The Implication of Communicative Language Activity
in Language Camps
การใช้กิจกรรมทางภาษาแบบการสื่อสารในค่ายภาษา

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บทคัดย่อ

        กลยุทธ์การสื่อสารนับว่าเป็นเครื่องมือในการเรียนการสอนที่มีประสิทธิภาพในค่ายภาษาอังกฤษ ดังนั้นการศึกษาในครั้งนี้เพื่อจำแนกกลยุทธ์การสื่อสารที่มีประสิทธิภาพตามลักษณะทางภาษาของทักษะการสื่อสารของนักเรียนและเพื่อประเมินกิจกรรมที่มีความเป็นไปได้และช่วยให้ทักษะการสื่อสารของนักเรียนดีขึ้น ผลการศึกษาพบว่าสถานการณ์ในการพูดเป็นกิจกรรมที่เกิดขึ้นในช่วงเวลาหนึ่งและสถานที่เฉพาะและกึ่งทางการ ดังนั้นกิจกรรมโดยใช้คำ วลี และประโยคมีประโยชน์ต่อทักษะการสื่อสารของนักเรียนได้แก่กิจกรรมที่หนึ่ง การบอกตนเองเป็นกิจกรรมทางภาษาที่สามารถพัฒนาการออกเสียง กิจกรรมที่สอง การพูดตามสถานการณ์เป็นกิจกรรมที่วัดความสามารถในการสื่อสารในชีวิตประจำวันและในสถานการณ์เฉพาะได้ กิจกรรมสุดท้าย การเล่าเรื่องเป็นกิจกรรมที่นักเรียนสามารถพัฒนาทักษะการเล่าเรื่องในบริบทและสถานการณ์ที่หลากหลายได้รวมถึงนักเรียนได้มีโอกาสเรียนรู้การใช้ภาษาผ่านกิจกรรมการเข้าค่ายภาษาในรูปแบบสถานการณ์ในการพูด

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Abstract

Communicative strategies are used for as an effective teaching learning tool in language camps. This study is to identify the effectiveness of communication strategies on the language aspects of students' communication skills and to evaluate the possible tasks in camps that could help students enhance their communication skills. The findings show that speaking situation is the activities in a specific time and less formal. Therefore, three activities have beneficial effects on communication skills by students being able to convey the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences according to language activities. First, Self-talk is a useful language activity that improves pronunciation. Second, speaking situations can be used to assess ability to communicate in everyday life in specific purposes. Lastly, students develop their narrative skills through various contexts and situations. Including, the students have the opportunities learning language through language camp activities in a pattern of speaking situations.

Keywords

Communication Strategies, Language Camp, Language Activities

Introduction

Communicative development occurs through exposure to many different language situations with the implementation of collaborative learning through practical and authentic activities. Communication is a tool for people to meet their needs through different channels and different situations both verbally and non-verbally. In education, learning communication subjects through situational dialogues whether using Thai or English languages is essential to communicate more effectively when both learning inside and outside of the classroom, including in language specific camps. Most studies seem to agree that language development through camps will continue to hold an important role in education going into the future. For example, Cho (2010) suggests language camps can be characterized as a communicative approach in authentic contexts, and the roles of explicit instruction are to assist learners to become more competent members in the community. As far as explicit instruction is concerned, Archer & Hughes (2011) identified two main uses of practical activities: to provide a direct approach to teaching and to include both instructional design and delivery procedures. Sangvatanachai (2013) cites four uses of practical activities as a means of prompting reactions: the asking of questions, instructions, directions, and any other input that elicits a reaction. A wide range of communicative activities in a language camp

are now therefore available in all these areas for use outside classroom. However, even though many studies have reported an increased use of communication strategies in language camps, there has been very little research reported on the effectiveness of such use. The purpose of the present study is therefore to ascertain the effectiveness of using communication strategies compared to outside classroom instruction in a language camp.

1. Background and Its Significance in Communication

According to Ellis & McClintock's model of communication (1990), a linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver. However, before it reaches the receiver, the message must go through noise which emphasizes information flow and accuracy. Bialystok (1990) also stated that overall goal in communication strategies is to find a means of explaining how strategies function in the speech of L2 learners. Finally, the receiver must convey the message to its destination in order to obtain an understanding from that information. Language can only truly happen with concentration belonging to situations and so, communication strategies are involved in order to mediate between people.

2. The Communication Process

Pfeiffer (1998) suggested that indirect communication is promoted between people. Game-playing behavior is one effective method of indirect communication that encourages people to communicate with each other with the basic aims of human relations development. In addition, Venkatagiri (2002) claims that symbol communication is relevant to the fields of linguistics, alternative and augmentative communication that identifies the relationship between a symbol and what it represents as arbitrary and entirely learned. It will probably use a combination of these symbols depending on their abilities, needs, motivation, and the demands of the communicative setting. Furthermore, symbolism can monitor thoughts, feelings, and actions as it refers to the way that people share ideas, feeling and experiences by words that are concerned with meaning.

The communication process can be divided into three basic stages. First, a sender transmits a message through a channel to the receiver in order to communicate the idea of the sender, and the receiver interprets the meaning of that message from the sender. The information that is sent could be complicated language of any kind or a symbol. Developing a message is known as encoding and interpreting the message is referred to as decoding. Feedback is also an important factor of the communication process because when two people interact, talk or do something together in any way, communication happens. The critical factor in measuring the effectiveness of communication is common understanding. Understanding exists when the sender and the

receiver have a mutual agreement as to not only the information, but also the meaning of the information. Effective communication, therefore, occurs when the intended message of the sender and the interpreted message of the receiver are one and the same. Communicative tasks could help a teacher design communicative task into practice (Yule, 1997, 30). Therefore, a high task approach, such as activities in camps, with the students may save time, but it does not always result in every student getting the same meaning from the task without opportunities to ask questions and to clarify the activities.

3. **Communication Strategies in Second-Language Acquisition**

In the course of learning a second language, the lack of linguistic competence is a communicative problem caused by low level speaking ability. Communication strategies are strategies that learners can use to solve communicative problems in order to convey meaning. These strategies may include:

3.1 Paraphrasing: using your own words to express someone else's message or ideas.

3.2 Substitution, a fundamental concept in logic: a syntactic transformation of formal expressions.

3.3 Coining new words: implemented when there is a clear-cut need for some kind of disambiguation.

3.4 Switching to the first language: occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation.

3.5 Asking for clarification: active and non-native English speakers alike occasionally don't understand what is said to them.

These are all, with the exception of switching languages, also used by native speakers. Including, Nakatani (2006) developed the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) which can be divided in two types: Strategies for coping with speaking problems and Strategies for coping with listening problems. It is about achievement or compensatory strategies where a student tries different solutions in order to achieve working communication, and reduction or avoidance strategies where a student gives up when the first attempt on communication fails. However, Panicha & Soranastaporn (2014) illustrated that the students used overall English communication strategies at the high level especially, social-affective strategies that concerns with strategies for coping with speaking problems.

4. Communication Characteristics in Language Camps

Language camps offer interactive and engaging activities that are involved directly with language learning and cultural understanding by using communication skills in another language. The learners that participate in a camp are called "campers" and they engage in the many different curricula available in language learning. Furthermore, "campers" are provided with a lot of opportunities to practice language in authentic situations. The "camper" can also engage in cultural activities so that learning a language in the camp becomes a valued cultural experience (Kositchaivot, 2012). In language camps generally, the method is to employ informal language with the aim of engaging participants in interactive and fun language activities. The Level of language in the activities is unique to each situation as it depends on the language abilities of the participants that are enrolled in the camps. The age of the "campers" is also important to consider in terms of its impact on the learning outcomes. However, face to face communication with high interactions where participants are given opportunities to master communicative skills is crucial for success.

Role play is a teaching methodology that aims to develop a way of bringing situations from real life into learning environments (Doff, 1990). Richard-Amato (1996) states that the most common situations for role play may need to function in the target language. Familiar or common situations are used so that students participate fully and can increase confidence with language use. Such examples of role play situations include; shopping, interacting at school, talking on the telephone, asking for directions, making appointments, and attending business meetings including fantasy situations from stories, television, or simulations and situations. VenTESOL (2014) enhances language skills of participants outside the classroom through a guided collaborative development of all the activities that take place throughout the camp days. Some typical and common role-plays used as camp activities are outlined as follows: 1) Face-to-face interaction where the learners support each other through task understandings and accomplishments. Group members encourage partners' achievements. 2) Group processing where group members evaluate their own effectiveness and take into consideration improvement decisions. In order to reach this goal, group members participate and are responsible for their part in the task in order to accomplish it. 3) Individual and group accountability which requires a great sense of responsibility in order to decrease social loafing. Accordingly, students must make their learning capacity evident. Fourth, Positive interdependence which is when each group members have a role or a task. 4) Social skills including interpersonal and group skills though leadership, effective communication, trust-building, conflict-management skills and decision-making. As a result, each member must be certain of their responsibility within the group.

Hence, language learning in these activities can be characterized as a communicative approach in authentic contexts, and the roles of explicit instruction are to assist learners to become more competent members in the community. (Cho, 2010)

4.1   Communication for a camp leader

Teachers are the leaders in the language camp and are encouraged to work closely with the students or "campers". Giving guidance for clearer communication and the method to accomplish activities are the major responsibilities of the teachers. Teachers are responsible for student's behavior, providing support, and maintaining the wellbeing and providing first aid when needed. Offering the right tools and explaining the whole process are important teacher duties to make students understand how to accomplish activities and to build effective relationships and conversations among the campers. Moreover, the teacher must be able to scaffold the language and teach students speaking and discussion skills (Dawes, 2004, 677-695). Scaffolding and support helps make the structure of the session clearer and also supports the method of thinking through into communication.

4.2   Communication for campers

Campers should have opportunities to try and master skills, especially oral skills. Oral language activities such as think-pair-share or group discussions provide campers with time to consider an idea prior to sharing it with others and to increase opportunities for students to listen and speak the language. Spoken language is interactive, situated and immediate (Freeman & Freeman, D. 2009, 154-180) and is considered interactive because it shows a high degree of personal involvement.

4.3   Communication problems in Language camps

There is a great difference between knowledge of a second language and the ability to use language in real life in different situations (Kositchaivot, 2012). Teachers play an important role in how language is used in the camp. Teachers, especially those who teach in language camps, often find that while students may appear to have some mastery of English when it comes to completing exercises in text books, they may really struggle if put in a situation where the spontaneous production of English is required for actual communication (Bumroongthai & Thanymanta, 2009). This is particularly the case when it comes to speaking and listening which students are the least practiced in. By the time students have finished school and university, they have already studied many years of English, yet their ability to communicate doesn't seem to have improved to any great degree. In contrast, a trip to any tourist destination in Thailand will reveal

that many people who work with foreign tourists are very adept at communicating even though, they have had limited formal instruction in the language.

There are many reasons for students' difficulty in using L2 to communicate in real situations. In Thailand, lack of vocabulary and incomplete sentence structure are fundamental problems that limit students' ability to communicate (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009). Students often just don't have the necessary vocabulary to express them and so may use words inappropriately. The inappropriate use of words can result in misunderstanding and confusion. Students also lack the basic sentence structures that make the coherent use of vocabulary possible. However, Bunwirat (2017) claim that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is integrated into English classrooms to give students chances to use English in authentic contexts. There are more communicative aspects than just grammar and vocabulary.

The Implication of Communicative Strategy

There has been much research on the effect of communication strategy on EFL as well as the communicative approach in authentic contexts and communicative language teaching. Explicit instruction is a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures (Archer & Hughes, 2011, 1-22). These could be the essence of our experience in using language. It involves cognitive functioning such as the high-quality experience which involves a high frequency of practices and repetition. People can monitor the meaning of information in a way they are familiar with and also construct social reality which makes sense of their past experience.

Explicit activities could also enhance communicative skills as a tool in a language camp by identifying the effect of language abilities on students' communication skills. These kinds of activities make it easier to evaluate the level of communicative proficiency as communicative activities are the ultimate integration of all the four skills in language camps. This could be the way that students convey the events in words, images, and sounds. Teachers' oral instructional language needs to be the medium of instruction in the camps of second language learners. This helps learners formulate the meaning that takes place in a pedagogic context which is the principle of teaching and learning. Being good at teaching requires effective language making it such an important element. Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow (2000) claim that well trained teachers might be native or native-like speakers but should have communicative competence in three areas, namely,

grammatical strategic and sociolinguistic competence including discourse competence. To attain native like communicative competence is not an active undertaking in order to succeed in language learning.

The lack of strategic competence factors might also affect communication strategies more due to language development compared to linguistic competence. Jamshidnejad (2011) argues that promoting the accuracy of the target language is one of the most frequent functions of CSs through which participants collaboratively repair, negotiate and discuss both lexical items and grammatical forms in their L2 interaction. Klein (1986) claims that "spontaneous" and "guided" acquisition may develop conscious and subconscious learning that are also valued. Speaking is considered to be the most important language skill. It helps learners acquire their target language and can aid measurement of their overall achievement. To improve language proficiency is most important for students and as such requires suitable strategies to motivate them into undertaking lifelong learning. The effects of using communication strategies have overcome the gaps or problems in communication which might happen during the communication process.

To develop a pattern for learners' communication could be argued as being equally or more important than oral discourse. Interactions and transactions are the key functions of oral discourse and they can convey meaning of information between the sender and the receiver while also maintaining social relationships. Communication strategies allow the learner to endure through times of difficulty in order to provide a sense of security within the target language (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014). It can lead to learning by eliciting without unknown language items either from the speakers or their own target language through paraphrasing (Jamshidnejad, 2011). The instruction of communication strategies can develop learner's autonomy which is the least significant tool. However, the classification of communication strategies is a difficult process and the teacher's experience out of the classroom is highly significant. Learning a foreign language does not have the same effect as the learning experience so some learners might have some difficulties with the learning process, feeling threatened and frustrated, and that result in language learning.

Brown (1994, 203-204) claims that the term interlanguage is neither the system of the native language nor the system of the target language based on the best attempt of learners to provide order and structure to the linguistic stimuli surrounding them. The importance of attribution for communication strategies are the definitions and classifications that happen from different perspectives. In language teaching, tasks become the conviction that affects the pedagogical tools

which could develop learners' competence in language learning. Tasks provide active roles such as helping each other when there is misunderstanding, and making themselves understood when their message is inarticulate. Different types of tasks offer different opportunities for negotiation of meaning, and to re-enforce which types of tasks are suitable for each learner.

    2. **Communicative approach**

According to The National Education Act (1999, 8-14) the development of English skills should take full account for "the national agenda" and it supports using new policies in learning English language that place emphasis more on practical skills than learning only knowledge.

    2.1   Communicative tasks

According to Bumroongthai&Thanymanta (2009), campers feel worried about speaking incorrectly, mistranslating, accents, shyness, insufficient vocabulary, arranging the words into sentences, and lacking motivation to learn English. These are the main problems amongst Thai students in relation to communication skills. Thus, choosing the right communicative activity would be an effective tool when doing activities in the language camps for many reasons. Moss & Ross-Feldman (2003, 20) suggested that students should be engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional classrooms.

    2.2   Camp tendencies of the 21st century in Thailand

Furthermore, The Core of Basic Education Commission (2008, 5) aims to fully develop learners in all respects such as morality, wisdom, happiness, and potentiality for further education and livelihood. It also places emphasis on knowledge and skills for communication, thinking, problem-solving, technological know-how, and life skills. Conducting a variety of activities in an English camp increases the knowledge of the region and its cultures. Mrs. PawadeeNgernmuen; president of the Roi Et Interior's Ladies Association, National News Bureau of Thailand, (2016) agrees that an English camp can improve English skills and create an effective learning environment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the MFA camp after the formation of the ASEAN Community for Thai youth in order to be more assertive and more confident when communicating in English. The Foreign Affairs Minister; Mr. Surapong, also stated that there has been positive feedback from parents and has planned to consider expanding the English camp project to other areas of the country as well (The Thai Financial Post, 2016).

2.3   Different communicative tasks in the language camp

Kositchaivot (2012) revealed that the speaking competency of students becomes higher after camping. Choosing the proper activities provide opportunities to use and learn real English in a relaxed environment. Games, songs, and other recreational activities are the most popular activities in camps. After camping, campers are likely to have more confidence to speak English when faced with foreign teachers (Bumroongthai & Thanymanta, 2009). Even-though, role-play is the most challenging speaking activity for the students, Jittreenit (2009) revealed that providing various and different situations to role play could really enhance students' communicative speaking abilities because they experience a simulation of a real situation.

2.3.1   Self-talk: Self-talk is intrapersonal communication which is involved with the act or practice of talking to oneself, either aloud or silently and mentally and it can have a great impact on learner's confidence. Bumroongthai & Thanymanta, (2009) indicated that self-talk can enhance the level of self-efficacy in using English for communication.The students help one another to think of the words for self-talk to speak with themselves and as always write down on the flip chart while they are talking to the foreign teachers. The following are some examples of words used in self-talk: don't be shy, speak with confidence, and use easy word with the same understanding. Ranking from the highest to the lowest in effectiveness, talking with foreigners: Using easy vocabulary to make the same understanding, be sure to speak up and I can talk. These strategies make learners feel confident while they are talking with native speakers or fellow second language users. Furthermore, students can improve their level of pronunciation with their freedom to create, present, and do English pronunciation activities. Through this they are able to all feel comfortable and learn the correct pronunciation of English unstressed syllables. (Wongthanet, 2013)

2.3.2   Narrative skill: The communicative view on Narrative skills is that it is part of the innate ability to process and produce language. Kositchaivot (2012) revealed that students with both high and low English learning achievement preferred doing activities involving writing for Mattayom 1-3 students in the school under the Phetchabun Educational Service. According to recent research results, the students' ability in writing English picture narratives and translating English into Thai are effective language activities to achieve English learning. The teacher chooses the contents of each dialogue that so that it is relevant to the scope of each speaking situation. Integration between subjects is important because it aids development of speaking skills. Therefore, when arranging the contents of each dialogue, it should be ordered from the most difficult to the easiest to keep a logical sequence. The scheme of the contents in speaking dialogue situations

can be about the ASEAN Community. Moreover, the students can choose 5 out of 10 topics by themselves. The 5 that they can choose from are, Module 1: Locations / Places: Getting to Know ASEAN Community, Module 2: People: Lifestyles of People in ASEAN Countries, Module 3: Aesthetics: Poems of ASEAN Countries, Module 4: Food: Food in ASEAN Countries, and Module 5: Environment: Environmental Problems in ASEAN Countries.

              2.3.3 Speaking Situation: Students could enhance speaking and voice confidence skills with apparent gestures (Suneeta, 2012). This strategy can be applied and would benefit English teaching and English for everyday lives. Importantly, students would have a great opportunity to practice English in a natural way leading to the goal of English learning. The development of training curriculum for supplementing speaking skills is one of the language activities for Bachelor degree English major students at Silpakorn University Faculty of Education. The extra supplementary course has more emphasis on developing speaking skills for using at English camps and developing social skills for being a good teacher. Therefore, some of the more common language activities are 1) Treasure Hunt 2) Life Maps 3) Writing Haiku Poems 4) Fantasy Food Show 5) Environmental Song. These activities relate to English for communication and aim to develop speaking ability. The learners have opportunities to practice narrating situational stories through activity based-learning: for example, warm up activities, encouraging activities, enhancing activities, and main activities. Oral testing is an opportunity for students to assess their ability to communicate as well as speaking skills through a face-to-face dialogue. Especially informal oral exams, these are an appropriate way to evaluate the student's outcome of learning outside the classroom. Bairan & Beverly (1997, 6-7) state that oral exams can also provide excellent results. Brown (2001, 39) said that speaking practical activities have attracted a greater level of interest and related to students' status including meaningful application in complex real-world situations.

Conclusion and Discussion

        Language activities in a language camp training program enhance English speaking skills and English camp activity knowledge. Students who have participated in English camps have higher motivation for learning English than students who have not because activities in language camp are practical tools that build an attraction to learning English (Bahakeeree ; Jaipaew ; Natawee & Rattanawan, 2005). Good language practices should also be employed by teachers to help their students by being more conscious about the context of their teaching and to provide suitable tasks, strategies to motivate students' learning, and mastering language skills. Actually,

students can demonstrate their progress with each activity in a specific language skill by doing things such as picture narrative, comprehension, sequencing, and language situations. The progress of transferring information and using non-verbal language are also required. As a result, being willing to communicate in the second language in various situations creates chances to communicate according to the new methods of teaching together with learners' linguistic competence in order to succeed in learning language.

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