

ผลการใช้การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูด
ภายใต้กรอบมาตรฐานความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของประเทศ
ในกลุ่มสหภาพยุโรป (CEFR) ต่อความสามารถด้านการพูดของ
นักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 2 โรงเรียนสาธิตมหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น

ฝ่ายมัธยมศึกษา (มอดินแดง)

Ketsemabom Damian Akuli¹ และ กรวิภา พูวา^{2*}

^{1,2}สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์

^{1,2}มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น

*Corresponding Author

บทคัดย่อ

รัฐบาลไทยได้นำกรอบมาตรฐานการประเมินความสามารถทางภาษาจากประเทศในกลุ่มสหภาพยุโรป (CEFR) มาใช้เป็นมาตรฐานในการประเมินความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อให้เป็นมาตรฐานเดียวกันกับสากล รัฐบาลมีนโยบายให้บรรจุ CEFR เข้าไปในการเรียนการสอนและใช้เป็นมาตรฐานสำหรับการประเมินความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียน นโยบายนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อยกระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียน เพื่อเตรียมพร้อมสำหรับการแข่งขันทางเศรษฐกิจที่มาพร้อมกับการเปิดประเทศเข้าสู่ AEC เนื่องจากการนำ CEFR ไปใช้ในห้องเรียนยังเป็นเรื่องที่ทำทนายงานวิจัยนี้จึงจัดทำขึ้นเพื่อประเมินผลของการใช้การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูดตามกรอบมาตรฐาน CEFR ต่อการพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดของผู้เรียน และเพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อการจัดการเรียนรู้ดังกล่าวในชั้นเรียน จำนวนนักเรียนที่เข้าร่วมในการวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วยนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 2 ของโรงเรียนสาธิตมหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น ฝ่ายมัธยมศึกษา (มอดินแดง) จำนวน 40 คน นักเรียนทั้ง 40 คน ทำแบบทดสอบวัดความสามารถด้านการพูดก่อนและหลังการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูด จากนั้นนักเรียนทุกคนตอบแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็น

ข้อมูลจากการทดสอบด้านการพูดและจากแบบสอบถามซึ่งเป็นข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์ทางสถิติเพื่อหาค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานและใช้ *t-Test* เพื่อเปรียบเทียบคะแนนก่อนและหลังจากการใช้การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูดตามกรอบมาตรฐาน CEFR สำหรับข้อมูลปลายเปิดที่ได้จากการตอบแบบสอบถามซึ่งเป็นข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพจะถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์ด้วยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า การจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูดตามกรอบมาตรฐาน CEFR สามารถพัฒนาความสามารถด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนและผู้เรียนมีทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่อการจัดการเรียนรู้แบบเน้นภาระงานด้านการพูดตามกรอบมาตรฐาน CEFR ในชั้นเรียน

คำสำคัญ: กรอบมาตรฐานความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของประเทศในกลุ่มสหภาพยุโรป, การพูดภาษาอังกฤษ, การจัดการเรียนการสอนแบบเน้นภาระงาน, ความสามารถในการพูด นักเรียนไทย

Effects of Using CEFR-based Speaking Tasks on Speaking Ability of Grade 8 Students in Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University (Mordindang)

Ketsemabom Damian Akuli¹ and Kornwipa Poonpon^{2*}

^{1,2}English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

^{1,2}Khon Kaen University, Thailand

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

The Thai government adopts and promotes the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a means to raise English language standards to international levels. According to recent Thai government policy on education, CEFR is to be used in teaching, learning and assessing students' English language ability. The aim of this policy is to uplift Thai English learners' ability preparing them for the competitive economy presented by AEC. Since an implementation of CEFR in the classroom is challenging, this mixed-method study aimed to investigate the effects of using CEFR-based speaking tasks to enhance the speaking ability of Thai learners. It also examined the students' opinions with regards to using CEFR-based speaking tasks in the classroom. Speaking ability tests were administered to the 40 subjects before and after the treatment. All participants responded to opinion questionnaires. 13 of them were randomly selected to answer open-ended questions. The test scores were statistically analyzed by mean, standard deviation, and *t*-Test for dependent samples. The questionnaire data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results revealed that using CEFR-based speaking tasks can improve students' speaking ability and that the students portrayed positive feelings and thoughts about the implementation.

Keywords; CEFR, Speaking, Task-based learning and teaching, Speaking ability, Thai learners

1. Introduction

With the commencement of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and given that Thailand is reputed for low levels English proficiency when compared to the other nations, there is necessity for some progress to be made to rectify the situation (Maxwell, 2015). For effective communication with people from other AEC countries and foreigners, Thai students need to develop their English language skills as well as abilities. However, of the four macro skills to be developed for successful communication, speaking is particularly important (Boonkit, 2010; Zaremba, 2006). Accordingly, the ability to communicate by means of speaking has been identified to be very beneficial (Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn, 2008). As a criterion for new recruitment, Zaremba (2006) argued that speaking ability is prioritized over experience, motivation and academic credentials. So, for successful communication with other nations, and since Thailand is attributed with poor levels of English proficiency, enhancing students' speaking ability should be of utmost importance (Noom-ura, 2013; Phensiri, 1993).

Though it is very important for communication, speaking in a language different from learners' mother tongue is quite challenging to acquire (Brown & Yule, 1983). Speaking is challenging for learners because besides involving oral communications, it is also concerned with non-verbal factors such as age, listening ability, sociocultural and affective factors. Generally, learners also encounter usual problems while learning speaking, e.g., difficulties to utter words in the target language, absence of vocabulary to use, interference from mother tongue, and lack of confidence to express themselves. In Thailand specifically, the challenges in acquiring and developing English speaking are equally observed (Dhanasobhon, 2006; Noom-ura, 2013; ONEC, 2003; Wiriyachitra, 2002). Most students can read, write and even understand when other people speak English but cannot express themselves by speaking (Noom-ura, 2013). In addition, although students are exposed to English language learning from early ages and continue learning it to advance levels, most

cannot communicate effectively by speaking. This could be because they 1) lack vocabulary to express themselves, 2) speak incorrectly with wrong grammar and poor pronunciation and above all, and 3) lack the motivation to speak (Noom-ura, 2013). Some researchers argued that the causes for the difficulties can be based not only on the learners' attitudes and abilities but on the teachers, teaching methods, assessments and teaching materials as well (Dhanasobhon, 2006; Noom-ura, 2013; ONEC, 2003; Wiriyachitra, 2002).

Consequently, the government of Thailand through the Ministry of Education has been taking steps to address the situation. Such moves included revising the English curriculum. Firstly, in the Basic Education Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001), English language is underlined as the main foreign language to be studied in basic education. The government required students to begin learning English as early as possible. Also, language for communication is emphasized thus promoting the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Unlike in the past that teaching and learning language was passive; the government encouraged more active methods. Secondly, in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008), the government policies were further revised. Any ambiguities arising from the previous document were addressed. CLT approach was further encouraged for the government envisaged that CLT can create positive environments for learners to use the target language in daily communications. By so doing, learners take control of their own learning. As a result, they are more motivated and they can experience using the language rather than listening to lectures without practicing (OBEC, 2009; Lochana & Deb, 2006; Nurhakim, 2009).

In conformity to the government's educational policies, seeking lasting solutions to the challenges of English language teaching and learning generally and with the ultimate aim of improving oral communication (speaking), attempts have been made to address and solve these problems. For example, schools employ more qualified

native English speakers to teach and provide students with opportunities to practice communication and interaction; Thai teachers attend many pedagogy workshops to improve themselves; researchers have investigated new teaching methods to enhance learners' skills. However, most recently at the national level, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) has been adopted to be used as a framework to design school curriculums, to guide the teaching and learning process and to help in selecting materials for teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2014). Though CEFR descriptors are very similar to the descriptors of the Basic Core Curriculum 2008 of Thailand, CEFR is more rigorous and practical. It has been tested and proven to be an effective framework to guide teaching and learning internationally. Amongst other benefits, CEFR promotes CLT (Cambridge University Press, 2013; North, 2007). In the light of CLT, Task-Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT) approach which focuses learners on using English in their daily activities is underlined (North, 2007).

With respect to enhancing students' speaking ability, many researchers have examined the effects of TBLT (Pongsawang, 2012; Promruang, 2012; Rattanawong, 2004; Sae-Ong, 2010; Saricoban & Karakurt, 2016; Tabrizi & Nasiri, 2011; Thanghun, 2012; Wijitpaisarn, 2005; Yooyong, 2008). The results from these studies indicated that TBLT fosters learners' speaking ability. In designing tasks under the framework of TBLT, students get the chance to use the target language in the classroom which prepares them for real world tasks outside the classroom. Although in Thailand generally and in Khon Kaen University specifically, TBLT has been studied extensively, little research has examined TBLT framed by CEFR in designing tasks, lessons, objectives and assessment for students at the classroom level. In this regard and in conformity with the Thai government recent policy of implementing CEFR to raise the standards of English in Thailand, this study, therefore, was an attempt to use CEFR-based speaking tasks to enhance the speaking ability of secondary school students. The objectives of this research were twofold: to investigate whether learners' English Language speaking ability improved after using

the CEFR-based speaking tasks, and to examine the opinions of learners towards using CEFR-based speaking tasks.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research design

This study was a one-group pre- and post-test experimental design.

2.2 Population and Participants

The population of the present study consisted of 82 Mattayom Suksa 2 (Grade 8) students at the Demonstration school of Khon Kaen University, Mordindang. This school was selected for convenience reasons as the researcher is a teacher at this school. However, the participants for this study included 40 subjects selected via convenience sampling since the researcher teaches these students. These students have been learning English for over seven years; however, they still display less ability in English language as was seen in their grades from the primary school than other Grade 8 students learning in Intensive English Course (IEC). Aside from the student participants, this study also included two experienced English language teachers (assessors) and two experts. The two teachers have been teaching at Satit Mordindang Matthayom School for over ten years. These teachers were trained on how to use a speaking rating scale before assessing students' performance for this study. The two experts, the head of the Foreign Language Department at Satit Mordindang and a senior colleague with over 25 years of teaching experience at the same department, validated the instruments for this study.

2.3 Instruments

There were four research instruments applied in this study: CEFR-based A2 speakingtasks, an English speaking test, a speaking rating scale, and a students' opinion questionnaire. The description and procedures for constructing each instrument are discussed as follows:

2.3.1 CEFR-based A2 Speaking Tasks

This study employed three CEFR-based A2 speaking tasks. Topics, objectives, and contents for each task were based on CEFR level A2 for speaking skill (Council of Europe, 2011), the Thai secondary school curriculum (OBEC, 2009) and the Satit Mordindang curriculum. These three speaking tasks included “My Last Summer Vacation”, “Personal Information” and “Favorites”. For the implementation of the CEFR-based speaking tasks, teaching and learning stages were designed on a basis of the TBLT framework integrated from Willis’s stages of TBLT (1996) and Burns’s Teaching Speaking Cycle model (2014). Willis (1996) provides three stages for task-based learning and teaching meanwhile Burns (2014) provides practical objectives for teachers to use tasks for each stage of teaching and learning (Figure 1). For example, Task I aimed for the students to be able to talk about events in the past. The students were asked to create conversations with their partners about “My Last Summer Vacation”, practice and then present to the class. After that, the teacher gave them feedbacks after which they can reproduce their task. This provided them an opportunity to speak about events using past simple tense. The same cycle continued for task II, “Personal Information” and tasks III, “Favorites”. This cycle of creating, practicing, presenting and receiving feedbacks gave learners the opportunity to use English language with their friends and with the teacher.

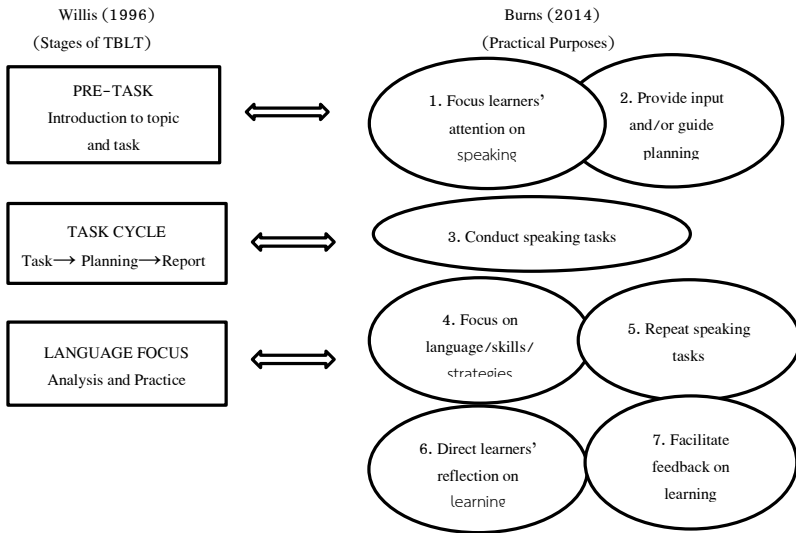


Figure 1. Integrated framework for task design

(Willis, 1996, p.38; Burns, 2014, p.17)

2.3.2 An English Speaking Test

An English speaking test aimed to measure students' English language speaking ability before and after using the CEFR-based speaking tasks. The test items were derived after analyzing principles of assessing speaking (Brown 2004; Luoma, 2004), CEFR level A2 for speaking skill (Council of Europe, 2011), Basic Education Core Curriculum (OBEC, 2009) and the school curriculum. The test comprised of two parts. The first part was an interaction between the test takers and the interviewer. The interviewer welcomed them and asked them warm up questions. This took three minutes. After this short interaction between the interviewer and the test takers, part two of the test started. In part two, the test takers were given situation cards and the task explained by the interviewer. In the first situation, student A used cues to ask student B questions meanwhile student B used cues to respond to the questions. This took two

minutes. The interviewer collected the situation cards and then provided cards for the last situation. In this case, student B used cues to ask questions while student A used cues to answer. This took two minutes. Then, the interviewer thanked the students and they left. Each test session took 7 minutes in total.

2.3.3 A Speaking Rating Scale

The speaking rating scale was adapted from Cambridge English Language Assessment and based on CEFR level A2 speaking performance assessment (UCLES, 2011). There were four criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Interactive Communication, and Task Completion. There were four levels of scoring for each criterion (0–3). This rating scale was adapted because of the clarity of the descriptors and it was easy to use. The additional criterion was Task Completion. This was added, based on an expert's comment, to assess students' comprehension and overall performance in the speaking test.

2.3.4 A Students' Opinion Questionnaire

The opinion questionnaire was used to investigate students' opinions about learning English through the CEFR-based speaking tasks. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were designed, based on a review of advantages and disadvantages of TBLT approach (Dailey, 2009; Ellis, 2003; Frost, 2006; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2001, 2007). There were 20 close-ended questions in the questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The open-ended questionnaire asked the students to express their feelings and thoughts about the treatment.

All instruments were constructed and submitted to experts for validation. The instruments were piloted first and then revisions were made and submitted again to experts for validation.

2.4 Data Collection

Data collection procedures of the study are depicted in Figure 2. Prior to the beginning of the study, the students were informed about the research for ethical reasons and recruited. The pre-test was administered to all 40 participants. Then the teacher (the researcher) taught the students using the speaking tasks for four weeks (two periods per week, 50 minutes per period).

After the treatment, the post-test was administered to all students. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires to express their opinions about the CEFR-based A2 speaking tasks.

2.5 Data Analysis

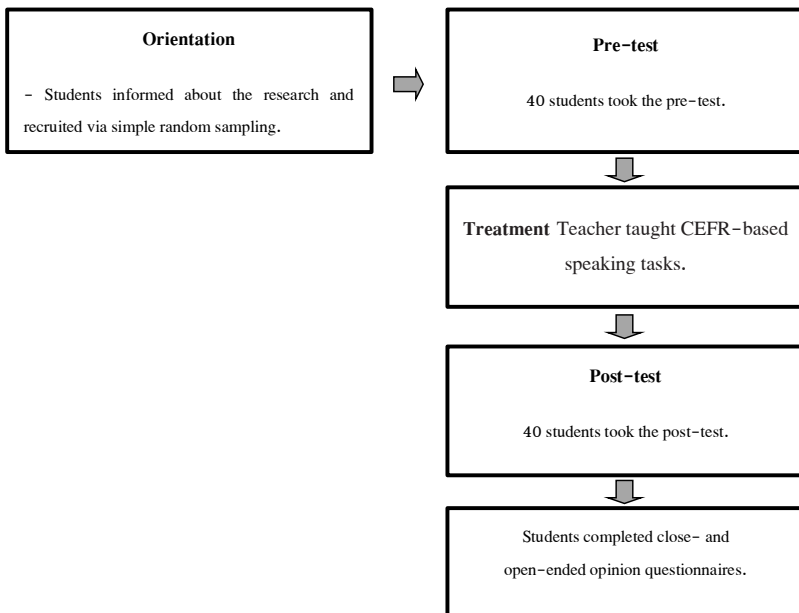


Figure 2. Data Collection Procedures

For Research Question 1, mean scores and S.D from the students' speaking tests were calculated and paired samples *t*-Tests were employed to see the differences between pre- and post-test scores. The results from these statistical tests informed us whether the students' speaking ability improved or not after the intervention.

For Research Question 2, data from questionnaires were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitatively, mean scores and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to analyze the data from the questionnaires. The mean scores were interpreted according to the ranges as follows (Polat, 2009).

- 4.21 – 5.00 refer to Strongly Agree
- 3.41 – 4.20 refer to Agree
- 2.61 – 3.40 refer to Moderate
- 1.81 – 2.60 refer to Disagree
- 1.00 – 1.80 refer to Strongly Disagree

Moreover, content analysis was employed qualitatively to analyze the data from open-ended questions.

3. Results and Discussions

To answer Research Question 1, the students' speaking scores from the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed. The paired samples *t*-Tests were employed to find out whether there were any significant differences in the 40 students' CEFR-based speaking ability between the pre-test and the post-test scores. Table 1 shows the comparison of the mean scores from the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 1 Paired Samples t-Tests Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Scores	$\bar{X}$	S.D	t-test
Pre-test	6.35	2.51	-9.52*
Post-test	9.38	2.29	

* $p < .001$, N=40

As illustrated in Table 1, the results showed that the students’ pre-test score ($\bar{X} = 9.38$, S.D. = 2.29) was higher than their post-test score ($\bar{X} = 6.35$, S.D. = 2.51). There was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($t(40) = -9.52$, $p < .001$). This indicates that the students’ English speaking ability improved after they studied in class with CEFR-based speaking tasks.

When looking at scores under each rating criteria, for assessing students’ CEFR-based speaking ability, namely Grammar and Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Interactive Communication and Tasks Completion, the mean ($\bar{X}$) and S.D. for each was calculated. Paired-sample t -Test was performed to examine and compare the differences between students’ mean scores and S.D.s in the pre-test and the post-test for each of the items (see Table 2).

Table 2 Paired Samples t-Tests Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Speaking Criteria

Speaking Criteria	Pre-test		Post-test		t-test
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D	
Grammar and Vocabulary	1.28	0.54	2.03	0.58	-5.70*
Pronunciation	1.41	0.57	2.32	0.67	-5.97*
Interactive Communication	1.51	0.65	2.46	0.58	-5.94*
Task Completion	1.52	0.74	2.51	0.56	-5.83*

* $p < .001$, N = 40

Table 2 shows results from paired samples *t*-Tests comparing the pre-test and post-test scores under four speaking criteria. There were significant differences between the pre- and post- tests for all criteria. For Grammar and Vocabulary, a significant difference was found between the pre-test ($\bar{X} = 1.28$, S.D. = 0.54) and the post-test ($\bar{X} = 2.03$, S.D. = 0.58) scores ($t(40) = -5.70$, $p < .001$). For pronunciation, there was a significant difference between the pre-test scores ($\bar{X} = 1.41$, S.D. = 0.57) and the post-test ($\bar{X} = 2.32$, S.D. = 0.67) scores ($t(40) = -5.97$, $p < .001$). For interactive communication, the pre-test score ($\bar{X} = 1.51$, S.D. = 0.65) was significantly different from the post-test score ($\bar{X} = 2.46$, S.D. = 0.58) ($t(40) = -5.97$, $p < .001$). The statistical test also found a significant different between the pre-test ($\bar{X} = 1.52$, S.D. = 0.74) and the post-test ($\bar{X} = 2.51$, S.D. = 0.56) scores for Task Completion ($t(40) = -5.83$, $p < .001$). This means that the CEFR-based speaking tasks in the lessons enhanced students grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactive communication; and all 40 students performed better in the post-test than in the pre-test.

To answer Research Question 2, the quantitative results of students' opinion towards CEFR-based speaking tasks are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that overall the students had positive opinions towards CEFR-based speaking tasks ($\bar{X} = 3.82$, S.D. = 0.85). It was also found that the students strongly agree that CEFR-based speaking tasks improved their English speaking ($\bar{X} = 4.27$, S.D. = 0.78), helped them learn vocabulary from their friends ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, S.D. = 0.73), and noticed their mistakes and learnt from teacher's feedback ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, S.D. = 0.86), respectively. Moreover, the students agreed that the tasks prepared them for speaking English in their daily lives ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, S.D. = 0.94), and will continuously improve their English speaking ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, S.D. = 0.71). Although the students agreed that they preferred to learn grammar by using the tasks to listening to lectures ($\bar{X} = 3.55$, S.D. = 1.29) and that the tasks motivated them to want to

know English more ($\bar{X}=3.52$, $S.D.=0.87$), these two items revealed the lowest means, respectively.

Table 3 Learners’ Opinion towards CEFR-based Speaking Tasks

No	Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation
1	The tasks help me learn to interact with my classmates using English language.	3.87	0.93	Agree
2	The speaking tasks help me to use English with my friends.	3.65	0.97	Agree
3	I feel encouraged to communicate in English when doing the tasks with my friends.	3.72	0.87	Agree
4	I get more English vocabulary from my friends as we do the tasks.	4.22	0.73	Strongly Agree
5	I enjoy learning new English words from my friends when doing the tasks.	3.75	0.89	Agree
6	I feel motivated when I see my friends doing tasks in English.	3.62	0.86	Agree
7	From the lessons, I can use English with my friends, teacher and others.	3.75	0.98	Agree
8	I can use the English that I already know in doing the tasks.	3.62	0.89	Agree
9	I get more opportunity to practice English by doing tasks.	3.90	0.77	Agree
10	I think my English will improve if I continue to learn English in this manner.	4.00	0.71	Agree

No	Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation
11	I can notice my mistakes when teacher is giving feedback.	4.22	0.86	Strongly Agree
12	Reflecting on my learning at the end of the unit helps me know more about de-veloping myself.	3.77	0.89	Agree
13	The tasks motivate me to want to know English more.	3.52	0.87	Agree
14	I prefer to learn grammar by using tasks than to receive long lectures from the teacher.	3.55	1.29	Agree
15	The tasks prepare me for my daily life.	4.02	0.94	Agree
16	The tasks help me to communicate with other people using English language.	3.65	0.89	Agree
17	I feel satisfied after I complete the tasks using English.	3.72	1.01	Agree
18	I can learn English with my friends when we are practicing the task.	3.85	0.86	Agree
19	I think learning speaking by using tasks can make my speaking improve.	4.27	0.78	Strongly Agree
20	I like it when we can help friends to com-plete the tasks.	3.72	1.08	Agree
	Average	3.82	0.85	Agree

When closely looking at the students’ opinions based on characteristics of TBLT, Table 4 shows interesting results. The 20 items in the questionnaire may represent seven TBLT themes or characteristics (Dailey, 2009; Ellis, 2003; Frost, 2006; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2001, 2007). They included *self-assessment and reflections* (items 10, 11, 12), *interaction/exposure* (items 1, 9), *confidence building* (items 3, 8, 15, 19), *collaborative learning* (items 4, 5, 18, 20), *satisfaction* (items 14, 17), *ability to communicate* (items 2, 7, 16), and *motivation* (items 6, 13). The results of students’ opinions in relation to characteristics of TBLT are displayed as follows.

Table 4 Students’ Opinions Categorized by TBLT Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	Item No.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Self-assessment and reflection	10.	4.00	0.71	3.99	0.82	Agree
		11.	4.22	0.86			
		12.	3.77	0.89			
2	Interaction/Exposure	1.	3.89	0.93	3.90	0.85	Agree
		9.	3.90	0.77			
3	Confidence building	3.	3.72	0.87	3.91	0.87	Agree
		8.	3.62	0.89			
		15.	4.02	0.94			
		19.	4.27	0.78			
4	Collaborative learning	4.	4.22	0.73	3.88	0.89	Agree
		5.	3.75	0.89			
		18.	3.85	0.86			
		20.	3.72	1.08			

No.	Characteristics	Item No.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation
5	Satisfaction	14.	3.55	1.29	3.63	1.15	Agree
		17.	3.72	1.01			
6	Ability to communicate	2.	3.65	0.97	3.68	0.95	Agree
		7.	3.75	0.98			
		16.	3.65	0.89			
7	Motivation	6.	3.62	0.86	3.57	0.86	Agree
		13.	3.52	0.87			

Table 4 shows the students’ opinions towards CEFR-based speaking tasks classified into seven characteristics. The TBLT characteristic with the highest mean score is self-assessment and reflection ($\bar{X}$ =3.99, S.D.=0.82). This means that the tasks can help the students evaluate themselves and reflect on their learning with respect to what they could do after completing the tasks. The subsequent characteristics with high means are confidence building ($\bar{X}$ =3.91, S.D.=0.87) and interaction/exposure ($\bar{X}$ =3.90, S.D.=0.85), respectively. In the lessons, the students were given opportunities to create conversations, interact and practice them with their partners. Then they presented to the teacher and received feedbacks. The students found this helpful as they were not provided with readymade dialogues to memorize. They agreed that this helped them build their confidence. Although the mean score for motivation was the lowest ($\bar{X}$ =3.57, S.D.=0.86), the students still agreed that the tasks motivated them to speak and learn English.

To further clarify Research Question 2, students’ responses to the open-ended questionnaires were analyzed via content analysis. The findings showed that students felt and thought positively about the use of CEFR-based speaking tasks. They thought

that the tasks were enjoyable and easy to understand. They also agreed that the tasks gave them an opportunity to practice English and learn new words from the teacher and their friends. The learners felt more motivated and satisfied with completing the tasks.

In sum, this study found that the CEFR-based speaking tasks enhanced the speaking ability of students. It also revealed that students nurtured positive impressions towards using CEFR-based speaking tasks in the speaking class. These findings are consistent with previous studies both in Thailand and other EFL settings. Regarding the support for learners in using communicative language development. That is, using tasks is more effective when compared with the traditional PPP approach in language pedagogy (Tanasarnsanee, 2002; Willis, 1996). In relation to the effectiveness of using task-based activities to improve the speaking proficiency of students, the findings of the current study are in agreement with Tabrizi and Nasiri (2011) and Saricoban and Karakurt (2016). In Thailand, many researchers have studied the effects of TBLT to enhance students' speaking skills (Pongsawang, 2012; Promruang, 2012; Rattanawong, 2004; Sae-Ong, 2010; Thanghun, 2012; Yooyong, 2008; Wijitpaisarn, 2005). The results of this study are also consistent with these. However, the present study differs from others in Thailand in that while the previous studies focused on TBLT approach, this study additionally used CEFR level A2 speaking to derive the contents, objectives and tasks following the integrated frameworks (Burns, 2014; Willis, 1996).

The findings of this study reveal a significance for teachers as it can serve as an example for implementing CEFR together with TBLT in the classroom. The scales used for this research may be used to assess students speaking in class. For the Thai policy makers, this study is an evidence showing that CEFR level A2 is somehow appropriate for lower secondary school and it may serve as a resource for future practitioners.

4. Suggestions for Further Studies

This study only examined the effects of using CEFR-based speaking tasks to improve the speaking ability of Thai learners in lower secondary level (grade 8). Further studies should use other CEFR-based tasks focusing on the other skills (i.e., writing, reading and listening). Researchers should also conduct studies with classrooms of students from other levels (e.g., primary school level, upper secondary level, and tertiary level). Moreover, studies should be conducted using authentic situations such as students interviewing a tourist or foreigner in English, or interacting with foreigners in the target language at the store. Due to the contextual limitation at the school, this study used only experimental group. Other researchers should consider increasing number of participants and using more advanced design to make research studies more generalizable.

5. Conclusion

With the impending necessity to elevate the standards of English language in Thailand so that Thais can compete comfortably with other member nations of AEC, the government through the Ministry of Education embarks on promoting educational policies meant to elevate the standards of English language learning and teaching generally and specifically oral communication ability of Thai people. One of such policies is adopting CEFR to be used as a guide for teaching and learning languages. Moreover, CEFR is to be used for developing teaching materials and for the assessment of both Thai English Language teachers as well as the students. Additionally, teachers are to implement CEFR in the classroom.

Nevertheless, since CEFR implementation seems to be challenging, it is still ambiguous for many teachers in Thailand.

TBLT is a method of teaching which has yielded positive effects in improving students' English language skills generally. This study, informed by CEFR in terms of contents, topics, objectives, and scales and framed by TBLT, effected positive results in terms of learners' speaking ability. The learners also felt and thought the experiment was good and helped them improve. Based on the positive outcomes of this study implications can be drawn for language instructors, learners and the government. For the teachers, it provides a model of implementing CEFR in their speaking lessons. The well-developed lessons framed by CEFR and TBLT have positive impacts on the learners. The current study may also inform government policy makers that CEFR under the framework of TBLT can enhance students' speaking ability. Finally, using CEFR Level A2 Speaking descriptors to inform the lessons for lower secondary school students and the resulting positive effects is evidence showing that the government policy that sets the students' level at A2 is somehow appropriate for lower secondary level. This study can serve as a guideline or a resource for practitioners in the future.

6. Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor, her research assistant, my partner and colleagues for their unceasing supports and encouragements to the realization of this study.

7. References

- Boonkit K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2): 1305–1309.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Brown, H. D. (2004). **Language assessment principles and classroom practices**. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Burns, A. (2014). Concepts for teaching speaking in the English language classroom. **LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network**, 12-22.
- Cambridge University. (2013). **Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers**.
- Council of Europe. (2011). **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) Language Policy Unit**, Strasbourg.
- Dhanasobhon, S. (2006). **English language teaching dilemma in Thailand**. Retrieved July 14, 2014, from <http://www.curriculumandinstruction.org/index.php?lay=show&ac...7>
- Luoma, S. (2004). **Assessing speaking**. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved July 14, 2014, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733017>
- Maxwell, D., (2015). **Thai Schools adopt European framework to boost English language Proficiency**. Asian Correspondent.
- Ministry of Education. (2001). **Basic Education Curriculum 2001**. Bangkok: Kurusapa Ladprao Publishing.
- Ministry of Education. (2008). **Basic Education Curriculum 2008**. Bangkok: Kurusapa Ladprao Publishing.
- Ministry of Education. (2014). **The Guidelines on English language teaching and learning reforming policy**. Bangkok: Chamjureeproducts Ltd.
- Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai Teachers' Professional Development Needs. **English Language Teaching**, 6(11): 139-147.

- North, B., (2007). **The Relevance of the CEFR to Teacher Training**. Zürich: Eurocentres Foundation.
- Nurhakim, F. (2009). **Teaching speaking by using communicative approach**. Retrieved May 4, 2009 from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15190009/Skip-si-Teaching-Speaking-by-Using-Communicative-Approach>.
- Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC). (2003). **National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002))**. Bangkok: Pimdeekanpim Co., Ltd.
- Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC). (2009). **The Basic Education Commission Policy**. Retrieved April 11, 2009 from <http://www.obec.go.th/plan/plan1.doc>.
- Osborn, S., Osborn, M., & Osborn, R. (2008). **Public speaking guidebook**. Boston: Pearson.
- Phensiri. S. (1993). **Problem and need for remedial teaching of English at the lower secondary school level in Khon khaen, Thailand**. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Khon Kaen University.
- Polat, S. (2009). Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) display levels of the teachers at secondary schools according to the perceptions of the schooladministrators. **Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences**, 1(1): 1591-1596.
- Pongsawang, G. (2012). **Using task-based language activities to enhance speaking abilities of Prathom Suksa 5 students**. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University.
- Promruang J. (2012). **The use of task-based learning to improve English listening and speaking abilities of Mattayomsuksa 1 Students at Piboonprachasan School**. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University.

- Rattanawong, C. (2004). **Effects of teaching by using task-based learning towards English language communicative ability of Pratom suksa six learners.** Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University.
- Sae-ong, U. (2010). **The Used of task-based learning and group work incorporating to develop English speaking ability.** Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shrinakhrinwirot University.
- Sarıçoban, A., & Karakurt, L. (2016). The use of task-based activities to improve listening and speaking skills in EFL context. **Sino-US English Teaching**. 13(6): 445-459.
- Tabrizi, A. R. N., & Nasiri, M. (2011). The effect of using task-based activities on speaking proficiency of EFL Learners. **In The Third Asian Conference on Education Official Proceedings**. pp. 333-345.
- Tanasarnsanee, M. (2002). 3Ps, Task-Based Learning, and the Japanese Learner English Teaching. **An International Journal**, 5.
- Thanghun, K., (2012). **Using task-based learning to develop English speaking ability of Prathom 6 students at Piboonprachasan School.** Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Srinakharinwot University.
- UCLES, (2011). **English Profile**. Introducing the CEFR for English. University of Cambridge.
- Wijitpaisarn, P. (2005). **The use of task-based learning program to enhance communicative English speaking ability of Mattayomsuksa 3 students to be young tour guides.** Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University.
- Willis J. (1996). **A framework for task-based Learning**. Harlow: Longman Pearson Education.

- Wiriyaichitra, A. (2002). English language teaching and learning in Thailand in this decade. **Thai TESOL Focus**, 15(1): 4–9.
- Yooyong, B. (2008). **The use of task-based learning to develop English speaking ability of Mattayomsuksa 2 students at Banmarkkaeng School in Udon Thani province**. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University.
- Zaremba, A. J. (2006). **Speaking professionally**. Canada: Thompson South–Western.