The Implementation of the Blended Learning Model with a Speaking Task-based Design on Thai EFL Students' English Speaking Ability

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การวิจัยเชิงทดลองครั้งนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจผลของการเรียนการสอนรูปแบบที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นฐานร่วมกับ รูปแบบสภาวะแวดล้อมในการเรียนรู้ 2 แบบที่แตกต่างกัน คือ การเรียนการสอนแบบเผชิญหน้า ร่วมกับการเรียนการสอนแบบ ผสมผสานเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ของนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏอุดรธานี โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) เปรียบเทียบความสามารถด้านการพูดของนักศึกษา ระหว่างกลุ่มควบคุมและกลุ่มทดลอง 2) เพื่อสำรวจผลของผลสะท้อนกลับระหว่างนักศึกษาทั้งสองกลุ่ม และ 3) เพื่อศึกษา ทัศนคติหลังจากการเรียนในสภาวะการเรียนรูปแบบที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นฐานและการเรียนแบบผสมผสานในกลุ่มทดลอง กลุ่มเป้าหมายคือนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 จำนวนทั้งสิ้น 88 ราย แบ่งออกเป็นกลุ่มทดลองและกลุ่มควบคุม กลุ่มทดลอง คือ นักศึกษา ที่เรียนในรูปแบบที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นฐานร่วมกับการเรียนแบบผสมผสานในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ เป็นนักศึกษาสาขาวิชา ภาษาไทย จำนวน 44 ราย และกลุ่มควบคุม คือ การเรียนในรูปแบบที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็นฐานและการเรียนแบบเผชิญหน้า เป็น นักศึกษาจากสาขาการจัดการทั่วไป มีจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 44 ราย โดยใช้วิธีเลือกแบบเจาะจง เครื่องมือในการทำงานวิจัย ได้แก่ แบบทดสอบก่อนและหลังเรียน แบบสังเกตการณ์และแบบสัมภาษณ์กึ่งโครงสร้าง สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ($\bar{x}$) และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน (S.D.) วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้วิธีเป็นในเชิงพรรณนาและบรรยาย หลังจาก ที่นักศึกษาทั้งสองกลุ่มได้เข้าเรียนโดย 2 วิธีที่แตกต่างกัน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1)พบว่านักศึกษากลุ่มทดลองมีผลสัมฤทธิ์ที่เพิ่มขึ้น สูงกว่ากลุ่มควบคุมจากผลการทดสอบหลังเรียนในด้านความแม่นยำ ความคล่อง การโต้ตอบในการสื่อสาร การบรรลุเป้าหมาย ของกิจกรรม การออกเสียง และ คำศัพท์ของการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ 2) ผลสะท้อนกลับจากผู้สอน และคะแนนความสามารถด้าน การพูด จากการณ์สังเกตชิ้นงานของนักศึกษาทั้งสองกลุ่ม พบว่าผลสะท้อนกลับของผู้สอนลดลงเนื่องจากมีปัญหาด้านการพูด ของนักศึกษาลดลง 3) นักศึกษามีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการเรียนแบบผสมผสานกันระหว่างรูปแบบการเรียนการสอนที่ใช้ภาระงานเป็น ฐานและการเรียนการสอนแบบผสมผสาน

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Abstract

This experimental study sought to investigate the effects of task-based language teaching (TBLT) when utilized in two learning environments, namely face-to-face (F2F) and blended learning (BL) and face-to-face on the speaking skills of Thai EFL undergrad learners. This study aimed to: 1) compare the learners' improvement in speaking ability between the TBLT face-to-face group and the BL +TBLT group, 2) investigate the effects of feedback on the TBLT group and the BL + TBLT group, and 3) explore learners' attitudes towards the TBLT approach in the blended learning speaking course of the experimental group. The participants were separated into two groups by using a purposive sampling method. In the experimental group, the participants needed to study speaking through task-based learning in blended learning class. There were 44 participants in the experimental group from Thai major. In the control group, there were 44 participants in the control group from business administration major.

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This group studied speaking through task-based learning in class. Three research instruments were used to collect data: pre-post-tests, the teacher's observation, and semi-structured interviews. Mean ($\bar{x}$), Standard Deviation (S.D.), and descriptive analysis were used in this study in order to describe the statistics. The results showed that: 1) the findings indicate that the participants showed an increase in speaking proficiency in all areas: accuracy, fluency, interactive communication, task completion, pronunciation and vocabulary. 2) demonstrated that the speaking problems of both the control and experimental groups decreased; moreover, the overall mean speaking scores of the control and the experimental group both tended to increase. 3) presented that the learners in the experimental group demonstrated a positive attitude towards the combination of task-based learning and blended learning. In addition, the TBLT that was implemented in both groups played a major role in encouraging the participants to complete the speaking tasks.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Task-based Learning, Speaking

Introduction

The task-based learning approach was expected to address the above lack of communicative ability because the task-based learning approach provides an opportunity to communicate, subsequently enhances communication and authenticity, and supports cooperative learning and active learning. In the opinion of Akuli (2018) and Gregurovic, (2011.), the task-based approach is a very helpful tool for students with a low level of grammatical knowledge, structure, and vocabulary. Similarly, Ellis (2003) stated that task-based learning can be beneficial for learners who can only communicate in basic English. The English proficiency level of the participants was therefore taken into account in the current study.

This study proposed the combination of exciting technology and computer programs in language teaching, via blended learning. The path to integrating the two learning approaches was supported by several related studies. Firstly, Allen et al. (2007) stated that blended learning refers to the combination of the online and face-to-face learning environments. Moreover, blended learning aims to improve and increase the potential of students in learning language situations (Hinkelman, 2005). Finally, blended learning supports motivation in language learning, and students have a more

positive attitude after implementing blended learning in class (Banditvilai, 2016). Based on the results from these previous studies, this study was established to harness the strength of blended learning and to combine it with the task-based learning approach in order to improve the speaking ability level of students. There exist studies of blended learning on language teaching in ELT research areas.

Task-based learning provides an opportunity for students to use the target language in a communicative way through real world tasks (Nunan, 2003). Moreover, Ellis (2003) noted that learner ability is the main factor in successful language learning due to the level of learners' proficiency being most advantageous for completing communicative tasks. In teaching speaking skills, Richards and Rogers (1986) proposed task-based communication activities such as games, role plays, and simulations which focus on pair communication material.

Empirical studies have proven that a task-based language teaching approach is effective for speaking development (Munirah & Muhsin, 2015; Khoshima, 2015; Tiwari & Mani, 2017; Sharafiye & Azarnoosh, 2017; Akuli, 2018). However, for online learning, task–based learning is not a panacea. Ellis (2003) and Hinkelman (2005)

noted that task-based instruction is designed for use in a classroom; however, there are several suggestions as to how task-based learning and teaching should be implemented in and outside the class (E-learning). Therefore, the current study proposed a new approach, which combines task-based learning and blended learning.

1.1 Research Objectives

1) To compare the learners' speaking ability between the task-based language teaching (TBLT) group and the blended learning and task-based language teaching (BL + TBLT) group

2) To investigate the effects of feedback between the task-based language teaching (TBLT) group and the blended learning and task-based language teaching (BL + TBLT) group

3) To explore learners' attitudes towards the task-based language teaching approach in the blended learning speaking course.

1.2 Research Questions

This study thus aimed at answering the following research questions**:**

1) To what extent do learners improve their speaking ability after the treatment?

2) What are the effects of receiving feedback from task based language teaching in the traditional class group and task-based language teaching in the blended learning class?

3) What are the learners' attitudes towards the implementation of the blended learning   class?

Literature Review

1. Blended Learning in Language Teaching and Learning Models

In a class that applies blended learning, the face-to-face and online delivery aspects are seen as inseparable (Graham, 2006). Because of this unique combination, many scholars have agreed to define blended learning as a learning and teaching approach that combines traditional learning environments with the application of technology (Bank & Graham, 2006; Dewar & Whittington, 2004; MacDonald, 2006). In this study, blended learning is that successful learning generally occurs in a learning environment that combines a traditional class with online learning.

In the 21st century, finding an appropriate blended learning model is a way to deal with different learning goals. Horn (2017) noted that there are no 'best' models; devising the right model for particular goals can be acceptable. Starker and Horn (2012) proposed several models that classify classroom levels. There were station rotation, flex, self-blended, and enrich virtual model. This study applied station rotation model. It consists of, firstly, station rotation, which is a classroom-based station. A whole class, groups or individual students can be rotated with online class.

2. Task-based learning

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), which is also called task-based language learning (TBLL) and task-based approach (TBA), has been an alternative approach to the traditional method of presentation, practice, and production (PPP), which solely focuses on grammar (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Skehan, 1998; Willis & Willis, 2007). With its communicative language teaching (CLT) nature, task-based language teaching involves interactive activities that can overcome Thai students' passive nature.

Many definitions can describe the meaning of task-based learning, and these definitions have been debated and discussed widely over time (Long, 1985; Prabhu, 1987; Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). According to these definitions, a task is defined as a language activity which requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, produce or interact the target language through communicative activities which have clear objectives and learning

outcomes. The task needs effort from the teacher in order to achieve these goals.

Certain characteristics of TBLT have led to it being widely considered by scholars (Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 2011; Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003). The first characteristic is that the task-based nature provides activities that engage learners in the use of the target language. In this regard, Bygate et al. (2001) stated that communication occurs when learners undertake the communicative task or activities. The second characteristic is that task-based language teaching offers communicative purposes. As Skehan and Swain (2001) stated, tasks and activities are designed to support learners to serve communicative purposes, which in turn results in students' positive learning outcomes. They, therefore, encourage learners to exchange meaning to lead them to desirable outcomes. They also facilitate learners to comprehend, manipulate and produce the target language.

3. Speaking ability

This study aims to identify the students' speaking ability. In the current study, the students' CEFR speaking is B1. They must be able to show comprehension of main points on familiar topics, retaining their comprehension. They may make pauses for grammatical and lexical planning and repair. Moreover, they should be able to link discrete, simple elements into a connected sequence to give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his or her interest. In short, the student should be able to use the main repertoire associated with more predictable situations accurately.

CEFR-based speaking rubrics were adapted and designed using the criteria of Cambridge (2009), UCLES (2011) and Akuli (2018). They consist of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, communicative interaction, vocabulary, and task completion.

Research Design

This study was a two-group pre-post quasi pre-post-test experimental design. There were 88 participants. The control group consisted of students majoring in Management Sciences (44 students or 22 pairs when doing the tasks), while the participants in the experimental group were Thai language majors (44 students or 22 pairs when doing the tasks). Both groups were first year students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University (UDRU). In this study, both groups took in total 6 weeks, including two weeks for the pre-post-test.

Figure 1 presents how this study was designed to serve the research goal (Settabut, 1983).
The symbols are explained as follows.
O1=Speaking Task Pre-Test
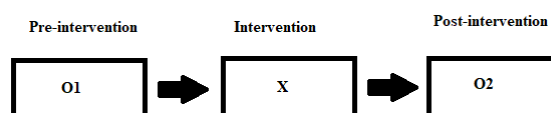
X=Speaking tasks in blended learning course
O2=Speaking Task Post-Test

The participants in the control group were required to study in class, while the participants in the experimental group were required to participate in class activities and to complete the speaking tasks online. Both groups aimed to develop their English speaking skills. In this study, the tasks were relevant to those in the course textbook, but the researcher specially designed additional tasks based on task-based concepts.

Tasks were designed to be role-plays on daily life topics. The control group completed these tasks in class or as assignments. The experimental group, on the other hand, took the lessons online and completed the same tasks in class. The experimental group needed to submit the speaking tasks in video recording that were assigned for each lesson. However, the control

group needed to present the tasks in class. For the experimental group, their video files needed to be uploaded, and then the instructor provided feedback on these tasks. The feedback was made orally in class for the face-to-face group (control), and online via Facebook Messenger, or LINE, for the blended group (experimental).

Data Collection

1. Research procedure

The participants completed the pre-test before the implementation of the treatment. Then, they undertook either a face-to-face course mode with task-based learning, or a blended learning course mode with a task-based design. The two modes of learning are illustrated in Figure 4

Figure 4 The blended learning and task-based language teaching (BL + TBLT) modes
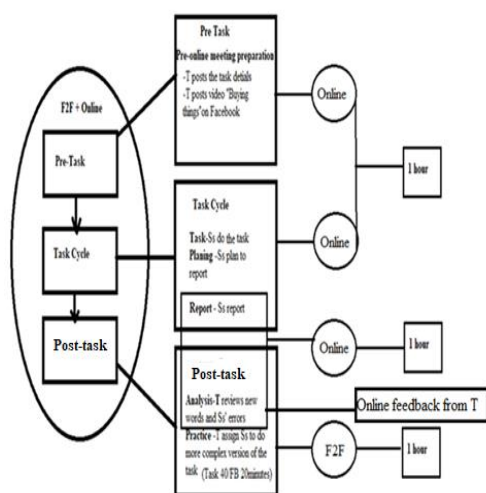

Figure 4 shows the blended learning and task-based language teaching modes. The blended learning class combines the face-to-face learning environment and the online learning environment. The oval-shaped figure consists of task-based learning phases, including the pre-task, task cycle and post task. The next section describes what the learners and the teacher did.

The pre-task phase aimed to introduce the unit. In this phase, the teacher asks the learners to recall the words and phrases that will be needed for their performance in the task (online exercises). After that, the teacher presents and defines the topic by playing video clips demonstrating a daily life topic, e.g. shopping. The learners are separated into groups of five. Each group is assigned to identify certain words, phrases, and expressions used to serve in the topic for each unit. However, the learners work within a time limit.

The task cycle phase refers to stating the task, planning it, and reporting on it. In the starting the task phase, the learners are asked to watch a video with a script. Then, they are asked to work in pairs. After that, in the planning stage, each pair creates a dialogue according to the task instructions. They are allowed to study and use information from Google classroom to create dialogues before they play their roles. In the report stage, the pairs present their video.

The post-task phase refers to students analyzing their speaking videos. They are encouraged to revise and to re-record their videos. During this phase, participants work in pairs to identify words, phrases, and expressions from conversational videos of native speakers which were selected by the teacher for that topic with an example script. This aims for the learners to reflect on the task and focus on language forms. After that, the learners practice and record videos again using correct words, phrases, and expressions from the feedback of the teacher and of the class.

In small circles, the learners present the status of the learning environments (online or face-to-face). On the right, the squares show the duration that the class spent. The online session took two hours, with just one hour for the face-to-face class.

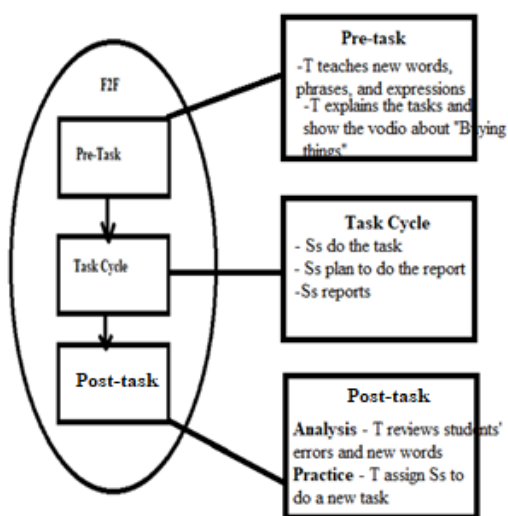**Figure 5** The task-based language teaching (TBLT) mode

Figure 5 shows the face-to-face class with task-based language teaching. The participants study as a normal class. The oval-shaped figure consists of task-based learning phases, including the pre-task, task cycle and post task.

The pre-task phase aimed at introducing the unit. In this phase, the teacher asks the learners to recall the words and phrases that will be useful for their performance in the task (online exercises). After that, the teacher presents and defines the topic by playing a video clip demonstrating a daily life topic, e.g. shopping. The learners are separated into groups of five. Each group is assigned to identify certain words, phrases, and expressions used to serve the topic of each unit. However, the learners work within a time limit.

The task cycle phase refers to stating the task, planning it, and reporting on it. In the starting the task phase, the learners are asked to watch the video with the script. Then, they are asked to work in pairs. After that, in the planning stage, each pair creates a dialogue according to the task instructions. They are allowed to study

and use information from the Internet to create their dialogues before they play their roles. In the report stage, the pairs present their role-plays in front of the class.

The post-task phase refers to when the students analyze their role plays. They are encouraged to revise, and transcribe and practice again. During this phase, participants work in pairs to identify words, phrases, and expressions from the transcription. After that, the teacher presents videos about the conversation of native speakers about that topic, with examples and scripts, for the learners to reflect on the task and focus on language forms. After that, the students practice in their old pairs and present again using correct words, phrases, and expressions from teacher and class feedback.

However, the experimental and control groups were treated with the same overall procedures. The duration for each class was three hours, with one hour for the pre-task, one hour for the during-task, and one hour for the post-task. The participants studied in a face-to-face learning environment.

Findings

1. **Research Question 1: To what extent do learners improve their speaking ability after the treatment?**

To answer Research Question 1, the data from the tests were analyzed. The tests aimed to examine the participants' speaking ability via the scores of the participants from the pre-test and post-test. T test was used to compare the mean scores ($\bar{x}$ and S.D.) of the participants from the pre-test and post test scores by looking at 7 aspects, namely fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication, task completion and total scores.

Table 1 Control and Experimental T-Test

Group		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	Sig.
pre-Flu	con	2.30	.24	-6.28	.000*
	exp	2.78	.25		
pre-Acc	con	2.26	.16	-3.75	.001*
	exp	2.59	.37		
pre-Voc	con	2.74	.25	-1.34	.000*
	exp	2.82	.12		
pre-Pro	con	2.28	.19	-12.58	.000*
	exp	2.80	.04		
pre-Int	con	2.30	.23	-3.78	.000*
	exp	2.60	.28		
pre-Tas	con	2.66	.24	-11.29	.000*
	exp	3.32	.13		
Total	con	2.42	.14	-9.03	.000*
	exp	2.82	.14		
post-Flu	con	3.22	.12	-9.59	.000*
	exp	3.68	.18		
post-Acc	con	2.80	.71	-5.39	.000*
	exp	3.66	.21		
post-Voc	con	3.20	.15	-2.11	.000*
	exp	3.28	.10		
post-Pro	con	2.27	.34	-17.51	.000*
	exp	3.64	.13		
post-Int	con	3.22	.12	-1.32	.000*
	exp	3.32	.32		
post-Tas	con	3.40	.21	-207	.000*
	exp	3.80	.14		
Total	con	3.02	.18	-12.09	.000*
	exp	3.56	.09		

*p < .01

As can be seen in Table 2, the pre- and post-tests were administered to the participants. The results were then analyzed by qualified raters to assess the changes (if any) that occurred to the scores. All raters had been trained on using the speaking assessment rubric and had understood the research goals. The findings show that the post-test scores of participants' speaking performance were higher than the pre-test scores of participants from the control and experimental group and that these were significantly different.

2. Comparison of speaking problems, receiving feedback by the participants, and speaking ability scores

This section compares the scores of the tasks before the participants received feedback.

Table 2 Table of the total mean scores of receiving feedback in pre and post phases for the control and experimental groups in six weeks

	Weeks 1-6			
	Con		Ex	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
Pre-Acc	5.14	1.25	2.27	0.72
Post-Acc	3.45	1.12	0.83	0.56
Pre-Flu	1.03	0.10	0.95	0.34
Post-Flu	0.67	0.49	0.45	0.48
Pre-Voc	4.59	1.04	2.60	1.09
Post-Voc	2.89	0.98	1.16	0.80
Pre-Pro	5.55	1.33	2.34	1.25
Post-Pro	3.92	1.32	1.48	0.76
Pre-Int	0.80	0.39	0.74	0.30
Post-Int	0.67	0.47	0.24	0.42
Pre-Tas	0.18	0.24	0.13	0.24
Post-Tas	0.17	0.07	0.16	0.27

The table shows the improvement from before receiving feedback and after receiving feedback for the control and experimental groups. In sum, receiving feedback may enhance the participants' ability to reduce errors and mistakes in accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication, task completion, and others. Even though both groups improved and the errors decreased after receiving teacher feedback, the mean scores for feedback in the experimental group were higher than in the control group for every speaking criteria (accuracy,

fluency, vocabulary, , interactive communication, and task completion). That may be a reason why the blended learning may enhance the speaking ability of the experimental group when comparing the means with the control group, which implemented only task-based learning in face-to-face class.

3. Research Question 3: What are the learners' attitude towards the implementation of the blended learning class?

To answer this question, data from semi-structured interviews were examined from the control group (traditional learning class) and the experimental group (blended learning class). There were 10 participants in this group. The total time spent on the semi-structured interviews was 60 minutes. To answer the third research question, there were positive results of implementing task-based learning and blended learning approaches. Task-based learning stages consist of pre-task, task cycle and language focus (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003). From this study, the components of task-based learning stages can be fitted into the blended learning approach due to the semi-structured interview of the participants. It showed that they had positive attitude towards studying speaking using a task-based approach in a blended environment. Moreover, after attending this course (blended learning course), learners felt highly confident in speaking ability and they thought it provides the convenience to learn. Therefore, blended learning is suitable for improving speaking ability, even though its design needs improving. T

Discussion of the Findings

Several important issues emerged from the study.

1) Learners' speaking ability after implementing the blended learning approach in a task-based learning class

To answer Research Question No. 1, "To what extent do learners improve their speaking ability after the treatment?", according to the findings in Chapter 4 (Table 4.1), the aim of the first research question is to examine the speaking ability after implementing the blended learning approach in a task-based learning class. The results of this study saw learners' speaking abilities improve in both groups after implementing the blended learning approach in a task-based learning class, findings which are similar to the results of studies by Sae-Ong (2010), Pongsawang (2012), Promruang (2012), Khamsai (2014) and Akuli (2018). Therefore, the results of the speaking ability of the participants in this study in the categories of accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, interactive communication, pronunciation and task completion ability increased. Accordingly, it may therefore be inferred that implementing blended learning in task-based learning instruction may enhance speaking ability. As a result, Research Question No.1 thus answered that learners' speaking ability improved after implementing the blended learning approach in a task-based learning class.

2) Effects of the teacher's feedback on the students' speaking ability and attitudes

To answer Research Question No. 2, "What are the effects of receiving feedback from task-based language teaching in a traditional class group and task-based language teaching in a blended learning class?", the results of the teacher's feedback in blended learning are in three categories: speaking progress, speaking problems, and teacher's feedback. The speaking

progress after receiving feedback showed a comparison of the participants' speaking ability progress in task-based learning in different learning environments. The results found that the participants in both control and experimental groups improved their speaking ability in terms of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication, and task completion. The participants did the three main tasks and three revisions. The total mean scores for the three tasks performed by the control and experimental groups showed improvement after the learners had received feedback. This is similar to Ibrahim and Yusoff's (2012) finding that when the teacher gave explicit correction feedback from voice recording feedback, this improved the performance of more than 97% of all participants. Similarly, the results for speaking ability improved after the teacher's feedback in Chen's (2015) study. The instructors gave the students voice recording feedback and presented the feedback on PowerPoint in class. The participants in the control group performed better in the long run (by Unit 6). Thus, their speaking ability improved. Similarly, Akuli (2018) implemented a task-based learning framework in order to develop speaking ability. The results showed that after receiving the speaking feedback, when comparing the speaking ability mean scores for the pre- and post-tests, the learners had higher mean scores on grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication and task-completion. He realized that giving feedback played an important role, and he focused on giving feedback at the report phase. After the learners received the feedback from the report phase, the learners were required to repeat a similar task in order to make use of the opportunity to practice using the language features more. He recommended that sometimes the first language could be used to check the learners' understanding before doing the task. In summary, results also prove that learners were

capable at achieving communicative purposes by using feedback from the teacher. That means the participants improved across all items.

Learners' Attitudes Towards the Implementation of Blended Learning Class

To answer Research Question No. 3, "What are the learners' attitudes towards the implementation of the blended learning class?", this section discusses the data from the instructed interviews on learners' attitudes towards the implementation of the blended learning class. From the interviews, even though the students agreed that blended learning helped improve speaking ability in the English for Communication course, they completely agreed that the blended learning required more suggestions about how to improve this specially designed model. According to the interviews, the students noted that the teacher needed to prepare the lesson in more detail. Therefore, the teacher needed to prepare and organize everything in and outside class very competently and professionally. Similarly, Pongsawan (2002) implemented task-based instruction at the university level at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University in order to enhance students' speaking ability. She suggested that the teacher plays an important role in a task-based learning approach. Several points were made. Firstly, the teacher should provide an opportunity for the learners to communicate in class and outside class. Secondly, the teacher scaffolded the students to help them to do the task, although they may enjoy doing it without help. Thirdly, the teacher allows the students to express their ideas and ask questions in the classroom. Fourthly, the teacher teaches them to revise and repeat the process for a new task. Therefore, the students realized how to do the process and understood better how to do the task again. Similarly, Ellis (2003) described students' behavior from observation after his students had studied in a task-based instruction

class. The teacher supported the students by providing them with more opportunities to communicate the target language. Online feedback needed to be accompanied by the teacher's face-to-face feedback in the blended learning class. Similarly, Banditvilai (2016) stated that a few students wanted face-to-face teacher feedback because they were then able to discuss problems directly with the teacher, they were able to ask more personal questions, they wanted face-to-face interaction, and it otherwise took time to pass a message to the teacher.

In addition, the way the teacher gave feedback could make a difference. Foster and Skehan (1996) mentioned that when the learners received guidance in detail, they tried to prioritize the feedback in line with their findings. Then, the learners were able to gain more in terms of complexity when they performed the tasks. That means that the learners could improve their accuracy by using the explicit correction that the teacher indicated when the teacher gave suggestions. In this study, after the learners submitted the task, the teacher tried to give feedback immediately, the day after the participants submitted it. According to the findings, the participants' speaking problems consisted of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication, and task completion. The next section describes how the teacher gave the feedback to the participants.

To sum up, the teacher presented the feedback by adapting Ellis's (2009) explicit correction. This means the teacher indicated the errors, identified the errors, and provided the correction. That is the reason why the participants in both groups improved after receiving the feedback.

Implications of this Study

This section presents the implications of implementing task-based instruction with blended learning. Three main implications of providing blended learning with task-based learning should be considered due to this study.

1. Providing task-based learning instruction in a blended learning mode

The lesson plans in the task-based learning instruction with blended learning mode should be suitable. They should contain the course details, including the course title, credits, duration, learning objectives, functions, learning stages, teacher's roles and students' roles, and evaluation process. It was essential that the lesson plans start with assessable learning outcomes. Also, the learning activities must be systematically devised according to the learning outcomes that are set. During the class, the teacher needs to ensure that students are engaging with coherent and purposeful learning experiences. Saphier and Gower (1997) and Wiggins and McTighe (2006) also agreed with the need to have a clear and well communicated lesson framework as a good beginning. Similarly, this study recognized the necessity to communicate the course objectives to the students before the lessons occurred. The teacher presented lesson agendas and provided an activator and summarizer function in every new lesson. These were found helpful for the students to organize themselves and to make the most from the lessons. Preparation offers better opportunities to add new experience to existing knowledge and leads to long term memory gain, better comprehension and higher retention (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014). In addition, the lesson plans can include appropriate classroom and online activities. Online

language activities can be language quizzes with answer keys and explanations. The learners can access these at home or log in at a language laboratory, depending on the setup for each class.

2. Teacher roles in blended learning environment

Regarding teacher roles of the teacher, there are several implications for task-based learning instruction in a blended learning mode.

1) The teacher must be capable of selecting and developing an appropriate teaching approach in order to integrate the technology and diverse teaching approaches. Presently, teaching approaches range from in-class to out-of-class. However, we have witnessed several unsuccessful attempts to implement technology in education. Technology has changed a lot over time in teaching and learning, with great expectations for the integration of technology (Watson Todd, 2015). The same author noted that Thai teachers teach language with techniques adopted from mostly Western countries. Problems occur when they implement the approach without an awareness of the environment, culture, and learners. Moreover, Khamhien (2011) made the interesting remark that poor Thai EFL learning is partially due to the limited competencies of the teacher. Many Thai EFL teachers fail to employ communicative activities with Thai EFL learners, while the heart of communicative language teaching (CLT) is that teachers are able to fit the materials to the learners' language skills, personal lives, and real world situations. He suggested that teachers improve their teaching abilities, especially testing and evaluation, through the communicative approach.

2) Teachers should change their roles and become facilitators. Teachers need to adjust their roles, from being instructors to becoming learning facilitators. In a blended learning class, the teacher has to provide more opportunities for giving suggestions and recommendations. Communicative language teaching that is suitable for the language activities should support the students' interaction and communication (Brown, 2010). Therefore, teachers need to prepare communicative activities. They need to monitor the learning and provide suggestions. In this study, in the traditional class, the teacher monitored the class when the students did the tasks. In the blended learning class, the teacher provided online feedback.

3) The teacher needs to be trained to use technology. Noom-ura (2013) noted that teachers felt that they lacked confidence about designing speaking and listening assessments because they lacked the knowledge about how to do so. Therefore, teachers need to understand how to manage their classes. Classroom management is not easy because teachers need to manage the students, the materials, e.g., books; the time; and the technology, etc. Even though technology can play an important role in motivating learners in language learning (Warschauer, 1996), the teacher needs to know how to use it well in order to motivate them.

4) The teacher should provide online feedback. The feedback in this study included web links that were related to the errors and mistakes which the students had made. One important issue is that the teacher should have the ability to deliver the content as well as to teach effectively, as otherwise, poor learning outcomes may result (Meador 2017). In the online class, the teacher is an information provider. Thus, he or she needs to provide an online learning environment and manage the learning process. The teacher needs to prepare guidelines for an online class. The teacher needs to provide objectives and direct the learning outcomes of the students; design lesson plans, including for inside and outside the class, with a coaching schedule;

provide materials and activities; and manage the implementation of technology, including software and the internet, together with other technological devices. Therefore, classroom management is very important for language learning both inside and outside the class.

5) The teacher needs to aware of the blended learning preparation phase in the task-based learning instruction. The task-based learning in this study consisted of pre-task, task-cycle and post task phases. The preparation phase informed the learners about what they needed to do in the blended learning mode. At the preparation phase of this study, the teacher needed to prepare guidelines for the blended learning class, i.e. the online class schedule, the time to meet the teacher, and how to access Google Classroom. Then, the teacher presented the online lessons, language activities, and process for submitting the tasks.

3. Learner roles in blended learning

This section describes how to prepare students for a blended learning class with task-based instruction. There are three main points to preparing the learners.

1) The learners need to attend the preparation phase for blended learning. This helps the learners to know about the guidelines and how to study in the blended learning class through implementing Google Classroom. The learners must be informed that they need to follow the schedule and instructed in what they need to do.

2) In task-based learning instruction, the learners need to learn how to work cooperatively. Task-based learning provides an opportunity for learners to work with partners and with the teacher. The learners need to know how to work in a team. However, the current study

focused on working in pairs, and the learners needed to submit their work online by recording conversations. The learners needed to understand how to make appointments to plan to do the tasks, and how to record the videos with their partners. After that, the learners helped each other to revise their conversations and to create new versions. They needed to help each other to solve the problems from the teacher's feedback, which covered fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interactive communication and task completion.

3) Learners need to be more active in a blended learning environment. Blended learning combines online and face-to-face learning. It appears learners need to be more responsible for their learning because they need to study in two different learning environments. Specifically, the learners need to be responsible in terms of the teacher's schedule both in the online class and in the face-to-face class. In online learning, the learners need to study and complete the language activities online individually. In the current study, if the learners had a problem, they could ask their friends and the teacher through social media applications (Facebook or Line) and by telephone. After that, they needed to submit their speaking task videos. Moreover, the learners were allowed to use mobile phones to record their conversations and to submit them online. Therefore, they needed to make appointments with their partners.

4) Learners need to commit and be more responsible for revising their work after receiving feedback from the teacher. Feedback plays an important role in developing speaking ability. The teacher can give online feedback by speaking or in writing. This can indicate the errors and mistakes, or provide suggestions, such as via web links.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Firstly, full online learning using task-based instruction should be proposed for subsequent studies. For the objectives of the present study, these aimed to compare task-based learning and task-based learning with a blended learning approach. However, further studies should employ task-based learning with full online classrooms. Garrison and Vaughan (2008) stated that the advantages of online learning include the fact that learners have more opportunities to use internet-based communication and information technology to enhance their learning. Then, the learners can share their experiences through channels to enhance connectivity, such as video conferences.

Secondly, learners' behavior should be analyzed before, during and after receiving feedback. However, this study only aimed to interview the participants after they had received the teacher's feedback. It would be more interesting if the learners' behavior was recorded throughout in order to show how they cope with the feedback when they have to revise their work. To examine the implications of receiving feedback, the next study should investigate the learners' behavior after receiving online feedback. This would be useful for a researcher who wanted to investigate learners' behavior after receiving feedback.

Thirdly, studies by Sae-Ong (2010), Pongsawang (2012), Promruang (2012), Thanghun (2012), Khamsai (2014) and Akuli (2018) focused on learners' ability after implementing task-based learning. However, in task-based instruction, the teacher is key to leading the class successfully (Ellis, 2003). The researcher should especially focus on the teacher's role. Teachers who are responsible for undergraduate learners should be participants in subsequent studies in order to increase awareness of teaching online or the use of blended learning environments. They may be trained and then apply the task-based learning approach with full online and blended learning.

Fourthly, for subsequent studies, the speaking tasks should be more complicated and varied, including for higher levels. Willis (1996) noted that a task provides an opportunity to communicate and a focus on meaning. Therefore, higher level tasks may encourage learners to think more in order to complete the tasks. Ellis (2007) classified Willis's (1996) task types as follows. First, listing and ordering and sorting are at the beginner level. However, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks are higher level and could be focused on in subsequent studies. Sae-Ong (2010), Pongsawang (2012), Promruang (2012), Thanghun (2012), Khamsai (2014) and Akuli (2018) focused on beginner level learners at university. However, sophomores and seniors should be asked to do higher level, harder tasks and more complicated speaking tasks.

Fifthly, in subsequent studies, researchers need to identify ways to provide feedback in order to improve learners' speaking ability from peer feedback. Previous studies have examined a variety of factors in relation to corrective oral feedback (and learner's uptake, such as types of feedback, peer feedback, linguistic target, and learner proficiency level (Li, 2014; Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Yuksel et al., 2017). Therefore, peer feedback may be a more autonomous way to improve the learners' ability.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the findings show that the post-test scores of participants' speaking performance were higher than the pre-test scores of participants from the control and experimental group and that these were significantly different in the categories of accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, interactive communication, pronunciation and task completion ability increased. It may therefore be inferred that

implementing blended learning in task-based learning instruction may enhance speaking ability. As a result, Research Question No.1 thus answered that learners' speaking ability improved after implementing the blended learning approach in a task-based learning class.

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