening when students need help. According to Nunan (2004), teacher should adopt a different role to match the learners' role. In task-based setting, teacher's role could be facilitator, participant, observer or instructor. Willis and Willis (2007) state that teacher is the best model and the best learning aid of learners. Teacher roles could be varied to 6 roles: (1) leader and organizer of discussion, (2) manager of group/pair work, (3) facilitator, (4) motivator, (5) language 'knower' and 'adviser', (6) language teacher (Willis and Willis, 2007).

2.4 Related studies

A number of studies exploring the impact of task-based instruction on speaking skill development had been conducted in Thailand and other countries. For example, Isamaili (2013) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the task-based learning in developing students' speaking skills in academic settings in South East European University (SEEU). The participants were 60 students, mix levels of pre-intermediate and intermediate. The research aimed to examine the teachers' attitudes towards TBLT, students' perceptions on TBLT and the effectiveness of the intervention on students' speaking skill improvement. The findings revealed that teachers believed that TBLT had a positive effect on students learning process as authentic material could enhance the interactions among students; and they also commented that TBLT could improve learners' communicative competency as it provided students with more opportunities to use English. Data analysis from the questionnaire revealed that students were more motivated as task-based lessons were more relevant to their real life than the activities in the course book. TBLT provided more relaxed atmosphere with enjoyable activities in which they had more chance to practice target language. The evidence from the pre/post speaking test suggested that students could learn more effectively when their attention was focused on the task.

A task-based study investigating college students' perceptions on the issues of task-based language teaching in Mainland China among 96 second year engineering undergraduate students conducted by Meng and Cheng (2010). The findings revealed relatively high rate of dissatisfaction on self and peer performance in task. The study also suggested that the teacher's role was very crucial to the success of task-based instruction in all steps, before, during and after the tasks. It was also advisable that the difficulty levels of tasks should vary to favour students of all proficiency levels.

Farahani and Nejad (2009) conducted an experimental study of task-based approach to investigate the effects of task-based techniques, gender, and different levels of language proficiency on speaking development among 162 of Iranian learners in advanced and intermediate level of proficiency. The findings suggested that the students in the experimental group performed remarkably better than those in the control group on the final speaking post-test. It was also concluded that gender was not an influential factor in speaking development under task-based approach but language proficiency.

The findings of many studies in the Thai context on the effect of task-based learning and teaching implementation reveal positive results (Uraiwan, 2010; Pahol, 2009; and Bancha, 2008). Uraiwan (2010) did a study investigating the effectiveness of task-based learning among 40 Matthayom 4 learners in Nakornpathom. The instruments used for collection data were seven lesson plans, pre-post speaking tests, observation, learner self-assessment and group work assessment. The result indicated the improvement of English speaking ability of

learners through task-based intervention was significantly higher at the .05 level. The learners gave positive comments reflecting on their satisfaction with task-based instruction for reasons that it was interesting, fun and relevant to real world language skill. Pahol (2009) conducted a similar study among 10 secondary school students (Matthayom 3) in Phangnga. The results suggested that students' speaking ability developed when comparing pre-test and post-test, as well as student attitude on language learning was notable improved. Likewise, the findings of Bancha's study (2008), investigating the use of task-based learning to develop English speaking ability of 20 secondary school students (Matthayom 2) in Udon Thani, revealed the improvement of students' speaking ability after the treatments. Also, the participants' attitude towards language learning was significant improved.

Several studies examining teacher's and students' perceptions on task-based instruction in China and South Korea reported advantages and also considerable limitations of the intervention. Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) conducted a study of perceptions and implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT) among 132 secondary school EFL teachers from 132 schools in China. The findings suggested some limitation of task-based instruction. Although most teachers had positive attitudes toward TBLT execution, many teachers did not employ TBLT in their classrooms. Two biggest reasons of avoiding task instruction were connected with the large-sized class

and lack of confidence to assess students' task-based performance. Likewise, Yim (2009) conducted a study of South Korea Teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching. The interview analysis from 10 teachers and 10 students revealed advantages and limitations of implementing TBLT in EFL classroom. The advantages were TBLT could increase class participation and student had greater confidence in speaking English and better positive attitude towards learning English. The limitations included incompatibility with text-centred exams, time constraints, lack of language proficiency and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN
3.1 Research instruments
3.1.1 Lesson plan

Six units of task-based instruction namely, greetings at work, answering a phone call, arranging an appointment, describing a process, giving directions and ordering food were included in the course syllabus. Each lesson plan followed task design adopting six-step procedure of Nunan's task framework (Nunan, 2004). They are 1) schema building, 2) controlled practice, 3) authentic listening practice, 4) focus on linguistic elements, 5) provide freer practice, and 6) introduce the pedagogical task.

Step 1: Schema building is to draw on the learners' background knowledge. Step 2: Controlled practice is to provide learners with controlled practice in using the target language vocabulary, structures and functions.

Step 3: Authentic listening practice provides learners with intensive listening practice. Step 4: Focus on linguistic elements is to let learners practice using one or more linguistic elements. Step 5: Provide freer practice is a stage where learners are required to use the target language to complete task in pair work or group work. Step 6: Introduce the pedagogical task as the final step where the teacher provides learners with feedback.

3.1.2 Instructional materials

The instructional materials consisted of: 1) worksheets, 2) video clips, 3) audio programs, 4) task-sheets, and 5) image cards. The materials were the teacher-produced, except for YouTube clips and commercial audio programs.

3.1.3 Interview

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted after course completion. The aim was to explore students' perception about task-based instruction. Fourteen students participated in an individual interview.

3.1.4 Teacher's journal

Teacher's journal was used to record the teacher reflections on the effect of task-based instruction on student motivation. The reflection mainly included the success or failure in each task-based unit; the students' performance of tasks; and what could be done to further develop the task-based lesson.

3.2 The participants

The participants were 36 undergraduate (first year) students of Panyapiwat Institute of Management, who enrolled in English for Work, the second compulsory English course. The course was content-based and students use an in-house textbook as a basis for classroom work. The English language classes were 6 hours per week (1.5 hours for native teacher, 1.5 hours for language lab and 1.5 hours, 2 sessions for Thai teacher or the researcher of this study), during 12 weeks at the time the tasks were carried out.

3.3 Procedures for data collection

The task-based instruction was implemented with a total of 6 sessions in 6 weeks from the third week to the eighth week. Teacher's journal was written after each session. At the end of the course, the interview was carried out.

3.4 Data analysis

The techniques of colored coding were employed for data analysis of oral and written data, derived from the interview and the teacher's journal, to accomplish the two objectives of this study. The first objective was to explore how task-based instruction enhances student learning. The second objective was to examine students' perception on task-based instruction.

4. FINDINGS

In response to the two research questions, which explored how task-based instruction would enhance English learning, and how

students perceived task-based instruction, the findings indicated some essential elements contributing to the success of task-based implementation: (1) generating motivation in students, and (2) promoting cooperative learning. Unexpectedly another aspect emerged from data analysis of teacher's journal was (3) limitations of the intervention.

4.1 Generating motivation in students

The findings suggested one crucial factor bringing the success of implementation was that it must generate motivation in students.

Table 1 How task-based instruction could improve learner motivation

Interview	Teacher's journal
(1) promoting confidence	(1) engaging learners to be 'active'
(2) Enjoyable activities	(2) employing interesting materials
(3) Interesting materials	(3) improving learner confidence
(4) Real world relevance	

Table 1 presents the perceptions of learners and teacher that task-based instruction could improve learner motivation. The findings derived from data analysis of the interview suggested that task-based instruction offered useful benefits of motivating students. Students were motivated because they felt confident; they were enjoying in class activities; the materials were interesting and it would be of their future need. As a result of repetitive practice of listening and speaking in task cycle, learners revealed that task-based instruction enhanced their confidence in applying the target language. For example, one learner expressed that, *"I had many opportunities to practice the learned language that I became more fluent. I gained more confidence.* Likewise another learner commented that:

"I liked this learning style as we did real practice that made me better in remembering what I had learned and in understanding the native's speech. I had more confidence to talk to native speakers".

Learners also commented that task-based instruction provided; more fun, was enjoyable, more freedom, was interactive and a cooperative learning environment. For instance, one learner mentioned that, *"It was enjoyable as I was able to take part in task activity and to interact with teacher and my friends".*

Learners stated that interesting materials increased their motivation and aided the task flow. For example, one learner commented that, *"Interesting task sheets and clips were essential for task completion.* Likewise, another learner stated that, *"Task sheets helped me to continue speaking".*

Learners valued task-based instruction on the grounds that it would be useful and relevant to real world. They recognized that the language they practiced would be applicable and useful in the future. For example, one learner perceived that, *"I liked task-based learning and teaching activities as it provided real practice opportunity for the language that could be used in real life"*. Role-play and simulation involved and encouraged the participants to take part and use learned language to communicate for meaning. The situational settings were likely to build learner feeling of 'real' drawing them in doing task. As one learner commented that, *"Learning in simulation motivated students to speak and use the vocabulary and the language, so we could gain more knowledge and skills"*.

In view of teacher, the findings from teacher's journal suggested that students' motivation would increase when classroom setting was directed to 3 aspects: (1) engaging learners to be 'active'; (2) employing interesting materials; and (3) improving learner confidence.

Teacher found that students were motivated if they were active. Task-based instruction engaged students as they were encouraged to participate in all stages. For example, at schema building stage, students had to interact with the teacher. During controlled practice and authentic listening practice, they had to participate with their partners and were free to ask teacher if they had any question. In freer practice, definitely they had to work together with their peers to complete task. From teacher's observation, students actively participated most of the time throughout the session.

The finding also suggested that interesting tasks and materials strongly increased students' motivation to participate in task. Coloured images such as business cards and name badge with modern IT company logos, food pictures, DIY process; and virtue media like Youtube captured students' interest and attention that brought to exhilaration of participation in group work.

4.2 Promoting cooperative learning

Another vital element that could lead to the success of task-based intervention was that it must promote cooperative learning.

Table 2 How task-based instruction could promote cooperative learning

Interview	Teacher's journal
(1) Enhancing learning by peer-assisting	(1) All group members strongly committed to accomplish task.
(2) Building positive & supportive relationships among learners	(2) Individual accountability
(3) Developing social skills	(3) It was possible to have good physical arrangement.

Table 2 outlines the results from interview and teacher's journal. The interview results gave evidence that task-based instruction promoted cooperative learning as it enhanced learning by peer-assisting; it built positive and supportive relationships among learners; and it developed social skills. Learners enhanced their learning from peer-assisting as they shared knowledge and ideas. For example, one learner commented that,

"I enjoyed doing group work. We could share ideas, helped each other and learned together. Pair work let me have more chance to practice speaking. Working together in pairs and in group work made it easier to learn and understand."

Learners expressed their positive attitude towards task-based activities for they could interact and learned from their peers. For instance, one learner expressed that,

"What I liked was I could participate in task-based instruction class. It was good that I was able to practice speaking with my friends and we could help one another. I could help my friend who had a limited English background. When I didn't know the meaning of words, I could also ask my peers."

Learners revealed that it involved social skills in terms of conflict management. For example, one learner stated that, *"When we had different ideas, we had to talk, find a solution and compromise."*

From teacher's journal, it was found that task promoted cooperative learning when group members had individual accountability. It was evident that the task in which task goal achievable only if each team member completed their task enhanced individual accountability. For example, each student took part in group presentation. It was also noticeable that good physical arrangement could enhance collaboration. These were in line with Ellis (2003) that students must be focused to the task and physical arrangement must be in a way that enables students to work together. One of the most successful tasks was in the session of 'describing a process' where all of the above elements occurred as noted in the teacher's journal.

Students were really enjoying the whole session. They were very enthusiastic to prepare for the presentation. As they worked together to solve the problem – rearranged the procedures, students moved from their seats to circle in groups. They were free to reseat anywhere, some students sat on chairs, other group-members circled around, while some group knelt on the floor. Then they put the pictures on the wall in order as they planned and rehearsed for the presentation. Everyone had to take part in the presentation. All were able to describe the process of making cup cake, papier-mâché, valentine card, and origami gift box. They used correct discourse markers in describing. They were happy as everyone taking part in accomplishing task goal. (Teacher's journal, Entry 4)

4.3 Limitations of the intervention

The findings from the interview and teacher's journal revealed some limitations during implementation. Teacher found that it took a considerable time for preparing and recreating the materials for mix-ability class. There were limited resources of task-based materials conforming to the content of the syllabus and students' proficiency. Large-sized group could affect time management in each task; teaching pace might not be steady. Not all students/groups would get equal support from the teacher. Teacher could not guide and check every group task-performance within limited time given. The findings also suggested some time teacher's role and learners' expectation did not match.

4.4 Summary of the findings

The findings revealed some essential elements of task-based implementation. First, the setting must increase learners' motivation, second it must promote cooperative learning. Learner motivation would be generated when they enjoyed and engaged in classroom activities; the teacher used interesting teaching materials that relevant to learner needs; the learners gained more confidence and improved their self-esteem. Cooperative learning atmosphere could exist when learners could build positive and supportive relationship with peers; there was accountability among team members in accomplishing task goal, good physical arrangement, as well as a great rapport between learners and the teacher. However, there were some limitations of the intervention as a result of marginal resources of the materials, time-consuming in material development, large-sized class, and lack of task-facilitation skill of the teacher.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The findings also led to some considerations that could be done to minimize the limitations. There are two aspects that should be considered before implementing task-based instruction in Thai EFL classroom. They are 1) lesson design, and 2) task facilitation.

Lesson design

The design a task-based lessons includes consideration of the stages or components of a lesson (Ellis, 2003). This study employed Nunan's 6-stage framework (Nunan, 2004) and found that it provided rich scaffoldings and a number of recycling practice of the target language. During lesson design stage, it is important that level of difficulty of the lesson and instructional materials are compatible with the level of learners' proficiency. It is crucial that teacher use the right level of difficulty for audio program or virtue media such as VDO clips. Teacher should wise up that limited English background learners require more time to deal with new vocabulary either for meaning or pronunciation. Some phrases or expressions could be taught in advance or assigned as homework.

Task facilitation

The success of task-based implementation was highly correlated with task-based instruction skill of the teacher. Teacher also need to study about cooperative learning and should explain students why he/she employs group work and how students could participate and get benefits from the cooperative learning. (Johnson and Johnson, 2009; Ellis, 2003). In task-based setting, it requires different teacher's roles to fit each component in task cycle and to match with learners' roles and expectation (Nunan, 2004). Nunan (2004) reported that it would cause a problem when learners find that the teacher's roles do not match with what they expected.

Willis and Willis (2007) suggest that teacher roles in task-based classroom could be varied to six roles: (1) leader and organizer of discussion, (2) manager of group/pair work, (3) facilitator, (4) motivator, (5) language 'knower' and 'adviser', and (6) language teacher.

5.2 Conclusion

I would like to conclude that task-based instruction could greatly benefit Thai EFL classroom especially one which aims for improving learners' listening and speaking skills. It would be highly recommended for using task-based instruction to increase learner motivation and to promote cooperative learning. The success of task-based instruction lies in considerations of lesson design and facilitation skill of task-based teacher. Rich scaffoldings and compatible level of difficulty and level of proficiency could result in success of the implementation. Cooperative learning knowledge, as well as teacher's roles adoption would also be essential for full fruition of the intervention.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides further evidence that students require great support during task completion. They needed more time for dealing with meaning and pronunciation. Extra time for more practice and more explicit instruction should be considered for further study, as well as a pre-test to assess level of competency before the implementation. That might help for preparing appropriate to the level materials. According to Krashen's model of comprehensible input, level of difficulty should be a little beyond learners' current level of proficiency. That input is the source of acquisition of reception skills (listening and reading) which precedes production skills (speaking and writing). Hence, the audio program and all teaching materials should be on a par with Krashen's comprehensible input. (Nunan, 2004; Lightbown and Spada, 1991).

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Nantana Wichitwarit is currently a full-time lecturer in Faculty of Liberal Arts, Panyapiwat Institute of Management. She earned her MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Thammasat University in 2009. Her academic interests include ESL/EFL teaching methodology and blended learning, instructional material development, teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), as well as critical thinking and language teaching.