

การศึกษาทัศนคติของนักศึกษาไทยระดับปริญญาตรีที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็น  
ภาษาต่างประเทศที่มีต่อการเรียนรู้แบบโครงงานเป็นฐาน  
ในการสอนทักษะการพูด

A Survey Study of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward  
the Use of Project-Based Learning in Teaching Speaking skill.

อาภาพรรัช เรืองกุล\*

Apapan Ruengkul

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจทัศนคติของนักศึกษาไทยระดับปริญญาตรีที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ที่มีผลต่อการเรียนรู้แบบโครงงานเป็นฐานในการสอนทักษะการพูด โดยมีนักศึกษาคณะมนุษยศาสตร์ ชั้นปีที่ 1 จำนวน 79 คน ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษพื้นฐานในปีการศึกษา 2560 เป็นกลุ่มผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย ซึ่งใช้แบบสอบถามในการเก็บข้อมูล โดยนำมาวิเคราะห์ตามหลักสถิติหาค่าเฉลี่ย และจากผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า กลุ่มผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัยมีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการเรียนรู้แบบโครงงานเป็นฐานในการสอนทักษะการพูด ทำให้สามารถสรุปได้ว่าการเรียนรู้แบบโครงงานเป็นฐาน เป็นหนึ่งในวิธีการที่มีประสิทธิภาพช่วยให้นักศึกษาสามารถพัฒนาทักษะการพูดและการทำงาน รวมถึงเพิ่มความมั่นใจให้กับตนเองได้ แต่อย่างไรก็ตามวิธีการนี้อาจใช้ระยะเวลายาวนานและอาจก่อให้เกิดความเครียดแก่นักศึกษาบางกลุ่มได้

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\* สาขาวิชาภาษาเพื่อการสื่อสาร (หลักสูตรนานาชาติ) คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

### Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate Thai EFL undergraduate students' attitudes toward the use of project-based learning in teaching speaking skill. The sample was 79 students from the Faculty of Humanities. They were the first-year university students who enrolled the English foundation course in 2017 academic year. A questionnaire was implemented as an instrument of this study. Descriptive statistics such as the mean scores were used to analyze the data. The results showed that students had positive attitudes toward the use of PBL in teaching speaking. PBL was an effective way to help students improve their speaking and working skills. Also, their self-confidence was added after completing the project work. However, although PBL yielded the good feedback, it was time-consuming and stressful for some students.

**Keywords:** Students' Attitudes, Thai EFL Undergraduate, Project-Based Learning, Speaking skill

## Introduction

Owing to the globalization, the Thai government puts an attempt to build and develop Thailand to become a first world nation. A new policy that the Thai government is trying to promote is Thailand 4.0. It is a new economic model aimed at avoiding catching in the trap of imbalance, middle income country, and income inequality. Thailand 4.0 is the model emphasizing on the concept of “doing less for more”. That is to say people need to create new innovations by using technology and creativity, and focus on trades in services (Royal Thai Embassy, n.d.). From this slogan, it is undeniable that one of the factors which can help Thailand to move forwards is education. Education is the key to help today’s students to be ready for the challenging work and complex society in the future, and the key to economic survival in the 21th century. Therefore, teachers should build students to have 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills consisting of creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, and collaboration (p.21, 2007). To boost students to master these skills, “Project-Based Learning” (PBL) is deemed an effective approach relevant to the concept of Thailand 4.0. Moreover, PBL can help students to have a chance to complete the real-work tasks such as interviewing foreigners and making a video, and is also appropriate for all levels of students starting from the beginning until the high levels (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). Therefore, this research has been conducted to investigate Thai EFL undergraduate students’ attitudes toward the use of PBL in teaching speaking skill. Hopefully, the results gained from this study can be the pathway and guideline for developing English instruction for the future course.

## Research objective

To investigate Thai EFL undergraduate students’ attitudes toward the use of PBL in teaching speaking skill.

## Methodology

This study is a survey research design which aimed at investigating Thai EFL undergraduate students’ attitudes toward the use of PBL in teaching speaking skill.

### 1. Population and sample

The population of the study was Thai EFL first-year undergraduate students who were from a public university in Bangkok in 2017 academic year. The sample was 79 students from the Faculty of Humanities studying the foundation English course.

### 2. Research instrument

A questionnaire using five-point likert scales: 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree was implemented for this research. It was adopted from the study of Siritaratn (2007). There were four main parts as the following:

1. The students’ opinions toward their success after taking the foundation English course focusing on speaking skill through the use of PBL.

2. The students' opinions toward the advantages and disadvantages of project work.

3. The students' opinions toward cooperative learning.

4. The students' additional comments and suggestions.

The evaluation criteria of the questionnaire are that 1.00-1.49 is strongly disagree. 1.50-2.49 is disagree. 2.50-3.49 is neutral. 3.50-4.49 is agree. 4.50-5.00 is strongly agree.

### 3. Data collection

After students had interviewed with foreigners, made their video, and given their oral presentation, they were asked to complete the questionnaire at the end of the course. Google drive was used to create the questionnaire for this study. Then, the researcher sent the link to all students in the classroom and translated it into Thai to assure that students could complete the questionnaire understandably. It took approximately 30 minutes to finish all statements and give additional comments.

### 4. Data analysis

Descriptive analysis using SPSS program was used to calculate and the data were presented in mean scores.

## Results

In this part, the results from the questionnaire are presented based on four aspects as mentioned above.

**Table 1** The students' opinions toward their success after taking the foundation English course focusing on speaking skill through the use of PBL

| Statements  | Mean | Level |
|---|------|-------|
| 1.1 I think I am able to improve my listening skill.                      | 3.87 | Agree |
| 1.2 I think I am able to improve my speaking skill.                       | 3.86 | Agree |
| 1.3 I think I am able to improve my speaking from doing the project work. | 3.77 | Agree |

Table 1 shows that with the mean scores of 3.87, 3.86, and 3.77 respectively, students agreed that PBL could help improve both listening and speaking skills. Also, students improved speaking skill from doing the project work.

**Table 2** The students' opinions toward the advantages and disadvantages of project work

| Statements  | Mean | Level   |
|---|------|---------|
| 2.1 Speaking or oral class is more interesting when applying project work instruction.    | 3.62 | Agree   |
| 2.2 Project work helps me improve my speaking skill better than learning from a textbook. | 3.86 | Agree   |
| 2.3 Project work method is time consuming.  | 3.51 | Agree   |
| 2.4 Project work encourages me to speak or interact in English with others.               | 3.96 | Agree   |
| 2.5 Project work encourages me to learn and practice English to communicate better.       | 4.06 | Agree   |
| 2.6 Project work increased my self-confidence in using English.                           | 4.01 | Agree   |
| 2.7 Project work increased my working skill.  | 4.15 | Agree   |
| 2.8 Project work experience is stressful.   | 3.93 | Agree   |
| 2.9 I am willing to accept project work as a way to learn speaking skill.                 | 3.72 | Agree   |
| 2.10 I prefer learning speaking by using a textbook.                                      | 3.20 | Neutral |

Table 2 indicated that students agreed that PBL made an English class more interesting. It provided opportunities for students to speak together with practice speaking English, and interact with their friends more. As a result, students' self-confidence was increased. Moreover, with the mean scores of 4.15, it proved that students could learn how to work with others. However, the project work took time to complete and also made students stressed according to the mean scores of 3.51 and 3.93 respectively. Lastly, students had neutral opinions toward learning speaking by using a textbook.

**Table 3** The students' opinions toward cooperative learning

| Statements  | Mean | Level   |
|---|------|---------|
| 3.1 I feel comfortable to participate in project work group discussion.                                       | 3.67 | Agree   |
| 3.2 I feel stressful when I discuss in groups at the beginning of the course.                                 | 3.10 | Neutral |
| 3.3 I feel stressful when I discuss in groups from the beginning of the course through the end of the course. | 2.96 | Neutral |

|  |      |          |
|--|------|----------|
| 3.4 I feel embarrassed to share my ideas with my group.                                | 2.51 | Neutral  |
| 3.5 I am frightened of group interactions because of my weak language skills.          | 2.94 | Neutral  |
| 3.6 I do not mind sharing my ideas with my group.                                      | 3.21 | Neutral  |
| 3.7 I improve my working skill when I work in groups in this course.                   | 3.82 | Agree    |
| 3.8 I prefer working in the same group or with the same friends.                       | 3.63 | Agree    |
| 3.9 My friends' and teacher's comments help me improve my speaking and working skills. | 4.10 | Agree    |
| 3.10 My friends give me some suggestions when working in group.                        | 3.86 | Agree    |
| 3.11 My friends blame me when working in group.  | 2.17 | Disagree |
| 3.12 My friends encourage me to improve my speaking skill.                             | 3.37 | Neutral  |
| 3.13 My friends help me to improve my speaking skill.                                  | 3.65 | Agree    |

According to table 3, it shows that students were satisfied with working and discussing with their same groups. They agreed that cooperative learning among friends together with suggestions from both a teacher and friends were the force to help them learn and work better. Besides, through the process of doing the project work, students were neutral. Also, they had neutral ideas toward the statements that they felt embarrassed to share ideas with their group, that they felt frightened of group interactions owing to their weak language skills, that they did not mind sharing their ideas with their group, and that their friends encouraged them to improve their speaking skill. Lastly, students disagreed that their friends blamed them when working in group.

**Table 4** The students' additional comments and suggestions

| Statements   | Mean | Level   |
|--|------|---------|
| 4.1 I think the group members should be changed after finishing the project.       | 3.06 | Neutral |
| 4.2 I think a teacher should be more involved in doing the project.                | 3.22 | Neutral |
| 4.3 I am able to apply doing the project gained from this course in other courses. | 3.69 | Agree   |
| 4.4 I will recommend this course to others.  | 3.58 | Agree   |

Table 4 shows that students had neutral perspectives toward changing group member after finishing the project and letting a teacher involve in doing the project.

In addition, students agreed to apply using PBL in other courses and recommended this course to others.

Regarding additional comments, students emphasized on good opportunities to work with their friends. The project work helped them learn to plan, discuss and share ideas in groups. In other words, they knew the meaning of “teamwork”. Moreover, they claimed that doing the project work made them fun, confident to speak English to others, and creative when doing their presentation in the video. They learned to understand the importance of the time, be responsible for their own duty, and solve any unexpected problems.

In conclusion, although PBL was time-consuming and stressful for students, they had positive attitudes toward the use of PBL in teaching speaking skills.

### Discussion and conclusion

Regarding the results from this study, it shows that students had positive attitudes towards the use of PBL in teaching speaking skill. It seemed that PBL could improve their speaking skills. The results were similar with the study conducted by Yang & Puakpong (2016), Rochmahwati (2015), Anuyahong (2015), and Marwan (2015). It proved that through the use of PBL, it could increase and promote students to have 21st century learning skills: creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. In terms of creativity and innovation, students were successful. They claimed that they could use their creativity fully to create their own video and presentation to submit a teacher. Next, regarding critical thinking and problem-solving, students could learn to solve the problems during the process of doing their project work, which helped them to understand the working life in the future. Regarding communication, students felt more confident to speak with foreigners and had more courage to show their speaking skills to others. Lastly, students could promote their collaborative learning. Almost all of students thought that they learned how to work with others. They understood how to be successful teamwork. Moreover, they loved to work together and learned each other.

Nevertheless, PBL has both advantages and disadvantages. The bad attitudes gained from this questionnaire were PBL was time-consuming (Frank, Lavy & Elata, 2003; Helle, Tynjala & Olkinuora, 2006) and stressful (Quido, 2016).

To sum up, it can be claimed that project work or project-based learning is an instructional approach that helps students to be ready to become students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and have potential for being Thais 4.0. Based on the results, it indicated that Thai EFL undergraduate students did not struggle with learning through the use of PBL. On the contrary, they were satisfied with this pedagogical method. It made students improve both speaking and

working. Also, their self-confidence and interaction with others were raised. Therefore, PBL should be promoted and integrated in language teaching and learning.

### **Recommendations**

For further research, researchers can conduct both quantitative and qualitative research to get an insight into Thai EFL undergraduate students' attitude towards the use of PBL in English language teaching and learning. Besides, researchers can conduct the study using two groups of students: experimental group and control group to investigate the effects of the use of PBL on English language teaching and learning.



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