THE EFFECTS OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITY
ON GRADE 5 STUDENTS' VOCABULARY LEARNING

SUPRANEE CHUANGKAN

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AUTHOR MS. SUPRANEE CHUANGKAN

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE
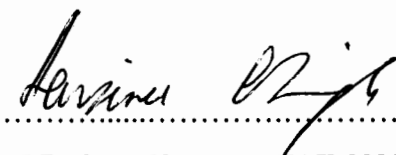
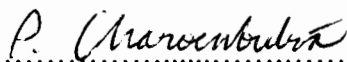DR. WACHIRAPORN KIJPOONPHOL   CHAIRPERSON

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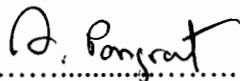
ASST. PROF. DR. APISAK PUPIPAT   MEMBER

ADVISOR

....

(DR. SAISUNEE CHAIMONGKOL)

....

(ASST. PROF. DR. PREEYAPORN CHAROENBUTRA)

DEAN, FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS

....

(ASSOC. PROF. DR. ARIYAPORN PONGRAT)

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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ผู้วิจัย	: สุปราณี จวงการ
ชื่อปริญญา	: ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาประสิทธิผลของกิจกรรมแลกเปลี่ยนข้อมูลที่ขาดหายไป ต่อการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ของนักเรียนในด้านของความหมายและการสะกดคำในระยะสั้นและระยะยาว และเพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อกิจกรรมดังกล่าว กลุ่มทดลองในงานวิจัยนี้ คือ นักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5 โรงเรียนบ้านม่วงนาดี จังหวัดอุบลราชธานี จำนวน 40 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในงานวิจัยครั้งนี้คือ แบบทดสอบก่อนเรียน แบบทดสอบหลังเรียน แบบสอบถามความคิดเห็น แบบสังเกต และการบันทึกวีดีโอ แบบทดสอบก่อน และหลังเรียนเป็นชุดเดียวกัน ให้นักเรียนเขียนแปลคำทั้งหมด จากภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ และ ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาไทย โดยแบบทดสอบก่อนเรียนมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อตรวจสอบคำศัพท์ที่นักเรียนไม่ทราบมาก่อน จำนวน 40 คำ เพื่อใช้ในงานวิจัย นักเรียนทำแบบทดสอบหลังเรียนหลังจากได้เรียนรู้คำศัพท์ผ่านกิจกรรมแลกเปลี่ยนข้อมูลที่ขาดหายไป ซึ่งออกแบบโดยผู้วิจัยเป็นเวลา 10 ชั่วโมง แล้วทดสอบซ้ำอีกครั้งใน 1 เดือนต่อมา คะแนนที่ได้ถูกนำมาเปรียบเทียบโดยใช้ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่า SD และค่า t-test

ผลการวิจัยพบว่ากิจกรรมแลกเปลี่ยนข้อมูลที่ขาดหายไป มีส่วนช่วยในการจดจำคำศัพท์ได้ในระยะสั้น และระยะยาวทั้งในส่วนของความหมายของคำศัพท์ และการสะกดคำในระดับเล็กน้อย อย่างไรก็ตาม นักเรียนมีความเห็นด้วยตรงกันว่ากิจกรรมแลกเปลี่ยนข้อมูลที่ขาดหายไปมีผลดีต่อการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ จากการสังเกตยังพบว่า กิจกรรมแลกเปลี่ยนข้อมูลที่ขาดหายไปสร้างโอกาสให้เพื่อนช่วยเพื่อนระหว่างทำกิจกรรม และส่งผลดีต่อความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างครูและนักเรียน อันจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษต่อไป

ABSTRACT

TITLE   : EFFECTS OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES ON
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AUTHOR   : SUPRANEE CHUANGKAN
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ADVISOR : SAISUNEE CHAIMONGKOL, Ph. D.
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This study investigated the effects of information gap activities on grade 5 students' vocabulary learning in terms of word meaning and spelling. The research also looked at students' opinions on learning through information gap activities. The participants were 40 grade 5 students at Banmuangnadee School, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The research instruments were a pre-test, immediate and delayed post-tests, questionnaire, observation form, and videotape recording. The pre- and post-tests were the same test that required the students to translate 40 unknown words from English into Thai and Thai into English. The students took the pre-test, the purpose of which was to identify unknown vocabulary items to study. They were then taught the target words thorough information gap activities, designed by the researcher over a period of 10 hours. The post-test and questionnaire were completed immediately after the treatment, and the delayed post-test was completed one month later. The pre- and post-tests scores were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and paired t-test. Results revealed that the information gap activities helped the fifth graders to learn the meanings and spellings of the target words in the short-term and long-term to a small extent. The students strongly agreed with the use of the information gap activities in learning vocabulary. It was also observed that these kinds of activities created peer teaching situations and built a good relationship between the teacher and students, thus benefiting their language learning.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the rationale, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Rationale

It has been commonly known that English is one of the most important languages in the world. It serves as an international language which is a tool for people around the world to communicate with one another. Also, English works as a lingua franca used among people who speak different languages (Harmer, 2001). As a result, English can be considered vital for business, education and tourism across nations. In Thailand, English is required for all students from the primary to the tertiary educational level where students are expected to be able to communicate fluently in all the four skills which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. However, to acquire the four needed skills, vocabulary is an essential language component which should never be ignored because the vocabulary knowledge affects the quality of the four skills of learners. For example, learners can be confused by the unknown keywords during the listening or reading practice, which then leads to unexpected misunderstanding of messages.

In the past, language classes generally emphasized grammar and vocabulary, using drills, exercises and memorization efforts (Brown, 1994). Moreover, Thornbury (2002) mentioned that the words taught in the classroom were likely to be selected according to the fact that they were easily demonstrated and fit the grammar of the day. Later, in the 1970s when the communicative approach was introduced, dictionaries and phrase books also provided communicative uses of words (Thornbury, 2002). The notion of vocabulary was broadened and it contained not simply words, but also phrases and their functions in order to serve communicative tasks (Brown, 1994; Richards and Renandya, 2002).

Due to the increasing realization of words' importance, later on in many textbooks, words were presented in a separated section together with pronunciation and meaning in pictures or descriptions (Thornbury, 2002).

Despite the importance of vocabulary, teaching and learning vocabulary in a second or subsequent language is challenging. Two challenges identified by Thornburry (2002) are (1) helping students create the correct connection between form and meaning in the target language, including discriminating the close meaning of the related words, and (2) helping students to be able to use the correct form of word as intended. He further suggested that to overcome those challenges, the students need to acquire sufficient words in order to comprehend and produce language, to be able to retain and recall words promptly, and to have strategies for dealing with the unknown words or unfamiliar uses of those words.

As generally accepted, new words are difficult to remember, recall and retain in long term memory. Consequently, many vocabulary teaching and learning techniques or strategies have been proposed and recommended to be initially introduced to the students in order to facilitate their vocabulary learning, especially when they come across unknown words. Some well-known techniques are semantic mapping, word association, guessing from context, keyword method, and vocabulary notebook (Decarrico, 2001). Semantic mapping is an activity that helps learners draw relationship among the target words in a text. By creating an associative diagram of the target words, they can deeply understand those words. The next technique is word association which requires students to match or associate words which share something in common or are of the same type. The meaning of a word depends on its relationship to similar words in the student's mind. Guessing from context, another effective technique, helps students use the context clue to guess the meaning of a word. This technique works well when dealing with low-frequency vocabulary, especially in reading authentic texts (Decarrico, 2001). The keyword method is a mnemonic technique which links a word form and its meaning with something similar in a certain aspect to make it more memorable. To exemplify, the learners first choose an L1 word that is phonologically or orthographically similar to the target word. Then, they create an association between the chosen keyword and the target word so that they will be reminded of the target word when hearing or seeing the key word. Kasper

(1993, cited in Decarrico, 2001) illustrated an example of the keyword technique to learn the Spanish word '*payaso*'("clown"), by linking it with the English word 'pie'. The association between the target Spanish word (payaso) and the English keyword (pie) is done by thinking of a clown throwing a pie at a friend. Another example provided by Angsirikulthumrong (1994, cited in Seelakun, 2008), is when Thai learners learn the target word 'council'. The keyword in L1 (Thai) is 'ข้าวสาร' ('khoa san') which has similar pronunciation to 'council'. Students could imagine a group of people meeting with a pile of uncooked rice on the table. The last technique suggested by Decarrico (2001) and Thornbury (2002) is a vocabulary notebook. Through this technique, learners wrote down word meanings, uses, word pairs, semantic map of new words and its frequency of use in their notebook which is a memory aid for an independent learning.

All of the above mentioned techniques are believed to be effective, and applying any of them in the classroom can help learners enlarge their vocabulary size in order to comprehend the target language and use the four skills effectively.

According to The Basic Education Core Curriculum A.D. 2008 of Thailand, students are expected to be able to use vocabulary appropriately in various communicative situations, and the number of vocabulary items that students should acquire by the age of 9 is 300-450 and 1050-1200 by the age of 12, based on the foreign language curriculum of Thailand. As a result, sets of vocabulary are usually introduced to the students in the beginning of the language class before exposing them to other skills. However, based on the researcher's experience of English teaching, it often happens that students forget the words which they learnt in the previous lessons, so the teacher has to take time reviewing them in the following.

In addition, it is commonly found that most of the English lessons in textbooks used in Thai classroom provide vocabulary exercises through reading and writing tasks rather than communicative tasks unlike what the national curriculum expects. Furthermore, according to the researcher's teaching experience, most English classrooms in Thailand still apply the traditional ways of teaching vocabulary such as chalk and talk, drilling, memorization, and using dictionary. This can be because the traditional vocabulary teaching method is convenient and easy to manage. However, although the traditional ways of language teaching are well-known and widely used,

they do not serve communicative purposes where interactions in the target language between students are the main focus (Nunan, 1991 cited in Brown, 1994). Additionally, the traditional ways of vocabulary teaching seem not interesting for young children at the primary level. So the researcher is interested in using the communicative tasks to teach vocabulary in order to meet the goals and expectation of education policies that encourage language teachers to implement more communicative tasks.

An interesting communicative task that is highly recommended in communicative classroom is an information gap activity. Harmer (2001:85) notes that "...a key to the enhancement of communicative purpose and the desire to communicate is the information gap". The information gap activity used in the communicative classroom is different from a traditional way of information exchange where a pair of learners both know the answers to the questions because they have the same information in hand such as the same pictures, time tables, or texts, so it is not like real communication. The effective information gap activity recommended by Harmer (2001) contains the "gap" or "missing" information which a learner has to ask another for. In terms of communicative purposes, several studies reveal that the information gap activity helps students effectively learn English. Specifically, it helps students improve their speaking skill and promote students' confidence (Kwangyoo 2008; Pimsri 2004; Poomsaidorn 1997; Setjun 2012; Thanomwattana 2008). Evidently, most of the studies on the effectiveness of the information gap activity mainly focus on speaking skills. As far as the researcher knows, the use of the information gap activity to enhance vocabulary learning has not been conducted although it has been suggested by Thornbury (2002).

In order to serve the national language learning policy in applying communicative tasks in the classroom and in an attempt to find an effective vocabulary teaching technique, the researcher intends to investigate whether and how much such a communicative task as the information gap activity can promote vocabulary learning in young learners as grade fice students at the researcher's school.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1.2.1. To what extent do information gap activities help grade five students at Banmuangnadee school learn and memorize vocabulary in both short and long terms (if any)?

1.2.2. What are the students' opinions on vocabulary learning through information gap activities?

1.3 Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study were to investigate the extent to which information gap activities helped grade five students learn and retain new vocabulary in both short term and long term, and to find out the opinions of the students on the use of information gap activities as practice tasks during the treatment.

1.4 Significance of the study

The result of the study might assist language teachers in deciding whether information gap activities should be used for vocabulary teaching in their English class. Moreover, it might imply whether the communicative task could be effectively used for vocabulary teaching.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was conducted at Banmuangnadee School, Ubon Ratchathani Province during the second semester of academic year 2016. The subjects of the study were 46 students from two grade five classes. All of them were 11 years old. The information gap activity was taught equally for both classes, but at different time based on the school teaching schedule. The researcher-designed information gap activity was given to the students twice a week and this lasted for five weeks or ten hours. The researcher was the only one who taught and provided the activities.

The 40 target vocabulary words used in the study were selected from the two text books - Smile 5 and Smile 6, which are for students in grades five and six respectively. In this study, the 40 target words are under five topics, or units,

including vehicles, places, illnesses, sports, and characteristics, eight words each. The words' meaning and spelling were the focuses of the study.

1.6 Definitions of key terms

The terms that need defining are as follows:

An information-gap activity refers to an activity in which each student has some missing information which s/he has to find out in order to complete the task through controlled language models.

Vocabulary learning refers to the ability to recognize the meaning and spelling of the target words.

Short term refers to the ability to memorize the target vocabulary including meaning and spelling immediately after the treatment.

Long term refers to the ability to memorize the target vocabulary including meaning and spelling a month after the treatment.

The next chapter will describe topics related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides background information relevant to the topic of the study, including the importance of vocabulary in language learning, vocabulary teaching strategies, role of memory in language learning, information gap principle, and the previous relevant studies.

2.1 Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning

Vocabulary is a core component of a language, and the first step of learning any language is learning words. Vocabulary knowledge provides basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Without the sufficient number of words and appropriate strategies for acquiring new vocabulary, it is hard for learners to become successful and to make use of language in the real situation (Renandya, 2003). In other words, enough words in the target language can result in communication such as in listening comprehension (Chuenjit, 2011) and reading comprehension (Kezhen, 2015; Folse, 2004).

In terms of communication, Brown (1994) states that in every language, words are basic building blocks, and survival communication can be carried on when people simply string words together. Furthermore, Decarrico (2001) ensures that vocabulary of a language and vocabulary learning are crucial for first, second, and foreign languages. Lexical competency of a person is the heart of acceptable communicative competence. It, therefore, can be concluded that vocabulary is a crucial element for communication. All in all, Wilkinson (1972, cited in Thornbury, 2002:13) points out that 'Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed'.

In terms of language learning, educators have been interested in vocabulary teaching and learning. Thornbury (2002) claims the development of vocabulary plays an important role in language acquisition. It is noticeable that vocabulary is treated as

a separate part in each unit or lesson, not just a supplement part of the book as before. The words of the unit have been carefully selected by considering the following features: words' collocation, their frequency, and their uses. In Thailand, many textbooks used in primary and secondary levels normally provide new vocabulary or new phrases at the beginning of the lesson before the language models are introduced. This shows that introducing vocabulary of the lesson first can help students easily get through the skill practice and can prevent students from struggling with unknown words.

It is obviously seen that words are important for every language and the number of words students acquire can affect their success in language learning as well as communication. This can be said that the more vocabulary students acquire, the better it helps their language learning. Therefore, this research is intended to investigate how to teach vocabulary more effectively through communicative practice which is using the information gap activity.

2.2 Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

It is known that appropriate vocabulary teaching strategies help students improve their learning and increase their vocabulary size. Many scholars have reviewed vocabulary teaching and learning strategies as follows.

Brown (1994) suggests some tips for the communicative vocabulary instructions. He recommended that the teacher should first allocate specific class time to vocabulary learning and pay attention to the target words. Second, the teacher should help students learn vocabulary in context because vocabulary internalization works best when students see and try to understand the vocabulary in context. Once the students understand the meaning from the surrounding context, they can understand the new word in the same context by association. Third, the teacher should reduce the use of bilingual dictionaries in class because that rarely helps them internalize the word for recall and use. In addition, students should be encouraged to develop strategies for guessing the meaning of words.

Similarly, Decarrico (2001) claims that a new word should be shown not in isolation but in the context which is rich enough to help students to guess its meaning. In addition, words should be presented in enough amount of time in order to allow

students to memorize them. Teachers should also provide a wide variety of activities and practice such as learning words through word association list, highlighting words in text or playing vocabulary games. Decarrico (2001) also proposes three famous vocabulary teaching techniques which are semantic mapping, word association, and word family. Semantic mapping helps learners create relationships among words in the reading text and facilitates them in understanding more about the text because learners have to draw a diagram which shows the relationship between words. He claims that it is more like "vocabulary network" which creates semantic associations that help learners learn more. Another is word association that requires students to match or associate words which share something in common or are of the same type. A clear example of word association is provided by Thornbury (2002) as shown in figure 2.1.
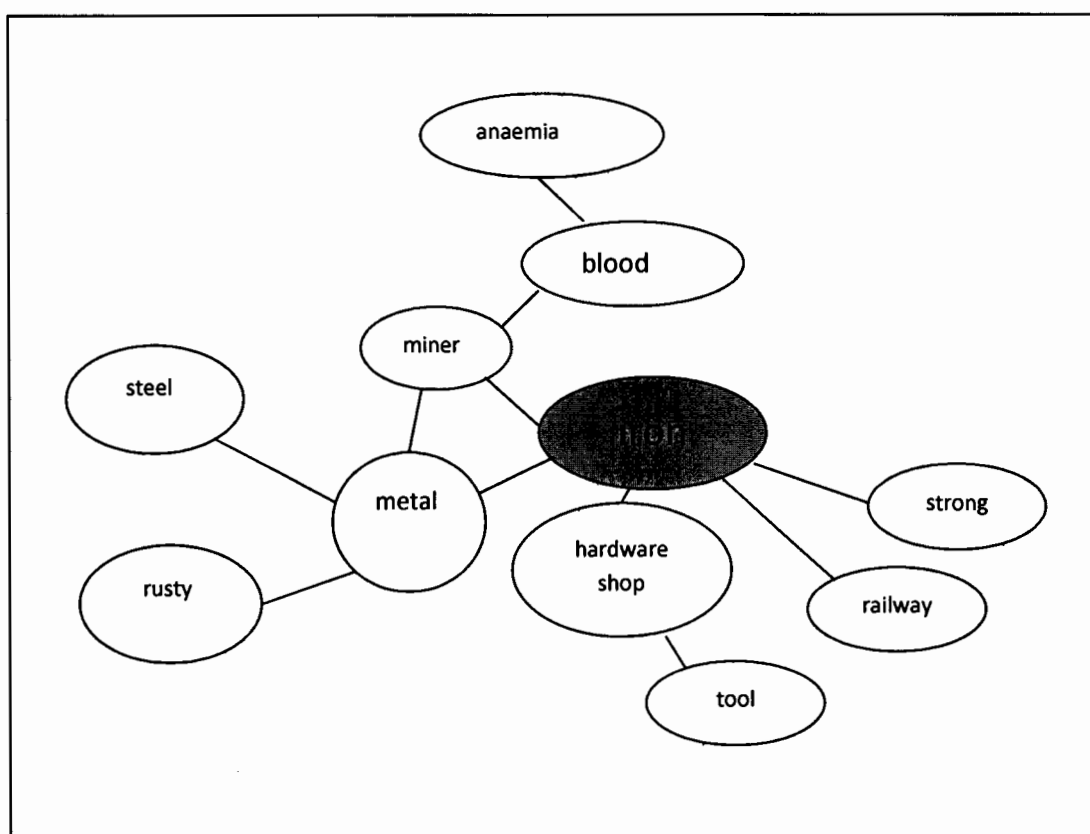

Figure 2.1 The example of association network
Source: Thornbury (2002: 89)

The last is the word family technique by which the teacher presents word family to learners along with their base forms and derivational word. An example of word family is act, action, active, actively, actor, etc. Thornbury (2002) mentions some vocabulary teaching techniques that the teacher can train learners to use. As a teacher, a major role should be motivating learners to be involved in vocabulary learning and taking vocabulary seriously along with giving them the idea about how to learn effectively. Learners can be trained by using the following techniques. The first technique is the keyword technique, one of the mnemonic techniques, which involves creating in learners' mind an image which is connected to the pronunciation of the focused L2 word. Creating keywords takes time and needs to be trained. So when teaching new words, the teacher may ask students to try to figure out keyword by themselves. This can help them get familiar with the technique and help some students who have troubles with picturing in their head and have them try more. Another suggested technique is using word cards. It requires students to write L2 word on one side of the card and its meaning in L1 on the other as the example below and then practice memorizing the word.

Front   Back

run   วิ่ง
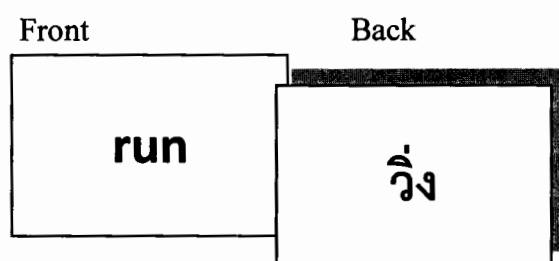
Figure 2.2 The example of using word card (English-Thai)

The next technique is guessing from the context which refers to the ability to guess the meaning of an unknown word from the surrounding text. Guessing the meaning of unknown words is one of the most useful skills that students can use inside and outside the classroom. Thornbury (2002:.149) provides an example of guessing from the context as demonstrated below:

a) It was a very cold day so I put a _tribbet_ round my neck.

Tribbet must mean scarf, because it is something you put round your neck when it's cold.

Using dictionary is another technique recommended by Thornbury (2002). Students should be trained to use dictionary effectively. Dictionaries can be the useful resource for the students if they can access the information in the dictionary speedily and accurately.

Thornbury (2002) also suggested that students should be taught spelling rules because knowing the rules of spelling can facilitate their vocabulary learning. Since there are many words in English that do not sound like the way they are written, teaching them rules of spelling can equip them with a handy tool when they write. And rules of spelling can help the students figure out the pronunciation of a new word when reading. Another suggested technique is keeping records. It is recommended that a student use an extra note book to record new words as a memorandum. The example of keeping records is shown below.
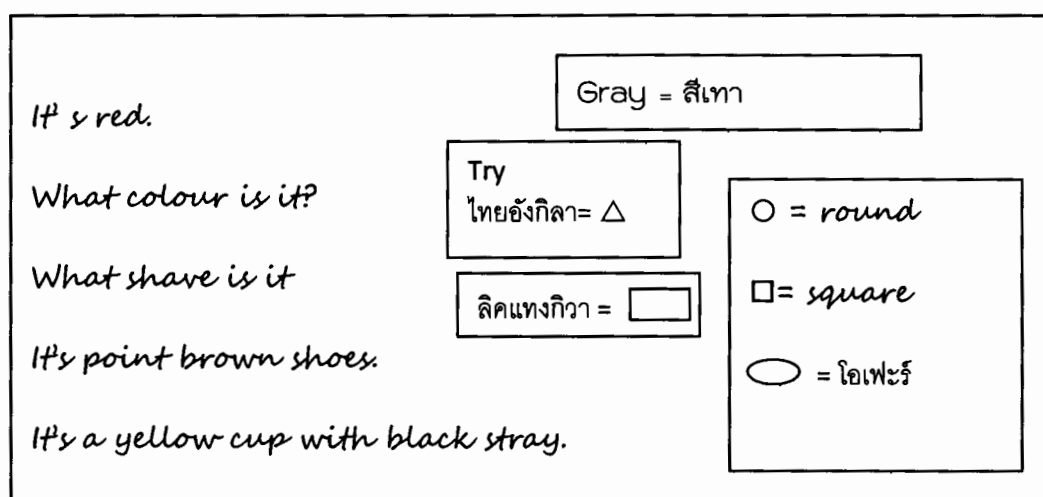
Figure 2.3 The example of keeping record

Source: Thornbury (2002: 157)

It is widely accepted that there is no single perfect method or technique that best suits every classroom and lesson. The teacher should be able to choose the most appropriate one or use more than one method which matches the students and classroom setting (Littlewood, 2007). So, it is the teacher's responsibility to find out what students need to understand in order to acquire words (Janenoppakarn, 2009). It is hypothesized for this study that the information gap activity will be a language task

which facilitates vocabulary acquisition along with communication skills among young EFL students.

2.3 The Role of Memory in Language Learning

Memory plays a vital part in second language learning since learning requires memory retention. Without memory, there is no learning (Harmer, 2001). Learning a language is learning of a large load of vocabulary and other features of a language; therefore, it requires a great memory for remembering these features (Thornbury, 2006).

According to Thornbury (2006), there are three systems of memories which are sensory, short term, and long term. Sensory memory lasts for only few seconds. It is a kind of echo or visual impression. Short term memory, or working memory, can hold information temporarily with limited capacity while the long term memory is greater in capacity with permanent information holding. In addition, the information can transfer from working memory into long term memory. The information or knowledge that moves into the long term part of memory can be recalled easily for weeks and years, and it seems beneficial for the students if they can store the knowledge taught by the teacher into the long term one as much as possible. However, the knowledge in the long term may decay if there is no retrieval and use. This means that the more the knowledge is recalled and used, the easier it is to be accessed and moved into the long term part (Thornbury, 2006).

The students store and retrieve information through memory, and the ability to recognize and retrieve information stored in memory correlates with the ability to understand and to produce spoken and written language (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, cited in Seelakun, 2008). However, Thai students still have problems keeping information in the long term memory. This may be because of insufficient practice and exposure of the target language. In order to benefit the students' language learning, the teachers need to plan a variety of activities that help knowledge to transfer from short term into the long term and encourage students to store words they have learnt so that they can recall and use them when needed (Bradsford, 1992 cited in Duadsuntia, 2008).

2.4 Information gap principle

2.4.1 The information gap

The information gap principle is well known and widely mentioned among communicative language practice (Littlewood, 2013; Thornbury, 2006). It refers to the communication between the listener and the speaker in a situation that contains a gap or the missing parts of the information, which each participant possesses, and known by either of the speakers (Li, 2015; Liao, 1997). In order to reach the goal of communication, those missing parts of information need to be completed through orally exchanging process (Fallahi et al., 2015). In short, it can be claimed that the major principle of the information gap involves the exchange of information between the speaker and the listener in order to complete a gap which means the missing information. It usually includes an interaction with negotiation for meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Thornbury, 2006). The negotiation is for checking comprehension and repairing the language used during interaction in order to achieve effective communication and to avoid misunderstanding.

The information gap activity in this study is designed based on the information gap principle, and it contains the following 4 features. First, the activity has to be set as a pair work or small group task where students work collaboratively. Second, the task designed contains a 'gap' which refers to some missing information that each person in a pair needs to find out in order to achieve the goal of the task. Third, the task allows chances for an interactive communication between the speakers. Lastly, there is some information shared or exchanged between the speaker and the listener.

2.4.2 The advantages of information gap activity

As claimed by Hedge (2000), the information gap activity reflects the real life communication where people communicate for the information they do not know or are curious to know. Also, chances of real communication can happen during the practice when students try to gain information by using their background linguistic knowledge and communicative strategies (Richards, 2006). This shows that the information gap activity can benefit language learning by allowing students to retrieve and use vocabulary and language taught in class communicatively. Next, it provides opportunity for negotiating and repairing language, which brings about opportunity for

language learning. It also increases students' talking time and speaking turns, and the information gap activity has been proven to help promote speaking ability (Cloutier, 1999; Nanthaboot, 2012; Pimsri, 2004; Skuse, 2012). Moreover, the information gap activity creates positive attitudes and better relationship among the teacher and students. Plus, it increases students' confidence in using the target language to communicate. It also meets the students' satisfaction and arouses their interest since they think the activity is fun and challenging (Poomsaidorn, 1997; Sarobol, 1989; Thanomwattana, 2008). Finally, Thornbury (2002) points out that the information gap activity can involve students in terms of collaborative working and peer- teaching in which a stronger student can help a weaker one on an unclear point in order to reach the goal of the activity.

In summary, the information gap activity is a communicative task which can enhance students' communicative competence, particularly on the speaking skill. Moreover, it meets students' interest and creates positive attitudes among students on language learning. Therefore, it is believed that the information gap activity is suitable for communicative language classroom practice.

2.4.3 Examples of the activities based on information gap principle

There are examples of activities based on the information gap principle which are provided by Hedge (2000). The first example requires students to work in pairs and think of reasons, based on the given information, before completing the information charts or worksheets. It is called reasoning gap such as completing teacher's teaching schedule based on timetables given. Another example is opinion gap, which involves personal preferences and feelings to a given situation such as a story completion and a social issue discussion. The important feature for this activity is there is no justification, right or wrong, on individual opinions. It allows students to propose different opinions and exchange how they feel about the given situation.

The next following examples of information gap activities are provided by Harmer (1986, cited in Sarobol, 1989). The example in figure 2.4 requires students to tell the missing names of places. Students A and student B have the same map which contains different missing names of buildings or places in town. Student A has the buildings which student B does not have and vice versa. They have to ask their partner for the missing buildings or places.

Student A's map   Student B's map
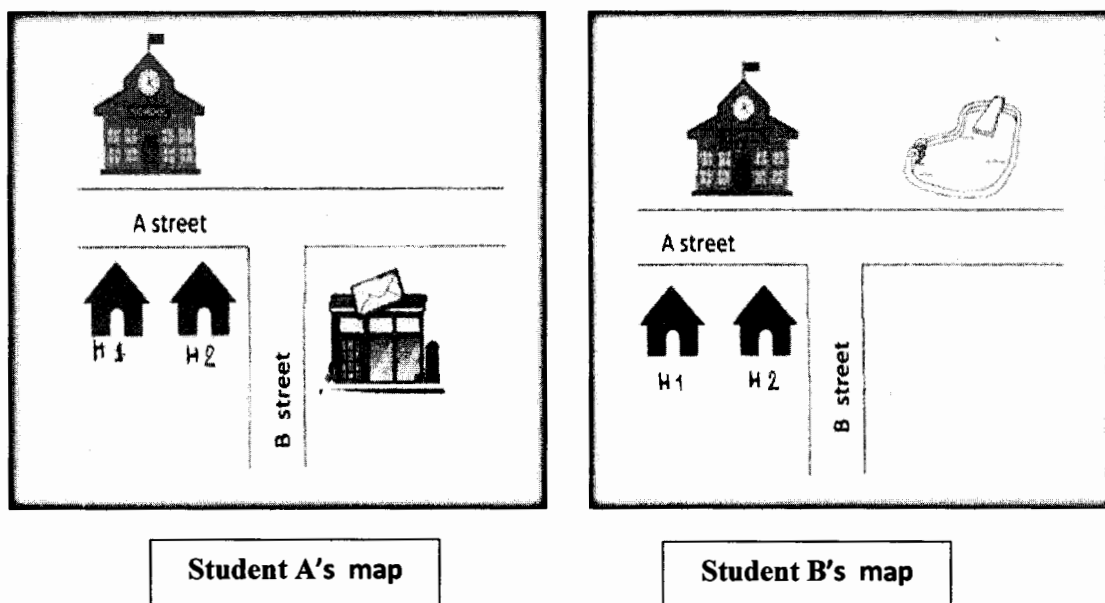
Figure 2.4 Example 1 of information gap activity

Another example requires students to ask their partners about their personal preferences, and then complete the table. To complete this activity, students have to exchange information about their preferences about the film types.

Me		Film types	My friend	
Like	Dislike		Like	Dislike
✓		Westerns films		
	✓	Historical films		
✓		Cartoons		
✓		Space films		
	✓	Horror films		
	✓	Musical films		

Figure 2.5 Example 2 of information gap activity

The third example is finding the target words through completing the puzzle grid. The students work in pairs. Each of them holds different sets of statement cues. They both have the same puzzle grid to work with. In order to complete the grid, they

have to figure out the answers from the statements cues, and then exchange the answers with their pair by using the target language.

| **Student A's statement cues**	**Student B's statement cues**
Your partner has another set of cues.	Your partner has another set of cues.
Fill in the crossword together	Fill in the crossword together
Across	Across
6. Is there ……… in there for me?	3. It tells the time.
8. I've been hurrying,	7. Young woman.
so I am out of……	11. A holiday place.
14. I'll do it if I'm………	16. Students do it.
15 You do it to a story.	
Down	Down
4. You need them on when it is dark.	1. It lives in the sea.
5. I'll meet you on the ………	2. Not less.
10. Said yes.	9. A kind of animal.
13. Not short.	12. Not closed
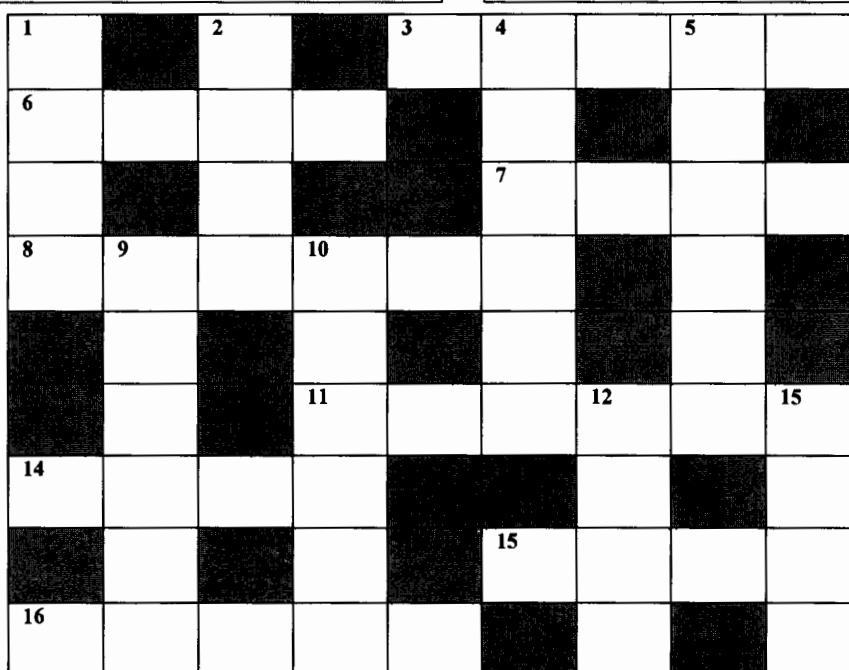
Figure 2.6 Example 3 of information gap activity

The next example, suggested by Thornbury (2002), aims to exchange information about the picture details. Each person of a pair has the same picture with some different kitchen tools. They have to spot the differences between the two pictures.
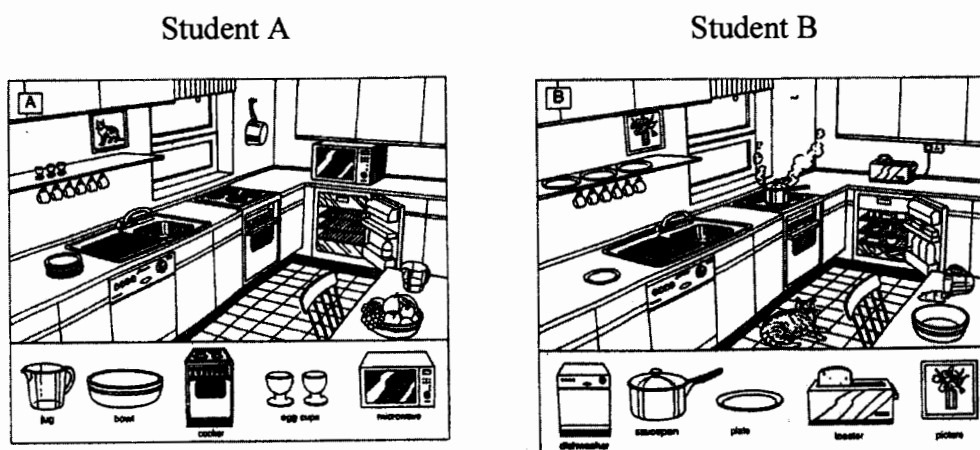
Student A   Student B

Figure 2.7 Example 4 of information gap activity
Source: Thornbury (2002: 90)

It can be seen from the examples above that the information gap activity is communicatively designed since it requires students to talk and interact with their partner a lot. It also arouses students' interest and curiosity to find the answers which they do not have and to reach the goal of the task. Applying the information gap activity into vocabulary teaching allows chances for recycling the target words and for practicing them in the given situations.

2.5 Previous studies

Information gap activities can benefit language learning by allowing students to use the language model taught in class communicatively. Some studies concern increasing turns of speaking, repairing language, and facilitating speaking ability. Some of the studies that were conducted in other EFL setting rather than Thailand are presented below.

The information gap task was used in the study of Schroen (1993) who investigated learners' comprehension across the various classroom settings. The four information gap tasks of listening comprehension tests were given to the subjects under three different classroom settings which were teacher–fronted whole class, open

whole class (teacher is not available to provide assistance), and pair work. It was found that there is no significant difference across the settings for listening comprehension. This could be implied that no matter what classroom setting was, the information gap activity could be effective for language learning.

Cloutier (1999) studied the effect of task types on the interactional discourse of non-native speaker and non-native speaker pairs. The information gap task was one of the activities used in the study which are jigsaw, information-gap, problem-solving, decision-making, and opinion-exchange tasks. The results of the study revealed the significant differences between those tasks and there was the greatest number of opportunities for negotiated interaction between students through information gap task. As a result, the information gap task gave opportunity for learners to negotiate and interact with others, and that reflected real life communication.

The information gap task was also used in Skuse's study (2012). It was a conversational analysis aiming to investigate the EFL students' learning opportunity while performing the information gap tasks. In the study, students' discourses were analyzed. One of the interesting results was the talk-in-interaction within the information gap tasks provided opportunity for negotiation and repairing language which brought about opportunity for language learning.

In Thailand, there were research studies that focused on the use of the information gap activity in order to enhance students' speaking ability as follows.

The study of Sarobol (1989) who studied the effectiveness of using information gap principle to improve students' language achievement, Poomsaidorn (1997) and Thanomwattana (2008) developed communicative models by using information gap principle and then compared their effectiveness with teaching through teacher's manual. They all found that the information gap activity resulted in students' higher achievement and led to higher learning outcomes than learning through the teacher's manual. Also, the students were satisfied with the activity and thought the activity was challenging and served communicative language learning (Sarobol,1989). Moreover, the information gap activity created better relationship between the teacher and the students and provided chances for students to speak and encouraged them to speak more fluently (Poomsaidorn, 1997).

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research method used in the study. It includes subjects, duration of the study, research instruments, research procedures, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were all the students in the two grade five classes at Banmuangnadee School, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Class 5/1 consisted of 22 students while class 5/2 comprised 24 students. Both classes were taught by the researcher. The 5/1 class consisted of 15 boys and 7 girls, and the 5/2 consisted of 10 boys and 14 girls. All of the subjects were 11 years old. They took English 15101, which was the main English course, during the second semester of the academic year 2016. Their English proficiency was very low. They knew some simple words such as school objects and some animals. They could speak some simple sentences which are related to their school life such as how to greet or thank people.

Unfortunately, six of the students did not have perfect attendance because of their health problems, so they were not counted in the study, so the total of the subjects in this study was 40.

3.2 Duration of the Study

The whole study took 13 hours. The first hour was for pretesting, and the treatment lasted 10 hours, twice a week, totaling 5 weeks. Two more hours were for the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest. The immediate posttest was given at the end of the treatment and the delayed posttest was administered a month later. The study was done under the regular school teaching schedule during the second semester of academic year 2016.

3.3 Research Instruments

The research instruments included the following:

3.3.1 Pretest and posttest

The pretest and the posttest were the same test, but they were used for different purposes. The pretest aimed to check whether the 40 selected words were unfamiliar to the subjects, and measured their word knowledge at the same time whereas the posttest intended to find out the effectiveness of vocabulary learning through the information gap activities. Both were translation tests requiring the students to translate the 40 target words from English into Thai to study their meaning learning and Thai into English to investigate their spelling ability. (See appendix B.)

The 40 target words were chosen from the textbooks "Smile 5 and Smile 6", which the students used at school. They were nouns and adjectives which were content words. Generally, noun and adjective are the most frequently found parts of speech in the textbooks (Nuemaihom, 2009). According to Thornbury (2006), the content words are rich in meaning and carry core meaning of a sentence in both written and spoken forms. The target words are under five topics: vehicles, places, illnesses, sports, and characteristics. Each topic was designed as one unit and equally consisted of eight target words with language models used for completing the information gap activity. The 40 target words comprise 32 nouns and 8 adjectives. They are presented below.

Table 3. 1 The 40 target words in the study

No	Topics				
	Vehicles	**Places**	**Illnesses**	**Sports**	**Characteristics**
1	bus (n.)	park (n.)	cold (n.)	boxing (n.)	shy (adj.)
2	van (n.)	airport (n.)	fever (n.)	judo (n.)	kind (adj.)
3	bike (n.)	temple (n.)	wound (n.)	cycling (n.)	bossy (adj.)
4	boat (n.)	hospital (n.)	cough (n.)	diving (n.)	polite (adj.)
5	plane (n.)	market (n.)	rashes (n.)	hiking (n.)	cheerful (adj.)
6	train (n.)	cinema (n.)	headache(n.)	surfing(n.)	selfish (adj.)
7	truck (n.)	church (n.)	toothache (n.)	climbing (n.)	friendly (adj.)
8	motorcycle (n.)	restaurant (n.)	stomachache (n.)	skateboarding (n.)	confident (adj.)

3.3.2 Handouts

The handouts used in this study were designed under the information gap principle by the researcher. They were of two types. The first one was for vocabulary practice and the other was for vocabulary revision which was given at the end of the unit. The information gap activities used during practice contained eight words which were practiced through the language models related to the topic of the unit. The language model used in each unit was a two-line dialogue which contained one turn of speaking by each student as demonstrated below.

Student A: How does ...(name of a person)... go to.....(a place)...?

Student B: He/she goes to ...(place).. by...(vehicle)...

The handouts designed for pair work contained different missing information that required the student to find out from partners. In order to achieve the goal of the activity, they had to orally ask for the information they needed and wrote down the missing target words in their handouts. (See appendix C.)

The other handout aiming to review the vocabulary items of each unit was given at the end of each unit. It required the students to match pictures with the target words they heard by writing the numbers of the words next to the pictures, and then write the words under the pictures. (See appendix C.)

3.3.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to find out the students' opinions on vocabulary practice through information-gap activities. It was written in Thai and given to the students after the treatment. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires by rating their opinions on four scales: strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point). The questionnaire included the following statements:

1) This activity is fun.
2) This activity helps me learn and remember new words.
3) I am more confident to speak or use English.
4) This activity makes me love English better.
5) I prefer this type of language activity than traditional ways of teaching.

To complete the questionnaires, the researcher read the statements item by item to the students in order to make sure that they all understood all of them. There was also space for the students to write comments or any suggestions they would like to say about the activity. The students were allowed to write comments in Thai so that the language did not obstruct their expression of opinions. (See appendix D.)

3.3.4 Observation Form

A class observation form in this study aimed to identify strengths and weaknesses of the activities as observed by the researcher. The researcher was the one who observed and completed the observation form at the end of each treatment period. The observation focuses on (1) the students' attention, interest and reaction to the activity, (2) the students' participation and interaction with others, (3) the use of the mother tongue during the activity (4) incidences of cheating to complete the tasks, and (5) classroom environment. (See appendix E.)

3.3.5 Video recording

During the completion of the information gap activities, the students' performances were video recorded in order to cross check with the observation in terms of their participation and interaction during the activities. Since the students were told not to use the mother tongue during the practice, the observation from the video could tell if any student used their mother tongue or tried to cheat. Moreover, any difficulties or unexpected events which might happen could be rechecked through the video recording.

3.4 Research Procedures

This study was experimentally designed, and the research procedures were implemented according to the following stages.

3.4.1 Pre-treatment

The English curriculum of grade five was studied and then the 40 target words, contents, and language models of the study that had not been introduced to the students were selected. After that, the pretest was given to the students in order to recheck if the selected 40 words were unfamiliar to them. Then, the information gap activities for each unit were designed along with the questionnaire and the observation form.

Next, the students were trained how to perform and complete the information gap activities for two hours. The purpose of the training is to familiarize the students with the information gap activity in order to prevent them from misunderstanding or getting confused by the task, which might lead to incomplete tasks. Vocabulary and language models used in the prompting session were different from ones used in the treatment sessions. Vocabulary used for these two hours of training did not count as parts of the data analysis.

3.4.2 While-treatment

The treatment, presenting and practicing the 40 target words through the information gap activities, lasted for 10 hours, two hours each unit. In the first hour of every unit, the first 20 minutes was spent on vocabulary presentation and this was done through software (power point presentation) and flash cards. Word meanings and spellings were presented through pictures with the words written below, and the

teacher had the students practice pronouncing the words of the unit together as a whole class. Then, the language model of the unit was presented and explained. Next, it was the practice stage which took 30 minutes. In the practice stage, the students completed the information gap activity through pair work (students A and B). In order to prevent cheating by looking at each other' worksheet, they were asked to sit back to back during the task completion. When they finished, they switched their roles. They were also asked not to use the mother tongue during the practice activities.

In the second hour, the students once again practiced the same set of target vocabulary introduced in the previous class through the information gap activity with different worksheets. After the practice, the teacher reviewed target vocabulary once again, and then provided the after unit revision worksheet. At the beginning of the next unit, the vocabularies of the previous unit were quickly reviewed through the flash cards.

During vocabulary practice, the researcher recorded a video to see how the activity flowed as well as to check their participation, and also noted some interesting points in the observation form.

3.4.3 Post-treatment

After the 10-hour practice, the immediate posttest and the questionnaire were given to the students in order to find the effectiveness of the information gap activity on vocabulary learning in short term and study the students' opinions about the activity. A month later, the delayed posttest was administered to investigate long term vocabulary learning. The immediate and the delayed posttest were taken under the same condition. Finally, all collected data were then analyzed and compared.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The data of the study were collected from the pretest, immediate posttest, delayed posttest, questionnaires, observation forms and video tape recording.

The results from the pretest and the two posttests were collected and scored in the same way. Each correct meaning and spelling scored 1 point.

The criteria for the scoring were set as follows:

1 was given to the correct meaning; namely, "plane means เครื่องบิน" or "headache means ปวดหัว"

0 was given to the wrong meaning; namely, "plane means จรวด" or "headache means หัวเจ็บ or เจ็บหัว".

1 was given to the correct spelling such as รถไฟ = <u>train</u>

0 was given to the wrong spelling such as รถไฟ = <u>trian</u>

The test scores were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, and paired t-test. The scores of the pretest and the immediate posttest were compared to find the short term vocabulary learning. Next, the comparison between the mean scores of the pretest and the delayed posttest together with the immediate and the delayed posttests were made in order to find the long term retention of vocabulary.

The data from the questionnaires were derived from the students' rating: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Next, all rated scales were counted and analyzed by using frequency, mean, and standard deviation for each item. Furthermore, the extra comments from the students were summarized and discussed.

The average mean score of each item was interpreted as follows.

1.00 - 1.75 refers to 'strongly disagree'

1.76 - 2.50 refers to 'disagree'

2.51 - 3.25 refers to 'agree'

3.26 - 4.00 refers to 'strongly agree'

The data from the observation forms along with the video tape records were used for describing the students' learning behaviors during the treatment.

The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented after the analysis of the pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest in order to see the effects of the information gap activity on vocabulary learning in both short term and long term. Then, the results from the questionnaires, observation, and video recording are reported.

4.1 Results from the Tests

After the treatment and completion of the two posttests, the immediate and the delayed, the test scores were analyzed and compared with those of the pretest in order to find out the effectiveness of using the information gap activity on vocabulary learning in both short term and long term. The results are presented as follows.

4.1.1 Effectiveness of the information gap activity on short term vocabulary learning

After the pretest and the immediate posttest had been administered, the results were statistically analyzed and compared in order to find out the effectiveness of the information gap activity on short term vocabulary learning in terms of meaning and spelling as shown below.

Table 4.1 Comparison between the pretest and the immediate posttest scores

Aspects	Tests	Total	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-value	Sig.
Meaning	Pretest	40	0	0	7.71	**.000
	Immediate posttest	40	9.4	7.07		
Spelling	Pretest	40	0	0	4.53	**.000
	Immediate posttest	40	2.15	3.0		

**P < .01

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that in terms of vocabulary meaning knowledge, the mean score of the pretest was 0 which that of the immediate posttest was 9.4. There was significant difference between the pretest and the immediate posttest scores in terms of students' knowledge of vocabulary meaning at p < .01. This showed that the information gap activity helped students learn vocabulary meaning in short term. However, It was noticeable that the mean score of the immediate posttest for meaning was quite low (9.40); far below 50 percent.

In terms of vocabulary spelling learning, the mean score of the pretest was 0 whereas that of the immediate posttest was 2.15. There was significant difference between the pretest and the immediate posttest scores in terms of students' knowledge of vocabulary spelling at p < .01. This could again be interpreted that the information gap activity helped students learn vocabulary spelling in short term. However, the mean score of the immediate posttest for spelling was extremely low (2.15); only about five percent.

In order to investigate the effectiveness of using the information gap activity on vocabulary learning in long term, the students were asked to do the identical delayed posttest a month later. The results are presented below.

4.1.2 Effectiveness of the information gap activity on long term vocabulary learning

In order to find out the effectiveness of the information gap activity on long term vocabulary learning in terms of meaning and spelling, the comparisons were done between the pretest and the delayed posttest, confirmed with the comparison between the immediate and the delayed posttest as shown below.

Table 4.2 Comparison between the pretest and the delayed posttests scores

Aspects	Tests	Total	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-value	Sig.
Meaning	Pretest	40	0	0	9.19	**.000
	Delayed posttest	40	12.48	8.58		
Spelling	Pretest	40	0	0	3.92	**.000
	Delayed posttest	40	1.67	2.70		

**P < .01

Table 4.2 showed that there was significant difference between the pretest and the delayed posttest in terms of meaning (P<.01) and spelling (P< .01). This indicated that students knew and could recall the target words after a month.

In order to confirm the above finding, the immediate posttest scores were compared with those of the delayed posttest as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Comparison between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest scores

Aspects	Tests	Total	$\bar{x}$	SD	T-value	Sig.
Meaning	Immediate posttest	40	9.40	7.73	4.79	**.000
	Delayed posttest	40	12.48	8.58		
Spelling	Immediate posttest	40	2.15	3.0	2.15	*.38
	Delayed posttest	40	1.67	0.42		

**P < .01, *P > .05

According to Table 4.3, the significant difference was surprisingly found between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest scores in terms of meaning (P< .01). It was quite interesting that the mean score of the delayed posttest (12.48) was higher than that of the immediate posttest (9.40). In other words, the students recognized

more target vocabulary items than they did in the previous posttest. The reasons for this were discussed in the next chapter.

In terms of spelling, nevertheless, there was no significant difference between the two posttests ($P > .05$). This could be assumed that after a month of the treatment, the students could retain the vocabulary spelling ability although the cores on the delayed posttest were a bit lower.

4.2 Results from the Questionnaire

In order to obtain the students' opinions towards the use of the information gap activity, the students were asked to complete the questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Students' opinions on the use of the information gap activity

Statements (Items 1-5)	Mean	SD	Level of opinions
1. This activity is fun.	3.76	0.22	strongly agree
2. This activity helps me learn and remember new words.	3.69	0.33	strongly agree
3. I am more confident to speak or use English.	3.36	0.51	strongly agree
4. This activity makes me love English better.	3.48	0.48	strongly agree
5. I prefer this type of language activity than traditional ways of teaching.	3.67	0.36	strongly agree
Total	3.58	0.24	strongly agree

According to Table 4.4, the students strongly agreed on all the statements concerning the benefits of the information gap activity. The statement the students most agreed on is the activity was fun (3.76), follow by the activity helped them learn and memorize new words (3.69), they prefer to learn with the information gap activity rather than the traditional way of teaching (3.67), the activity made them love English better (3.48), and 'I am more confident to speak English better' (3.36). To conclude, they have positive opinions about the information gap activity.

Apart from the benefits mentioned in the questionnaire, the students were allowed to provide comments at the end of the questionnaire. There were thirteen comments written by the students. Five of them stated that they really liked the information gap activity used in the treatment. Four of them stated that the information gap activity was fun and they wanted to do this type of activity in the classroom again. The rest of the comments stated that they wanted to learn more vocabulary and English was their favorite subject.

4.3 Results from the Observation Form and Video Recording

In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the activities, the observation was done by the researcher and summarized in five aspects as follows. In terms of the students' attention, it was found that they were interested in the activity and tried to complete the tasks enthusiastically. All of the students could finish the task in time. However, it took more time for the slow learners to complete the tasks. This showed that the slow learners needed longer time to practice and complete the task.

For the students' participation and interaction, it appeared that all the students were willing to participate and interact with their pair. Moreover, during the treatment, 'peer teaching' occurred in every hour. Some slow learners asked the stronger ones when they had problems or unclear points during the practice sessions such as word meaning clarification or word pronunciation. The stronger learners provided help with willingness. It was also found that most of the students had fun during the task completion. Since the students were asked to work in pairs and sat back to back against each other, when they asked and answered, they whispered in their partner' ear and leaned their back against each other in order to signal a speaking turn or urge their friend to speak. That made practicing the language fun for them.

The use of the mother tongue was found during the activity. The students used their mother tongue in order to ask their peers to clarify word meaning, word pronunciation, or something they were not sure about. The example of questions and answers used by the students in their mother tongue were *'Did you say....?'* (เธอพูดว่า .....ใช่ไหม) , *' No, I said.....'* (ไม่ใช่ๆ ฉันพูดว่า......), *'How can I pronounce this word?'* (คำ

นี้ออกเสียงว่าอย่างไร), *'You say........, right?'(เธอพูดว่า........ใช่ไหม), 'Say again, louder.'(* พูด อีกที ดังๆ), etc.

Regarding incidences of cheating to complete the tasks, as evidenced in the video recording and the researcher's observation during the task completion, there were two or three students trying to cheat in the first hour of the treatment. However, they stopped cheating when the teacher told them not to. And as for the classroom environment, the experiment was held in a room where there was no table or chair. When the students performed the tasks, they had to sit back to back on the floor in a long row. Sitting back to back prevented the students from looking at their pair's information. In addition, sitting back to back in rows of 'student A' and 'student B' allowed the teacher to check and help slow learners during the tasks. Since the information gap activity required students to speak a lot, it appeared that students made a lot of noise, which might disturb other classes.

The discussion of the results is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results shown in the previous chapter and provides the pedagogical implications of the present study.

5.1 Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the information gap activity on vocabulary learning of grade five students in both the short and long term. The study also searched for the students' opinions of the activity used during the treatment. In addition, observation and video tape recording were used, and data from these two sources was summarized and discussed.

The discussions are provided in accordance with the results presented in the previous chapter.

5.1.1 Effectiveness of the information gap activity on vocabulary learning

According to the results of the pretest and the two posttests, the information gap activity seemed to enable the students to learn vocabulary in terms of meaning and spelling over both the short term and long term. However, the mean scores of the posttests were quite low in both aspects. This may indicate that the information gap activity could help students learn and memorize new words, but only to a limited extent. The information gap activity can reinforce vocabulary taught in class by allowing the students to use the vocabulary of the target language in a communicative way (Raptou, 2001). However, the reason students could learn and retain new vocabulary knowledge to a small extent may be because, firstly, the information gap activity itself primarily focused on speaking and listening (Li, 2015; Littlewood, 2013; Thornbury, 2006). There were many turns of asking and answering through the language models (Cloutier, 1999; Nanthaboot, 2012; Pimsri, 2004; Skuse, 2012), so spelling received a secondary focus. Therefore, the information gap activity

provided insufficient chances for students to practice spelling. Secondly, the study provided limited time for the treatment; that is, each learning unit lasted for only two separate hours. This may be too little time for learners to learn and memorize all eight words of the unit. As Hedge (2000) claimed, repetition of words in texts could be useful to learners' learning. The more frequently the students were exposed to the target words, the better they were able to learn and extend their vocabulary knowledge (Decarrico, 2001; Read, 2007). This is in line with the study of Kachru (1962, cited in Hedge, 2002) who found that most of his students knew the words that appeared more than seven times, but did not know half of the words that appeared only once or twice.

From the study results, it is interesting to note that the mean scores of meaning were higher than those of spelling in both immediate and delayed posttests. The reason for this could be that a number of students claimed they knew some of the target words through spoken form, but did not know how to spell out those words in the written form (personal communication). As a result, they left some spelling test items blank, or provided only a few initial letters, or misspelled some of the target words altogether. Thus, spelling seemed to be problematic since the spelling process is complicated and needs to be taught consciously (Wallace, 2006). However, it is suggested by Thornbury (2002) that one thing which the teacher can do in order to reinforce the sound-spelling relationship is teaching the students rules of spelling, which would then help them improve their spelling ability.

An unexpected result was that the delayed posttest meaning score was higher than the immediate posttest meaning score. This was quite unusual. It was expected that the score of the later test would have been lower since the subjects of the study did not encounter the 40 target words again after the treatment. It is commonly known that any knowledge can be slowly forgotten if it is not recalled or used (Hedge, 2000; Thornbury, 2006). From personal communication, the subjects who gained higher scores on the delayed posttest said that they did a quick review before testing. However, they did not do a review on spelling, such as orally spelling out or writing the words. A quick review of the target words likely contributed positively to the result of the test score.

In summary, it was found that the designed information gap activity could help students learn and retain new vocabulary in both short and long term but only to a

small extent. Additionally, meaning was better learned through the information gap activity than spelling.

5.1.2 Students' opinions of the information gap activity

According to the result of the questionnaire, it was found that the students strongly agreed on using the information gap activity for practicing vocabulary in the language class. This finding was in line with the data from the observation and video recording which revealed that the information gap activity provided positive affective effects; students were motivated and had fun during the practice. Moreover, the activity provided chances for students to work collaboratively in pairs, allowed peer teaching, and created positive relationships between the teacher and the students.

Since the questionnaire results showed that all statements were strongly agreed on, it was interesting to look at items which received the highest and the lowest average scores. The statement "The activity was fun." gained the highest average score out of the five statements. This is because unlike the memorization technique frequently used in the classroom which is boring, most of the students had fun during the task completion. They worked in pairs and sat back to back with their partners. When they asked and answered, they whispered in their partner' ears and leaned their back against each other in order to signal a speaking turn or urge their friend to speak. This made practicing the language fun for them. According to Harmer (2001), pair work, as used in the information gap activity, provided a chance for learners to practice the language together. At the same time, they had more opportunities to use vocabulary and language to interact with friends independently, and that could promote communicative competence.

The statement which received the lowest score was "I am more confident to speak or use English." This could be because the information gap activity may not match the learning styles of some students that prefer learning by reading and writing. As Ellis (1997) claims, the learners' personalities can influence the degree of anxiety which may affect how students learn and use the target language. Therefore, students who feel uncomfortable speaking may not find the information gap activities enjoyable and are reluctant to participate.

In summary, the information gap activity could prompt students to face real communication and give them chances to use the target language with their friends

with fun. The activity also met the students' preferences, and it could build up the positive relationship between the teacher and students as well as allow chances for talking in the target language and 'peer teaching' between the faster and slower students.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study showed that the information gap activity helped students learn and memorize new words, but not to a satisfactory degree. However, the advantages of using the information gap activity were obvious in terms of allowing them speaking opportunities, peer teaching, and creating positive relationships between the teacher and students. These features all benefit language learning and enhance students' communicative competence. Therefore, when implementing the information gap activity, the following ideas should be considered:

The low mean scores of spelling in both short and long terms may be because the information gap activity did not provide enough chances for students to practice their spelling, as the activity itself primarily focused on speaking and listening. Spelling is a subset of writing skill (Thornbury, 2006), which is more complicated than other language skills, and it should be taught thoughtfully (Wallace, 2006). As Thornbury (2002) suggested, it is vital to teach students spelling rules because knowing the rules of spelling can facilitate their vocabulary and equip them to be ready for writing tasks. Therefore, spelling should be taught systematically, with adequate time for spelling practice when using the information gap activity.

Another idea to bear in mind when implementing the information gap activity is to provide enough time for practice. Providing a greater amount of time for practice may help students to better remember the new words.

The conclusions are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter includes conclusion, limitations of the present study, and recommendations for further study.

6.1 Conclusion

The purposes of this study were to investigate the effects of the information gap activity on grade five students' vocabulary learning, in terms of word meaning and spelling in both short term and long term, and to find out the students' opinions on the use of the information gap activity. In order to answer the research questions, the students were asked to take the pretest, the immediate posttest, and a month delayed posttest, and to complete the questionnaire. The observation and videotape recordings were also done in order to find the strengths and weaknesses of the activity.

The results revealed that, in both the short term and long term, the information gap activity could help students to learn and memorize the new words, in terms of both meaning and spelling, to a small extent. The reasons were probably due to limited practice time in both meaning and spelling. However, according to the observation and video recording, it was found that the information gap activity met students' preferences and created peer teaching opportunities along with allowing positive relationships between the teacher and the students.

In conclusion, the findings of the study provide evidence that the information gap activity can benefit students in learning new words, although not to a great extent. It also motivates students to learn with fun and creates a positive attitude on language learning. Therefore, the information gap activity can be another communicative task for vocabulary teaching and learning used by teachers who teach English. However, sufficient exposure to the new words and adequate amount of time for practice should also be taken into account when implementing this technique, especially in young learners such as primary students.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This study contained some limitations. The first limitation was the short time period of the study. Since the learning and practicing hours of the experiment were quite limited, only 10 hours of treatment, it seemed the students did not have adequate chances for learning the new vocabulary.

Second, a pilot study was not done before the experiment. Conducting a pilot study could help the researcher carefully design the tools for research and prevent problems or weak points which may happen during the treatment. If a pilot study had been done for this study, the researcher would have provided adequate time for practice.

Third, in terms of vocabulary learning, the experiment was done without a control group to compare with. It may not be able to make an absolute conclusion that the information gap activity was really effective or should be employed in class.

Lastly, since the pretest and the posttest used in the present study relied on writing, which required students to write the meaning of the target words, this may cause difficulty for students who know the target words by spoken form but do not know how to spell them out.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Study

The recommendations for the further study are as follows.

The further study can be conducted over a greater length of time in order to provide enough opportunity for students to better learn and acquire the new words. Learning new language features takes more time, especially for young EFL learners. Lastly, since the test used in the present study relied on writing, which may affect students who know the target words by spoken form but do not know how to write, it is recommended that the further study provide the vocabulary test through speaking, having students orally tell the meaning of the target word that they hear instead of writing it down. This more accurately shows how well the students have learned vocabulary through the information gap activity.

In addition, the pilot study should be done before the real study takes place in order to allow the researcher to try out and improve the research tools or procedures. Moreover, providing a control group for the further study is necessary. The

comparison between the results of the control group and the treatment group, with the information gap activity implemented, would clearly show the effectiveness of the activity used in the study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LIST OF THE TARGET WORDS

The list of the target words

No	Topics				
	Vehicles	Places	Illnesses	Sports	Characteristics
1	bus (n.)	park (n.)	cold (n.)	boxing (n.)	shy (adj.)
2	van (n.)	airport (n.)	fever (n.)	judo (n.)	kind (adj.)
3	bike (n.)	temple (n.)	wound (n.)	cycling (n.)	bossy (adj.)
4	boat (n.)	hospital (n.)	cough (n.)	diving (n.)	polite (adj.)
5	plane (n.)	market (n.)	rashes (n.)	hiking (n.)	cheerful (adj.)
6	train (n.)	cinema (n.)	headache (n.)	surfing (n.)	selfish (adj.)
7	truck (n.)	church (n.)	toothache (n.)	climbing (n.)	friendly(adj.)
8	motorcycle (n.)	restaurant (n.)	stomachache (n.)	skateboarding (n.)	confident (adj.)

APPENDIX B
PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Pretest and Posttest

(Vocabulary Meaning: 40 items)

Directions: Write the meaning of each word in Thai.

No.	English	Thai
1	bike	
2	hospital	
3	headache	
4	boxing	
5	bossy	
6	motorcycle	
7	church	
8	toothache	
9	diving	
10	friendly	
11	train	
12	park	
13	stomachache	
14	cycling	
15	confident	
16	plane	
17	restaurant	
18	fever	
19	hiking	
20	kind	

No.	English	Thai
21	boat	
22	cinema	
23	cold	
24	climbing	
25	shy	
26	van	
27	temple	
28	wound	
29	skateboarding	
30	selfish	
31	truck	
32	airport	
33	cough	
34	surfing	
35	cheerful	
36	bus	
37	market	
38	rash	
39	judo	
40	polite	

Pretest and posttest

(Vocabulary Spelling: 40 items)

Directions: Write the word into English.

No.	Thai	English
1	รถจักรยาน	
2	โรงพยาบาล	
3	ปวดหัว	
4	กีฬามวย	
5	จู้จี้	
6	รถจักยานยนต์	
7	โบสถ์	
8	ปวดฟัน	
9	กีฬาดำน้ำ	
10	เป็นมิตร	
11	รถไฟ	
12	สวนสาธารณะ	
13	ปวดท้อง	
14	กีฬาปั่นจักรยาน	
15	มั่นใจ	
16	เครื่องบิน	
17	ร้านอาหาร	
18	เป็นไข้	
19	เดินทางไกล	
20	ใจดี	

No.	Thai	English
21	เรือ	
22	โรงหนัง	
23	หวัด	
24	กีฬาปีนป่าย	
25	ขี้อาย	
26	รถตู้	
27	วัด	
28	แผล	
29	กีฬาสเกตบอร์ด	
30	เห็นแก่ตัว	
31	รถบรรทุก	
32	สนามบิน	
33	ไอ	
34	กีฬาโต้คลื่น	
35	ร่าเริง	
36	รถโดยสาร	
37	ตลาด	
38	ผื่นคัน	
39	กีฬายูโด	
40	สุภาพ	

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITY HANDOUTS
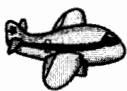
Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 1 Vehicles

Directions: Write and draw the missing information.

You:	How does ……………. go to ……………?
Your friend:	He/ she goes to ………… by…………….

Student A

Joe goes to Phuket by …	Jane goes to the farm by …	Tim goes to Had Koodue by…	Ben goes to the playground by…
…………………	………………………	…………………	…………………
Sue goes to Lotus by ..	Jenny goes to the zoo by….	Tom goes to school by….	Betty goes to Bangkok by….
…………………	………………………	…………………	…………………

Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 1 Vehicles

Directions: Write and draw the missing information.

You:	How does ………….. go to …………….?
Your friend:	He/ She goes to …………… by……………

Student B

Joe goes to Phuket by….	Jane goes to the farm by …..	Tim goes to Had Koodue by…..	Ben goes to the playground by…..
…………………..	…………………..	…………………..	…………………..
Sue goes to Lotus by….	Jenny goes to the zoo by…..	Tom goes to school by …..	Betty goes to Bangkok by….
…………………..	…………………..	…………………..	…………………..

After unit/ Quick review

Unit 1 Vehicles

Directions: Listen and number. Then write the words that match the pictures.

train	bus	van	boat
bike	truck	plane	motorcycle

☐	☐	☐ ....
☐	☐	☐ ....
☐	☐	

Information gap activity worksheet
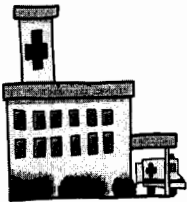
Unit 2 Places

Directions: Write and draw missing information.

You:	Where is .... going on weekend?
Your friend:	He/ She's going to the........................... .

Student A

Jimmy is going to the.................	Tom is going to the..............	Dan is going to the.................	Ben is going to the..............
Tim is going to the..............	Tom is going to the............	Joe is going to the..............	Tina is going to the...........

Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 2 Places

Directions: Write and draw missing information.

You:	Where is .... going on weekend?
Your friend:	He/ she's going to the................. ...

Student B

Jimmy is going to the.................	Tom is going to the.................	Dan is going to the.................	Ben is going to the.................
Tim is going to the.................	Tom is going to the.................	Joe is going to the.................	Tina is going to the.................

After unit/ Quick review

Unit 2 Places

Directions: Listen and number. Then write the words that match the pictures.

market	airport	temple	cinema
hospital	church	park	restaurant

☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	

Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 3 Illness

Directions: Write and draw missing information.

You:	What's wrong with ....?
Your friend:	He/ She has a ....

Student A

Jimmy has a.......	Tom has a........	Dan has a.......	Ben has a....... ....
Tim has	Tom has a........	Joe has a.........	Tina has a......... ....

Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 3 Illness

Directions: Write and draw missing information.

You:	What's wrong with ....?
Your friend:	He/ She has a........................... .

Student B

Jimmy has a	Tom has a	Dan has a	Ben has a ....
Tim has	Tom has a	Joe has a	Tina has a ....

After unit/ Quick review

Unit 3 Illness

Directions: Listen and number. Then write the words that match the pictures.

cough	cold	toothache	fever
wound	rashes	headache	stomachache

□	□	□	□
....	....	....	....
□	□	□	□
....	....	....	....
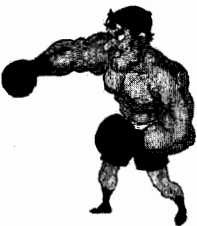
Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 4 Sports

Directions: Write and draw missing information.

You:	What is ....'s favorite sport?
Your friend:	His/ Her favorite sport is ....

Student A

Jim's favorite sport is...............	Tom 's favorite sport is	Dan 's favorite sport is.............	Ben 's favorite sport is............
Tim 's favorite sport is.............	Tony's favorite sport is...............	Joe's favorite sport is.............	Tina's favorite sport is.............

Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 4 Sports

Directions: Please find the missing information.

You:	What is ....'s favorite's sport?
Your friend:	His/ Her favorite sport is ....

Student B
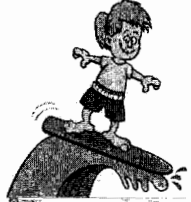
Jim's favorite sport is............	Tom 's favorite sport is	Dan 's favorite sport is............	Ben 's favorite sport is.............
Tim 's favorite sport is.............	Tony's favorite sport is.............	Tony's favorite sport is.............	Tina's favorite sport is.............

After unit/ Quick review

Unit 4   Sports

Directions: Listen and number. Then write words that match with the picture.

boxing   diving   climbing   hiking

surfing   skateboarding   cycling   judo
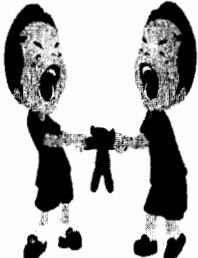
Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 5 Characteristics

Directions: Please find the missing information.

You:	What is …………….. like?
Your friend:	He's / She's ………………….. .

Student A

Jane is……………	Joe is…………	Tim is…………	Tom is ………
Tina is…………	Jeff is…………..	Dan is ……….	Kate is ………..
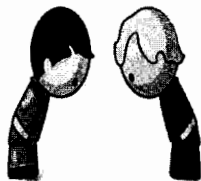
Information gap activity worksheet

Unit 5 Characteristics

Directions: Please find the missing information.

You:	What is ……………. like?
Your friend:	He's / She's ………………….. .

Student B

Jane is……..	Joe is………….	Tim is………….	Tom is ………….
Tina is………….	Jeff is…………..	Dan is ……….	Kate is …………..

After unit/ Quick review

Unit 5 Characteristics

Directions: Listen and number. Then write words that match with the picture.

confident	bossy	selfish	polite
friendly	kind	shy	cheerful

☐	☐	☐	☐
....	....	....	....
☐	☐	☐	☐
....	....	....	....
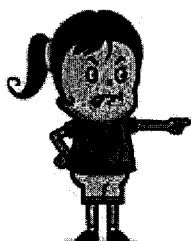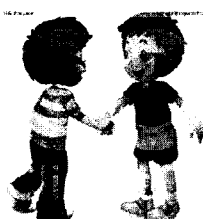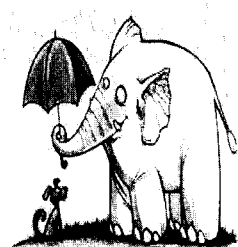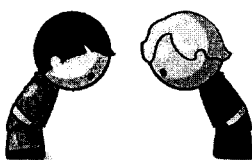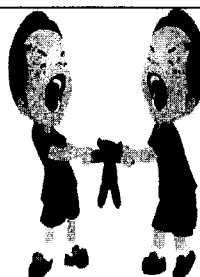
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire
แบบสอบถาม

Part I: ส่วนที่ 1

Directions: Please put a tick (✓) in the box that matches your feeling.

คำแนะนำ : โปรดเติมเครื่องหมาย   (✓) ในช่องที่ตรงกับความรู้สึกของท่าน

☺☺   4 = strongly agree   ☺☺   4 = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
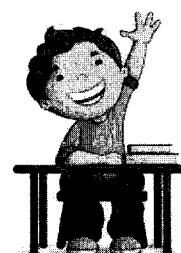
☺   3 = agree   ☺   3 = เห็นด้วย

☹   2 = disagree   ☹   2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย

☹☹   1 = strongly disagree   ☹☹   1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

No	Statements	4 ☺☺	3 ☺	2 ☹	1 ☹☹
1.	This activity is fun. กิจกรรมนี้สนุกสนาน				
2.	This activity helps me learn and remember new words. กิจกรรมนี้ช่วยให้ฉันเรียนรู้คำศัพท์และจดจำคำศัพท์ได้				
3.	I am more confident to speak or use English. ฉันมั่นใจที่จะพูดและใช้ภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น				
4.	This activity makes me love English better. กิจกรรมนี้ทำให้ฉันรักษาภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น				
5.	I prefer this type of language activity than traditional ways of teaching. ฉันชอบกิจกรรมแบบนี้มากกว่า การสอนแบบเดิม (แบบบรรยายและใช้แค่กระดานดำ)				

Part 2 :

More comments on activity /ความคิดเห็นอื่น ๆ เกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอน

....

....

....

Observation form

1. Observer name.. Date.................time.............

2. Videotape record file:...

3. Criteria observed

Observed issues	Description/ comments
1. Students' attention (students' interest, enthusiasm,)	
2. Students' participation and interaction with others.	
3. Use of the mother language during activity. (When and how much do they use of L1? Why do they decide to use it?)	
4. Cheating to complete task. (How often do they cheat? Why?)	
5. Classroom environment (Number of students, classroom layout, classroom equipment: mic. TV.,etc.)	

Suggestions for improvement:

Overall impression of teaching effectiveness:

APPENDIX F

PRETEST, IMMEDIATE POSTTEST, AND DELAYED POSTTEST SCORES

The pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest scores
(Continued)

No.	Pretest		Immediate posttest		Delayed posttest	
	Meaning	**Spelling**	**Meaning**	**Spelling**	**Meaning**	**Spelling**
31	0	0	10	3	13	2
32	0	0	24	3	32	4
33	0	0	19	3	27	3
34	0	0	6	4	9	2
35	0	0	4	1	4	0
36	0	0	4	0	4	0
37	0	0	5	0	11	2
38	0	0	6	2	4	0
39	0	0	18	4	23	3
40	0	0	39	13	38	12
Total	0	0	376	86	499	67
Mean	0	0	9.4	2.15	12.48	1.67
SD	0	0	7.07	3.0	8.58	2.70
Min	0	0	1	0	2	0
Max	0	0	39	13	38	12

VITAE

NAME	Ms. Supranee Chuangkan
DATE OF BIRTH	March 3, 1979
PLACE OF BIRTH	Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand
INSTITUTE ADTENDED	2004, Bachelors of Art (Business English)
	Ubon Ratchathani Ratjabhat Institute, Thailand
POSITION&OFFICE	English Teacher
	Ban Muangnadee School, Detudom District
	Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand
EMAIL ADDRESS	schuangkna@outlook.com