

## **Chapter 5**

### **Methods & Procedure**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using task based learning and drama for students' communicative competence at Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University majoring in English at the Faculty of Education. Furthermore, it was to investigate student's perceptions towards learning English before and after using the task-based learning method and drama. The two objectives investigated were accomplished by means of a pre and post questionnaire and a pre-test post-test task deployed under rubric to test cognitive, communicative and educational compensatory components of strategic competence. In addition, two hypotheses were set. Firstly, student's communicative competence will be significantly higher in their post-test score than their pre-test score. Secondly, students will increase perceptions to a high level learning task based learning and drama. 34 students were selected by purposive sampling for the study. The data was collected and analysed using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, a non parametric test to investigate the effects of using task-based learning and drama for students' communicative competence and the relative hypothesis. Data relating to the investigation of the effects of using task-based learning and drama for students' communicative competence and testing the hypothesis of students gaining high level learning task-based learning and drama were analysed by T-test. The data collected from video footage corresponding to the rubric assessment was also checked by experienced PhD lecturers from Pibulsonkram Rajabhat University for triangulation purposes and reliability.

## Findings

The study revealed that from the data collected that students gained communicative competence at a higher level in their post-test scores from that of their pre-test scores. However, the cognitive indicators that were set under the rubric in the post-test analysis reported a non significant level of 4.00 in the mean scores for the drama task. The rubric's communicative indicators contrasted to the cognitive results by producing mean data at .00 significant levels. Moreover, educational compensatory levels also indicated levels of significance at .00 from the mean data received appertaining to the drama task. The post test mean scores increased to 3.7778 from the pre-test mean scores of 2.8889. Furthermore, the average minimum and maximum scores for the cognitive, communicative and educational compensatory indicators under the rubric all increased after the participants had completed the 8 week treatment of task-based learning and drama.

To conclude, the students improved their communicative competence after completing the course using task-based learning and drama. Task-based learning may improve various aspects of language learning and increase communicative competence in second language learners (Al-Olaimat, 2012). Drama creates student confidence, contextualises language, and helps students to find solutions to problems. (Almond, 2005). Results obtained from the data of 10 closed questions from the investigation about students 'perceptions towards learning English by using task-based learning and drama, tested by questionnaires reported positive results. An increase in post questionnaire mean scores to all of the 10 closed questions was recorded. Furthermore, the 4 open ended questions revealed a decrease in negativity towards learning English by using the task-based learning method and drama. Students reported an increase in confidence and a reduction in shyness, fewer concerns of presentation amongst peers, improvement of using verbal and non verbal strategies and using the appropriate vocabulary. Apprehensions regarding pronunciation of words were stipulated. Participants revealed they had no concerns about learning task-based learning and drama in the post questionnaire analysis. In conclusion, students improved their communicative competence after learning drama and task-based learning. Moreover, the

students significantly increased their perceptions towards learning task-based learning and drama after completing the course.

## **Discussion**

The research revealed numerous results appertaining to the participant's practical abilities by using task-based learning and drama as well as their mental attitude towards the learning process. It was observed that the pre-test drama task under the rubric that students lacked aspects of communicative competence. Students showed long pauses between utterances, displayed inappropriate non verbal strategies in relation to the task, certain aspects of shyness were apparent and a general lack of strategic competence. It is considered difficult for EFL adult learners to speak the target language fluently and appropriately (Shumin, 2002). The pre-test data showed that the participants displayed between fair and good levels in the communicative competence indicators. The post-test practical observation assessment signified an improvement after the participants had encountered the task-based learning and drama treatment. Students displayed more fluency in their utterances, increased confidence, showed greater self critical awareness and that of their peers; they had a greater understanding of appropriate non verbal strategies in relation to the task and an increase of strategic and communicative competence. These findings are supported by scholars that indicate drama has numerous benefits, particularly in speech development (Hamilton & Mcleod, 1993). Nonetheless, despite the signified positives in the majority of components in the observation process, the post-test data revealed an insignificant level of change from the cognitive indicators. There are possible factors as to why cognitive indicators were not significantly different. Some participants of the study reported elements of pressure from each task due to their time constraints, pressure for their course work scores and anxieties that they could lower the scores of their group if mistakes were frequent. Furthermore, it could be said native speakers tend to be more critical on the flow of language rather than the accuracy according to Skehan (Skehan,2009). Pradesh also indicates time as affecting cognitive indicators stating that difficulties in understanding the task, requires more time or more attention and resources, (Pradesh, 2015).

The data collected from the questionnaires yielded positive findings regarding student's perceptions of learning English under the treatment. Students indicated that their overall communicative competence had increased between the pre and post scores. The participants improved responses, flow, non verbal strategies, filling words, pronunciation, confidence, the ability to construct and use the appropriate language, collaboration skills and overall speaking ability due to task-based learning and drama. The increase in student's confidence is supported by Al-Olaimat's research on task-based learning where results concluded a 66% increase in student's confidence,(Al-Olaimat, 2012). The improvement in collaboration and stimulation of the learning process is supported by the findings from other scholars too, (Leaver and Willis, 2004). A few participants of the study still reported anxieties about performing tasks and forming critical assessment of their peers. A viewpoint reiterated by Tsui, (Tsui, 1996). The data collected from the participants of the study revealed perceptions of their speaking ability had improved which parallels the findings of Al-Olaimat's research where 80% of the student participants reported that they had felt an improvement of their abilities, (Al-Olaimat, 2012). Non verbal strategies were increased under the treatment of drama and task-based learning which is important in second language communicative competence. Gregerson indicates drama as a source of significance (Gregerson, 2007).

In conclusion, the research revealed that task-based learning and drama can improve various aspects of learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, it can be beneficial to students by particularly improving confidence and removing a certain amount of anxieties when performing a task in the English language. Moreover, students can improve their communicative confidence by using task-based learning and drama whilst gaining satisfaction by using this approach. Task based learning and drama can foster the progress in second language and foreign language learning process (Carson, 2012). Nonetheless, not every student can improve using this teaching method. A small minority of participants reported in the questionnaires and interviews that they still had problems appertaining to confidence to use English amongst their peers and native English teacher in the task and analysis stages.

Reservations about time constraints also were reported. From the two sets of data collected in relation to the research questions and hypotheses as well as the interviews of the participants there is a compelling amount of favourable evidence to suggest that task-based learning and drama has a positive effect on learning of the English language for year 3 English majors studying at the Faculty of Education at Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University.

### **Implications**

The research disclosed certain findings that could be investigated for further research or for teaching to an EFL or ESL classroom. For researchers, this study could be used for further research to find the effects of using task-based learning and drama in an EFL context to seek if its effects are positive. The results from the research yielded overall conclusive and positive results although in the component of cognitive indicators for the pre-test and post-test group task in drama, the results indicated an insignificant value. Moreover, further research may be conducted to the causes of such data values.

Teachers may also benefit from the research by interjecting aspects of using task-based learning and drama into English lessons to promote confidence, language building, collaboration, and critical thinking and analysis skills. Lesson plans devised for drama activities may be used in EFL and ESL classrooms and stimulate lessons that coincide with Thailand's educational objectives of communicative language teaching. Teachers who specifically teach English through drama may be able to seek beneficial approaches from the lesson plans by using tasks that can be adopted or adapted to their English lessons.

### **Conclusion**

There is an evident problem in Thai classrooms concerning students' communicative competence. Students have little self confidence to use English and it is possible that these fears increase in the presence of a native language speaker. Consequently, student's English communicative competence could be interpreted as

being relatively low. The deficiencies in confidence can be indicated by reduced sounds in utterances, pauses or delays in communicative tasks, speech breakdowns, stammers, silent periods or severe reductions in speech acts. The eight week treatment implemented for the research contributed to student development in numerous aspects. Firstly, student confidence gained in using the English language in front of their peers and native English language teacher. Students improved speech volume and reduced delays and speech breakdowns whilst adopting strategic competencies. The researcher identified significant progress in communicative tasks by students who previously had demonstrated insecurities and apprehensions in using the English language. Secondly, students reacted favourably to the task-based learning method and implied that the analysis stage from their peers and teacher created awareness of inaccuracies within their own speech acts and to that of their peers. Thirdly, students reflected positively towards the drama tasks and reported that the construction of those tasks generated new vocabulary. The drama tasks were said to be challenging and meaningful. Finally, the participants from the study declared an overwhelming positivity towards learning drama under a task-based framework.

The researcher believes that task-based learning combined with drama works effectively. However, the task-based framework may be difficult to use as a single teaching methodology for the duration of a term in other subjects and should be considered as a methodology for eclectic teaching methods. There is no single methodology of teaching that is suitable for every individual student as many scholars will state. Nevertheless, the researcher believes task-based learning could be used as a lone and valid method whilst teaching English through drama. Strategic competence can be increased by using task-based learning and drama.

### **Recommendations**

The research disclosed certain findings that could be investigated for further research. Whilst students gained overall communicative competence under the study, a minimal amount of students still had some confidence issues. A treatment of longer duration may reveal more comprehensive positivity and further increases in confidence.

The students were also under the scrutiny for grading with each task involved adding to extra anxieties. With the removal of the supplementary grading it may reveal a variation in the findings. Time scale for tasks also remained a concern for some participants so further studies may allow an increased time scale for the task based learning cycle. Data analysis revealed that cognitive indicators in the practical tasks of drama production were not significantly different and further research focusing specifically on student's cognitive indicators may give insight into detrimental factors that attribute to this.

There are minor recommendations for teachers that teach English through drama. Firstly, teachers should give a clear and defined understanding to the students about the full framework and their responsibilities of task-based learning and drama. Secondly, adequate time should be set aside for each of the tasks and the full task cycle. Thirdly, the teacher should remember to act as a facilitator and withhold from manipulating the student's tasks, although be ready to assist students when required. Finally, be aware of possible problems in groups, from tasks and being over critical to a point of destroying a student's confidence.