AN ASSESSMENT OF AN EFL CLASSROOM BY USING LEARNER-CENTRED METHODOLOGY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to assess EFL classroom by using learner- centred methodology for undergraduate students in Thailand in six aspects: curriculum, teaching – learning process, teaching materials, instructors, evaluation, and supporting resources and to gather supplemental suggestions.

Research samples were 425 Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology undergraduate students derived through stratified random sampling techniques. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis.

The research findings were as follows: 1. EFL classroom by using learner-centred method of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology undergraduate students as a whole was at high level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that their using learner-centred method was at high level on curriculum, teaching-learning process, teaching materials, instructors and evaluation, while their using learner-centred method in supporting resource was at a moderate level. 2. Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students had supplemental suggestions: to organize the curriculum in order to learners' needs in curriculum, to provide various activities and be suitable for learners' skills in teaching-learning process, to use innovative materials for learners in teaching materials, to teach how to do efficient examination in evaluation, and to provide facilities such as wireless and more modern equipments both in the classroom and outside classroom in supporting resources.

KEYWORDS The Assessment of EFL Classroom, Learner Centred Techniques

INTRODUCTION

Instructional curriculum of foreign language is based on National Education Act of B.E.2542 section 22 as it stipulated that Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality. And Section 24 in organizing the learning process, educational institutions and

agencies concerned shall provided substance and arrange activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes, bearing in mind individual differences, provide training in thinking process, management, how to face various situations and application of knowledge for obviating and solving problems, organize activities for learners to draw from authentic experience; drill in practical work for complete mastery; enable learners to think critically and acquire the reading habit and continuous thirst for knowledge, achieve, in all subjects, a balanced integration of subject matter, integrity, values, and desirable attributes, enable instructors to create the ambiance, environment, instructional media, and facilities for learners to learn and be all-round persons, able to benefit from research as part of the learning process. In so doing, both learners and teachers may learn together from different types of teaching-learning media and other sources of knowledge, enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places. Co-operation with parents, guardians, and all parties concerned in the community shall be sought to develop jointly the learners in accord with their potentiality (Ministry of Education 1999: 14)

Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has been operated under the philosophy of "disseminating knowledge, building economic base". The objective of the institute is to generate human resources who have abilities in technological advancement and industrial management. Moreover, TNI concept of program administration is to focus on the students' language skills- the students will be able to communicate in Japanese and English. In order to achieve in the TNI objectives, TNI has provided English through multimedia course which was an elective course for students from all faculties from each faculty to enroll (TNI Student Handbook: 2011: 24). The assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students, however, is one of the most significant factors to motivate learners to be interested in English learning. Because English is the subject used for communicating in globalization age, the satisfaction in doing English activities is a pleasure derived from physical environment, a pleasure from participation and a pleasure from absorbing the activities (Apple White 1956: 78). Moreover, the human satisfaction is presented in a form of abstract behavior. To recognize the satisfaction in learning is originated from observations. Currently, TNI has offered the English courses for students from all faculties for two and a half year. However, TNI has lacked of a well research to find out information to verify The assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students and the methodology to encourage students to learn English effectively and efficiently in order to achieve in the TNI objectives included the needs and the motivations (Wolman 1973: 304). Nowadays, classroom teaching is to teach the students the new knowledge by lecturing and any other types of the old-fashioned techniques. The teachers must make the well-defined lesson plans to indicate the objectives of the study, teaching-learning techniques as well as the evaluation and learning outcomes (Penkhae Prachonpachanuk 2009: 1-2). In addition, the teachers should introduce the learner centered technique in their classroom teaching. According to this, Malcolm Knowles (1970: 39-41), who is known as the founder of Adult Education in the United States, explained that in order to help adults to

learn, we should use the special type of teaching which is called Learner Centered Model.

The main concepts of learner centered model of teaching are derived from Penkhae Prachonpachanuk (2009:1-2) as she demonstrated that the learners have former experiences in learning activity; the learners are dependent and able to do their own learning; learning outcomes will be more effective when the subject centered style is shifted to the problem centered style; learning activity is arranged to meet with the learning needs of the learners to the evaluation of learning outcomes; and the teachers will facilitate the learners to learn step by step, that is to create the learning climate, diagnose the learning needs, formulate the objectives and design into the learning experiences, select the suitable techniques and experiences and finally evaluate the learning outcomes. Three most important things in learning are learning atmosphere, participation in learning and flexible teaching method and techniques (Knowles, 1970: 40).

At present, the learner centered technique of teaching is accepted and applied in schools around the world. Moreover, some other new techniques are also introduced in teaching the classes. The learners' former experiences are used in their own learning. Self-study, therefore, is used as a significant part of learning activity. Hence, the language learning is arranged from various channels to the students. In Thailand, the technique of learner centered model was used in schools at all level. Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, the College of General Education and Languages has also started to use this teaching model since 2008 to teach English and Japanese language to the students.

In the results, researcher studied the assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students by creating research tool as questionnaire in order to survey satisfaction in English learning. This research was categorized into 6 aspects: curriculum; teaching-learning process; teaching materials; instructors, evaluation and supporting resources. This survey research was purposely focused on the TNI students from faculties of business administration, engineering, information technology in 2011 academic year. In this way, the results gained from the research will be used as a channel to solve, improve and develop teaching-learning process as well as teaching materials to be more effective and efficient.

Objectives of the research were 1) to assess EFL classroom by using learner- centred method for undergraduate students in Thailand in six aspects: curriculum, teaching – learning process, teaching materials, instructors, evaluation, and supporting resources and 2) to gather supplemental opinions and suggestions of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology under-graduate students in Thailand towards the teaching-learning activities based on learner-centred method in EFL classroom.

Significant of the research were 1) the results from the research presented the level in assessing EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for undergraduate TNI students in Thailand in order to develop teaching-learning process techniques applied for the next semester. 2)the suggestions from the research are used as a plan to improve the method of teaching and learning in English course of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students to be more effective and efficient.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Population and Sampling

This research used the survey method in satisfaction in learning English of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology which consisted of population and sampling as follows:

Populations of this research were 1,200 TNI students in 3 faculties namely faculty of business administration, faculty of engineering, and faculty of information technology and derived from enrollment in English through multimedia course.

Samplings of this research were 425 TNI students derived through Simple Random Sampling technique.

B. Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of personal data, such as genders, ages, academic years, and majors. The second section consisted of 42 questions in 6 aspects namely: in curriculum, in teaching-learning process, in teaching materials, in instructors, in evaluation and in supporting resources. Respondents used 5 point scale to answer this section, which are 1= "Strongly disagree," 2= "Disagree," 3= "Neither agree nor disagree," 4= "Agree," 5= "Strongly agree." The third section was open-ended questionnaire which consisted of 6 aspects namely: in curriculum, in teaching-learning process, in teaching materials, in instructors, in evaluation and in supporting resources.

C. Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS/PC (Statistical Package for Social Sciences/Personal computer). The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis.

RESULT

The result of this research divided into 3 phases. 1. The result of personal data analysis of TNI students in table 1.

TABLE 1 The result of personal data analysis of TNI students

Sampling data	**No.**	**%**
1. Gender		
1.1 Male	247	58
1.2 Female	178	42
Total	**425**	**100**
2. Age		
2.1 19 years	105	24.71
2.2 20 years	133	31.29
2.3 21 years	115	27.05
2.4 22 years	72	16.95
Total	**425**	**100**
3. Academic year		

Sampling data	No.	%
3.1 First year	105	24.71
3.2 Second year	133	31.29
3.3 Third year	110	25.88
3.4 Fourth year	77	18.12
Total	**425**	**100**
4. Majors		
4.1 Automotive Engineering	66	15.53
4.2 Productive Engineering	40	9.41
4.3 Computer Engineering	51	12
4.4 Information Technology	67	15.76
4.5 Multimedia Technology	42	9.88
4.6 Business Information Systems	33	7.76
4.7 Industrial Management	49	11.54
4.8 Business Japanese	77	18.12
Total	**425**	**100**

2. The result of an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in table 2.

TABLE 2 Descriptive Statistics of an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in aspects and in total

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Curriculum	425	4.40	0.67	High
2. Teaching-learning process	425	4.48	0.53	High
3. Teaching materials	425	4.34	0.71	High
4. Instructors	425	4.58	0.51	High
5. Evaluation	425	4.39	0.76	High
6. Supporting resources	425	3.71	0.89	Moderate
Total	**425**	**4.32**	**0.68**	**high**

3. Content analysis of opinions and suggestions of TNI students for the assessment of satisfaction in learning English in table 3.

TABLE 3 Frequency and percentage of opinion and suggestion scores in learning English of TNI students

Opinions and suggestions in an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students	**No.**	**Freq**	**%**
1.Curriculum	**94**		
Opinions	54		
1. Contents in the textbook are suitable		31	32.98
2. Contents in curriculum can be used in daily life especially in reading part and vocabulary		23	24.47
Suggestions	40		
1. The curriculum in various dimensions should be organized and		30	31.91
2. The curriculum should be managed flexibly to learners' needs. Moreover, the supplementary materials should be done for enhance proficiency in instructions		10	10.64
2. Teaching –learning process	**113**		
Opinions	76		
1. Teaching –learning management is suitable		50	44.25
2. Pedagogical method is good and completes in all aspects		26	23.02
Suggestions	37		
1. Contents of lessons should be taught in order to lesson plans in course outline.		31	27.43
2.Learning in sound lab room should be provided more in instruction		6	5.30
3. Instructors	**137**		
Opinions	98		
1. Teachers are kind and fun		49	35.80
2. Thai teachers are friendly to students		32	23.36
3. Teachers provide good materials and exercises for students		17	12.40
Suggestions	39		
1. Foreign teachers should speak slowly		19	13.86
2. Teachers should take students to aboard		12	8.75
3. Teachers should come on time		8	5.83
4. Teaching materials	**81**		
Opinions	44		
1. Teaching materials are suitable to learners		36	44.44
2.Teaching materials are various		8	9.87
Suggestions	37		
1. New computer and modern equipments should be provided in the classroom.		19	23.45
2. Instrument and materials in teaching should be provided in self-access learning style		18	22.22
5. Evaluation	**73**		
Opinions	36		
1. Evaluation is appropriate for language learning		18	24.65

Opinions and suggestions in an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students	No.	Freq	%
2. There are evaluation in every unit		18	24.65
Suggestions	37		
1. The evaluation should be tested every skill		24	32.87
2. The evaluation should be various		13	17.83
6. Supporting resources	**124**		
Opinions	98		
1. Classroom environment is suitable for learning English language		78	62.90
2. Supporting resources are suitable for students in learning both in class and outside class		20	16.12
Suggestions	26		
1. Textbooks should be easier to be appropriate with level of learners.		16	12.92
2. Internet should be brought in teaching		10	8.06

DISCUSSION

The results of this research showed that the assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students was at high level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students was at high level on Curriculum, Teaching materials, Teaching-learning process, evaluation, and instructors, while in supporting resources was at a moderate level.

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in curriculum ($\bar{X}$=4.40), (S.D.= 0.67) was because contents of English subject cover all skills and support students in learning about language focus, sociolinguistics, syntax, and communi-cative strategies (Canale and Swain 1980:1). Moreover, contents of English course are important to learners' interesting and needs. So an effective learning process of individuals was dependant on 2 significant factors: learning environment and learning situation (Gagne and others, 1988: 14). Learner centered teaching demands active learning environments, guides learners to learn how to learn, recognizes differences in each learner, and creates different learning styles to meet the needs of each learner (Brooks & Brooks, 2001).

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in teaching-learning process ($\bar{X}$=4.48), (S.D.= 0.53) was because the TNI students were satisfied with activities or tasks in teaching-learning process because instructors focused on cognitive tasks indicated the procedural and declarative knowledge enabling strengthened through practice (Anderson, 2005).

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in teaching materials ($\bar{X}$=4.34) (S.D.= 0.71) was because College of General Education and Languages of TNI provided updated teaching materials for all students and the various multimedia materials were prepared for TNI students in practice listening skill and chatting with foreign teachers. Teachers emphasized environment in the classroom in English and provided the interesting topics to motivate all students in learning English. The students were taught happily (Rost 1994: 146).

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in instructors ($\bar{X}$=4.58), (S.D.= 0.51) was because the teachers emphasized the learner-centered approach and understood learning psychology of learners. The instructors were aware of the method to motivate the learners to learn as well as encourage the learners to respond to the needs to learn English subject. An effective learning process of individuals was dependent on 2 significant factors: learning environment and learning situation (Gagne and others 1988: 14). Moreover, the result of high satisfaction towards the instructors was because learners had the benefit of learning English, as second language, with both Thai and foreign teachers. The learners got used to practicing their English naturally in a form daily life speaking. This strategy supported the learners to learn English by coincidence because they emphasized on speaking for communication rather than rules of English language. Thus, the learners did not feel that they were learning English subject. However, the learners were able to be aware of the wrong use of English (Krashen 1987: 35-40). In addition, the role of instructors has shifted from transmitting knowledge to the new role of facilitating, guiding, or coaching. As a facilitator, the instructors incorporate and provide rich environments and learning experiences for collaborative learning (Sharp, 2006). Thus, the learning environment is more learner-centered as students are encouraged to construct meaning from their experiences in order to apply with the content (Huba & Freed, 2002).

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI students in evaluation ($\bar{X}$=4.39), (S.D.= 0.76) and in supporting resource) ($\bar{X}$=3.71), (S.D.= 0.89) were because the learners need new equipments and modern computers in the classroom to help their learning. Thus, the results were shown as a moderate level because evaluation and supporting resource were outdated so the learner centred approach emphasizes positive learning climate in every class and Teachers worke as the facilitators of learning (Penkhae Prachonpachanuk 2009), (Ministry of Education 2003).

CONCLUSION

An assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method for TNI undergraduate students as a whole was in high level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that an assessment of EFL classroom by using learner-centred method was at high level on curriculum, teaching-learning process, teaching materials, evaluation and instructors, while their satisfaction in supporting resources was at a moderate level. Moreover, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students had supplemental suggestions: to organize the curriculum to various dimensions and to manage flexibly to learners' needs in Curriculum, to teach in order to lesson plans in course outline and to organize more activities in Teaching-learning process, to use innovation materials for learners in Teaching Materials, to test every skill and to have variety of evaluation in Evaluation, to speak slowly for foreign teachers, to take students to aboard in some occasions, and to come on time in Instructors, and to teach how to do examination and to provide more modern computer and equipments in the classroom in Supporting resources.

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