

Evaluation of the effectiveness of a lesson plan combining the Direct Teaching Method (DM) and the Task Based Learning teaching (TBLT) approach in the context of an intensive TOEIC course for Thai students from Silpakorn University Animal Science and Agricultural technology Phetchaburi IT Campus^{*}

การประเมินประสิทธิผลแผนจัดการเรียนรู้ด้วยวิธีการสอนแบบตรงและการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานแบบเข้มข้นสำหรับการทำข้อสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อใช้ในการทำงาน (TOEIC) ของนักศึกษาคณะสัตวศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีการเกษตร มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร วิทยาเขตสารสนเทศเพชรบุรี

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Abstract

This paper considers the effectiveness of a combined teaching method using the Direct Method and Task Based Learning Teaching approach in the context of an intensive TOEIC course. After presenting background information on the two language teaching methods that are Task-Based Learning Teaching Method and Direct Method, this paper evaluates the appropriateness of the lesson plan both for teaching listening and reading to prepare students for the TOEIC test. This lesson plan is composed of 7 items and has been assessed by 3 experts to check its suitability for Thai students from Silpakorn University - Animal Science and Agricultural technology - Phetchaburi IT Campus. This lesson has been approved at high level, for use during the intensive TOEIC course. Additionally, students' Learning achievements have been checked with a comparison of a pre and post TOEIC test at day 1 and day 30 for 10 students. The students achieved learning outcomes after the intensive course have been significant at level .05, as indicated by their post-test compared to the pre-test analysis. Lastly, a satisfaction survey of the overall course has been conducted for all the 10 participants and showed a high level of student's satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 4.30$, S.D. = 0.70)

Keywords: lesson plan, TOEIC, Direct Method, Task-Based Learning Teaching method

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยฉบับนี้นำเสนอประสิทธิผลการจัดการเรียนการสอนสำหรับการทำข้อสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อใช้ในการทำงาน (TOEIC) แบบเข้มข้นด้วยวิธีการสอนแบบตรงและการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงาน จากการนำเสนอวิธีการสอนภาษาอังกฤษด้วยวิธีการสอนแบบตรงและการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงาน ได้พิจารณาประเมินความเหมาะสมของแผนจัดการเรียนรู้ในด้านทักษะการฟังและทักษะการอ่านสำหรับใช้ในการสอบ TOEIC แผนจัดการเรียนรู้ที่พัฒนา ประกอบไปด้วย 7 องค์ประกอบ โดยประเมินความสอดคล้องและเหมาะสมโดยผู้เชี่ยวชาญ 3 ท่าน พบว่ามีความสอดคล้องและมีความเหมาะสมอยู่ในระดับมาก ผลการเปรียบเทียบคะแนนข้อสอบวัดระดับความรู้ทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อใช้ในการทำงาน (TOEIC) ก่อนและหลังเรียนด้วยแผนจัดการเรียนรู้ พบว่า ผู้เรียนมีคะแนนสอบหลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และผลการสำรวจความพึงพอใจที่มีต่อแผนจัดการเรียนรู้ที่อยู่ในระดับมาก ($\bar{X} = 4.30$, S.D. = 0.70)

คำสำคัญ : แผนจัดการเรียนรู้, โทอิก, วิธีการสอนแบบตรง, วิธีการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงาน

Introduction

1. Background of the study

In Thailand TOEIC is used by large organizations and job seekers to decide if a potential employee is suitable for a precise mission or particular duty, it may be part of the hiring requirements and candidate's selection criteria. However, data show that lots of improvement needs to be done to increase the TOEIC score of Thai test takers in Thailand, The United States Educational Testing Service (ETS) "2015 Report on Test Takers Worldwide: The TOEIC® Listening and Reading Test" published that the mean TOEIC score by region scored Asia as the lowest score for listening and reading worldwide. Thailand's Listening performance mean 282 and standard deviation (101) and respectively 210 (94) for reading.

The "Animal Science and Agricultural Technology" department of Silpakorn University has created an intensive training TOEIC course during summer for 10 of its selected students (1st to 4th year) with a pre-test TOEIC score between 220 and 340. The program has been a 1-month intensive class with 2 consecutives meetings of 3 hours in the second semester academic year 2016. To make it a successful long term program that could be offered each year to our students, we have decided to analyze the performance of our lesson plan combining 2 teaching methods (Direct Method and Tasked-based Learning Teaching Method).

The objective of this program is to give students more knowledge of the test to help them overcome the challenges resulting from the test design itself, to provide them with concrete strategies to comprehend and complete each individual of the 7 parts of the test

and lastly to give students guidance and support on how to develop their global English skills. We have decided to apply the combination of the Direct Method and the Task-Based Learning Teaching method.

According to the British Council, the Direct Method of teaching proposes a full immersion for the learner who will thus not be allowed or the least possible to use his or her mother tongue (Thai). “All the activities are done in the target language (English Language), grammar is taught inductively, there is a focus on speaking and listening, and only useful ‘everyday’ language is taught” (British Council – Para 1). This Direct Teaching Method has been used mainly to explain and practice the 4 parts of Listening TOEIC test. For the 3 reading parts, we have used the combination of the previous Direct Method and the Task-Based method: a comprehensive structure where learners do Task-Based activities via cycles of pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback via language focus (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). The Task-Based Learning Teaching approach aims at presenting opportunities for learners to master language via learning activities designed to engage them in the natural, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purpose (Lin, 2009).

2. Research objective

The study objective aimed at 1) assessing the developed TOEIC lesson plan using Direct and Task-based Learning Teaching method, 2) examining its effectiveness and evaluate the learning outcomes of the students of Animal Science and Agricultural technology Silpakorn University - Phetchaburi IT Campus through a compared pre and post TOEIC test and 3) investigating the satisfaction of students towards the developed materials and the overall intensive course.

Research design

1. Participants

Participants in this study were 10 students who enrolled in academic year 2016 at the faculty of Animal Science and Agricultural Technology at Silpakorn University. These 10 students have freely decided to test the TOEIC examination as “independent candidates” on Wednesday May, 26th. The classic TOEIC Listening & Reading Test lasted two hours [45 minutes for Listening, and 75 minutes for Reading] from 4.30 PM to 6.30 PM. Each candidate has received independent scores for listening and reading comprehension on a scale from 5 to 495 points. The total score adds up to a scale from 10 to 990 points (score classification of the TOEIC official website). The scores of our 10 participants ranged from 220 to 340.

2. Methodology

This study was One Group pretest-posttest design for students from faculty of Animal Science and Agricultural technology Silpakorn University who registered for an intensive TOEIC course as an experimental design. The participants for this study consist of ten 2nd year students from the “Animal Science and Agricultural Technology” department of Silpakorn University who voluntarily enrolled in an intensive TOEIC course during the summer semester of academic year 2016. The participants have been purposively selected with a pre-test score between 220 and 340. The procedures of directing this study have been divided on three stages.

The first phase was the development of our lesson plan. The second phase consisted of the assessment of student’s improvement after implementation of our intensive. The last and third phase was to conduct an overall satisfaction survey.

Phase 1 - development of TOEIC listening and reading material and lesson plan

The Direct Teaching Method has been used mainly for the Listening part of the TOEIC: Grammar rules have been avoided and we have mainly focused on the repetition of the audio tracks, asking students to comprehend from just a few words and the main idea to the full exact same sentence. Repetition, lead-in and eliciting information has directly contributed to the comprehension and recall of the listening inputs. Although listening is an individual activity, we first focused on explaining students on how to listen. We did not rush to supply correct answers. We played every tracks many times and asked, in plenary, for students’ inputs to make things right.

Part I - photographs: students were asked to answer questions related to what they could see on the pictures printed in their textbooks, make a list of predictions and think of possible statements of what they could probably hear. While listening, keys words were listed and correct answers probed.

Part II Question/Response: students practice (Lecturer / students and students / students interaction) to answer and ask different types of questions: yes/no questions + WH questions + questions tag questions. Before listening the TOEIC track, we asked students to try to identify the question type, and elicit possible answer type.

Part III Conversations: we first reviewed how a conversation is usually build up in the TOEIC test, then the lecturer asked students yes/no and wh - questions related to a random conversation to check their comprehension. After that. in class skimming activities have been practiced. Students have been asked to skim the questions from their text-book before

listening, and underline the keywords, try to predict possible answers from the 3 questions. After listening, students repeated the main idea of each speaker.

Part IV Short Talks. The lecturer revised the short talk or lecture first and then read it to the class, asked questions about the short talk/lecture/ announcement, the objective being to find out the main idea, the subject of the talk, facts, eventual specific conditions, prediction, and exclusion. Students were asked to read the questions before listening and skim the main idea. Listen the track and repeat it until we could answer correctly.

The Task-based Learning method of teaching has been combined with the Direct Method for the 3 reading parts of the TOEIC. Tasks have been employed as main pedagogical tools to structure the language teaching and its clear enrichment. We have also used group activities for a more collaborative learning, assuming that interaction Lecturer / student and student /student is the basis of language acquisition as they had to comprehend each other and work together on the same goal which is to achieve the given task.

Here we have also focused on the time management as it is considered as a critical issue if one wants to complete the whole test in the 75 minutes allocated. Tactics of skimming and scanning have been taught for the reading part of the TOEIC, as well as the basic grammar rules to help them choose the correct answers. Unknown vocabulary has been drilled, information and answers have been elicited.

As our TOEIC program was just an intensive one-month course of 2 times 3 hours a week, we had to select carefully the topics that we thought would be the most useful for our Thai students.

Pre-task preparation for Task-Based Learning practice on reading TOEIC skills

1. Understand the parts of speech and learn how to Identify them quickly and efficiently as they are commonly tested features.
2. Improve students' vocabulary by using word families. the suffixes; and prefixes to develop educated guesses of unfamiliar words.
3. Enhance students' grammatical knowledge by giving them the fundamental grammatical rules such as how tenses, auxiliaries ... are used and how they may appear in the TOEIC.
4. build up students' systematic knowledge of pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions as they are common features or English writing and understanding the ways they are used will definitely help the students to choose the correct answer. According to our time

constraint we could only focus on these few points hoping that it is a starting point to improve their TOEIC score.

The reading part has been using the Task-based Learning combined with the natural method: refraining from using the learner's native language.

The focus of the teaching was then on the completion of a task from the reading section of the TOEIC. Learners have used the language they already had to complete the task and there was little correction of errors beside that the one of the task itself.

Phase 2 - Implementation of our intensive TOEIC course and assessment of students'

improvement through the comparison of their score from the pre and post TOEIC test. Prior to the start the TOEIC intensive course, Faculty of Animal Science and Agricultural technology, Silpakorn University students had to test TOEIC, 10 students have been selected for the purpose of the study regarding their score and achievement abilities.

The experimentation period (intensive TOEIC course), lasted for a month during June 2017. Every week, the students and lecturers were meeting twice during 3 hours. The students used a pre-printed book with selected TOEIC exercises, instructions and activities were discussed in class. On the last day of teaching, our 10 students did the post-TOEIC test to evaluate their improvement and in consequence the efficiency of our teaching methodology.

Phase 3 - satisfaction survey

At the end of the experimentation period, our 10 students have completed an online survey in order to examine their satisfaction and opinions towards the developed English TOEIC lesson plans.

3. INSTRUMENTS

1. Lesson plan assessment

The essential items of pedagogy, listening, content, language focus, tasks and the practice have been designed in accordance of identified learning objectives (understand tactics to improve TOEIC score). Tactics and practice on 7 items (4 parts for listening and 3 for reading) have been taught during 8 sessions of 3 hours to give students efficient strategies to improve their TOEIC score. Three experts of English language teaching have been asked to assess the developed materials, its quality and the appropriateness of the specific lesson plan combining the Direct Method and the Task-Based Learning Teaching methods. The lesson plan has been verified using the evaluation form (Items Objective Congruence Index, IOC) to guarantee the

appropriateness of the content as well as to construct validity of the overall lesson plans (objective, tasks, and materials). The 3 experts had to evaluate the layout, design, activities, subject, content and teaching method. The IOC index ranges on a three-rating scale range from -1 to 1. Items that had an index lower than 0.5 should be revised and all the items scoring more or equal to 0.5 were considered appropriate and relevant. Results indicated that all the 7 parts were rated more than 0.5 which implies that they were acceptably congruent with the course objective.

2. Pre-test and Post-test achievement

Achievement has been measured by comparing the scores of a pre-test; administered before the intensive course and a post-test after the 8 sessions of TOEIC intensive course.

3. satisfaction survey

The overall satisfaction of the intensive course has been evaluated through an online satisfaction survey on the last day of teaching. We have designed a brief questionnaire in English to have a complete and accurate information on how the students had apprehended the teaching methodology and to evaluate their perception of usefulness of such a program.

The researcher created a satisfaction survey to investigate students' satisfaction towards a lesson plan combining the Direct Teaching Method (DM) and the Task-Based Learning teaching (TBLT) approach in the context of an intensive TOEIC course. The satisfaction survey was created using both closed-end and opened-end questions. The answer to each survey item was separated by Likert 5 step rating scale with 6 items. The satisfaction survey has a reliability of 0.92 using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Cronbach, 1974). To assess the validity of the research instrumental content validity, the IOC (Index of Item Objective Congruence) was also used and indicated an objective congruence between 0.67 - 1.00 which was evaluated by 3 experts.

The items relative to the evaluation of the teaching methods were presented with multiple choice or structured questions using five-point form of the Likert measurement scale to reflect the strength and direction of respondents' attitudes in the most relevant way. 1=strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, depending on their agreement with the statements. The data obtained from the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. Their opinions on the usefulness of the intensive class have been assessed through open-ended question.

Results and finding

Research objective 1: lesson plan assessment

The result of the evaluation of the lesson plan using the combination of two methods of teaching (Direct Method and Task-based Method) for an intensive TOEIC course for Thai students from Silpakorn University - Animal Science and Agricultural technology - Phetchaburi IT Campus found that the lesson plan verified using the evaluation form (Items Objective Congruence Index:IOC) was appropriate at high level 0.67 - 1.00. Corresponding to the research of Muneerat and Chinokul (2014) who studied “ The Development of English Reading Materials Using Inference Strategies Instruction to Enhance English Reading Comprehension Ability of Upper Secondary Students: A Case Study of Tenth Grade Students of Chonkanyanukoon” and also found that the lesson plan using listening and reading comprehension, the capacities to recognize and understand the main ideas, make assumptions, preempt possible answers, evaluation of the information, and determine the significance of some new vocabulary words were also judged by the three experts as valuable and appropriate for the teaching at high level.

Research objective 2: pre-test and post-test achievement

The data collection for this study was carried out in before and after the experimental study. The research results from the comparison of the scores from the pre-test and post-test helped us to evaluate the students’ learning achievements of the TOEIC test, and showed that the post-test scores are higher than the pre-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic of the TOEIC test score

	n	Mean	S.D.	Mean Difference	t-test	df	P-Value
Pretest	10	283.50	43.85	20.57	4.08	9	.003
Posttest		367.50	70.56				

**p < .05

According to table 1, the results show that the post-test mean score (\bar{X} = 367.50, S.D. = 70.56) of the TOEIC test score was higher than students’ pretest mean scores (\bar{X} = 283.50, S.D. = 43.85). The possible total score was 990 and the difference between the

mean differences was 20.57. The t-value was 4.08 with a degree of freedom of 9 ($n = 10$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the TOEIC test at a significance level ($p < .05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a difference between the pre - test and post-test mean scores of the TOEIC test. Thus, the 10 students had highly increased their TOEIC abilities and learning achievements after experiencing the intensive TOEIC course using our combined teaching method. The results also corresponded to Khamkhonsanr (2017) and Muneerat and Chinokul (2014). As they also tried to develop English reading material and have investigate the opinion of students towards it and its effectiveness through a pre and post test.

Research objective 3: student's satisfaction

Finally, at the last day of the experiment, the 10 students have been asked to rate the course regarding their overall satisfaction of the intensive course. The results of the satisfaction survey towards the developed lesson plan for the intensive TOEIC course have been analyzed using a mean, standard deviation and a sample paired t-test. which shows a high level of global satisfaction. The students strongly agreed ($\bar{X} = 4.6$, S.D.=0.7) that the course was efficient and the material appropriate at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.71$, S.D.=0.48) as well, students strongly agreed that the teaching of tactics were useful at highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.70$, S.D.=0.48). Examples and instructions have been fairly understood at high level ($\bar{X} = 3.8$, S.D. =0.42). Practices and exercises were adequate and comprehended at high level ($\bar{X} = 3.8$, S.D.=0.63) and finally, the use of the Direct Method combined with the Task-Based Learning method has been evaluated as suitable in the context of an intensive TOEIC course and students are really willing to study more to improve their TOEIC score. The overall students' satisfaction towards the TOEIC intensive course after the learning period using the developed lesson plan for the intensive TOEIC course was at high level at $\bar{X} = 4.30$, S.D. = 0.70 according the criteria from Best (John, W. Best, 1997). The results also corresponded to Singyen (2017); Pansaead et al. (2012); Thongkong et al.(2009).

Examination of the issues and recommendations

The principal objective of this present study was to assess the effectiveness of combined teaching method using the Direct and the Task-based Learning Teaching method in a context of an intensive TOEIC course. The findings statistically demonstrated that the abilities of the students exposed to our TOEIC teaching plan have significantly improved at high level. However, based on the results of the student's satisfaction survey, we have identified that for

80% of the participants the principal physical limitations for this course was the length of the intensive program (1 month. 3 hours x 2 times a week) which didn't allow to cover all the necessary materials to have a full comprehension and develop all the necessary skills for the TOEIC test.

The personal students' limitations were for 100% of them a lack of vocabulary, followed by a lack of concentration due to the intensive condensed hours in class. Furthermore, students personal work could not be monitored (lesson component vs homework component). Personal work would have helped the intake of all the new knowledge and information.

According to our findings, we are recommending to expand the research study to students with higher initial TOEIC score so they can have a better and easier understanding of all the material provided and be more comfortable with the use of the Direct Method. Additionally, we recommend to lengthen the period of teaching in order that the results be more reliable and for that we highly suggest to integrate TOEIC in the curriculum of Animal Science and Agricultural technology - Phetchaburi IT Campus students so that it can be taught during a full term and students TOEIC score much more increased.

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