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## Editorial



As the editor, I would like to welcome you to the second issue of the THAITESOL Journal, which provides a collection of research-based articles in various fields of study: English Language Teaching, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, Language Testing and Assessment, and other related fields. THAITESOL Journal is intended to provide a forum for research and the exchange of information including opinion and theory and practice in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

The articles presented in this issue were selected, peer-reviewed and edited before being published in their final form. In the first article, Brian Daniel Bresnihan and Myle MacAuley examine students' perceptions of the benefits of multi-skill language classes. The result shows that a majority of the students believe that engaging in the practice of multiple language skills was more beneficial than practicing only one skill in order to improve both their receptive and productive abilities.

Second, Duangkamol Campbell conducted a study on blended learning in the teaching of English in a Thai university. The result of the study revealed blended learning as showing a significant, positive difference in students' English learning achievement when compared with the English learning achievement of students participating in traditional face-to-face classes.

In the following article, Pham Duc Phuoc and Le Pham Hoai Huong investigated the effects of the use of mind mapping technique in retrieving vocabulary of high school students in Vietnam. The results indicate significant improvement in retrieving vocabulary of the students. In addition the students reported that mind mapping technique benefited their vocabulary learning.

Nguyen Tam Trang, Tran Thi Thanh Thuy and Ta Thanh Binh analyzed learning situation and need in developing ESP courses for three faculties at university in Vietnam. The article gives practical suggestions for the procedure in developing ESP syllabi and materials which can be applicable not only for three faculties but also for any other ESP courses nationwide.

In the final article, Rudi Hartono and Seful Bahri conducted a research to increase students' ability of translating the Indonesian folktales into English and know their responses to the use of Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) in translation activity. The findings reveal that TWA can improve students' ability in translating the Indonesian folktales into English and help them produce better translation product.

Finally, Supakorn Phoocharoensil wrote a book review for *Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition* by Vivian Cook and David Singleton. The review includes summaries and presents the main issues of all the chapters in the book.

I would like to thank all the reviewers for their valuable time in evaluating and editing those articles with commitment and dedication. I hope that you will both enjoy and benefit professionally from the new and relevant contributions to knowledge to be found in this journal.

Associate Professor Nopporn Sarobol

Editor

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# **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF MULTI-SKILL LANGUAGE CLASSES**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines students' perceptions of the benefits of taking part in activities involved in reading circles and discussion groups that meet regularly to share ideas and information about different aspects of text read by each member of the group. Reading circle activities provide opportunities for language input and output, as well as interaction. SLA research indicates that these features are all of primary importance to language development. However, do students recognize the benefits of participating in these activities? The results of a student survey of two university EFL classes that used reading circles for one school year suggested that a great majority of these students believed that all of the reading circle activities were useful for their English language learning. The students felt that taking part in various activities concerning what they had read helped them both to better understand what they had read and to perform better in their discussions about what they had read. They also believed that engaging in the practice of multiple language skills was more beneficial than practicing only one skill in improving both their receptive and their productive abilities.

**Keywords:** *reading circles, integrated skills classes, student surveys, language acquisition*

## **Introduction**

Recent research in second language learning acquisition supports the idea that input, output, and interaction all have important roles in promoting successful language acquisition (Bresnihan & MacAuley, 2014; Ellis, 2005; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Lessard-Clouston, 2007; Wang & Castro, 2010). A well-designed language learning program should therefore provide a balance of activities that provide abundant input together with opportunities to actually use the language in meaning-based tasks and in situations with other people.

It is clear that repeated contact with large amounts of varied input is necessary for language learning to take place (Ellis, 2005; Gass, 1997; Maley, 2009). Krashen (1985), in particular, emphasizes the importance of input in the language learning process. In fact, in Krashen's view, speaking and writing are not important for language acquisition to take place, and learners will be able to learn a language without these components as long as there is sufficient comprehensible input. "More writing," he claims, "does not result in better writing," and "More speaking does not result in better speaking" (Wang, 2013, p.26). In this language learning model, the language classroom should provide interesting and comprehensible input in a relaxed atmosphere; learners do not have to speak and when they do, there should be little or no error correction.

Swain (1985), however, points out that both comprehensible input and pushed output are necessary for language learners to develop not only communicative competence but also accurate language usage. Drawing on Swain's research, Skehan (1998, p.16-18) outlines the benefits of having opportunities to actually use the language.

1. Learners can use output to provide feedback, which should result in subsequent input from an interlocutor being more appropriate to the level of the learner.
2. Learners will be forced to pay attention to the syntax of the language to which they listen if they know that they will be required to respond.
3. Learners will be forced to test out their language assumptions.
4. Learners will develop automaticity.
5. Learners will be able to work towards better discourse skills.
6. Learners will develop a personal manner of speaking.

In order to provide students with the kinds of opportunities for sustained output necessary for language development, Ellis (2005, p.40) maintains that learners should be asked to perform tasks in which extended conversation takes place and in which the learners are stretched to express messages "clearly and explicitly." According to Ellis (2005), this is best achieved with tasks that require both written and spoken output. The teacher should therefore set tasks which require students to produce written and spoken output that encourages them to pay attention to the forms of the language they are using and to test out ways of getting their messages across.

Building on the idea that both input and output are important to language acquisition, the Interaction Hypothesis draws attention to the fact that both input and output exist in spoken interaction. This hypothesis, as described by Gass and Mackey (2006), maintains that through

spoken interaction, language learners notice the differences between the ways they use the language and the ways it is used by their conversation partners. Moreover, when there are communication problems, negotiation for meaning will often take place. The resulting modifications help to make the input more comprehensible, result in corrective feedback, and encourage the learners to modify their own output. In this way, spoken interaction not only provides opportunities for learners to improve their fluency, it also provides more comprehensible input and allows learners to test using combinations of words and phrases in ways that are new to them. Ellis (2005) points out that one way for teachers to provide opportunities for the kinds of interactions that will lead to acquisition in the classroom is through the introduction of small group work. Allowing students to interact freely in small groups without teacher intervention, he says, is more likely to result in “acquisition-rich discourse” (Ellis, 2005, p.41).

Reading circles, also known as literature circles, provide many of the aforementioned favorable conditions for language acquisition. They provide abundant opportunities for language input, they require written as well as spoken output, and they also allow language learners to interact freely in small groups.

Reading circles, which are basically small groups of people meeting at regular intervals to discuss something they have read, have existed for many years outside the world of academia. However, they are now frequently used in all levels of education and are starting to make an appearance in the EFL classroom. Furr (2007, p.16) describes eight features that reading circles for EFL students will likely contain.

1. The reading material is at an appropriate level for the students and is selected by the teacher.
2. Small groups of students are created in the classroom.
3. All of the groups read the same text.
4. Groups meet regularly to share their ideas and interpretations of the text.
5. Students use role sheets to guide their reading and discussion, so that each student in a group reads the text from a different perspective.
6. The students decide what topics to discuss.
7. Discussions are natural conversations about the text.
8. Discussions activities are student centered, and the teacher’s role is that of a facilitator.

Reading circles provide a structure that enables EFL learners to have engaging, student-led group discussions (Furr, 2007). Clear instructions, explaining what is expected of students in each role, together with an example of a completed role sheet, can also be provided. This kind of support can be especially helpful in the EFL classroom as students may have little experience of taking part in group discussions in English.

One leading exponent of the use of reading circles in the classroom, Daniels, claims that reading circles “are a part – a quite sophisticated and highly evolved part – of the wider collaborative learning movement” and display the “characteristic features of true collaboration: student initiated inquiry, choice, self direction, mutual interdependence, face-to-face interaction, and self and group assessment” (Daniels, 2002, p.35). Research indicates that students achieve more and find their classes more enjoyable and satisfying when they work in collaborative learning environments than when they work alone (Marzano, Pickering & Pollack, 2001; Slavin, 1989).

Reading circles also appear to motivate students to develop the habits of extensive reading (Daniels, 2002; Davis, Resta, Davis, & Camacho, 2001; Furr, 2007), and studies show that participation in reading circle activities leads to increased reading performance (Daniels, 2002; Davis, Resta, Davis, & Camacho, 2001). For students living in countries where there are few chances to communicate with speakers of the target language, reading is one of the most available ways of getting exposure to comprehensible input, and EFL students who read extensively outside the classroom will be exposed to far more input than would be possible during limited class time (Maley, 2009).

Daniels (2002) also points out that although the body of research on reading circles has expanded rapidly, the studies appear under so many different names (literature circles, reading circles, book clubs, literature discussion groups) and focus on such a wide variety of features (teacher control versus student autonomy, assigned versus chosen books) that careful reading is necessary to understand the picture that is emerging concerning their usage in classrooms. However, he stresses that the evidence from research to support the positive benefits of using reading circles in the classroom is accumulating. He also adds that the number of strong endorsements from teachers who have used reading circles in the classroom is growing rapidly.

One area of research into the use of reading circles, however, where there seems to be a scarcity of data available is the examination of the extent to which EFL students perceive the benefits of participating in reading circle activities. The data that is available, however, seems to be very favorable. A survey carried out in a university in Taiwan on a group of EFL students, as



well as on a group of students studying Japanese as a foreign language, recorded very positive attitudes from the students about the use of reading circles in class (Sai & Hsu, 2007). Similar findings appeared in a survey conducted in a Japanese university on EFL students, who were using reading circles as part of their content-based course on British culture (Williams, 2011). As well as indicating that the students had very positive reactions to the use of reading circles in class, the results showed that the students felt that the discussions helped them to better understand the reading material and also improved their critical thinking capacity and overall English language ability. Further evidence of favorable student responses towards the use of reading circles in the EFL context was found by MacAuley and Nevara (2015) in a survey carried out on a class that had been using reading circles in lessons for almost a year. The results in this survey showed clearly that the students felt that reading circles made the class more relaxing and more enjoyable and created a positive learning environment. The students also strongly indicated that they felt that the discussions helped them to improve their understanding of the reading material.

However, because the limited scope of the questions relating to the development of specific language skills in previous surveys, further research into the details of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of reading circles in promoting language development in the EFL classroom is needed. The present study is intended to further this inquiry.

Basically, we were interested to find out if the students thought that their experiences carrying out reading circle activities, as one example of an interactive and integrated approach to language learning, helped them to improve their English abilities. Our specific research questions were:

1. Did the students think that each of the reading circle activities helped them to improve their English language abilities?
2. Did the students think that their comprehension of the reading material was helped by taking part in activities involving other language skills?
3. Did the students think that their performance in the discussions of the reading material was helped by taking part in activities involving other language skills?
4. Which did the students think helped them most to develop their receptive abilities: practice in a single language skill or in a combination of language skills?
5. Which did the students think helped them the most to develop their productive abilities: practice in a single language skill or in a combination of language skills?

## Materials and Methods

The participants in this study were a convenience sample of sophomores studying at Japanese universities. The English language abilities of most of these students would be considered intermediate to upper intermediate in Japan, with none being beginners. The students in class A were majoring in English and attending a public city university of foreign studies. The students in class B were attending a public prefectural university and majoring in one of the social sciences. The students were assigned to class A, a required course, while the students in class B had selected this particular section of a mandatory course. Both courses were taught by the same native English speaker.

Each class was held once a week in a 15-week, two-semester system. When the questionnaire was administered, reading circle activities had been conducted in half of the class A lessons and in five eighths of the class B lessons. The students in both classes had read the same non-fiction book for native speakers of English, and those in class B had additionally read some short stories from a graded reader. Basically, each reading circle was made up of four students, each student having a different role, as per Appendix A. In class, the students were given about one hour to complete the activities. After each reading circle's lesson, they rotated roles, and they changed groups after every fourth reading circle's lesson.

The questionnaire (Appendix B) was responded to anonymously, and took about ten minutes for the students to complete. Of the 30 students in class A, 28 filled it out in the ninth lesson of the second semester. All 12 of the class B students answered the questionnaire in the tenth lesson of the second semester. In all of the tables, which present the collated responses to the questionnaire, the percentages may not equal to 100 due to rounding.

## Results and Discussion

It seems clear from the data collected that these students believed that the reading circle activities were helpful in their efforts to improve their English abilities. Moreover, the students' responses strongly indicate that the students felt that activities focusing on each of the language skills also benefited their performance in the other skills, as well.

1. Did the students think that each of the reading circle activities helped them to improve their English language abilities?

Table 1: Percentages of students who thought each reading circle activity was or was not beneficial for their English language learning

Class	Reading		Writing		Presenting		Listening		Discussing	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
A n=28	100%	0%	82%	18%	100%	0%	89%	11%	96%	4%
B n=12	100%	0%	75%	25%	100%	0%	92%	8%	100%	0%

In Table 1, “Reading” means reading the text for homework; “Writing” means writing for homework what was required for the student’s role that week; “Presenting” means presenting orally in the reading circle group what was required for the student’s role; “Listening” means listening to what other students present orally in the reading circle group; and “Discussing” means discussing further what is presented in the reading circle group. We see that the great majority of the students in both classes thought that each of the reading circle activities was useful for assisting them in their English language learning: 100% for reading the text and presenting material about the text and almost 100% for discussing the text, with one student in class A disagreeing; 89% and 92% of the class A and B students, respectively, for listening to others present material about the text; and 82% and 75% of the class A and B students, respectively, for writing about the text in preparation for presenting. The answer to the first question was definitely “Yes”.

2. Did the students think that their comprehension of the reading material was helped by taking part in activities involving other language skills?

Table 2: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: Having discussions helped me to understand what I had read

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	18 ( 64% )	8 ( 29% )	2 ( 7% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	9 ( 75% )	3 ( 25% )	0 ( 0% )	0 ( 0% )

Table 3: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: Writing helped me to understand what I had read

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	13 ( 46% )	12 ( 43% )	3 ( 11% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	2 ( 17% )	7 ( 58% )	3 ( 25% )	0 ( 0% )

The rankings in Tables 2 to 7 are 1 (I agree strongly), 2 (I agree), 3 (Maybe), and 4 (I do not agree). Table 2. shows us that 93% (64%+29%) of the students in class A and 100% (75%+25%) of the students in class B were certain that having discussions helped them to understand the text they had read. In Table 3. we find that 89% (46%+43%) of the class A students and 75% (17%+58%) of the class B students felt sure that writing in preparation for presenting allowed them to better understand what they had read. No students thought that these were definitely untrue. Therefore, the answer to the second question, about whether these students thought that their reading comprehension was enhanced by taking part in activities involving other skills and related to the same content, as was required by the design of the reading circles, was “Yes”.

3. Did the students think that their performance in the discussions of the reading material was helped by taking part in activities involving other language skills?

Table 4: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: “Reading something before talking helped me to say more when I had discussions”.

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	18 ( 64% )	6 ( 21% )	4 ( 14% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	5 ( 42% )	7 ( 58% )	0 ( 0% )	0 ( 0% )

Table 5: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: “Writing something before talking helped me to say more when I had discussions”.

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	14 ( 50% )	11 ( 39% )	3 ( 11% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	4 ( 33% )	4 ( 33% )	4 ( 33% )	0 ( 0% )

Table 6: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: “Reading something before listening helped me to understand more of what my classmates said in the discussions”.

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	19 ( 68% )	8 ( 29% )	1 ( 4% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	7 ( 58% )	3 ( 25% )	2 ( 17% )	0 ( 0% )

Table 7: Numbers of students and their rankings of the following statement: "Writing something before listening helped me to understand more of what my classmates said in the discussions".

Class	1	2	3	4
A n=28	11 ( 39% )	10 ( 36% )	7 ( 25% )	0 ( 0% )
B n=12	0 ( 0% )	6 ( 50% )	5 ( 42% )	1 ( 8% )

In Table 4, we see that 85% (64%+21%) and 100% (42%+58%) of the students in classes A and B, respectively, believed that reading the text before talking enabled them to say more in their discussions. Also, Table 5 shows us that 89% (50%+39%) and 66% (33%+33%) of the students in classes A and B, respectively, thought that writing down what was required for their role helped them to say more in the discussions. Again, no students responded that they felt either reading or writing certainly did not help them to speak more during their discussions. Table 6 tells us that 97% (68%+29%) of the class A students and 83% (58%+25%) of the class B students thought that reading the text before listening to their classmates speak about it help them to understand what their classmates said; and no students felt this to certainly be false. And, in Table 7, we see that 75% (39%+36%) of the class A students and 50% (0%+50%) of the class B students believed that writing what their role required helped them to better understand what their classmates said; with no students in class A and one student in class B feeling that this was surely not true. Overall, the results displayed in these four tables show strong support for answering question three with "Yes". These students thought that their performance and comprehension in the discussions of the reading were better than might have been because they took part in activities involving other skills based on that same content, as was necessary in the reading circles. The somewhat weaker support for this hypothesis displayed in Table 7, may be due to the fact that the students within each group wrote about quite different things, and so they may not have felt their writing definitely made it easier for them to understand what their classmates said.

4. Which did the students think helped them most to develop their receptive abilities: practice in a single language skill or in a combination of language skills?

Table 8: Numbers of students who chose an individual skill or a combination of skills as the most helpful to them to become better at reading

Class	Single	Combination
A n=28	4 ( 14% )	24 ( 86% )
B n=12	0 ( 0% )	12 ( 100% )

Table 9: Numbers of students who chose an individual skill or a combination of skills as the most helpful to them to become better at listening

Class	Single	Combination
A n=28	3 ( 11% )	25 ( 89% )
B n=12	0 ( 0% )	12 ( 100% )

In tables 8 to 11, the single skills are: reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking, and the combinations of skills are: reading and writing, reading and listening, reading and speaking; writing and listening, writing and speaking; having discussions; reading and writing and listening, reading and writing and speaking, reading and having discussions; writing and having discussions, and/or reading and writing and having discussions. Table 8. tells us that 86% of class A students and 100% of class B students thought that a combination of activities practicing various skills helped them more to develop their reading abilities than only engaging in a single-skill language learning activity. Table 9. shows that 89% and 100% of the class A and B students, respectively, thought that it was more beneficial for them to take part in a variety of language learning activities practicing different skills rather than practicing only one skill to improve their listening abilities. Therefore, these students overwhelmingly felt that participating in various activities, which allowed them to practice different skills, based on the same content and required by the different reading circle tasks, helped them to develop their receptive abilities more than practicing only a single skill; and the answer to the fourth question is clearly “A combination of language skills”.

5. Which did the students think helped them the most to develop their productive abilities: practice in a single language skill or in a combination of language skills?

Table 10: Numbers of students who chose an individual skill or a combination of skills as the most helpful to them to become better at speaking

Class	Single	Combination
A n=28	4 ( 14% )	14 ( 86% )
B n=12	1 ( 8% )	11 ( 92% )

Table 11: Numbers of students who chose an individual skill or a combination of skills as the most helpful to them to become better at writing

Class	Single	Combination
A n=28	3 ( 11% )	25 ( 89% )
B n=12	0 ( 0% )	12 ( 100% )

In Table 10, we find that 86% and 92% of the class A and B students, respectively, believed that participating in activities that required them to practice various skills was more helpful for them to become better at speaking than practicing only one skill. Also, Table 11 shows us that 89% and 100% of class A and B students, respectively, felt that engaging in various activities using different skills, rather than practicing only one skill, was more useful for them to improve their writing. So, we see that a very good majority of these students thought that a combination of various skill-based activities concerning the same content, as was required by the reading circles' framework, benefited them more in developing their productive abilities than practice in only one skill; and so the answer to the fifth question is also strongly, "A combination of language skills".

### Conclusion

Most Japanese universities separate their language classes by skills. A specific method of translation, in which written English is translated into good written Japanese for comprehension in Japanese, dominates much of the teaching in high schools and universities carried out by Japanese English teachers. (Listening texts normally come with transcriptions.) Therefore, the interactive and integrated skills approach to language teaching and learning, the use of reading circles, emphasizing both input and output based on the same content, examined here was new for many of these students.

Our five research questions concerned whether or not these students regarded the various and integrated reading circle activities as beneficial for the development of their individual English language abilities. The responses to the questionnaire indicate that these students overwhelmingly believed that they did. The students' responses demonstrated their belief that: 1) all of the various reading circle activities helped them to improve their English language abilities, 2) their comprehension of what they read was helped by participating in activities involving other skills, 3) their speaking and their listening comprehension during discussions of what they read was helped by participating in activities involving other skills, and 4) their involvement in a combination of various skill-based activities helped them more in developing their receptive and their productive abilities than practice in only a single skill. This suggests, even without quantitative measures of improvement, that such a method would be very useful for students' English language learning because perception of improvement often results in increasing one's motivation to study and learn.

To a very great extent, the results from this study support the use of integrated, interactive approaches to teaching English as a foreign language that require students to practice all four skills based on the same content. The great majority of the students perceived all of the reading circle activities as beneficial for their English language learning in all but one case (See Table 7, Class B.) Objective assessment of students' improvement in each of the language skills would be useful in determining whether students' perceptions matched their actual progress.



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# **BLENDED LEARNING IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN A THAI UNIVERSITY**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of introducing ICT into the compulsory, first year English syllabus in Thai higher education through Blended Learning (BL) pedagogy. This researcher seeks to advance Thai university students' English achievement through a greater understanding of the influence of ICT and its impact on students' English language achievement, students' participation within English classes, and student attitudes towards learning English.

This mixed method study was conducted using a pre-test, post-test design. Participants were 278 students attending a rural University in North-eastern Thailand, who were arranged into blended learning (BL) and face-to-face classes (F-to-F). A course web site was developed for course instruction. This site and social network tools such as Skype, Twitter and Facebook were utilised by the blended learning class for communications and language acquisition. Data was collected from the pre-test and post-test instruments, class room observation check lists, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and researcher's field notes in order to compare Blended Learning and traditional face to face instruction.

Results of the data analysis revealed Blended Learning as showing a significant, positive difference in student's English learning achievement when compared with the English learning achievement of students participating in traditional F-to-F classes. Furthermore, this study establishes that Blended Learning can affect a significant, positive difference in student's behavioural participation within the classroom when compared with student's behavioural participation within the traditional F-to-F classroom. Finally, this research has identified a significant, positive difference in students' attitude after learning English through Blended Learning.

**Keywords:** *(BL) blended learning, ICT, face-to-face, traditional approach, teaching English,*

*English as a foreign language, higher education, Thailand education*

## Introduction

As a consequence of economic changes resulting from globalisation, the government of Thailand realised the need to prepare its people to cope with progress and competition in the global marketplace. Under the Thai National Education Act 1999 and major policies developed by the National Information Technology Commission, the Thai government launched a series of educational reforms with the aim of developing a knowledge-based society (Wiriyachitra, 2001). The Thai National Education Act aimed to implement a transition from instructor-centred to learner-centred instruction for all subjects including the compulsory Basic English unit, which is studied by all first year university entrants (National Electronics and Computer Technology Center [NECTC], 2011). Another of these reforms focused on developing and harnessing information and communication technologies for the advancement of the educational system (Chetchumlong, 2010; Phornphacharaphong, 2012). This shift was associated with an investment in improving English communication standards to meet the needs of globalisation (Kripanont & Tatnall, 2011). Thai educational policy is based on the belief that proficiency in English and competence in the use of information and communication technology will prepare the Thai workforce for engaging broadly in the global economy (Banados & Jauregi, 2008; Charungkattikul, 2011).

ICT has been used not only for distance learning but also for supporting traditional classroom instruction and traditional courses can benefit from the addition of BL. Instructors in traditional course formats may need to increase the duration of student engagement with course content and provide rapid access to help at points where student confusion may occur. Instructors are creating web-based lessons as a medium to deliver instruction and are finding that the Internet can be used for lesson delivery as well as for resources that support the blended learning approach. As can be seen from the literature presented, most research findings in this area show that a BL environment addresses some weak points of both online learning and traditional approaches. Furthermore, students' attitudes toward online instruction and traditional instruction are generally positive in different ways. Therefore, it would appear that Blended Learning may be the best approach to teaching English in Thai higher education.

BL can provide students with numerous learning options, with its most positive features being that it provides improved pedagogy, communication, student-centred learning, increased information access, time flexibility, peer interactivity, student enjoyment and learning outcomes. It might also reduce class time and course costs. As such, the introduction of Blended Learning

may provide a valuable contribution to learning in Thai higher education. These learning options may become more suitable as ICT connectivity increases in developing countries.

In other respects, online course design techniques can enhance traditional course formats, increase instructor efficiency and enrich student learning by increasing their involvement in the course. This may create the impression of passivity in classroom discussions; however there already seems to be a lack of critical questioning in the Thai educational system. One solution may be the use of ICT to support student-centred learning, promote critical thinking, and increase interaction.

There are several studies on BL in developed countries and in Asia but there are a few studies of BL in teaching English as foreign language in Thailand. In particular, there is no relevant research on utilizing BL approach in teaching English in higher education in a rural university of North-eastern Thailand. As a consequence of that, using the BL approach for teaching English in a Thai university may be of great benefit to students as it could inspire, excite, stimulate and motivate students to learn English. Further, BL would open to students and instructors a new world of networking on a global scale, enabling students to link internationally with other forward-looking learning and development professionals. BL should provide an active learning environment and encourage students to be able to learn, practice and reach their goals successfully. This study will be the first in the field on this new way of learning and teaching English in higher education in a rural university of North-eastern Thailand.

### **Methodology**

This study is guided by the first research question: *Does the use of Blended Learning affect students' achievement levels?* To investigate whether there is a difference in students' engagement in classroom activities, the second research question was: *In terms of classroom participation, what are the observable differences between students who used Blended Learning and those that did not?* In order to discover students' attitudes towards learning English through Blended Learning, the third research question was: *Does Blended Learning affect student attitudes toward learning English?*

Permission for the study was granted by the President of the University, the Dean of Faculty and the English Department leader at a rural university in North-eastern Thailand. The research project was permitted and conducted with the generous cooperation of the University,

and its instructors, faculty, volunteers and students. First-year students enrolled in *Foundations of English 1* were randomly selected to participate in the study. Curriculum program majors were randomly allocated to Blended Learning (BL) and face-to-face group (F-to-F) (Tuckman, 2000).

Instructors of a rural university in the North-eastern Thailand instructed both the traditional F-to-F groups and Blended Learning groups (BL). The F-to-F group was traditionally taught from a textbook whereas the Blended Learning group was taught via blended learning. In order to ensure that the students could use computers and access the Internet, six periods of computer training were completed by both F-to-F and BL groups. ICT specialists communicating in Thai gave instruction. The intent here was to explore students' opinions about Blended Learning. The F-to-F group then sat the pre-test before the semester's instruction began. They completed a post-test after the course. The Blended Learning group sat the pre-test, and then completed an attitude questionnaire before the semester's blended ICT instruction. The post-test was conducted after the course, prior to completing the attitude questionnaire and interviews, which were used to examine the students' opinions regarding ICT instruction (McMillan, 2008). Observations of the behaviours of both groups were recorded over the whole semester.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instruments were the course website, which was created for BL classes and other instruments that were used to collect data. These included: pre/post-testing, attitude questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, researcher field notes, and textbooks (Dumridhamaporn, 2007; Soars & Soars, 2004; Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2008, 2010).

#### **1. The course website**

There were two lesson plans presented on the course website. The first lesson plan was based on the textbook, *Foundations of English 1*, (Soars & Soars, 2001) which was used as the syllabus for the F-to-F treatment. The other lesson plan was a constructed Blended Learning syllabus (Bonk & Graham 2006; Jeon, Debski, & Wiggleworth, 2005), combining the website [www.bl-ict-efl.esl.com](http://www.bl-ict-efl.esl.com) with the textbook, *Foundations of English 1* (Levy & Stockwell, 2006; Shank, 2007). After the pilot study done by the *Community Development* program, the website was then revised and improvements made to the Blended Learning syllabus before it was implemented. The website was evaluated online by ICT specialist Mr Chatchawan Mitarat, a

lecturer at Jajamangala University of Technology, Isan, and then revised after his feedback and that given by students in the pilot study.

## **2. Pre-test/ Post-test**

TOEIC Tests were employed in parallel as pre-tests and post-tests for both groups. The tests comprised multiple choice questions and were developed to assess students' learning achievements in reading; writing and listening through the student learning achievement score (ETS, 2008, 2010). The speaking skills of all students were assessed through individual interviews conducted by a native English speaker who was unaware of the students' backgrounds. The interviews were recorded during the pre-test and post-test to compare speaking skill improvements (Nicolson, Murphy, & Southgate, 2011).

Learning achievement was assessed through pre/post-tests, using a quasi-experimental design. All students in both the face-to-face and Blended Learning groups were pre-tested at the beginning of the semester to determine if their existing levels of English knowledge were similar (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). The English achievement tests are the internationally recognised TOEIC Tests (ETS, 2008, 2010). These tests measure the student's ability to use every day English for speaking, writing and reading in an international workplace environment. There are four skills tested: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The tests were employed as parallel pre- and post- tests for both groups of students. The standardised tests in reading, listening and writing comprised 20 multiple-choice questions for each skill. Speaking skills were assessed by interview with both the researcher and a native English speaker and lasted for 10 to 15 minutes. All students completed the post-test after the last class of the semester.

## **3. Classroom observation lists**

During the 16-week semester, classroom observations were undertaken of the BL and F-to-F groups. A classroom checklist was utilised to gather data concerning: 1) the quality of pedagogy related to students including: listening to the instructor, listening/speaking to peers, and speaking to the instructor; 2) the quality of pedagogy related to instructors, including data on the instructor building on previous learning and engaging student interest; 3) the quality of ICT used by students, including students utilising multimedia and interacting with ICT; 4) the quality of ICT used by instructors, including: the instructor making use of ICT, using ICT effectively, and using ICT capability to describe (Wudthayagorn 2000; Mckenzie, 2001; Nicolson et al., 2011).

The behaviour of all students was observed, in both Blended Learning classes and traditional classes. There were 40 assessment items in the checklist, and for each item the following rating scale was applied: (4) always, (3) often, (2) occasionally, (1) never. During the semester a total of 32 observations of the F-to-F and BL groups were conducted. Classes were observed from beginning to end, with field notes taken and the classroom observation checklist was completed on each occasion (Yeok-Hea, 2010). However, there was only one observer and this may be a potential source of observer bias (Pethrod & Chamnipran, 2004).

#### **4. Researchers' field notes**

Researchers' field notes were taken throughout the 17-week study. Both groups were observed to reflect on students' learning activities. The research continued for a week longer than anticipated (16 weeks) because the oral testing and the semi-structured interviews went over schedule. The researcher's field notes present student-centred learning, communication in language acquisition and ICT use in language learning (McMillan, 2008).

#### **5. Attitude Questionnaire**

An attitude questionnaire completed at the beginning and at the end of the semester was a survey checklist, which used a Likert Scale to measure students' responses. This is a scaling procedure commonly associated with attitude measurement. A graded response is made to each item or statement. In scoring, responses to questions were assigned numerical values and the individual's score was derived from the sum of the numerical values. The attitude questionnaire consisted of 30 questions and a descriptive rating scale was applied. There were six open-ended questions for students to express their ideas or suggestions. This questionnaire was adapted from surveys of learner attitudes about computer-assisted instruction developed by Jeon, Debski & Wiggleworth (2005), and Zhang, Shelley & Heshan (2008). These questions were designed to relate to English and Blended Learning was designed to be understandable to Thai students.

#### **6. Interview**

The interviews were carried out after students had completed the attitude questionnaire, with the duration of each interview being 10–15 minutes (Pethrod & Chamnipran, 2004). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the semi-structured interview data.



### **Data Collection**

This study used a triangulation of data by including pre- and post-testing, an attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, a classroom observation checklist and the researcher's field notes. The qualitative cross-validation is achieved by checking the reliability of the data according to the convergence of multiple data sources or multiple data-collection procedures (Goodwyn, 2000; Lynch & Dembo, 2004; Pethrod & Chamnipran, 2004). Prior to the data collection, all students were informed that the data gathered would be anonymous and confidential and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The course website [www.bl-ict-eft-est.com](http://www.bl-ict-eft-est.com) was developed for course instruction and data collection and was available for use by anyone wishing to access course information. Prior to commencing the syllabus all students completed basic ICT and Internet familiarisation (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009).

During the study students in the Blended Learning group were encouraged to utilise the course website to search for information and submit completed assignments. Initially, prior to commencing the course syllabus, TOEIC Listening and Reading, TOEIC Speaking and TOEIC Writing pre-test evaluations of both groups were conducted. Also, a 'Learning English through Blended Learning' attitude questionnaire was completed by the Blended Learning group. Throughout the classroom observation, checklists and researcher's field notes were recorded with both groups. After the course, TOEIC Listening and Reading, TOEIC Speaking and TOEIC Writing post-test evaluations of both groups were conducted. Following these post-test evaluations, the Blended Learning group students completed individual semi-structured interviews, a learning English through a blended learning attitude questionnaire and the course website evaluation questionnaire (Pethrod & Chamnipran, 2004).

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained using the different methods was analysed and interpreted using quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Analysis of the quantitative data obtained from pre-test and post-test results was used to examine the learning achievements of the two groups. Qualitative data was obtained from the researcher's field notes and semi-structured interviews. The SPSS for Windows, Version 18 software was used for the analysis (Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

## **1. English learning achievement**

This study involved a pre- and post-test comparison. Students were selected by way of purposive sampling and were arranged into BL and F-to-F groups with the data collected over six months. The quantitative statistics from the pre-test and post-test were based on students' TOEIC test scores and were analysed using SPSS version 18 to compute the mean and standard deviation to analyse students' English learning achievements (Pallant, 2011).

In this study, the pre-test and post-test English learning achievements of the two groups of students were compared using the Independent Samples T Test. To find the mean differences between pre-test and post-test results for each language skill in both groups, a Paired Samples T-Test was employed. To compare the changes in mean scores of the blended learning group to the changes in mean scores of the F-to-F group, an Independent Sample T Test was conducted. To compare the six major classes' pre-test, post-test, total pre-test, total post-test results, and the changes in means scores, a one-way ANOVA was employed. To investigate whether there were significant differences between male and female pre-test, post-test scores and between male and female changes in mean scores one-way ANOVA tests were conducted. To determine whether there were significant differences between pre-test, post-test scores and whether there were significant differences between the changes in mean scores for males of the blended learning group and males of the F-to-F group, Independent Samples T-Tests were conducted. To determine whether there were significant differences between pre-test, post-test scores and whether there were significant differences between changes in mean scores of the females of the blended learning group and females in the F-to-F group, an Independent Samples T-Tests were conducted (Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

## **2. Student participation**

Classroom observations were conducted to assess the behaviour of the students in the two groups. Frequencies observed by the researcher were recorded. These frequencies were calculated from the sample data by using the marginal totals. The questionnaire was adapted from three sources: the Technology Self-Assessment Form by Mckenzie (2001) and the Classroom Observation Form developed by Wudthayagorn (2000). The classroom checklist was used to gather data concerning the four dimensions of the quality of pedagogy relating to students, the quality of pedagogy relating to instructors, and the ICT used by students and by instructors. To answer the research question: "In terms of classroom participation, what are the observable differences between students who received blended ICT instruction and those that did

not?” The checklist data was analysed using SPSS version 18 to apply the Independent Samples Test to derive and compare mean scores of the blended and F-to-F groups (Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

Student learning participation was examined by studying their behaviour in a natural classroom setting. This involved observing how students acted, performed and reacted to their classmates and instructors during web-based instruction, and whether students shared their interests with classmates and instructors. The categories for describing and analysing the observational data consisted of: quality of pedagogy and ICT related to instructors and students, learning interests, interaction, cooperative learning, student interaction, and engagement in assignments using ICT. They were assessed using the 40-item classroom checklist. One lesson per week per group was observed. The F-to-F group was instructed through traditional F-to-F instruction based on an instructor’s manual, while the BL group was taught utilising Blended Learning which involved online learning combined with F-to-F instruction. Both groups studied the same content (Sharma & Barrett, 2007; Zhang, et al., 2008).

### **3. Students’ attitudes towards learning English through Blended Learning**

There were three facets to the analysis students’ attitude towards BL. There were pre-post attitude surveys, open-ended attitude questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as follows:

#### **3.1 Attitude questionnaire**

To investigate participants’ attitudes towards learning English through Blended Learning an attitude survey was conducted. As detailed in the 30-question survey employed 15 positively and 15 negatively posed questions. The following Likert scale was employed as the key for responding to the questions: Strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). Prior to commencing the course the participant attitude survey was completed by the BL group. Post-course, to complete data collection, the BL group attitude questionnaire was again completed by the students. The data was analysed using SPSS version 18.0. To answer the research question, ‘*Does Blended Learning affect students’ attitudes toward English learning?*’ A correlation analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to compare students’ pre-and post-course attitudes (Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

### **3.2 The open-ended attitude questionnaire**

The open-ended attitude questionnaire survey was conducted at the end of the course by the 139 students of the Blended Learning group. SPSS version 18.0 was used to analyse and compute the data. The responses were placed into the appropriate groups for analysis using descriptive statistics (Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

### **3.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit students' opinions about Blended Learning. Each student participated in an informal, conversation-style interview where they were asked six open-ended questions, which enabled them to express their ideas or give suggestions about learning English through BL. Similar responses were arranged for analysis using descriptive statistics (McMillan, 2008; Siljaru, 2012; Pallant, 2011; Pusee-on, 2011).

## **Results and Interpretation**

The researcher has endeavoured to form conclusions derived from the quantitative data concerning students' learning achievements, participation and attitude in order to make comparisons and determine positive or negative difference.

Pre-course comparisons verify similarities in English competence between the Blended Learning and face-to-face groups, except in speaking ability where the F-to-F cohort held a clear advantage. Pre-course comparisons also confirm that equivalent English abilities were retained by males and females, that no differences were present between English ability between males of the BL and F-to-F groups, and that no difference was shown in English ability between females of either group. Significant differences were apparent amongst the six Major program group's pre-course scores in listening, speaking and reading, Public Health Majors proving to be the weakest in listening and speaking. Social Science Majors attained the highest total pre-course result, confirming a substantial advantage in prior learning and established English abilities. Therefore, two Major classes included within the BL cohort proved to be the strongest and weakest in established English language skills.

Post-course measures were applied to compare English learning achievement and ascertain difference or similarity between groups and identified the BL cohort as significantly more competent in writing skills than the F-to-F group. Unlike the pre-course outcome, no

difference in speaking skills was observed post-course, signifying another considerable advancement in the BL group. Comparisons of change in mean scores (learning improvement) clearly highlight significant differences between the F-to-F and the BL groups. The BL cohort attained larger improvement in mean scores than the F-to-F group in all four English disciplines examined, and substantially higher in listening and speaking. Consequently, the BL group's significantly higher total change in mean scores implies a considerably greater English learning outcome.

Social Science Majors achieved an outstanding result by attaining the highest scores in three skill sets post-course after scoring highest in two skill sets pre-course. Total post-course results confirmed Social Science Majors as most proficient in English language skills and clearly achieved the highest learning outcome. Multiple comparisons identified Public Health Majors as the group realising the greatest improvement in English language acquisition. Both the Social Science and Public Health Majors were part of the BL cohort.

No significant contrast was detected in male and female post-course outcomes or in male results of the F-to-F and BL groups, males of both group's attained the highest post-course results in speaking skills, replicating their pre-course outcomes. Comparisons of post-course achievement also confirmed females of the BL group significantly outperformed F-to-F group females in writing skills. Appraisals of change in mean score relating to gender uncovered no significant difference between males and females and no significant difference between males of the BL and F-to-F groups. Notably, females of the BL group achieved a significantly higher change in mean score than females of the F-to-F group; BL female's English learning achievement significantly exceeded the English learning achievement of females of the F-to-F cohort.

Observations of pedagogy in relation to students and instructors revealed three areas of significant difference. Traditional F-to-F instruction was found to rely heavily upon the course textbook while the BL approach allowed more flexibility and input from external resources. This was expected, and was part of the research design, but was confirmed through observation. Within the BL environment student-instructor interactions were noticeably enriched. Although this more freethinking atmosphere encouraged many students to join in, a section of the class happened to frequently dominate and overshadow more reserved students.

The quality of ICT used by instructors and students differed significantly in two areas. Observations confirmed the instructor of the BL cohort utilised ICT more effectively, a practical

conclusion considering that the BL group were afforded more opportunity and actively encouraged to use ICT in the course. This divergence is illustrated further by several significant differences in quality of ICT used by students. BL student's uses of ICT were many and varied, from research to communication and presentation. Given the ability and opportunity, these contemporary students possess a voracious appetite for ICT use.

Student's perspectives and opinions were gauged in pre-course and post-course attitude toward learning English surveys in order to investigate change in attitude. Change in mean score analysis identified significant difference in the two positive and one negative scales. Importantly, BL students considered ICT valuable for learning English and thought ICT-based instruction encouraged learning English, even though they disclosed a significant rise in the perception of ICT as a barrier to learning English. Considering the substantial increase in the two positive scales, ICT may be a barrier the BL students thought of as surmountable.

Gender comparisons disclose no difference in positive attitudes toward BL, though a significant difference was disclosed through SCALE2- "ICT an obstacle to learning English". Male BL students indicated experiencing more difficulties, indicating that learning to use ICT and learn English at the same time increased the complexity of the course.

The Programs Majors also differed significantly in all the three attitude scales. Social Science Majors, the high achievers of the course, considered ICT instruction encouraged their learning efforts even though ICT was seen as an extra burden. Public Health Majors, achieving the greatest improvement in the course, thought ICT was a valuable addition to the course expressed the least encouragement gained from ICT and experienced the least difficulty with the added workload of learning to use ICT for their studies.

The Blended Learning groups' responses to the open-ended attitude questions were almost blurred in their unanimity. Almost all students believed that BL positively affected their enthusiasm toward learning the subject matter and that ICT supported independent study through student-centred learning. English skills, worldwide communications and academic interactions were the skills students felt most improved by the BL experience. Students recognised the major advantages of ICT integration as; access to vast contemporary resources, expansion of vision and very importantly, in the teaching of English as foreign language context, and the development of academic and social networks.

Alternatively, disadvantages were also considered and specified as; added course costs, increased difficulty or workload and online distractions or addiction. Just fewer than half the BL

students replied in the optional comments section and those respondents overwhelmingly agreed that improvements and upgrades to the institutions ICT infrastructure and ICT skills education for students and instructors were priorities for the effective implementation of ICT-based contemporary education.

At the beginning of the semester, students of the BL group volunteered to engage in the research and approached the project with anxiety, nervousness and curiosity. After training in the use of ICT for academic purposes, and after having time to familiarise themselves with the project, the instructor and the researcher, students began to relax and interact with technologies. From the outset students enjoyed their ICT experiences and looked forward to commencing class. During the research students actively explored the Internet and used it to search for information relevant to their studies and especially enjoyed interacting widely via social media. Students enjoyed updating their status, posting messages, tweeting, and sharing photos or links. The most noticeable developments throughout the course of the research were enhanced classroom participation and more positive attitudes towards ICT and English language learning within the BL group.

The semi-structured interview results indicate there were some barriers to BL in this study such as instructors' and students' backgrounds in English and ICT skills and also inefficiencies of the technology used. The students clearly liked the contemporary teaching strategy of BL and clearly enjoyed improved interactions through extensive online communications. Students reported that learning English with the assistance of ICT interactions was easier and effective and that the Internet expanded their worldwide vision and provided access to boundless resources.

Students of the F-to-F group also volunteered to be involved in the study and like the BL group, they had the advantage of ICT training and access to the computer laboratory room. As the results from the research did not affect their grades, the F-to-F group students had nothing to lose, although they did agree to the extra workload of pre-course training and assessment and additional post-course assessment as well as the imposition of the researcher observing their regular classes. In brief, the F-to-F group improved their English learning achievements, gained some valuable ICT experience and at times took advantage of having an extra instructor. Therefore it may be safely assumed that the F-to-F cohort benefited from their participation in the research.

## Conclusion

In answer to the research question: *Does the use of Blended Learning affect students' English learning achievement?* This study has established that *the use of Blended Learning positively and significantly affects student's English learning achievement.* To answer the research question, *In terms of classroom participation, what are the observable differences between students who participate in Blended learning and those students that do not?*, it was found that BL students' contributions, interactions, quality of ICT use, frequency of ICT use, and autonomous learning practices were greater than those of students in F-to-F, traditional classes. To answer the research question, *"Does Blended learning affect students' attitude toward learning English?"* the simple answer is *"Yes, positively."* The findings indicated there was a significant difference between pre- and post-survey results of the BL groups in the three subscales.

The findings derived from the quantitative data; attitude questionnaires and open-ended attitude survey, together with findings derived from the qualitative data; semi-structured interviews, indicated that students' attitudes towards learning English through Blended Learning improved throughout the study and progressively became more positive. This study's documented increases in student participation, interactions and learning outcomes may all be dependent on these recorded elevations in positive student attitude. When given an opportunity to construct their own knowledge, the BL students in this study became active, interested and responsible students; positive attitudes flourished, life-long learning skills were acquired and shared with peers and greater collective learning outcomes were the result.

The evidence-based findings in this mixed-methods research revealed that the Blended Learning model produced positive effects on students' English learning achievements, classroom participation and students' attitudes towards learning English. The quantitative results indicate that students of BL classes attained a significantly higher English language achievement in writing skill than F-to-F classes. Also, the change in mean scores (English learning improvement) of BL classes was higher than F-to-F classes in writing, listening and speaking skills. In short, this study demonstrated a positive correlation between using BL and students' English learning achievement when ICT was integrated into the English course. Positive attitudes towards learning English through BL are an important requirement.

It is clear that BL provides flexible access to global resources and supports interaction and communications to advance English language acquisition. The BL approach guides students



toward autonomous learning strategies. The use of ICT was seen as beneficial to students for providing up-to-date information, increasing the sense of belonging and providing opportunities for interactions between staff and other students (Preston, Phillips, Gosper, McNeill, Woo & Green, 2010). Appropriately, the BL approach prepared students with English and ICT skills enabling everyday life communications, competition in the international employment marketplace, higher education and self-improvement. Consequently, the BL approach is ideally suited to preparing students for becoming 21<sup>st</sup> century, digital citizens (Sanprasert, 2010).

### **Recommendations**

Overall, this study establishes that BL presents productive impacts in terms of student English learning achievement, classroom participation and attitudes toward learning English. This may be reassuring to the limited number of EFL lecturers in Thailand willing to accept and implement ICT in the classroom. Lecturers should be encouraged to focus on the quality of their approach to teaching, using several authentic resources and supporting learners to practise their approach to increase their language competence (Stockwell, 2012). Lecturers of EFL classes should be trained to integrate technology into their courses and must be supported by their institutions through the provision of ICT infrastructure (Vonganusith, 2008). Blended Learning is suitable for EFL classes because ICT offers benefits for learning and teaching (Suanpang & Petocz, 2006) and supports independent learning/self-study, which is in accordance with contemporary constructivist theory (Snodin, 2013).

Student TOEIC test results indicate that BL positively affected student achievement over the course of the research, as the post-test scores of BL students were significantly different from their pre-test results. Furthermore, when comparing the change in mean scores of the two groups' achievement scores, the BL group recorded a greater increase than the F-to-F group. For future research, with regard to BL in an EFL context, it should be noted that where possible, the researcher should consider the use of course-related pre-test/post-test examinations rather than the TOEIC tests. However, issues regarding the reliability and validity of the tests, and the question of whether selected test methods are standardised or not, would need to be considered. The advantages of using course-related pre-test/post-test examinations are that students may feel more comfortable with the content, and therefore more confident to sit the tests, while the researcher may assess students based on more relevant material. Further research could extend the study by adding course scores per group in order to arrive at more generalised results.

Based on the findings of this study, further studies investigating the problems students faced with regard to ICT skill deficiencies and possible solutions would certainly be warranted. This study recognises a need for further research incorporating studies of different levels of student computer proficiency, such as undergraduate Computer Majors or postgraduate computer science degree scholars that would effectively overcome the difficulties associated with ICT inexperience (Stacey, 2008).

Furthermore, this study confronted problems associated with poor ICT skills, coupled with instructors and students inexperience with applying ICT in a BL environment. Based on these findings, there is a need for further research on the best ways to introduce instructors and students to the BL experience. These considerations are consistent with recent research conducted by Ferneda, Alonso & Braga (2011), and Suwannasom (2010) which has found that there is a need for further study on the best way to facilitate the adjustment and adaptation process of instructors and students to a new learning environment. There is also a need to investigate ways of helping students develop the online critical and cultural skills required for the effective use of ICT tools for learning purposes.

Another consideration for researchers developing future studies of BL first-year rural students' lack of Basic English skills. If future researchers are to address these difficulties, studies of EFL students with different levels of proficiency, such as postgraduate English degree scholars, undergraduate English Majors or third- and fourth-year English Major Students would more easily address the difficulties associated with language proficiency (Dziuban, Moskal & Hartman, 2005). This is confirmed by the previous studies of Ferneda et al. (2011), and Pornwasin (2012) who note that Blended Learning should be undertaken with highly proficient students such as fourth-year students or postgraduate students in order to see how ICT facilitates English language acquisition.

Future research considering the BL approach could be conducted to investigate other specific areas of language learning skills such as: vocabulary development, multicultural awareness, communicative competence and learning strategies, etc. These suggestions are consistent with Chen, Shen, Xiong, Tan and Cheng (2006), Cooner (2009), and Shin (2011) in stating that a more flexible teaching method associated with online learning should be investigated.

Furthermore, further research might consider investigating the variables of interlocutors and intercultural differences as well as online communications extending to other social

networks such as LinkedIn, chat rooms, web blogs, Line.com, What App, Google+ and other online forums in order to investigate how communications in these mediums may promote English language acquisition and communicative competence.

This study of BL reflects on computer-mediated communications such as Internet websites, social media and e-mail and their roles in English language acquisition. Results here clearly indicate that online communication contributed to a remarkable improvement in student attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language. Another outcome established in the findings of this study was BL's effectiveness in facilitating English competence when compared to F-to-F traditional classroom instruction.

This study also indicated students' independent learning potential and self-learning experiences were greatly increased through BL because it provides effective, flexible and convenient communications and access to resources. To this day, past and present students are able to access and use the course website as a hub for resources, communications and continued learning. Therefore, the study of website productivity is worth investigating, and further research studying different forms of online self-learning may also prove to be valuable. Beyond that, further research could extend this present study by investigating the effects of learning English by utilising the course website in other institutions or contexts.

The final area of potential further research, identified through this study and others, should examine how instructors could be supported in attaining ICT teaching skills, develop Internet-enabled courses and the updating and enhancing of ICT skills and practices on a regular basis as technologies develop rapidly (Hoic-Bozic, Mornar & Boticki, 2009; Siritongthawon, Donyaprueth & Dimmitt, 2006). Furthermore, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses, more and more students will be able to access and research current and established information as readily as their instructors. The results presented in students' comments and suggestions reveal that students and instructors required additional English and ICT skills. Consequently, if instructors do not acquire and improve their technology skills, it is possible that they will be left behind, redundant in the information age.

This study provides evidence of the potential of BL environments to assist students and instructors overcome ICT and language barriers in rural Thai Universities. In general, the present study's conclusions and implications with regard to combined F-to-F and online learning parallels the findings of numerous educators in the field of educational technology research

Karimi, Badariah & Ahmad (2013), Ono & Ishihara (2011), Phornphacharaphong, (2012 ), Picciano, Dziuban & Graham (2014), Siritongthawon et al. (2006).

Furthermore, this study found BL improved the lowest level students the most, where the Public Health Major class registered the lowest pre-test mean score but increased significantly to attain the highest change in mean score post course ( $p < .05$ ). These finding may be related to students' attitude, as the Public Health Major held the highest positive attitude on SCALE 1: ICT valuable for learning English. In short, this study indicated that the BL approach improved progressive learning outcomes for those students with the least background knowledge who held the highest positive attitudes towards the subject matter. Future research could explore this correlation in students' learning levels, learning achievements and their attitude.

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## **Appendix A: Reading Circle Roles**

### The Facilitator:

For Homework– writes an overall summary of the main points, ideas, feelings, and events of the section that was re–ad

In Class– tells the group the summary orally without looking at what was written; encourages group members to comment on these points, ideas, and feelings; also, maintains the use of English by group members (reminds group members to speak in English, if they drift into Japanese)-- this person presents first.

### The Investigator:

For Homework– identifies and writes down at least ten words or phrases that are unknown, interesting, or used in unusual ways, along with the pages they are on and the sentences they are in, and finds out and writes down their meanings; and identifies and writes down any unknown places, people, or events and finds out and writes down who or what they are.

In Class reads one word or phrase (and the sentence it is in) or place, person, or event and gives an explanation of it; encourages group members to add or ask anything they wish; then repeats this for each item written– this person presents second.

### The Quoter:

For Homework– chooses and writes down at least three or four quotations along with the pages they are on.

In Class– reads one quotation aloud twice and asks group members for their thoughts, opinions, and feelings about it; encourages group members to discuss the quotation; then repeats this for each quotation-- this person presents third.

### The Connector:

For Homework– identifies and writes down at least three or four similarities and/or differences with things in her/his country and/or Japan, along with the pages they are on; and identifies and connects three or four things with what is happening now or recently in Japan or the USA or elsewhere in the world and writes them down.

In Class– tells the group about one similarity or difference or connection orally without looking at what was written; encourages group members to comment on these similarities, differences, and connections; then repeats this for each item written– this person presents last.

## Appendix B: The Questionnaire

**In this class, you have been reading a book and then writing, speaking, and having discussions about it. Please answer the questions that are written below about these activities and your English abilities as carefully as possible.**

**For 1 to 6, rank each statement by circling only ONE answer.**

**1 (I agree strongly) 2 (I agree) 3 (Maybe) 4 (I do not agree)**

1. Writing helped me to understand what I had read.

1    2    3    4

2. Reading something before talking helped me to say more when I had discussions.

1    2    3    4

3. Writing something before talking helped me to say more when I had discussions.

1    2    3    4

4. Reading something before listening helped me to understand more of what my classmates had said in the discussions.

1    2    3    4

5. Writing something before listening helped me to understand more of what my classmates had said in the discussions.

1    2    3    4

6. Having discussions helped me to understand what I had read.

1    2    3    4

**7. Which helped you MOST to become a better reader? Circle only ONE answer.**

Reading / Writing / Listening / Speaking /

Reading and Writing / Reading and Listening / Reading and Speaking /

Writing and Listening / Writing and Speaking / Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Listening / Reading and Writing and Speaking /

Reading and Having Discussions / Writing and Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Having Discussions

**8. Which helped you MOST to become a better listener? Circle only ONE answer.**

Reading / Writing / Listening / Speaking /

Reading and Writing / Reading and Listening / Reading and Speaking /

Writing and Listening / Writing and Speaking / Having Discussions /

Reading and Writing and Listening / Reading and Writing and Speaking /

Reading and Having Discussions / Writing and Having Discussions /

Reading and Writing and Having Discussions

**9. Which helped you MOST to become a better speaker? Circle only ONE answer.**

Reading / Writing / Listening / Speaking /

Reading and Writing / Reading and Listening / Reading and Speaking /

Writing and Listening / Writing and Speaking / Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Listening / Reading and Writing and Speaking /

Reading and Having discussions / Writing and Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Having discussions

**10. Which helped you MOST to become a better writer? Circle only ONE answer.**

Reading / Writing / Listening / Speaking /

Reading and Writing / Reading and Listening / Reading and Speaking /

Writing and Listening / Writing and Speaking / Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Listening / Reading and Writing and Speaking /

Reading and Having discussions / Writing and Having discussions /

Reading and Writing and Having discussions

**11. Which aspects of the classroom activities you did involving the textbook were beneficial to you for improving your English language abilities? Mark each of the following either O (helpful) or X (not helpful).**

reading at home

writing at home (for your role)

talking in class (presenting your role's information)

listening to your classmates in class (presenting their roles' information)

discussing the topics (after or while each classmate presents for her/his role)

# **SITUATION ANALYSIS AND NEED ANALYSIS IN DEVELOPING ESP COURSES FOR THREE FACULTIES AT HANOI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION (HNUE)**

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## **Abstract**

In the development history of English for Special Purposes (ESP), a considerable amount of evidence has revealed that there are not many studies on English for such fields as Social Work, History, and Vietnamese Studies. Moreover, in reality, there is an obviously recognized need for developing ESP for undergraduate students so that they can use English in their working environment. For these aforementioned reasons, a group of teachers at FOE were allowed and funded to carry out key university-level research for the purpose of developing ESP courses and teaching materials for three faculties, namely: the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies, the Faculty of Social Work, and the Faculty of History. This paper first analyzes the ESP teaching and learning situations at the three faculties at HNUE and the needs reported from both students and teachers using two data collection tools, namely, interviews for teachers and questionnaires for students. In conclusion, the paper gives practical suggestions for the procedure in developing ESP syllabi and materials which can be applicable not only for the three faculties but also for any other ESP courses nationwide.

**Keywords:** *English for specific purposes, ESP courses, undergraduate students*

## **Introduction**

ESP, “an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.19), was defined as having absolute and variable characteristics (Strevens, 1988; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Meanwhile, ESP is accordingly characterized by its clearly defined purposes in teaching and its learner-centered short intensive courses which tend to be more focused than other types of ELT (English Language Teaching) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

With the above-mentioned features of ESP, ESP course development has been believed to center around learners' needs analysis. ESP instructions should closely relate to learners' reasons for learning (Carter, 1983), "a real analysis of students' needs and expectations, on a real analysis of the ESP learning situation, and on real negotiation with the students" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1983, p.112). ESP is often seen as the best example of communicative teaching in that it is supposedly aimed at students' needs.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) found its way into Vietnam in the 1990s and is increasingly gaining in popularity. The rising number of economic and cultural organizations in the country after the Open-door Policy was issued by the Government in 1990 has created a demand for a resource of professionals who are able to use English to communicate in their professional environment. This social demand has led to a strong need for learning ESP in colleges, universities and vocational schools in Vietnam, in general, and in Hanoi National University of Education, in particular.

Nevertheless, ESP courses in tertiary institutions in Vietnam are said not to be well developed. One of the major reasons is that ESP teaching programs in Vietnam were designed largely based on EFL frameworks and experience and understanding of the teacher-designers and administrators rather than on learners' needs analysis (Pham, 2007). As a result, the students in Pham (2007) expressed their dissatisfaction with their ESP course materials.

Similarly, at HNUE, a preliminary survey on the situation of ESP teaching and material developing at three faculties, namely Faculty of Vietnamese Studies (FoVS), Faculty of Social Work (FoSW), and Faculty of History (FoH), conducted by a group of teachers at Faculty of English (FoE) revealed some major issues which need tackling. Firstly, the ESP syllabi and teaching materials are developed and designed by the teachers themselves without details being approved in terms of quality. Secondly, the teaching materials which are being used by the teachers at either FoE or these faculties have not been unified, systematized, and published for formal and official usage.

Therefore, FoE was approved and funded the key university-level research entitled "Developing ESP syllabi and ESP teaching materials for three faculties of History, Vietnamese Studies, and Social Work at HNUE" (Code: SHHN13 – 360, research manager: M.A Ha Hong Nga, research secretary: M.A Thai Thi Cam Trang). In conducting the research to develop the ESP syllabi and teaching materials for the three faculties, the very first and crucial step is needs analysis. A syllabus is considered to be efficacious when it can reflect the necessary contents in

teachers' opinions, the contents which the undergraduates desire to study, as well as the ones which the graduates need to use at work. Therefore, needs analysis is also a step conducted by a great number of researchers in syllabus design (Singh, 2003; West, 1994; Nunan, 1991; Belcher, 2006; Long & Crookes, 1992; Seedhouse, 1995; Badger & White, 2000; Savage & Storer, 1992; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). It is agreed by ESP theorists that an ESP program is built based on an assessment of the purposes and the needs for which English is required. Thus, the most important difference between GE and ESP lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English. However, the survey also revealed that the teachers at FOE and three faculties have never conducted any kind of needs analysis in developing the syllabi and teaching materials before.

This article addresses ESP and developing ESP syllabi and teaching materials by conducting situation and needs analysis. This is followed by a description of the methodology including both interviews with teachers and questionnaires with students at the three faculties in analyzing the needs. Subsequently, the findings from these semi-controlled interviews and questionnaires are presented and discussed. The paper concludes with some practical suggestions for the procedure in developing ESP syllabi and teaching materials.

### **Research Methods**

The present study, which focused on situation analysis and needs analysis, was an attempt to overcome the problems mentioned above. Based on this study, recommendations have been made for HNUE and other universities nationwide.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. Specifically, a questionnaire of 15 questions (Appendix A) was delivered to 90 students of these three faculties, 30 students each, most of whom were third-year students who had just completed ESP course. It was hoped that they, with ease, could give full reflections of the real teaching and learning situations they had experienced, and that they would describe expectations from the ESP course in detail.

Qualitatively, semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) were arranged among authors and teachers involved in the ESP course, eliciting all issues concerning teaching and learning ESP within their faculty. Due to the small number of ESP teachers, the interviews were carried out quickly and smoothly.



The questions of both the questionnaires and the interviews were designed to cover most of all, the following aspects of needs analysis in ESP, according to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), including *professional information about the learners; personal information about the learners; English language information about the learners; the learners' deficits; language learning information; professional communication information; and what was wanted from the course?*

## **Data Analysis**

### **1. The situation of learning and teaching ESP at HNUE (Situation Analysis)**

#### **1.1 Data analysis from interviews**

The amount of time for ESP in three faculties is different: 2 credits for FoH but three credits for both FoSW and FoVS. They all share the noticeable problem of lacking ESP teachers. Only one teacher in FoH is able to teach the ESP course whereas the other two faculties are hiring teachers from Faculty of English (FoE). They all hope that in the next five years some of their teachers after finishing their graduate courses in English speaking countries such as the UK, the US or Australia, would be able to teach ESP.

Because of this fact, the ESP materials have never been evaluated and approved at faculty level, and teachers themselves compiled handouts for students and designed tests at the end of the course. Therefore, the effectiveness of teaching and learning ESP has not yet been assessed.

However, their target skills development is dissimilar. In the FoH, reading skills and speaking, especially presenting capability, are highly developed. Besides grammar, specialized lexis, and translation practice are also focused. In the FoSW, apart from reading skills, grammar and technical terms, they have more specific objectives in speaking skills, which are maintaining conversations in international transactions and making presentations in conferences. ESP for FoVS mainly concentrates on English for Tourism. Because of the particular skills required of a tour guide, teachers combine the disciplinary knowledge with English skills in the ESP course. They asked the students to write an introduction for a historic relic and later to take them to the real site to make a presentation in the manner they are expected to with tourists in their future jobs. The differences in training objectives undoubtedly lead to the disparity in testing and assessment. The ESP teacher in FoH used on-going assessment as an efficient way to manage his

over-sized class which was up to 60 students. On the other hand, teachers in FoSW and FoVS tended to mark their students' presentations or essays as mid-term and end-of-term assessment.

## 1.2 Data analysis from questionnaires

Almost all students had learned English for three years at their high schools plus ten credits of General English at university (FoH 93%, FoSW 100% and FoVS 92%). This means that they were assumed to have achieved a level of English adequate to study ESP.

Asked about the motivation for learning English, students in the three faculties all gave two reasons. First, English is a compulsory subject and it would bring them many opportunities of employment. Besides, they were aware that English is a tool for their widening and deepening specialized knowledge. It can be said that students have intrinsic motivations rather than extrinsic stimuli. It was hoped that this would shape positive attitudes towards their approaching ESP.

As regards the difficulties in learning ESP, the lack of an English speaking environment was first remarked upon by 90% students of FoH, 60% students of FoSW and 92% students of FoVS. In addition, a relatively high proportion of respondents believed that the difficulty came from the fact that "they have low ability of language proficiency, and they do not have inborn talents for words". The last but the most highlighted difficulty was that up to a third of FoVS students blamed their failure in learning ESP for teachers' weak ability and as many as 47% of FoH students blamed poor learning and teaching facilities.

Asked about the significance of ESP, the majority of respondents selected "necessary" or "very necessary" options. They also thought that they would have many chances of using ESP in their coming jobs.

Few students were satisfied with their ESP course: only 27% FoH students, 4% FoSW students, and 0% FoVS students assessed the course as "effective". This meant that they were not yet happy with ESP course.

Regarding the activities and skills development on which ESP teachers focused, the results were not consistent across the three faculties. In FoH, teachers concentrated on Reading skills (70%), Speaking skills and Translation Practice (53%). The percentage was closely similar but lower in FoVS and totally different in FoSW. Teachers in this faculty mainly taught Speaking, Grammar and Vocabulary.

Learner autonomy is one of the factors determining the success of students in learning ESP. The questionnaire was also an attempt to investigate teachers' approaches to upgrading students' self-study. "Assigning homework", a traditional method, was mostly used by FoH teachers (50%). Teachers in FoSW and FoVS used such pair or group assignments as making presentations or writing essays with provided topics relating to their discipline. Students were very active in this activity but they had to choose their own modes of self-study.

In summary, there emerged some pressing issues from the results of interviews and questionnaires about the teaching and learning ESP situation in FoH, FoSW and FoVS as mentioned previously. First, the three faculties had not agreed on the point of time and the number of credits for ESP; therefore, they would find it difficult to agree on the standard outcomes for ESP later. Second, the current ESP materials were compiled by the teachers without being evaluated by such parties as faculty managers and students. Third, the three faculties had not been consistent in approaching teaching contents and material development. Fourth, the three faculties, due to their disciplinary gaps, had focused on different language components and skills in teaching and learning ESP. Fifth, there had not been teaching and learning quality assessment.

## **2. The learning and teaching needs in three faculties at HNUE (Needs Analysis)**

### **2.1. The needs in teaching ESP**

In terms of developing ESP syllabi and teaching materials, only FoSW and FoVS would have liked to co-operate with FoE so that the syllabi and teaching materials in developing the language skills would be a combination between the experienced teachers at the faculties in the given fields and the skillful teachers at FOE.

Regarding the *content*, the teachers at FoSW had already developed a new ESP syllabus for the upcoming courses with seven lessons, including nature of social work, origins, social work, work environment and employment, types of professional intervention, internship, and target for the development of social work in Vietnam. Another teacher added some other topics, such as the methods in social work (individuality, group, and society), social work with special groups, and social work practice. This teacher also suggested that the ESP course should help the students communicate in conferences aiming at co-operating and exchanging internationally, as well as develop their skills of working in groups in addition to reading and translating skills.

Therefore, he would have liked to use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate the students effectively.

The teachers at FoVS also suggested the specific topics for the cultural area, such as pagodas, festivals, main traditions, professional villages, cultural specialty, cultural identity, and religions. Others recommended some reference materials for the travelling area, such as the thirteen standardized travelling fields, Vitosh standards, and other universities which have travelling courses. Notably, the teachers at FoVS and FoE reached an agreement on the goals and the teaching approach of the ESP course. Firstly, the course aimed at helping the students to express their knowledge in English. Secondly, the syllabus design was based on the themes and communicative skills related to the duties of a tour guide. There were various tasks in each theme which reflected the feasible tour guide situations. These tasks also provided the input through listening and reading tasks and the drill with speaking and writing with the focus on speaking. Each theme ended with self-study development and instructions on how to find the self-study materials.

Meanwhile, the teacher at FoH hoped that the upcoming ESP course designed by the teachers at FoE would increase their students' vocabulary and develop their students' reading and translating skills for researching in the future without giving any suggestions about the contents.

In terms of ESP *teaching*, there were two different opinions among teachers at FoSW and FOVS. Some would like to invite the teachers at FoE to teach ESP at their faculties while others thought that the teachers at FoE should help them to develop the syllabi and teaching materials, and then co-teach with the teachers at their faculties, and finally enable their faculties to teach their own students. Meanwhile, the teacher at FoH confirmed that ESP teaching belonged to the teachers at FoH only because the teachers had a wide knowledge in history and can answer the students' questions. Moreover, there were some teachers studying PhD in English-speaking countries and would be taking charge of teaching ESP in the future.

Concerning the *intention of building language and teaching capacity* of their teachers, only FOSW would choose to invite the teachers at FoE to train and help their teachers so that they could teach ESP efficiently.

## 2.2. The needs in learning ESP

In terms of *the most appropriate time* to learn ESP, half the students at FoSW (52%) and FoVS (50%) thought that ESP should be taught after General English (GE) whereas the rest (FoSW: 48%, FoVS: 50%) argued that ESP and GE should be taught simultaneously. Meanwhile, the numbers of the students at FoH who had the latter view (46%) were larger than those of the former view (40%). One of the possible reasons for the latter view could be that the students wanted to reduce the time span of learning both GE and ESP. However, if the students learn GE and ESP at the same time, the studying quality could be much lower. In fact, when GE and ESP are taught at different time, most of the students do not spend much time on self-studying. This is one of the major factors which result in the low studying quality and low proficiency in English communication later at work. Therefore, it is suggested that it is appropriate to teach ESP after the students have finished learning GE for three semesters.

The period of time that the greatest numbers of the students at FoSW (48%) and FoH (53%) chose to spend on ESP studying was 26-50% of the overall time for learning English. Meanwhile, only 17% of the students at FoVS were of this opinion because the period chosen by the greatest number of the students (42%) at this faculty was over 76%. A larger number of the students at FoSW (40%) and FOVS (33%) would like to spend 51-75% of the overall time for English on ESP. Nonetheless, the number of the students at FoH was quite small, accounting for one fifth (20%) of the respondents. Hence, as the wish of the majority, ESP should only account for one semester. However, the period could be lengthened to three credits, instead of two credits as at the moment, to improve the quality of teaching and learning ESP.

Asked about the use of English skills, most of the students at FoSW (96%) and all the students at FoVS affirmed that speaking skills would be used the most at work whilst only half the students at FoH (50%) were of this viewpoint. Writing and translation were the skills believed used least by the students at FoSW (32%) and FoVS (25%), respectively. Nevertheless, a large number of the students at FoH (66.7%) believed that translating skills would be used the most at work. The following skills include speaking (50%), reading (36.7%), listening (33%) and writing (33.3%).

Therefore, the majority of the respondents at FoSW (72%) and half of the informants at FoVS (but only 36.7% at FoH) ranked presenting basic issues related to their fields as the most significant skill in learning ESP. Meanwhile, half the respondents at FoH chose translating and reading specialised materials. In addition, many of the students at FoSW (44%) believed that it

was also important to write such scientific documents as reports, articles, abstracts, etc. but only 5 students at FOH and none of the informants at FoVS shared the same opinion.

According to the informants at all three faculties, ESP teachers could employ the following activities: pair work, group work, discussion, presentation; vocabulary games and activities; translation; and self-study check. It is obvious that the students hoped to have useful ESP lessons as well as interesting and active ones. Moreover, homework needs checking regularly and controlling effectively so as to prevent the students from copying the answers from others but to form real self-study habits. ESP teachers can also spend certain time checking the homework and answering any questions from the students to improve the self-study quality. In addition, the students at FOVS also want their teachers to translate all the reading texts into Vietnamese in order to fully grasp these texts.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

The present article reports efforts in the greater work of developing ESP courses and designing ESP materials for three faculties at HNUE. With an aim to develop effective ESP courses with helpful ESP materials, a situation analysis and a needs analysis were conducted. The data for our situation and needs analyses were mainly collected from teachers and students at HNUE via group interviews and questionnaires. On the basis of the data analyses, ten suggestions are made for improving teaching and learning ESP at HNUE in particular and other nationwide universities in general.

First, the university should specify the social needs for ESP so that they can set appropriate training objectives. The real needs of learners are that after graduation they can use ESP for their jobs and professional development. When the training goes on the right track, students will be stimulated in learning.

Second, managers at all levels should take the needs of teachers, students, and employers as well as the students' ability into consideration. Consequently, decisions will be made on ESP syllabi, the number of credits, and course books to meet the needs of each specific major throughout the university.

Third, learning objectives should be clarified for students so that they have positive attitudes towards learning. Besides, consulting students how to develop their learning autonomy

is a great significance. Many students are hard-working but fail to study because of their ineffective self-study.

Fourth, ESP teachers should be provided with continuous professional development through training classes of updating teaching methodologies and strengthening their capacity. Teachers themselves should exchange ideas and experiences in teaching ESP by implementing peer observation in groups.

Fifth, development of learning material is a key factor for the success of ESP course. With the aid of international organizations and the Ministry of Education and Training, the universities should cooperate to compile standard course books which match current social needs and training objectives. Therefore, ESP course books for each specific discipline should be used throughout the nation. In doing so, it would be easier for universities to shift credits to each other and exchange experiences in improving teaching methods in national conferences every year.

Sixth, a bank of test items should be built according to international standards. Students will need to meet these standards when graduating. The institutions should organize similar international tests to motivate learning and communicative competence-oriented teaching. Those who design the tests should be well-paid in accordance with their energy, to motivate them to design standard tests. Test items builders should be thoroughly trained and have real experience in teaching ESP.

Seventh, apart from common skills and language components like listening, speaking, reading, writing skills, grammar and vocabulary, students should be equipped with other supplementary soft skills such as deduction, summarizing, reasoning, comparing and contrasting, presenting, etc. These skills would help students' self-study and further study later. Teachers need to improve their expertise by professional self-development activities.

Eighth, universities should give priority in building multi-media classrooms for ESP lessons. Projectors are essential in making full use of both teachers' teaching and students' learning potentials. More ideally, the Internet should be installed in the classrooms, so that teachers and learners can look up technical terms via online dictionaries or software. The class size should not exceed 30 students. This will be done easier today as students follow credit training programs and they are willing to pay for high quality courses.

Ninth, when developing the ESP syllabi and teaching materials, the teachers at FOE can consult with the teachers at the three faculties as well as focusing on the students' needs and the

employers' needs in making a decision on which themes should be included. ESP can be taught in the fourth semester after three-semester GE studying and can also be lengthened to four credits. Besides, the ESP program should not only build up the student's vocabulary, their reading and translating skills but also communicating skills, presentation skills and work-related problem-solving skills by conducting various activities within the classroom. As a result, various kinds of on-going assessment like alternative assessment could be employed to evaluate the students more effectively. In addition, throughout the program, the students would be capable of developing their self-study habits and skills to self-study efficaciously with strict control from their teachers.

Tenth, after the syllabi and teaching materials have been completely developed, the teachers at FOE, as planned previously, can co-teach with the teachers at the three faculties and organize training workshop so that the teachers would be enable to make full use of the syllabi and teaching materials and teach on their own effectively.

It is obvious that the research cannot cover all the perspectives in needs analysis which should include such informants as teachers, students and employers. However, due to limited scope and limited time, the authors did not have the opportunity to interview the travel agencies, the non-governmental organizations and the employers at high schools– the recruiters of the graduates from the three faculties of Vietnamese Studies, Social Work, and History, respectively. Hence, further studies need to be conducted with these recruiters taken into account.



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**Appendix A**

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

The survey aims at collecting data only, not for any commercial purposes, for designing ESP course books for English non-major students at Hanoi National University of Education.

Personal information

Are you undergraduate or graduate students?

What year are you in?

What faculty are you learning at?

1. How long have you been learning English?

- a. 0-3 years
- b. 3-5 years
- c. Over 5 years

2. Where have you learned English? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. at secondary school
- b. at university
- c. at foreign language centers
- d. Others

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3. Why do you learn English? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. because English it is a compulsory subject
- b. because you want to follow friends and current trend
- c. because you love listening to music, watching films, etc
- d. because it is a mean to widen my knowledge through reading journals and listening to news in English
- e. because I believe English will bring me more opportunities
- f. because I want to study abroad
- g. Other reasons (please specify)

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4. What are your obstacles in learning English? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. The content does not meet my learning needs.
- b. Learning aids are poor.
- c. Teachers are weak at their professional expertise and teaching methodologies.
- d. I do not have English learning environment.
- e. My abilities in learning English are limited.
- f. Other challenges (please specify)

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5. Have you every heard of ESP?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. How significant do you find to learn ESP?

- a. Unnecessary
- b. Normal
- c. Necessary
- d. Very necessary

7. How often do you think you will use ESP for your future work?

- a. never
- b. Rarely
- c. sometimes
- d. usually

8. What do you think of your ESP course?

- a. ineffective
- b. so so
- c. effective
- d. very effective

9. In your opinion, what should teachers do to enhance the effectiveness of the ESP course? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. increase games and other activities to help learners memorize vocabulary
- b. translate all the reading texts into Vietnamese
- c. get students to practise more translation
- d. more frequently check home assignments
- e. get students to discuss or present in pairs or in groups
- f. other recommendations (please specify)

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10. What skills and language components that your ESP teachers focus on? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing
- e. Translation
- f. Pronunciation
- g. Grammar
- h. Vocabulary

11. What did your teacher do to improve the students learning autonomy?

- a. Assign homework.
- b. Give a list of reference books and suggested websites for self-study.
- c. Get students to work in groups and give group assignment.
- d. Let students free in their self-study.
- e. Other ways (please specify)

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12. What are the most important aspects in learning ESP? (You can more than one option)

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Translating ESP documents
- d. Reading ESP documents
- e. Getting to know many types of texts in ESP
- f. Writing reports, journals, abstracts in ESP
- g. Presenting matters concerning their major
- h. Listening to documentaries in ESP
- i. Other aspects (please specify)

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13. What skills do you expect to use most in your future work? (You choose more than one option)

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing
- e. Translation

14. What stage should ESP be taught?

- a. from the beginning of undergraduate course without general English course
- b. parallel with general English
- c. after the general English course

15. How much time do you spend on ESP?

- a.  $\leq 25\%$  of the total time for learning English
- b. 26-50% of the total time for learning English
- c. 51-75% of the total time for learning English
- d.  $> 76\%$  of the total time for learning English

## **Appendix B**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS**

1. What semester does ESP fall on and how many credits is it for?
2. By whom is ESP taught: by teachers of the faculty or by visiting teachers from English faculty?
3. If by teachers of the faculty, have they gone over any English courses?
4. Have you had the syllabus for ESP? Has it been approved? Does the faculty give any financial support for ESP teachers?
5. Have you ever got feedback from students after the course as well as the learning needs of students before the course?
6. What is testing and assessment like within ESP course?
7. Are there any extra-curriculum activities?
8. What are the teaching approaches for ESP course?
9. If ESP is taught by the teachers of faculty, are there any advantages and disadvantages?
10. What do the faculty leaders expect in terms of ESP syllabus and ESP course books? What skills and language components do you want to focus on? What teaching approaches do you expect to use?
11. When the ESP course book and syllabus have been completed, do you plan to invite English teachers to teach ESP or do you want them to train your teachers to become ESP teachers?

# **THE EFFECTS OF THE USE OF MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE IN RETRIEVING VOCABULARY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines whether the mind mapping technique brings about better retrieval of vocabulary by high schools students in Vietnam. It is a one group design study with 37 students. The students were instructed with how to use mind mapping and apply it in learning vocabulary from a textbook in a semester. The measurements include pre- and post-test of vocabulary together with seven vocabulary quizzes. The results indicate significant improvement in retrieving vocabulary by the students. Interviews with the students revealed their agreement that the mind mapping technique benefited their vocabulary learning.

***Keywords:** mind mapping, vocabulary, ELT in Vietnam*

## **Introduction**

Vocabulary is a basic component in language learning. In Vietnam, teaching vocabulary and learning vocabulary at high schools are integrated into other skills. As a result, teachers normally choose some words or phrases to introduce in the early stage of a skill lesson. Besides, it can be said that teachers usually pay more attention to how vocabularies are taught rather than to how they are learnt. In fact, students need to know ways to remember and retrieve words in their English learning.

### ***How vocabulary is learnt and remembered***

The ways vocabulary is learnt and remembered are different but they are not completely distinctive. It can be reasoned that how words are learnt has great influence on how they are remembered. For example, a good presentation of a word will help learners remember it more easily and use it more effectively as words are put in visualized presentation and in contexts (Do, 2009). In other words, visual aids are good to teach vocabulary as they can help enhance

students' ability to remember words after lessons. Apart from knowing how words are learnt, it is also important for teachers to know how words are remembered by their students so that they can devise better techniques to benefit vocabulary learning. Genc (2004) states that in order to arouse interest and awareness in students about vocabulary development and make the vocabulary learning process more meaningful, teachers should try out different vocabulary teaching techniques.

Teachers play an important role in bringing motivation to students in learning vocabulary. According to Scivener (1994, p.127), some kinds of practical exercises to help students become more familiar with the words they have learned are: matching, pictures to words, matching parts of words to other parts, using prefixes and suffixes to build new words from given words, classifying items into lists, using given words to complete specific tasks, filling in crosswords, grids or diagrams, filling in gaps in sentences and memory games. Gairns and Redman (1991, p.90) state that students forget eighty percent of the new information they have learnt within twenty-hours from their initial acquaintance with it. Therefore, "Follow-up learning activities that use the same material, presented through various kinds of individual and interactive exercises, maximize the chance of the word being retained over the long term." (God, Cao, Solvberg and Rasmussen, 2007, p.428).

To remember words, students should be exposed to different kinds of vocabulary exercises. Gap filling helps students have more opportunities to consolidate new words (Allen, 1983; Nation, 1990; Thornbury, 2007). Students can also match words with pictures or definitions (God, Cao, Solvberg and Rasmussen, 2007) as matching exercises encourage students to remember new words in connection with their pictures or definitions. Nation (2011, p.349) states that multiple choice items help students focus on a particular meaning when a word tested has more than one meaning. Harmer (1992, p.160) asserts, "Students remember best when they have actually done something with the words they are learning". In learning, working out what words mean rather than just handling their meaning should be paid attention to at the beginning level. Thus, the more students activate their previous knowledge to practice the new words, the higher is the students' motivation to learn and remember these words (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 2005, p.148).

### ***Mind mapping and learning vocabulary***

Mind mapping is a thinking tool proposed by Tony Buzan (1993) from the UK. It is a technique of regulating ideas with visual interconnection as a popular brainstorming technique. Buzan (1993, p.49) claims that mind mapping is a powerful graphic technique providing a universal key to unlock the potential of brain. It records the information through symbols, pictures, emotional meaning and colours, in the same way as processed by the brain. Due to its appearance, mind mapping has been used in teaching, learning and working places. However, in Vietnam it is a rather new concept and was introduced through the recent book “*Đạy tốt-Học tốt các môn học bằng bản đồ tư duy*” [Teaching and learning effectively with mind mapping] (Hoang, 2012). In the academic year 2010-2011, the application of mind mapping in teaching and learning has been piloted in 355 schools throughout Vietnam and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam has decided to use mind mapping a component in the high school curriculum.

In teaching and learning vocabulary, mind mapping can be used to apply images so that language items can reach long-term memory as well as to stimulate the whole brain by appealing to both its creative and logical sides (Thornbury, 2002). Mind mapping allows students to clarify their thoughts by categorizing and grouping related ideas as “Acquiring a vocabulary requires not only labeling but categorizing skills” (Thornbury, 2002, p.18). It can be seen that the main use of mind mapping is to create an association of ideas. Another use is for memory retention. With such memory retention, students’ ability in retrieving vocabulary will be improved. A pattern which at least consists of pictures, symbols and colors will not just help the students to understand the vocabulary knowledge but also makes the students feel good, is enjoyable and attracts their intellect which leads them to an interest in mastering vocabulary knowledge.

The five essential characteristics of mind mapping are: (a) the main idea-- subject or focus is crystallized in a central image; (b) the main themes radiate from the central image as branches; (c) the branches comprise a key image or key word drawn or printed on its associated line; (d) topics of lesser importance are represented as 'twigs' of the relevant branch; and (e) the branches form a connected nodal structure.

According to Indah (2010), each feature of mind mapping has its own benefits to the learners. For example, *central image* is always used to show the main idea and it is put in the middle of the paper. It helps activate learners’ brain and reinforce their memory. A *key word* is known as a word that helps students to figure out a sentence or an event. The key word makes it



easier for students to remember a lot of words. Learners can learn from *basic ordering ideas*. From the central ideas, branches are drawn to show the related sub-ideas. These are important because they help learners to direct their minds by encouraging their creativity and helping them achieve a profound understanding of the topic. *Colors* can also be used not only to make the mind map lively, but to also enhance students' comprehension and the ability to remember the contents presented on the mind map. *Branches* help activate the right side of the brain. Lastly, *pictures* attract learners and brainstorm the related words and help remember things easily and vividly. In addition, pictures have the power of strengthening a keyword that has been written before.

Clearly, there are pros and cons of using mind mapping in teaching and learning vocabulary. Shina and Yamada (2008) state that the mind mapping technique has brought various positive aspects to the teaching and learning processes. It promotes an effective method of learning vocabulary and keeps students highly motivated. It can be helpful not only in vocabulary learning but also in understanding word classes and in reading comprehension. In addition, Hofland (2007) discovered that mind mapping is an excellent way to remember new words. It uses associations, pictures and even colors which are really helpful to organize thoughts that are very personal and unique which makes it easy to remember. Additionally, mind mapping is fun as it is a creative process and natural way to organize thoughts. However, mind mapping links are usually limited to simple associations. Absence of clear links between ideas is a constraint. Mind maps have been said to be idiosyncratic in terms of design, often hard for others to read, representing only hierarchical relationships (in radial form), and inconsistent in terms of level of detail (Eppler, 2006).

### ***Previous studies***

A considerable body of research indicates the effectiveness of using mind mapping in facilitating meaningful learning in science, psychology, social studies, computer science, research methods and teacher education by elementary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate students (Al-jarf, 2009). Mind mapping is found to help students develop many skills such as dynamic thinking, critical thinking, recall and more coherent writing (Al-Jarf, 2009). Evrekli, Balim & Inela (2009) reported that students perceived the mind maps as an interesting approach and thought that the mind mapping enhanced their learning. Similarly, Zampetakis, Tsironis & Moustakis (2007) found that students preferred to work with mind maps in teams since this technique allowed them to develop synergistic interaction, assemble collective knowledge and work with a group minded attitude.

Studying the usefulness of the mind mapping technique, Toi (2009) focused on the aspect that mind maps help to improve users' memory and found that mind mapping was able to help children recall words more effectively than using lists, with improvements in memory of up to 32%. Similarly, Farrand, Hussain & Hennessey (2002) reported that mind mapping improved the long-term memory of factual information in medical students by 10%. Using a 600-word essay to test the effectiveness of mind mapping technique compared to free choice of summarizing techniques with 50 second and third-year medical students, these researchers revealed that mind maps provide an effective study technique when applied to written material and they are likely to "encourage a deeper level of processing" for better memory formation.

Mind mapping was considered as a mnemonic device in learning vocabulary. Nguyen (2011) did an experimental study on mnemonic strategies for improving students' retrieval of vocabulary in a textbook for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Vietnam. The study pointed out that with the frequent application of mnemonic strategies, students' ability in vocabulary retrieval remarkably increased. Besides, students' perceptions on these strategies were also raised.

Regarding the research on using mind mapping technique in teaching and learning English, the study by Phan (2012) investigated the application of mind mapping in teaching English grammar for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in Vietnam. The result revealed that nearly three-quarters of the students in the experimental class claimed that studying grammar through the mind mapping technique was be more enjoyable. In addition, the students were more successful in choosing correct answers for grammar exercises given by the teacher.

It is obvious that the studies on mind mapping have proven the importance of using them in many fields of language teaching and learning and have been documented in the literature. However, there have been few studies focusing on the intervention of using the mind mapping technique in teaching vocabulary and its impact on learners. The current study aims to investigate the effects of the use of mind mapping technique in retrieving and remembering words by high school students in Vietnam. It seeks an answer for the question as to whether mind mapping enhances the retrieval of vocabulary of the students.

## **Materials and methods**

This research was an experimental study with a one-group design with the use of a pre-test, a post-test and 7 quick vocabulary quizzes. It was carried out at a junior high school in Vietnam during the first 17 weeks of an academic year. The participants were 37 grade eight students aged from 13 to 14. They were learning English with a prescribed textbook, English 8. There was a balance in the number of male and female students in the class. The students volunteered to participate in the study and the procedure of the study was explained to them.

Before data collection, the use of the mind mapping technique in teaching and learning vocabulary was introduced to students for two hours from the beginning of the school year through pictures and videos. Apart from the introduction, mind map software was introduced to students so that they could study at home. In class, students without a computer to practice with the software used pens and papers to make mind maps. The researcher used a laptop to make mind maps on the screen.

The researcher based instruction of the students in the process of making a mind map on the following recommendations made by Buzan (2000):

1. Place an image or topic in the center using at least three colors.
2. Use images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout a mind map.
3. Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
4. Each word/ image is alone and sitting on its own line.
5. Connect the lines starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
6. Make the lines the same length as the word/ image.
7. Use colors- your own code- throughout the mind maps.
8. Develop one's own personal style of mind mapping
9. Use emphasis and show associations in the mind map.
10. Keep the mind map clear by using radial hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches.

Students are then advised to base retrieval of vocabulary on mind maps. This activity was done during the process of learning. During the course, students were advised to use mind mapping to activate their prior knowledge about the vocabulary related to the topic. They would compare their mind maps with those of their partners and teacher. The other activity was

students' presentation. When practicing this activity, students were sometimes asked to display their mind maps on the board to report their recall of the vocabulary they had just learned to the class. Vocabulary lessons were planned for two periods per week, lasting from ten to 15 minutes. The intervention period was targeted during 12 weeks.

The one-group pretest-posttest design was used to evaluate the improvement of students in the class involved in the study after 17 weeks of learning vocabulary with the intervention of the mind mapping technique. In the process of data collection, the researcher used written tests to assess the students' ability in learning and remembering vocabulary. The pretest and post-tests contained 20 items. The time allowance for each test was about 20 minutes and for each vocabulary quiz was about ten minutes. The pretest and post-test included multiple choices and gap-filling questions. The activities used to measure vocabulary knowledge were similar to the kind students were familiar with in the course book. Multiple choices were chosen as the main form of the achievement test because they are highly objective and easily and exactly scored. Students had to fill in the gaps with one suitable word, matched with the corresponding words or pictures.

After the pre-test and the post-test were designed, they both were piloted to ensure the reliability. The two tests were delivered to 20 participants at the research site. The reliability coefficient of the pretest with 20 items was Alpha over 0.70 and that of the posttest over 0.70. These results indicated that the test was reliable to measure students' ability of remembering vocabulary. The scores were recorded on each score sheet and then processed with an SPSS program.

Besides the vocabulary pretest and post-test, seven quick vocabulary quizzes were also conducted to measure students' ability in remembering vocabulary. The quizzes were ten-minute written tests which were delivered at the beginning or at the end of some periods. It is clear that quizzes also provided a good form of feedback, both for learners and teachers.

Besides the tests and quizzes, informal interviews with students were conducted to document their points of view about the application of the mind mapping technique in learning vocabulary. Interviews were chosen to collect data for this research because of several advantages. With this method, the interviewer was not only able to follow the ideas but also to investigate the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees. Moreover, if the answers of the participants were ambiguous or incomplete, it was easy to clarify them by asking for further explanation. Questions were structured for the interview so that the researcher could confirm the

validity of information from the questionnaire. To help avoid misunderstanding and make students feel comfortable in answering, the interview questions were in Vietnamese language.

After collecting data in the post-test, nine students were interviewed. The language of the interview was Vietnamese so that the questions could be fully understood and the interviewees could precisely express their feelings and ideas. Each of the interviewees answered five questions. The first two questions were aimed at finding out if the participants liked using “Mind mapping technique” for vocabulary learning or not. The last three questions were used to obtain students’ evaluations of the effects of the mind mapping technique on enhancement of the memory of vocabulary and their suggestions for the application of using mind mapping technique.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Vocabulary tests**

The pretest of vocabulary was given to the participants at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year: 2012-2013. During the semester, seven quick vocabulary quizzes were also administered to check how well they could remember the words. At the end of the first semester, the post-test was administered to measure their ability to recall vocabulary they had learnt.

For the 20-question pretest and post-test, the participants’ answers were coded as: 1 for the “correct answer” and 0 for the “incorrect answer”. Data collected from the pretest and post-test were subjected to the SPSS software to test the reliability and compare the participants’ ability in vocabulary retrieval. The vocabulary tests were designed in the form of multiple choice questions and gap-filling which are popular in all the examinations of Vietnam. As a result, the score of the vocabulary test was easily and exactly measured by SPSS program. The reliability coefficients Cronbach’s alpha of the pretest and posttest were  $\alpha = .72$  and  $\alpha = .75$  respectively.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of vocabulary tests**

Vocabulary Tests	condition	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	MD
	Pretest	37	2.5	9.0	6.149	1.8138	-1.216
	Posttest	37	4.5	10.0	7.365	1.6400	

Table 1 shows a rather significant difference in mean scores between pre and post vocabulary test of the research group. In comparison with the mean score of the participants before the intervention (M-pre = 6.149), that after the intervention is much higher (M-post = 7.365). The mean difference (MD = -1.216) is statistically significant. Clearly, learners made remarkable progress in remembering and recalling vocabulary with mind mapping technique. Besides the Paired Samples T-Test below shows more support for the results.

**Table 2: Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Mean pre and post in experimental group	-1.216	.9898	.1627	-1.5462	-.8862	-7.474	36	.000

As can be seen from Table 2, the P-value of .00, much lower than 0.05, reveals a dramatic change in the participants' ability in remembering vocabulary among the experimental group. After the intervention, the participants gained much progress in terms of recalling the vocabulary they had learnt. During the time of having been trained with the mind mapping technique, most of the participants showed their interests in using mind maps, and their progress in remembering vocabularies could be clearly seen. This finding is also in accordance with Indah (2010) confirming that mind mapping technique benefits students in terms of enhancing their ability of remembering the vocabulary.

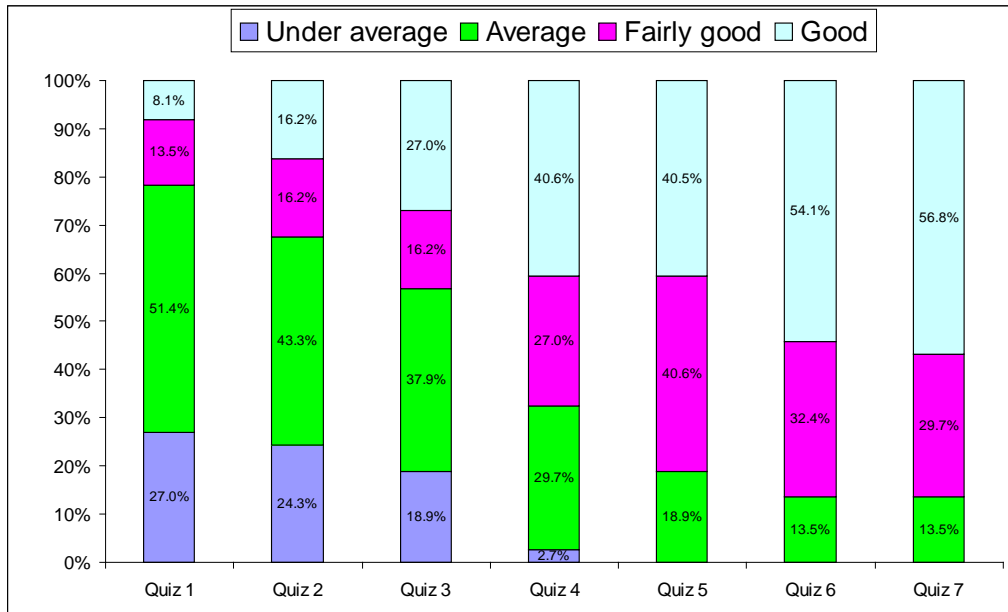
**Table 3: Correlation of Mean of Pre-test and Post-test**

		Mean of pre-test- exp.group	Mean of post-test- exp.group
Mean of pretest-exp.group	Pearson Correlation	1	.840**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	37	37
Mean of post-exp.group	Pearson Correlation	.840**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	37	37

As can be seen from Table 3, the Pearson's  $r$  value at .840 was pretty high indicating quite a strong relationship between the two variables (Pretest mean score and post-test mean score). That is to say, most of the participants who gained high or low marks in the pre-test would get the same levels in the post-test. Besides,  $p$ -value of .00 in this intervention shows a statistically significant correlation between mean scores of pretest and post-test. The data from Table 3 prove that there was no unusual change beyond the researcher's expectation about participants' mark levels. Therefore, the data from Table 3 indicates that the intervention, which was the impact of mind mapping technique on participants' ability of vocabulary remembering and retrieving, was successful.

Besides the pre- and post-tests, seven quick vocabulary quizzes were also given to students. The results are shown in the following figure.

Figure 1: Results of seven quick vocabulary quizzes



As can be seen from Figure 1, students have made much progress in remembering and retrieving vocabularies through each vocabulary quiz. The first quiz was conducted one week after the treatment (in week 4 of the study). Only 8.1% of the students obtained good scores. The second and the third quizzes continued to be conducted in week 7 and 8 of the study. The number of students who got good scores remarkably increased. This percentage gradually increased by 8.1-18.9 %. The fourth and the fifth quizzes were again conducted in week 11 and 12 of the study. Surprisingly, up to 40.5 % of the students had good scores and no students got under average scores in quiz 5. The last two quizzes number 6 and 7 were conducted in week 14 and 15 of the study. The last two quizzes were quite different from the previous ones. In these quizzes, students were asked to produce their own mind maps with the given topics. The results revealed that no students got under average scores and up to 54.1 % of the students achieved good scores. It can be inferred from the results of the last two quizzes that students not only improved their vocabulary mastery but that they also knew how to make mind maps skillfully.



**Table 4: Mean score of seven quick vocabulary quizzes**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quiz 1	37	2.5	8.0	5.297	1.4552
Quiz 2	37	3.0	10.0	5.689	1.6970
Quiz 3	37	4.0	10.0	6.405	1.8665
Quiz 4	37	4.0	10.0	7.297	1.5566
Quiz 5	37	5.0	10.0	7.554	1.3478
Quiz 6	37	5.0	10.0	7.743	1.1880
Quiz 7	37	5.5	10.0	8.095	1.2955

The continual rise in mean scores in Table 4 again strongly supports the data in Figure 1. Hence, it is affirmed that with the intervention of mind mapping technique, improvement in students' ability in vocabulary remembering and retrieving was statistically significant.

### Interviews

Nine students were randomly chosen to participate in the interview with the researcher. The interview questions were aimed at determining whether or not the participants liked using "the mind mapping technique" for vocabulary learning and their evaluation of the effects of the mind mapping technique in enhancing the memory of vocabulary.

Most of the interviewees showed that they liked to learn vocabulary through mind mapping technique and also agreed that learning vocabulary through mind mapping technique was quite new, interesting and able to develop learners' brainpower and promote learners' initiative and creativity. Responses also gave many different reasons for this but their ideas shared common points. Huy, a participant with a very high mark in the post-test said, "I enjoy learning vocabulary with mind mapping technique because it is much more effective than traditional ways. When learning vocabulary with mind mapping technique, the more I write and draw, the more things came into my mind." Similarly, Nhat shared, "I feel more enjoyable to learn vocabulary with mind mapping technique because it is new, fun and creative. I love the feeling of creating and decorating a mind map by myself. Therefore, I can remember the new

words better and longer.” Hoai explained the benefits of learning vocabulary with mind mapping technique as; “When learning vocabulary with mind mapping technique, I feel free to show my ideas and add as many vocabularies related to the topic as possible. There is no limit to the number of branches and sub-branches that can radiate outwards from the topic so my amount of vocabulary increases remarkably.”

The third question asked about the participants’ achievement. All the interviewees agreed that their ability for remembering vocabulary was remarkably increased. Huy said, “Mind mapping technique is an effective tool of helping me to remember vocabulary. Mind maps help me perceive the relations of different kinds that exist between words. By relating new words to those that I have already known, I learn more quickly and am able to use the words more readily and effectively.” Thuan said, “The important thing is that learning vocabulary with mind mapping technique helps me remember the words easily with the help of key words, colorful pictures and symbols.” Mind mapping is reported to help students not only in learning but also in examinations. For example, Loc said, “When I do the test, I imagine the mind maps and try to locate the words with their positions in the diagram then I remember them better. Even after three weeks or more, I can still keep in mind the mind maps that I have worked in the lesson.”

However, mind mapping is not always beneficial to students. Nhat pointed out, “Though I like to learn English with mind maps, it is only suitable to students who can draw well. I am not good at imagination and drawing. It takes me a lot of time to draw appropriate pictures or symbols that appropriate with the words or information from the lesson.” Similarly, Phu said, “Though I have quite a good range of vocabulary, sometimes I felt confused to decide which words are important and which to be included in the branches of the mind maps.”

In brief, through the interviews, the participants reported their improvement of their performance in learning English vocabulary after the treatments. They also reported the obstacles they have met when applying the mind mapping technique in learning words.

## Conclusions

The findings show that by applying the mind mapping technique in learning vocabulary, 81.1 % of the students could generate wide vocabularies related to the topic. In addition, 59.5 % of the students could also feel free to show their ideas on the topics in the textbook and made a connection between their prior knowledge and the lessons. It was a big surprise that 78.4 % of the students said that they could remember and recall the new words better with the help of key words, colorful pictures and symbols. The same percentage of the students (78.4%) also revealed that the mind mapping technique helped them to remember vocabulary more effectively and make the retention of vocabulary much easier and longer and surprisingly 54,1% of the students reported that they could remember vocabulary in class. As a result, most of the students felt self-confident in doing vocabulary exercises and tests and communication. Furthermore, most of the students shared that they were willing to use the mind mapping technique in other learning activities in the future. Furthermore, the results from the pretest and post-test on vocabulary and seven quick vocabulary quizzes demonstrated that the ability of remembering vocabulary of the participants has been significantly improved.

The findings of the current study indicate the effectiveness of mind mapping technique in teaching and learning vocabulary. Generally, in order to carry out the procedure to construct a mind map, the following fundamental steps are implemented:

1. Teachers decide on a topic for instruction and the new words that are important to be taught. The topic is briefly introduced and a key word/ a central idea is written on the chalkboard, power point screen or chart paper. Teachers should bear in their mind that they should choose familiar topics which are appropriate to learning objectives and to students' interests. This is also one of the supporting factors in creating a mind map that makes students gain a lot of new vocabulary more easily.
2. Students are asked to brainstorm as many words as they can that are connected with the key word/ a central idea. They can share their recorded words with their partners.
3. Students design and apply mind maps on a sheet of paper. Every word should be written up on a sheet of paper with a line connecting it to the original word so that the end results can be a "sun-ray" effect. Students should use colours, symbols and pictures to distinguish categories of words. This activity is mainly for revising words that students have already known, but new ones can be introduced by teachers or students.

Depending on the difficulty level of the topics, students can make the mind map individually or in groups of 3 or 4 students. Sometimes both teachers and students co-construct the mind maps and teachers act as a guide-on-the side.

4. Teachers are also advised to prepare their own mind maps so that students can compare them with theirs and complete the maps.

More importantly, teachers should create a habit of learning vocabulary with the mind mapping technique among students. In order to get students into the habit of recording vocabulary, teachers should encourage them to take home their mind maps they made at class and spend some more time to reread and add some more words to the maps. This reviews the lesson nicely and acts as a reference to show what words have been covered on the course. However, it is vital that teachers should check students' maps regularly to make sure that they are indeed recording them. Students are particularly motivated to record vocabulary when teachers award points for doing this. One more important strategy to raise students' awareness of using mind mapping technique in learning vocabulary is that vocabulary tests with mind mapping should be implemented. In these tests, students are required to produce their own mind maps about a specific topic they have learned.

It cannot be denied that vocabulary plays an important role in learning English language successfully. Thus, it is necessary for students to capture such a useful technique as mind mapping. As it can be seen that mind mapping is actually an effective technique for helping learners to store vocabulary, students should therefore be aware of learning vocabulary through this technique. With the help of the mind mapping technique, students explore the richness of English vocabulary and perceive the relations of different kinds that exist between words. By relating new words to those that they have already known and together with help of colours and symbols, students will learn words more quickly and will be able to use the words more readily and effectively.

To measure the improvement in retrieving words, the quizzes and tests in the current study used only multiple choice questions and gap filling. Some students could have guessed the answers and benefited from other ways of learning vocabulary. Further study with the design of two group settings: control and experimental would be able to compare the impact of mind mapping on learning vocabulary and learning vocabulary in a conventional way.

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## Appendix

### VOCABULARY PRE-TEST

Time allowance: 20 minutes

#### Part 1: Circle the best answer A, B, C or D to complete the following questions. (5 pts.)

1. There is a sink, a tub and a shower in the .....  
A. kitchen                      B. dining room                      C. living room                      D. bathroom
2. People usually ..... in the kitchen.  
A. take a shower                      B. cook food                      C. make the bed                      D. watch TV
3. A(n) ..... is a big metal box for keeping food and drink cold and fresh  
A. cooker                      B. dryer                      C. refrigerator                      D. stove
4. Peter put his dirty clothes in the .....  
A. washing machine                      B. wardrobe  
C. closet                      D. electric stove
5. .... is a large piece of furniture where you can hang your clothes.  
A. Wardrobe                      B. Refrigerator                      C. Desk                      D. Counter
6. We have a ..... check-up every six months.  
A. medicine                      B. record                      C. sickness                      D. medical
7. This medicine will ..... the pain in your back.  
A. prevent                      B. relieve                      C. protect                      D. worry
8. Don't forget to tell the doctor your ..... because he will need them to cure your disease.  
A. symptoms                      B. sick notes  
C. medical records                      D. temperature
9. The nurse asked me to step on the scales to ..... me.  
A. measure                      B. take                      C. weigh                      D. put
10. How ..... is Nga ? – 40 kilos  
A. high                      B. weight                      C. tall                      D. heavy

**Part II : Circle the word that does NOT relate to the sport in the picture.(2.5pts)**

11.



A. shuttlecock

B. net

C. map

D. court

12.



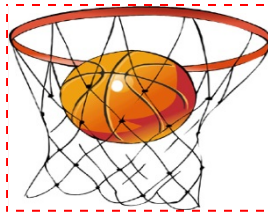
A. ball

B. score

C. coach

D. racket

13.



A. goal

B. paddle

C. basket

D. hoop

14.



A. swimming suit

B. running shoes

C. lifeguard

D. deep end

15.



A. net

B. racket

C. ball

D. globe



**Part III : Fill in the gap with ONE suitable word. (2.5 pts.)**

Students in grade 7 have twelve subjects at school. Some like studying Maths, others are fond of literature. They learn how to do..... (16) problems or how to read stories and poems in these classes. Some enjoy learning.....(17) because they can know more about the world and its rivers and mountain ranges. Computer Science helps them to use a computer while in .....(18) class, they learn household appliances work. Students feel more excited in .....(19) which helps them to speak, listen, write and read it. They also learn a lot about plants and animals in .....(20). Every subject at school has its own usefulness.

### VOCABULARY POST-TEST

Time allowance: 20 minutes

**Part 1: Circle the best answer A, B, C or D to complete the following questions. (5 pts.)**

1. It is better for us to .....the important words in our lessons.  
 A. underline                      B. make                      C. try                      D. forget
2. It is not necessary for everyone to try to learn all new words they come ..... .  
 A. up                      B. to                      C. with                      D. across
3. Some language learners write one or two .....with each new word to remember how to use the word in the right way.  
 A. important words                      B. phrases  
 C. example sentences                      D. pieces of paper
4. I often make a list and put into it the meanings of new words in their ..... .  
 A. mother tongue                      B. meaning  
 C. pronunciation                      D. use
5. To remember words better, learners often put the words and their meaning on a piece of paper and .....it somewhere in the house to learn it at any time.  
 A underline                      B. highlight                      C. look                      D. stick
6. My friend is quite ..... . He doesn't talk much in public.  
 A. sociable                      B. reserved                      C. independent                      D. confident
7. Mary is ..... . She likes to help her friends.  
 A. kind                      B. careful                      C. talkative                      D. shy
8. Nam is very ..... . He always makes us laugh with jokes.  
 A. humorous                      B. helpful                      C. outgoing                      D. creative
9. My brother is ..... . He always thinks of new ideas when doing something.  
 A. responsible                      B. creative                      C. generous                      D. impatient
10. She was always .....at school. She spent most of the time studying.  
 A. friendly                      B. sensitive                      C. hardworking                      D. caring

**Part II: Look at the picture and circle the best answer to complete the sentences. (2.5 pts.)**

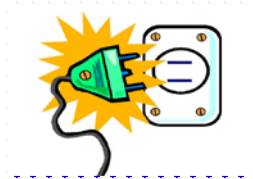
11. Children may eat these .....because they look like candy.

- A. drugs
- B. chemicals
- C. drinks
- D. foods



12. You must cover .....so that children do not try to put anything into them.

- A. cupboards
- B. objects
- C. electrical sockets
- D. appliances



13. Each year ..... destroys homes and injures children.

- A. match
- B. medicine
- C. chemical
- D. fire



14. Small objects like .....are also dangerous for children.

- A. household appliances
- B. matches
- C. locked cupboards
- D. beads



15. Remember, it only takes one .....to cause a fire.

- A. bead
- B. match
- C. candy
- D. knife





**DOWN** ↓

1. Friendly and talkative; like meeting new people
3. Don't talk much in public
6. Happy to share things with others
10. Behaving in a pleasant kind way and like to be with other people

**ACROSS** →

2. Able to make other people laugh or have a good time
4. Very friendly; enjoy talking to other people
5. Working very hard
7. Caring about others
8. Always think about new ideas when doing something
9. Willing to help people in some ways

**Key :**

The crossword puzzle grid is filled with the following words:

- Down 1:** O, P, E, N
- Down 2:** H, U, M, O, R, O, U, S
- Down 3:** S, I, L, E, N, T
- Down 4:** S, O, C, I, A, B, L, E
- Down 5:** H, A, R, D, W, O, R, K, I, N, G
- Down 6:** G, E, N, E, R, O, U, S
- Down 7:** K, I, N, D
- Down 8:** C, R, E, A, T, I, V, E
- Down 9:** H, E, L, P, F, U, L
- Down 10:** P, L, E, A, S, A, N, T
- Across 2:** H, U, M, O, R, O, U, S
- Across 4:** S, O, C, I, A, B, L, E
- Across 5:** H, A, R, D, W, O, R, K, I, N, G
- Across 7:** K, I, N, D
- Across 8:** C, R, E, A, T, I, V, E
- Across 9:** H, E, L, P, F, U, L
- Across 10:** P, L, E, A, S, A, N, T

# APPLICATION OF TRANSLATION WORKSHOP APPROACH (TWA) IN TRANSLATING INDONESIAN FOLKTALES INTO ENGLISH

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## Abstract

The topic of the research is the application of the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) in translating the Indonesian folktales into English. The purpose of this study is to increase students' ability in translating the Indonesian folktales into English and to evaluate their responses to the use of the Translation Workshop Approach in translation activity. This study used action research which uses five main steps proposed by Ferrance (2000), namely: 1) Identifying the problem, 2) Collecting the data, 3) Interpreting the data, 4) Implementing the action, and 5) Evaluating the research results. This study used 20 students as the subjects. The research instruments used were an initial test and a final test of translation, questionnaire and interview guide. The data from the tests were analyzed by simple statistical analysis using the average ratio of the initial test and final test, while the results of the questionnaire of students' response were analyzed by using descriptive analysis. From the test results it is known that the average score of translation initial test was 69 while the final test was 84.45. This means that there was a significant improvement of students' capability of translation in the amount of ratio score of 17.45. Based on the questionnaire and interview, it was seen that nearly 90% of students reported that the Translation Workshop Approach could help them produce accurate and natural translation. It can be concluded that the Translation Workshop Approach can improve students' ability in translating the Indonesian folktales into English and help them produce better translation products.

**Keywords:** *translation workshop approach, Indonesian folktales, Indonesian language, English language*

## Introduction

Translating literary works, including Indonesian folktales, is noticeably different to translating non-literary texts. Translating scientific texts is not as complicated as translating literary texts (Purwoko, 2006, p. 19). Literary works contain unique and distinctive aspects that are hard to translate. Literary works have different text structures and linguistic characteristics which differ from non-literary works, thus translating literary works has its own difficulty and complexity (Soemarno, 1988, pp. 19-21).

Literary work contains messages and styles. The messages contain connotative meaning and styles form aesthetic and poetic nuances. Literature itself is a series of papers that describe the history of a community, containing the artistic and aesthetic values and read as references (McFadden in Meyer, 1997, p. 2).

A translator of literary texts will face a variety of difficulties associated with meaning, such as lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, contextual or situational meaning, textual meaning, and socio-cultural meaning. From those difficulties, the translator usually finds the meaning that is easy to translate (translatable) and the meaning that is difficult to render (untranslatable). However, if he or she is already well aware of his or her role as translator, he or she will produce a qualified translation, a translation that is easy to understand, is natural and is helpful as a source of information (Kovács, 2008, p. 5).

Folktale is a genre in literature that is widely read and told by many people, particularly students. This genre contains moral values and social values that are very relevant to the school curriculum in Indonesia. So this text type is included into the English curriculum as the basic competence. Thus it becomes a lesson material at school. The Indonesian folktales are now a source of extensive reading for students. On the other hand, this genre can be a source of Indonesian cultural information because through this literary text we can introduce Indonesian customs and habits. It is a good medium for promoting Indonesia to many countries in the world. Therefore, it is necessary for us to translate Indonesian folktales into English. It is also an effort to conserve the Indonesian cultural heritage.

In relation to the effort above, initial research was carried out by the author concerning translation of Indonesian folktales into English by students of the Translation class. Unfortunately, the research showed that their translation products were less accurate and less acceptable in the context of English culture. The level of accuracy was only 75% while the

acceptance level was 60%. This condition provided the motivation to improve their translation products by applying the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) that is regarded as an effective approach to improve the capability of translating text from Indonesian into English. This approach is very appropriate for translating difficult texts because through the activities of TWA, the students could collaborate with their friends and the teacher could monitor and even solve their problems of translation. This approach lead them to translate the texts together, so it was hoped that their translation would be better than the translation produced alone. This approach is also known well as collaborative translation (Lefevere, 1991).

The main problem in translation is finding the equivalents. The correct translation depends heavily on outside factors of text. The first factor beyond the text is the "author of text" that in his or her writing process he or she cannot be separated from his or her educational, reading and other factors that influence his or her writing. The second factor is the "translator" that must be able to translate the message written by the author of the text from one language to another language. He or she has a central role in the translation process, so for example, he or she will determine whether he or she decides to drop the choice between using foreignization ideology, that places emphasis on the source language with all its implications, or domestication, that places emphasis on the target language with all its implications (Hoed, 2003; Xianbin, 2005; Ordudary, 2008). The third factor is the "readers" who have a variety of interpretations of the text they read. The fourth factor is the "norm" that prevails in the source language and the target language. The fifth factor is the "culture" that underlies the target language. The sixth factor is the "talk" in a text that can be understood differently by the source text author and translator, as well as by the reader (Hoed in Taryadi, 2007). From the above statements it can be concluded that the translator has a heavy responsibility because he or she should be able to understand the world of both source and target texts. Because of such difficulties, so many translators have problems in translation.

### **The Indonesian folktales**

Translating folktales differs from translating ordinary texts. A folktales translator must have the background knowledge of the source and the target language, cultural understanding and deep appreciation of literary works he or she is to translate. In addition, he or she must have skills in the areas of language, literature and aesthetics, and social culture, so in this case it can be said that if the translator does not have these qualities, he or she will have difficulties in translating literary texts (Suryawinata, 1996, p. 173). Translating folktales is not only transferring the message or looking for the equivalence of the source language into the target



language, but also translating the idea and the author's intention, so that the original message and the purpose of writing a message itself can be transferred to readerships (Nord, 1997, pp. 80-84).

In connection with this, Hu (2000, p. 1) asserts that "Translation of fiction is much more complicated than the translation of other genres, as it deals not only with bilingual, but also bi-cultural and bi-social transference." This means that the translation of folktales is more difficult and complicated than other ordinary texts because translating these works does not only translate two languages but also transfer the meaning of two different cultures. The reflection of life in the forms of symbols in fiction requires a high interpretation from translators.

On the other hand, Reiss (1976) in Nord (1997, p. 89) adds that "A literary translation orients itself towards the particular character of the work of art, taking as its guiding principle the author's creative will. Lexis, syntax, style and structure are manipulated in such a way that they bring about in the target language an aesthetic effect which is analogous to the expressive individual character of the source text."

From the above, it may be concluded that literary translation orients itself to the nature of literary works in accordance with the will of the creative writer. Lexis, syntax, style and structure have a role of bridging the aesthetic effect, as an analogue of the expressive nature of the individual in the source language, to the target language. It means that the translation of a literary work must be in accordance with the principle, idea, and purpose of the author and the aesthetic value expressed by characters in that work.

### **The Translation Workshop Approach (TWA)**

The Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) is an approach that uses a similar forum translation center where two or more translators translate together in one activity of translation (Gentzler in Hong, 2005, p. 32). Lefevere (1991, p. 130) suggests the definition of the approach as follows: "That is the role and place of the workshop or, even better, the one-to-one translation project for the which teacher and student sit down together with a specific text and try to translate it." That approach can help students in solving problems in the translation process. Teacher and students sit together to find the right synonym and improve grammar, sentence structure and mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) of the translation product.

Lefevere added that the approach is much the same as creative writing. If this activity is done in the classroom, it can be considered as a teaching method or approach to translation. The background of the creation of this approach is to improve the translation learning by direct

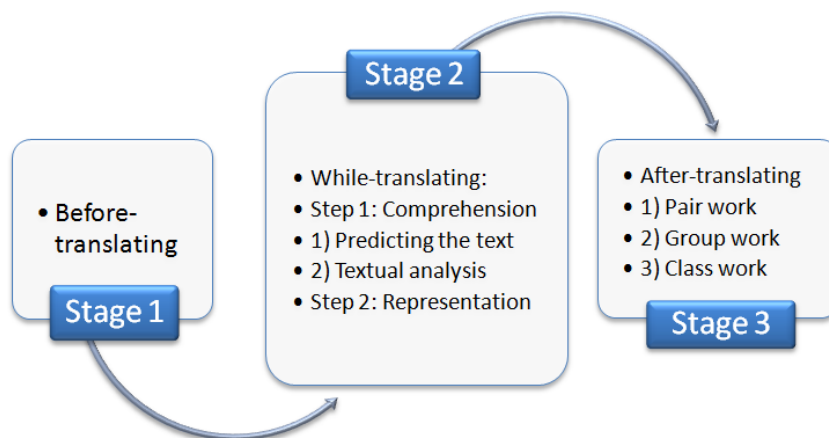
practice in translating. As proposed by Hong (2005, p.32), "The nature of the Translation Workshop Approach is to promote students learning translation by translating."

Some advantages of this approach if it is conducted in the classroom are:

1. The teacher can monitor the whole process of translation done by the students, so that teachers can provide feedback on translation problems faced by students.
2. This approach will give an incentive to the students to engage fully and actively participate in the translation process.
3. This approach will improve the cooperation between students and students and between students and teachers, so as to give the benefit of all parties. This approach can increase the interaction and responsibility for the work within a team.
4. This approach creates a democratic attitude, a good competitive atmosphere, creative thinking, enthusiasm, and initiative.

The following figure modified from Gentzler in Hong (2005, p. 32) describes how the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) runs in one translation activity. Based on the figure 1, there are three main stages that are important in applying the Translation Workshop Approach. The first stage is "Before-translating". In this stage teacher prepares what his students are going to translate. The teacher chooses a text that his students will translate. Then he divides the class into some small groups. He may provide some books next stage on translation theory and dictionaries from which he and his students may obtain the information for translation. The second stage is "While-translating". In this stage the teacher gives students the text that they have to translate. Then he assigns students to read the text first before they translate it into another language. It comes to the step 1 in which the students must be able to comprehend the text well. In order to comprehend the text, they can predict the meaning of each word in the text and understand the whole text. The next activity in the step 1 is textual analysis. The students helped by the teacher analyze the text. Here they analyze sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. Many things can be done here, such as analyzing the grammar, structure, and mechanics. After they analyze the text, the next step in the second stage is representation. This means that they elaborate what they know or understand from the text. It is time for them to translate the text they read into another language. They represent the meaning and forms of language and styles used by the text writer. Here they render the message and information by finding the equivalent words or appropriate forms of language in order to be accepted in the target text or language. Next, they come directly to the third stage, the "After-translating" stage. There are three ways of checking whether their translation products are accurate or not, natural or not, accepted by readership or not. It is the last check before they display their translation

product. In this stage checking the translation product can be conducted by three ways: 1) Pair work, checking the translation product in pairs, 2) Group work, evaluating the translation product by group, or 3) Class work, assessing the translation products by class. In the “After-translating” stage, the teacher and the students edit, revise, and rewrite their translation altogether. They edit spelling, punctuation and capitalization, revise the grammar and structure, recheck the vocabulary used in their target text whether it is appropriate or not, equivalent or not. If they are satisfied with their work, students can display or publish their translation product in front of the classroom and the teacher can do the scoring. It can be seen in the last stage that the Translation Workshop Approach is an attempt to implement a collaborative translation process. It is a way to solve problems in translating text together. The result of the translation using this approach will be better than using an individual approach. These are all the activities which can be implemented in using the Translation Workshop Approach in translation of Indonesian folktales and ordinary texts in general.



**Figure 1. Steps of Translation Workshop Approach**

### Methods

The research was conducted in English Department of Faculty of Languages and Arts, Semarang State University. It used 20 students of the Translation class as subjects of the research. They translated Indonesian folktales into English. The research method used was action research adopted in five steps based on the Ferrance model (2000) as follows:

1. Identifying the problem. In this step the researcher as a teacher identified students' problems when they translated an Indonesian archipelago folktale from Indonesian into English.

2. Collecting the data. After identifying the students' problems through classroom observation and an initial test of translation, the researcher collected the data or information in the form of field notes and translation scores.
3. Interpreting the data. After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed and interpreted descriptively the data or information from the observation and initial test of translation.
4. Implementing the action. Because based on the observation, the students showed difficulties much in translating the Indonesian folktales individually and their translation scores were poor, the researcher applied Translation Workshop Approach (TWA). It was hoped that by applying this approach the students' capability in translating the folktales would improve and their translation scores would rise. In this step the researcher gave the same test of translation as in the initial test by giving them the same of the folktale title. The researcher organized and managed the translation class based on the TWA steps.
5. Evaluating the result. In this step the researcher evaluated and reflected on the research result as to whether the Translation Workshop Approach was effective for the translation of Indonesian folktales into English.

In gaining the data from the field research, the researcher used test questionnaires (initial test and final test of translation), and interviews as the research instruments and data gathering techniques. The tests were used for assessing the progress of translation while questionnaires and interviews were used for evaluating the students' response to the TWA application. All data were analyzed descriptively.

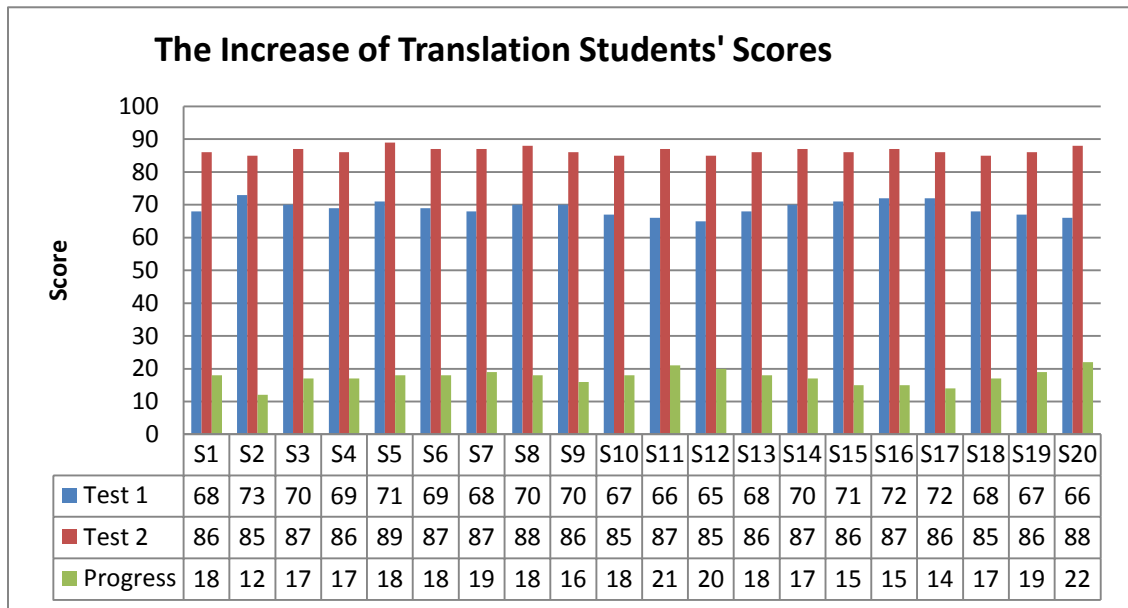
### **Finding and Discussions**

This section examines the findings and discussions related to the application of the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) used in translating the Indonesian folktales into English. The findings are presented in the form of figure, table and description. The test result can be seen on the Figure 2, the students' response from the questionnaire in the Table 1, and students' response in the interview result description.

#### **The Test Result**

The following figure describes the result of the translation tests given to 20 students (S1-S20) when they translated the Indonesian folktales into English. The scores are classified into three scores. The first scores are the scores taken from the first test (Test 1) or the initial test

that was given before the Translation Workshop Approach was introduced and the second scores are the scores taken from the second test or final test (Test 2) that was given after the application of the Translation Workshop Approach while the third scores are the progress scores as a result of the reduction between the initial test and final test.



**Figure 2. The translation scores before and after TWA**

Based on the Figure 2 we can see that the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) increased the students' average scores from 69 to 84.45 in. This means that the average progress score the students attained was 17.45. From random examples, it can be seen that Student 1's score increased from 68 to 86 with the progress score of 18, Student 7's score increased from 68 to 87 with the progress score of 19, Student 11's score increased from 66 to 87 with the progress score of 21, Student 12's score increased from 65 to 85 with the progress score of 20, Student 13's score increased from 68 to 86 with the progress score of 18, Student 18's score increased from 68 to 85 with the progress score of 17, Student 19's score increased from 67 to 86 with the progress score of 19, and Student 20's score increased from 66 to 88 with the progress score of 22. From these findings it can be concluded that TWA is effective in increasing the students' scores and in improving their capability in of translation of Indonesian folktales.

### Data Analysis of the Translation

The following data from the translation test show how the students' translation products improved after the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA). The translation results before and after the TWA application are presented. These abbreviations are used: ST for the Source Text, TT1 for the Target Text before the TWA application, and TT2 for the Target Text after the TWA application.

### The Questionnaire Result

The following table shows the analysis of the students' responses to the application of the Translation Workshop Approach used for translating the Indonesian folktales into English.

**Table 1. The Questionnaire Results of Students' Response**

No.	Statement	Response	
		Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	Translating Indonesian folktales from Indonesian into English is difficult.	100	0
2.	Translating the Indonesian folktales from Indonesian into English is more complicated than translating ordinary texts.	100	0
3.	Translating the Indonesian folktales needs the basic knowledge of English and Indonesian linguistics, literature, and culture.	90	10
4.	<i>Translation Workshop Approach (TWA)</i> gives me easy ways in translating the Indonesian folktales into English.	90	10
5.	After using <i>Translation Workshop Approach (TWA)</i> in the process of translation, my translation product is better than individual approach.	90	10

Table 1 above shows that the students predominantly say, "Yes" for statements given in the questionnaire. 100% of students or 20 students agree that translating Indonesian folktales from Indonesian into English is difficult and 100% of students agree that translating the Indonesian folktales from Indonesian into English is more complicated than translating ordinary texts. On the responses to the other three statements provided, 90% of students agree that translating the Indonesian folktales needs the basic knowledge of English and Indonesian linguistics, literature, and culture and *Translation Workshop Approach (TWA)* gives them easy ways in translating the Indonesian folktales into English and makes their translation product better.

## **The Interview Result**

Based on the results of interviews with the students, the following research findings, can be specified: multiple responses as

1. There are significant differences between before and after using the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) in the translation process of the Indonesian archipelago folktale into English.
2. The Translation results of the Indonesian archipelago folktale into English by using the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) are better than using an individual approach.
3. The Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) provides a convenient tool for students in determining appropriate vocabulary, accurate grammar and standard sentence structure in translating the Indonesian folktales from Indonesian into English.
4. The advantages of the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) application in the process of translating the Indonesian folktales into English gives the opportunity for students to collaborate in solving their difficulties of translating the words, terms of culture, grammar, syntax complexity from Indonesian into English.
5. The disadvantage of the Translation Workshop Approach (TWA) application in the process of translating the Indonesian archipelago folktale is that is time consuming because more time was spent in discussion to determine the appropriate vocabulary, accurate grammar and standard sentence structures.

## **Conclusions**

Based on result of the research it can be concluded that:

1. The results showed that the Translation Workshop Approach is very effective in improving the ability to translate Indonesian folktales into English.
2. The result of the student response questionnaire shows that the Translation Workshop Approach can help students produce a better translation.
3. The results of interviews show that the Translation Workshop Approach is very effective in improving the students' ability to translate Indonesian folktales into English and in assisting them to generate a more accurate and natural translation product than using an individual translation approach.

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## **Book Review**

### **Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition**

**Authors: Vivian Cook & David Singleton**

**Publisher: Multilingual Matters 2014**

**ISBN: 978-1-78309-179-9**

**Reviewed by SUPAKORN PHOOCHAROENSIL**

**Thammasat University, Thailand**

*Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition* has emerged as the result of synergy between two distinguished specialists in second language learning, i.e., Vivian Cook and David Singleton. As a reader-friendly textbook with the goal of introducing the principal concepts in second language acquisition (SLA), this book is targeted at a novice readership looking for an introductory discussion of the key issues in SLA. No prior knowledge of the field, as claimed by the authors, is required for the understanding of the book's content, divided into eight chapters, each of which addresses common questions and areas of second language learning. The book proves to be readable since each of the topics presented in individual chapters is treated independently rather than an earlier one being a prerequisite for the next. This means readers can start at any chapter in which they are interested or find useful. Furthermore, interesting facts and statistics are given throughout the book.

The very first chapter, i.e., *How Do Different Languages Connect in Our Minds*, offers a basic notion of bilingualism as well as multilingualism, which are now playing a crucial role in the majority of world's multilingual speech communities, e.g. Canada, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, etc. Not only does the chapter present the well-known maximal and minimal definitions of *bilingual*, but also the main characteristics of L2 users are pinpointed. The authors seem to subscribe to a theory that L2 users should not be viewed as imperfect imitations of native speakers. Rather they possess certain unique attributes: L2 users think differently, L2 users have a better feel for language, and L2 users speak their first language slightly differently. This chapter ends with how two languages are stored in one single mind; different types of bilinguals, such as coordinate, subordinate, and compound bilinguals, are discussed and clearly exemplified.

Chapter Two focuses on proving the popular belief that there is (or is not) a best age for successfully learning a second language. Lenneberg (1967)'s Critical period Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is constrained by the limits of a critical period in such a way that L2 learners past a certain age will appear unable to achieve native-like competence of L2 being

learned, came under challenge. Evidence from recent studies suggests that other potential factors also come into play. With respect to L2 instruction, it is of paramount importance to consider such factors as teaching materials and teaching methodologies, in addition to age-related ones, as it is evident “An early start in this context [L2 teaching] does not seem necessarily to advantage the recipients” (Cook & Singleton, 2014, p. 33). Unless the circumstances regarding L2 instruction are favorable, appropriate ages may not always serve as a determining factor contributing to a real accomplishment in L2 acquisition.

How people acquire the L2 lexical knowledge is dealt with in Chapter three. The authors seem to highlight the fact that L1 children’s lexical development is far different from L2 learners’ since it is likely that the latter group may be exposed to specialized language and benefit from words having concrete meanings. L2 lexical acquisition, in a nutshell, is inevitably associated with learners’ reliance upon the already existing vocabulary knowledge of L1, which can actually assist learners in L2 vocabulary learning. As their L2 proficiency level rises, the dependence on L1 lexical knowledge significantly lessens since they seem to be able to have better control of their L2. Moreover, the writers also discuss some prevailing vocabulary learning strategies, e.g. mnemonic strategies, learning from context, etc. This chapter would become much more useful if the recent concepts of lexical chunks, e.g. collocation and formulaic language, were to be incorporated, as it is currently accepted among language researchers and teachers that chunks really account for a massive amount of frequent lexicon in language (Nation and Webb, 2011; Schmitt, 2010).

In the fourth chapter, the way learners acquire L2 grammatical knowledge is addressed. Learners construct their own grammar, known as interlanguage, which apparently differs from the grammatical systems in either L1 or L2. There exist links between learners’ native language and the second language being learned. To illustrate this, L1 influences some aspects of L2, and by the same token L2 can also have an impact on L1. It is also noteworthy that L2 can even have influence on the third language. The authors reveal that there appear to be certain stages through which learners go in their acquisition of grammatical morphemes (Dulay & Burt, 1974). As regards word order, L1 and L2 grammars do not work separately but are somehow related. Processing L2 word order is partly dependent on L1 and vice versa. The other grammatical area raised in this chapter is the article system, where countability and specificity play a pivotal role in conjunction with its grammatical meaning for its proper use.

Chapter Five centers around second language acquisition of writing systems. Two major types of writing systems are introduced. One is referred to as a shallow writing system, e.g. that

in Finnish or Italian, where each sound almost always corresponds to the same letter and each letter virtually always represents the same sound; the other commonly known as a deep writing system concerns the fact that there seems to be no one-to-one correspondence between sounds and spellings in that language. A typical example of languages with a deep writing system is English, in which there occur 44 phonemes, compared to only 26 letters. It is assumed that learners whose L1 writing system is shallow will be confronted with difficulty in acquiring a deep writing system in L2. However, if both systems are deep, the complex spelling rules of the L2 system need to be learned.

As for the next chapter *How Do Attitude and Motivation Help in Learning a Second Language?*, the authors briefly review Berry (1980)'s acculturation model in comparison with another subsequent model proposed by John Schumann (1986), who regards acculturation as reliant upon the user's contacts and relationships with L2 culture. It is worth noticing that attitude and motivation are closely related, and more importantly "...motivation goes beyond attitude" since it is motivation, rather than simply positive attitude, that is a key to success in language learning (Cook and Singleton, 2014, p. 94). This chapter also sheds light on future directions of research on L2 motivation in SLA; emphasis should be placed on the dynamic and situated complexity of the learning process as well as a multiplicity of internal, social, and contextual factors (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011).

The seventh chapter investigates whether research in SLA can accommodate L2 teaching. It is evidently the case that a connection between SLA research and language teaching exists under a specific set of conditions (Ortega, 2011). The authors touch upon a couple of major teaching methodologies, namely the grammar translation method, the audiolingual method, and the communicative approach. Central to the concise description of each method are signature techniques or elements, plus useful learning implications. What is strikingly interesting lies in a proposed eclectic teaching approach that integrates communicative methodology and grammar translation, both of which were once thought to be mutually exclusive. In particular, as Harbord (2003) maintains, not only should teachers concentrate on communicative activities in language classrooms, but they are also advised to, from time to time, explain grammar rules or even deal with translation when necessary in order to enhance learners' understanding of L2.

The last key topic, which constitutes Chapter Eight, pertains to the goals of language teaching. L2 learners' aspiration for native-like competence in SLA is out of question. Theoretically speaking, no L2 user could ever become an absolute native speaker of L2 no matter how considerable the effort expended is because they already have one existing language, i.e.,

L1, in minds. Accordingly, it is probably far less sensible that teachers assess students' L2 progress against native speakers. Language teachers' attention, in actuality, should be drawn to making their students successful L2 users. It is important to note, in English-as-a-global-language contexts, the preponderance of non-native English speakers over those speaking L1 English. This means it is highly likely that L2 learners will use English communicatively more with other L2 users than with L1 English speakers. It follows that English as a Lingua Franca (EFL), i.e., English as a global means of communication between people speaking different native languages, is now a current trend in English language teaching (Seidlhofer, 2004).

On the whole, this book makes a useful reference for those who are starting a course in SLA. As remarked in *the Introduction*, there are actually innumerable topics in SLA which are beyond the scope of this 8-chapter book, for only what is deemed indispensable for beginner-SLA students is included. More issues, together with thorough details of the eight aforementioned topics, could be sought in other books with comprehensive content (e.g. Ellis, 2008; Gass, Behney and Plonsky, 2013; Loewen, 2014; Ortega, 2009). Since the book is aimed at providing readers with foundations of SLA, the eight selected topics deal with the most common areas in SLA, presented in a very understandable manner for readers in general. The facts, figures, tables, and thought-provoking questions throughout the book constantly capture readers' attention. A short summary at the end of each sub-topic helps recap what has been previously read to make sure all the essential points stand out.

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# THAITESOL Journal

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<b>Materials and Methods:</b>	Describe the experimental procedures clearly enough for others to repeat the same experiment so that the same result could be obtained.
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