



**THE USE OF EXPLORATORY PRACTICE FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH SPEAKING IN A MIXED-AGE GROUP**



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TITLE THE USE OF EXPLORATORY PRACTICE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH
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Thanawoot Pakdeeya
Researcher

บทคัดย่อ

เรื่อง	: การใช้การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจในการสอนการพูดภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุที่คละกัน
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ชื่อปริญญา	: ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชา	: การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา	: ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.อรนุช ปวงสุข
คำสำคัญ	: การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ, ห้องเรียนกลับด้าน, กลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุต่างกัน

“การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” เป็นทฤษฎีที่ใช้กันโดยแพร่หลายในวงการการสอนภาษามาเป็นระยะเวลาหลายทศวรรษ เนื่องจากทฤษฎีดังกล่าวมีจุดแข็งในด้านการเข้าใจผู้เรียนและการพัฒนาร่วมกันของครูและผู้เรียน จากการทบทวนวรรณกรรมพบว่านักวิจัยทั้งหมดนำ “การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” มาใช้ในห้องเรียนที่มีบรรยากาศการเรียนรู้ในโรงเรียน มีนักวิจัยจำนวนน้อยมากที่นำ “การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” มาศึกษากับห้องเรียนนอกระบบ และไม่มีงานวิจัยชิ้นใดเลยศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการใช้ “การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” กับกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกัน เพื่อเป็นการเติมเต็มองค์ความรู้ดังกล่าว งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ดังนี้ 1 เพื่อเรียนรู้ปัญหาของนักเรียนในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียนของผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกัน 2 เพื่อเรียนรู้ความต้องการในการเรียนของห้องเรียนที่มีผู้เรียนอายุคละกัน 3 เพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกันโดยใช้แผนหลักสูตรที่ออกแบบโดยทฤษฎี “การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” และ 4 เพื่อทราบทัศนคติของกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีต่อแผนหลักสูตรดังกล่าว

การศึกษาวิจัยในครั้งนี้มีเป้าประสงค์เพื่อค้นหาคำตอบจากการวิจัยแบบผสมผสานโดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างในการเก็บข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับปัญหา และความต้องการของกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกัน ในหมู่บ้านเกษตรกร BNS ที่ตั้งอยู่ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือของประเทศไทย การวิเคราะห์แก่นโครงเรื่องจะถูกนำมาใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลทั้งหมด ผลของงานวิจัยพบว่าแผนหลักสูตรนี้ช่วยพัฒนากลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกันในด้านทักษะการสื่อสาร คำศัพท์ และความเหมาะสมของการใช้ภาษาในสถานการณ์ที่กำหนดให้ นอกจากนี้ ผู้เรียนเกือบทั้งหมดมีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการเรียนการสอนผ่านแผนหลักสูตรดังกล่าว งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้เป็นกรณีตัวอย่างสำคัญในการใช้ ทฤษฎี “การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบเน้นการสำรวจ” เพื่อช่วยให้กลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีอายุคละกันได้พัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของตนในห้องเรียนนอกระบบการศึกษา

ABSTRACT

TITLE : THE USE OF EXPLORATORY PRACTICE FOR TEACHING
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KEYWORDS : EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP), FLIPPED CLASSROOM (FC),
MIXED-AGE GROUP

Exploratory Practice (EP) is a theory that has been widely adopted in teaching language for the last couple of decades due to its strength in promoting the understanding of learners and its mutual development of teachers and learners. From a review of related literatures, all researchers who adopted EP in their studies have mainly focused on formal classroom contexts. Few researchers have examined non-formal classroom contexts and no studies have looked at mixed-age groups of learners. To fill this gap, the main objectives of this thesis study are (1) to understand learners' difficulties when studying English in a mixed-age group, (2) to know learners' preferences on learning in a mixed- age English class, (3) to improve mixed-age learners' English speaking skills by a designed program based on EP, and (4) to gather insight on the learners' perceptions towards the use of the program.

This empirical study uses a mixed method approach with individual semi-structured interviews to identify the difficulties and preferences of learners in an agricultural rural remote area, NSB Village, Thailand. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Results show that the designed program based on EP helped mixed-age learners improve their conversation skills, grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and the appropriateness of language used in a given context. Moreover, almost all of the learners had positive perceptions toward the program used. This study gives an important example of the successful use of EP as a means of helping learners in a mixed-age, informal classroom context improves their English skills.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBR.	MEANING
BNS	A pseudonym for the village examined in this study
EP	Exploratory Practice
FC	Flipped Classroom
FGI	Focus Group Interview
ISSI	Individual Semi-structured Interview
RQ	Research Question

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is composed of five sections which will introduce and explain the rationale behind this research study. It will first outline the rationale of the study, followed by a statement of the RQs and scope of the study. Then a brief explanation of the research methodology and significance of this study are given. Finally, the key terms used in this research study will be defined.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

I have taught English for a group of villagers in BNS, (a pseudonym for the village examined in this study,) for two years, where there is very wide range of students in terms of age, knowledge, and occupation. I, as their teacher and a village insider, was asked to continue teaching other private class with the same group of students in the same village where, from my observation as their teacher and a village insider, the average English language ability would be considered low to middle (A0-B1). As an insider and part of the village community who also has a role as a language teacher, I decided to meet the individual needs of these English learners and help them to improve their language abilities by providing resources to help support their lifelong learning.

From my two years teaching experience with this group, the learners have a very high motivation to improve their English abilities because there is a resort business belonging to the village community that has occasional foreign visitors. Despite their strong desire to learn, I experienced some difficulties in teaching this mixed-age group of students; this led me to ask the question, “Why are some of students unable to follow the lesson?”

In response to the puzzles above, I decided to review related literatures (Dick Allwright, 2003; Farrell, 2015; Wallace, 1998; Willis, 1996) They suggest that practitioner research methods are the most appropriate. Exploratory Practice or EP

(Dick Allwright, 2003) was chosen, however, because it focuses on understanding the classroom first to make the learners' quality of life better and also focus on the local, particular classroom, rather than a national or general classroom. So, I chose Exploratory Practice or EP (Dick Allwright, 2003) as my framework due to three main reasons. First, this is a form of teacher improvement and was selected to better understand what happens within the classroom instead of focusing on exploring for self-awareness, or problem solving for change. According to previous research on EP, this research will refer to goals or the study or problems to be solved as "puzzles" because EP seeks to understand the classroom before thinking to change it (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009) to make the learners' quality of life better and also focuses on local and particular classroom (Dick Allwright, 2003). Second, EP highlights mutual improvement (both teacher and learners,) which is beneficial to me as a novice teacher and to my classroom. This way I can draw from the difficulties and preferences of learners and design classroom material together with them. I may also encourage learners' autonomous learning by examining puzzles from their perspectives and encourage their self-improvement according to those puzzles, which will make their life better (Zheng, 2012). Third, Allwright and Lenzuen (1997) stated that EP is a sustainable way of carrying out classroom investigations that provides language teachers (and potentially the learners also) with a systematic framework. Using this method I may learn to better manage speaking practice for the mixed-age classroom and write better lesson plans for the class.

The majority of studies in my literature review wrote about classes at an undergraduate level (Yim and Chuk, 2003; Chen, 2016; Hanks, 2014; Puangsuk, 2018) or at the high school level (Hiratsuka, 2016) based on the government policy. There is no work that focuses on using EP for teaching English speaking in a non-formal classroom environment with mixed-age group of students. I decided to study this topic in my own research to fill this gap of knowledge and to make improvements in my own classroom.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 What are the learners' difficulties with studying English in a mixed-age group?

1.2.2 What are the learners' preferences to learn in a mixed-age English class?

1.2.3 To what extent does the designed program based on EP help mixed-age learners to improve their English speaking skills?

1.2.4 What are their perceptions towards the use of the program?

1.3 Scope of the study

This study primarily focused on understanding the effectiveness of the designed program based on Exploratory Practice. The program was designed from learners' difficulties and the most requested topics from interviews of them. The designed program was piloted and delivered to a target group of participants in an informal learning environment. The informal learning environment classroom consisted of eight mixed-age high level of motivation to learn English learners, and then four of them were voluntary participated in this study. The participants are voluntary sampling with high level of motivation to learn English. This empirical case study aims not to generalize the research findings.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study of the use of Exploratory Practice (EP) for teaching English in a mixed-age group can be beneficial in three ways. First, this study investigates a private classroom with learners of mixed-ages, background knowledge, and occupations. Consequently, this research might offer some empirical data for English teachers who teach in the same environment as the study that can provide guidelines for them to use when dealing with English courses in mixed-age classrooms in the future. Second, the results of how learners improve their English learning in this study through EP can inspire teachers to provide appropriate educational stimulation for their learners. Third, it is hoped that this study may help learners who want to improve their studying practice to know how to apply EP to their study habits both in school and outside formal classrooms.

1.5 Definitions of key terms

1.5.1 Exploratory Practice is a name given to a sustainable way of carrying out classroom investigations which provides language teachers (and potentially learners also) with a systematic framework with which to define areas of language teaching that they wish to explore, to refine their thinking about these areas, and to investigate them further using classroom activities, rather than academic research techniques, as investigative tools. (Dick Allwright and Lenzuen, 1997)

1.5.2 A mixed-age group is one in which learners of different ages are taught together in the same class setting.

1.5.3 A flipped classroom is a pedagogical concept where the traditional classroom and homework elements are reversed (Lage et al. 2000; Lage and Platt, 2000; Bergman and Sams, 2008; Gannod et al., 2008; Bishop and Verleger, 2013; GAugusthan, 2014; Hwang et al., 2015)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEWS

In this chapter, I review the existing literature relating to the four RQs. To answer the first and second RQs, I will discuss EP theoretical framework, advantages and disadvantages of EP, and why I chose EP for this thesis. To answer the third and fourth RQs, I will discuss literature relating to the flipped classroom concept and Bloom's revised taxonomy theory, which have been chosen as main theories in the designed program teaching approaches. So, the literature review highlights advantages and disadvantages of these theories. Moreover, other related studies are reviewed at the end of the chapter.

2.1 Introduction

A review of the literature suggests a high level of effectiveness when using practitioner research to facilitate language learning (e.g. Allwright, 2003; Farrell, 2015; Wallace, 1998; Willis, 1996) as it promotes a better understanding of classrooms environments. In one empirical case study, Exploratory Practice or EP (Allwright, 2003) was adopted to explore learners' puzzles in learning English. According to Dick Allwright (2003), understanding a classroom is the first step in EP to improve the quality of a learner's life both inside and outside classroom, meaning that if teacher and learners understand the problems then they can together solve them and gain knowledge using lessons that they have co-created; this procedure focuses on mutual development among learners and teachers in a specific context.

EP is beneficial to teachers in regard to their professional development since EP allows them to have a better understanding of their own classroom and improve the quality of their classroom life, instead of focusing on problems or trying to change them. Learners also gain benefits from EP because they can explore their own puzzles and improve themselves (Zheng, 2012).

Most of the literature reviewed finds that EP mostly investigated in a formal educational context; for example, at a university level (Hanks, 2014; Chen, 2016; Yim

and Chuk, 2003), or at a high school level (Hiratsuka, 2016). Little research on EP had been conducted in informal education and with mixed-age groups. Accordingly, it is expected that the findings from this case study will contribute useful information to gain a better understanding of this group of learners and give some fruitful suggestions for lesson planning.

Apart from EP, the other theoretical framework that has been adopted for this study is the flipped classroom. Many researchers defined a flipped classroom as a pedagogical concept where the traditional classroom and homework elements are reversed (Lage et al., 2000, Lage and Platt, 2000, Bergman and Sams, 2008, Gannod et al., 2008, Bishop and Verleger, 2013, GAugusthan, 2014, and Hwang et al., 2015). Many times, teachers record the lecture materials and post them to the internet where learners can access them before attending face-to-face meetings (classes). This allows the teacher to maximize the quality of the time they have in face-to-face meetings (classes). Strayer (2012), Hwang et al. (2015) and O'Flaherty and Phillips, (2015) added that outside class learning helps students better prepare for in-class participation, to engage with course content on a deeper level, and to increase the quality of interaction with teacher.

2.2 EP theoretical framework

Exploratory Practice (EP) is an approach to classroom research or practitioners' research developed by Dick Allright and several researchers principally based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Dick Allwright and Lenzuen, 1997).

EP focuses on understanding the classroom environment and giving priority to 'quality of classroom life' which refers to whether the students and teacher are happy in class. Everyone in the classroom is a part of creating every lesson and activity. The lesson plans and activities are developed according to insiders' (teacher and students) puzzles. From this, life in the classroom is not based just on getting work done, studying because one is a student or teaching because one is a teacher. But instead, the learning process is a part of participants' lives and the enjoyment of the classroom experience encourages both teachers and students to be lifelong learners (S. Gieve and Miller, 2008).

EP is a combination of reflexive practice (RP) and action research (AR). Therefore, EP has some characteristics drawn from each theory. EP has taken from RP the practice of systematically using observations that compile reflections from both learners and teachers to better understand the classroom. EP is not only observing the classroom like RP however, but also takes action on puzzles found in the classroom to understand them and evaluate the quality of classroom life of learners and teachers. EP is like AR in that it strives to better the classroom. However, AR is controlled by academic research regulations which may not appropriate for teachers who are already busy, have limited access to resources, and lack training in academic research methods. In addition, AR discourages changing the classroom in order to solve problems. At the same time, EP is a professional development tool that has room for teachers who have time limited time, few resources, and lack the academic research method training to improve themselves in congruence with developing learners through classroom understanding. EP is different from AR in that it is not trying to solve any problem in the classroom, but it tries to understand the occurring issues based on learners' and teachers' feedback, which are referred to as 'puzzles'. Then, if a puzzle is considered to be a problem, it can be solved using a proper approach because the puzzle is already understood. Puzzles can be both positive and negative issues in the classroom that learners and teachers are interested to improve their classroom life.

The recent decades, the new trend of teaching and learning has put more focus on learners. In many classrooms, only teachers are viewed as practitioners, but students seem to be the subjects of the research. In contrast, EP mainly focuses on students' lives and puts students at the center of the classroom. So, every classroom activity conducted based on EP is always developed based on the collaboration between teachers and learners. This process can gain students' puzzles for their improvement. At the same time, teacher can learn student puzzles and improve their teaching style in cooperation with their students.

2.2.1 Exploratory Practice: Principles framework

Over the past two decades, EP has been developed in discussions with teachers from around the world (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Hanks and Allwright, 2009; Slimani-Rolls, 2003, 2005; Wu, 2006; Zhang, 2004), with particular input from the EP

Group in Rio de Janeiro (Kuschnir and Dos Santos Machado, 2003; Lyra et al., 2003; Miller, 2003, 2009). The EP framework (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009) is based on the following seven principles:

Principle 1 : Focus on ‘Quality of life’ as the main issue

Principle 2 : Work to understand the ‘quality of life’ before thinking about improving it

Principle 3 : Involve everybody in the work for understanding

Principle 4 : Work to bring people together

Principle 5 : Work cooperatively for mutual development

Principle 6 : Make it a suitable and continuous enterprise

Principle 7 : Integrate the work for understanding fully into existing curricular to minimize the burden and maximize sustainability

2.2.1.1 Principle 1 Quality of life

In EP, a practitioner researcher wishing to develop his or her understanding of classroom language learning needs to consider the principle of ‘quality of life’ above all. This first principle challenges the more common expression of the ‘work/life balance’, suggesting that instead of a dichotomy, life and work in the language classroom should be seen as one, as Gieve and Miller (2006) explained: [Quality of life] is what teachers and learners understand, and/or try to understand about their joint experience in classrooms, [...] these understandings are of greater intrinsic importance to them than how productive or efficient classroom outcomes are by external standards.

In other words, the classroom needs to focus on understanding teacher’s and learners’ experiences and design the lessons to meet their puzzles. From doing this, teachers and learners can be happy and enjoy learning and involving in every activity both inside and outside classroom. Moreover, the contents of the lessons can be effectively used in their daily lives to help improve their quality of life.

2.2.1.2 Principle 2 Working for understanding(s)

EP focuses on working toward understanding the classroom before finding ways to improve the quality of the classroom. It digs on the “puzzles” to more deeply understand, not “problems” to be solved. So, the questions asked would be “I wonder...” instead of “I do...”.

Crucially, EP promotes a stance of open-ended, puzzled inquiry for practitioners; it creates the space for practitioners to explore their puzzles while concurrently practicing the target language.

2.2.1.3 Principle 3 Involve everyone

Using an EP approach means that I could involve learners much more in my research. In this sense, I perceived my learners as “key practitioners of learning” (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009). Simply by encouraging learners to have voices in creating lesson plans and activities in a democratic space, classroom participants could help teach each other and help the teacher learn to create a peer-teaching environment.

2.2.1.4 Principle 4-5 Bring people together for mutual development

If one person wants to understand, everyone should have the opportunity to understand however “deep” or “shallow”. Moreover, in the research circumstance EP bring people (teacher, researcher, learner, etc.) to work together. It is not only researcher gets in to the field and collect data then report the result without further connection or inform the result to the participants. From working in a state of collegiality (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009)(Rowland, n.d.), previous research has shown benefits gained by teachers. Additionally, while results show benefits to the researcher, they also benefit language teachers and/or learners, and vice versa, in a continuous loop of learning and development. For example, in a case where a teacher thought that learners are lazy, while learners said that the teacher is boring, EP would help them to work together, co-create their own classroom environment, understand the puzzle and improve themselves together.

2.2.1.5 Principle 6 Working for understanding as a continuous enterprise

Life is continuous and dynamic. EP suggests that practitioners do their research during instructional time; in other words, the research is the pedagogy (and vice versa). In promoting this approach, EP can be seen to be responding to issues raised in previous years (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, 2009; Freire, 1970, 1973; Zeichner and Noffke, 2001), namely:

1. The relevance of the research: To whom or for whom?
Implemented by whom? Judged by whom?

2. The need for more time and resources to do the research;

3. The struggle for recognition of practitioners as legitimate owner/generators of knowledge.

By recommending that practitioners take what they already do and utilize their pre-existing pedagogic practices as research tools, EP offers an opportunity to develop understandings of language learning and/or teaching in a sustainable ecology of research and pedagogy.

2.2.1.6 Principle 7 Integration of research and pedagogy

EP focuses on reducing the burdens and maximizing sustainability; as Allwright (2005) offered, the main aim of EP is to use 'class time' to deepen understanding of what language learning involved.

Using what EP purports may seem baffling at first. A novice might ask: What kind of pedagogic activities can be potentially exploited in this way? How is it possible to utilize 'normal classroom work' as a way of investigating a puzzle?

EP argues that almost any communicative activity can be harnessed to this end (for examples see Hanks and Allwright, 2009; Hanks, 2013; J Hanks, Tarone, and Soneson, 2013; Miller, 2009; Miller, 2003; Slimani-Rolls, 2003, 2005; Slimani-Rolls and Kiely, 2018; Zhang, 2004). But careful thought is required to reframe pedagogy in this way. This is because habits of seeing, thinking, and knowing, are deeply ingrained, so discovering the elegant simplicity of the integration of pedagogy and research may take time.

2.3 Establishing the case of EP as a form of practitioner research

EP addresses ethical concerns by integrating research into pedagogy and recommending routine teaching activities as data collection tools rather than academic research tools that require extra effort, extra time, and a higher energy level. When advocating for EP as an appropriate form of classroom research for my students, I would compare it to other types of professional research. i.e. action research and reflective practice. EP was chosen in light of the aims of the study, which are; to see how EP helps improve learners' English skills and what are their perceptions toward the teaching.

2.4 Exploratory Practice versus action research

Borg (2010) initially considered EP to be an extension of action research. This paragraph highlights that EP is not an extension of action research, but is instead entirely different from it. Methodologically, action research as a framework for classroom research allows teachers to develop research skills derived from educational repertoire. There is, therefore, little difference in practice between action research and academic research (Nunan, 1989). Block, (1999) reflects on the action research that “the entire enterprise is strong in theory but very difficult to carry out in practice.” He mentions two reasons why an academic model of teacher research (i.e. action research,) is not feasible because it requires extra time and needs a higher level of energy to conduct. Research goals for academic research and action research are opposed to EP, which aims “to get pedagogy done in a way that incorporates a research perspective (Dick Allwright, 2005).

Work on practitioners' lives should not be useless or parasitic. Under the technical framework, practitioners are generally concerned with conducting methodological formalities, i.e. gathering data using academic research instruments and analyzing the results. They are likely to forget the ultimate goal of teaching and learning while doing it. EP as a form of classroom research prioritizes teaching and pedagogy carried out with a research perspective in order to benefit the lives of everyone involved in the research/inquiry. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the study of Perpignan (2001; 2003) because it provides a good example of classroom research as a social enterprise and a collegial system that results in the mutual development of all those involved. In

the framework of EP, she performed qualitative research where the tools used for self-reports were in the form of questionnaires in which one questionnaire was used to generate data to examine the choice of the learners for feedback type and the other questionnaire was focused on classroom activities. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to familiarize herself with the ideas and opinions of the learners about input they got during the course. Not all of Perpignan's data collection methods are deceptive as they not only accommodated, but also supported the classroom's regular teaching environment. In fact, Perpignan's self-reports show an excellent and perfect example of "integrating the work of understanding into the life of the individual pedagogical and social circumstances" (Perpignan, 2003). The matching game and the "Z" exercise Perpignan used in her study function as a better guide for how to conform with the concept of integrating research into pedagogy by EP. On the one hand, we can prevent disruption of the usual teaching environment by using classroom-friendly data collection tools. On the other hand, we gain awareness of some topics that may not be feasible if we remain pre-occupied with using only academic research tools in classroom research. All in all, it can be claimed that the doctoral thesis of Perpignan, (2001) on enhancing written feedback on writing for students offers a good example of translating study into pedagogy.

2.5 Understanding not problem-solving

Understanding language classroom life for teachers and learners is a top priority of EP as a form of practitioner research in contrast to that of action research which aims to find a solution to a problematic issue. EP strictly avoids any action that is taken without reaching adequate understanding. According to EP, many situations that seem to be problematic requiring a practical solution could be handled through dealing with quality of life (Perpignan, 2001). Understanding the relationships between people doing the investigation and being investigated is the main objective of EP as a form of practitioner research (Allwright, 2005).

2.6 EP advantages and disadvantages

Teacher-researchers working with EP have acknowledged numerous advantages to their professional lives as teachers, including new awareness of the perspectives of their learners (Gunn, 2010; Rose, 2007; Silver, 2008), increased passion for the learning-teaching experience (Crane et al., 2012; Johnson, 2002), more room for researching personal, affective issues relevant to language teaching (Lyra et al., 2003), increased incentive for establishing common understanding with colleagues on curricula (Slimani-Rolls, 2003), and a better understanding of the reflective system itself (Kuschnir and Dos Santos Machado, 2003). While this research has tended to focus on the improvement of learners and their perception on the designed program, EP is likely to serve as a productive model for beginning language teachers who are training to become reflective, analytical practitioners (Freeman, 2002; Wright, 2010) in an educational setting that is continually requiring a sophisticated understanding of learners and learning (Hanks and Allwright, 2009; Claire, 2009). In addition, the third principle of EP, which encourages the involvement of learners in the puzzles of teachers allows this framework a theoretically rich paradigm through which novice teachers can pursue learner-centered pedagogies.

Despite the abundance of available material, EP has sometimes been downplayed. Critics argue: EP exists only in small, privileged circumstances, there is inadequate published work to warrant attention, or the study lacks conceptual heaviness. Typical statements include: "it lacks global reach", "It occurs in limited, isolated geographic/institutional areas", "it's just another word for action research / reflective practice / teacher research", "It's ephemeral, just a flash-in-the-pan."

2.7 Why EP

Breen, (2006) describes the current professional development approaches to teachers as part of two types: 'trainability' and 'vernacular pedagogy.' The first type of professional development for teachers comprises of short training courses designed to serve policies adopted by institutions, governments or publishing companies where follow-up teacher professional development programs are a rare occurrence. When improving understanding, these short-term training courses were considered less effective (Hargreaves, 2001). There are local pedagogical principles and various

frameworks for classroom practice that are generated by teachers in real and diverse situations as an alternative to the trainability pedagogies. These are termed vernacular pedagogies, which are deemed more flexible in terms of culture and circumstance. Breen, (2006) specifically refers to three teacher training strategies within vernacular pedagogies: Reflective Practice Model Action Research and EP. According to Breen (2006), if these approaches embrace and accommodate research-informed innovations, these approaches are useful for future teacher development.

EP was developed by using non-academic research tools and did not require extra effort to study it, unlike action research. Action research has shown that compared to the time and effort teachers expended in their teaching, it is not very valuable (Dick Allwright, 2005). Breen (2006) suggests that EP appears to have improved on reflective practice and action research by integrating research into pedagogy using routine teaching activities as research tools rather than pushing additional work onto practitioners; EP does this by focusing on the local concerns and needs of teachers and learners alike. EP does not ignore the importance of academic researchers and teacher educators in improving the field, but it calls for a shift in their traditional position by challenging them to work as insiders. A researcher may be invited to act as a resource person serving the insiders, while a teacher educator can function as a facilitator and member of the EP group engaging in this awareness of what teachers and their learners are learning locally. The scholarly context where EP first came to be known was through the epilogue to a book published in 1991 by Allwrights and Bailey. The set of design criteria (Allwright, 1992) played a key role in determining the ethical framework of EP. It could be argued that Dick Allwright (2001)'s six criteria helped to differentiate EP from Action Research. The list of the following six principles accompanied by two practical suggestions, is the product of further analysis (Allwright, 2005). The following work on EP (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009) also contains a similar list of the following concepts. The list of the seven principles (as mentioned in section 2.2) is the outcome of more thinking (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009). It is necessary to mention, however, that these principles can evolve and change in the future. Proponents of EP believe that it has improved on earlier forms of reflective practice and action research by integrating research into pedagogy

using routine teaching as research tools rather than putting additional work on practitioners. So, in my research, EP was chosen as the main approach.

2.8 Flipped classroom theoretical framework

The flipped classroom theory is one of the student-centered theories which differs from older ways of teaching and learning. In a Thai traditional classroom, the teacher stands in front of a class presenting information to convey the knowledge that they think the students should know, while leaving the duty of trying to understand to lesson to the students. In traditional class settings students sometimes have opportunities to ask questions, however, most of them do not ask or stop their teacher when they do not understand for fear of losing face in the classroom or worries that the teacher or their friends will judge them and perceive them as stupid. This may be one of many reasons that traditional class is not as effective as it should be.

On the other hand, flipped classroom gives out lessons, mostly in video format, for students to study from home before coming to the class. Then, the class starts with asking questions in first few minutes, discussion on the topic in small groups, and completion of assignments together during class time. In this way, the teacher can walk around and assist students who need extra help to make sure that every student understands the lesson. As Shari Kendrick shared in “Flipped Your Classroom” by Bergmann and Sams, 2012,

“I don’t have to go to school and perform five times a day. Instead, I spend my days interacting with and helping my students.” (Shari Kendrick, 2012: Interview)

This study showed a flipped classroom approach as used to teach classes comprised of all levels of students, including adults (Bergmann and Sams, 2012), which is why it was chosen as a reference for the main theoretical framework of my study.

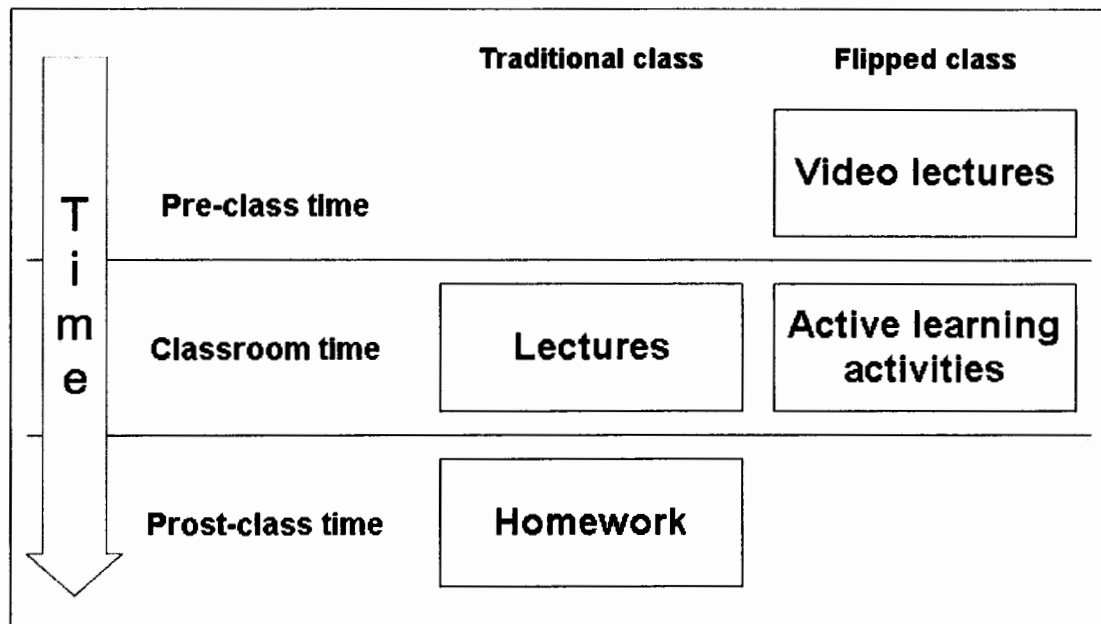


Figure 2.1 Comparison of the learning process in traditional classrooms and flipped classrooms

Academic research into student perceptions and the effectiveness of a flipped classroom is relatively limited at present, with the majority of commentary coming in the form of informal weblogs and the like. Bishop and Verleger (2013) provide a recent survey of research into the flipped classroom approach and report on eleven studies that have investigated student perceptions of the flipped classroom, with results being relatively consistent in that general student opinion of the flipped classroom tends to be positive with a significant minority being opposed. In introducing the term “inverted classroom,” which is the similar idea of flipped classroom Lage, Platt, and Treglia (2000b), found favorable opinions from students toward the introduction of such a model in an introductory microeconomics course. Gannod et al., 2008 found that students in a software engineering course were largely happy with the model, although there were students who were not so supportive. Bates and Galloway (2012) found that 80% of survey respondents in a first-year physics course preferred the flipped structure to a traditional approach. Schullery, Reck, and Schullery (2011) found a largely positive response from students in a flipped introductory business course, although 32% of survey respondents advocate a return to a traditional lecture format. Conversely, Strayer (2012) found that students in a flipped classroom introductory statistics course were less satisfied with the classroom structure than

those in a traditional class, but that they became more open to co-operation and innovation as the semester progressed. Jaster (2013) found a majority of students prefer a traditional lecture approach to a flipped classroom in a first-year algebra course.

Figure 2.2 below provides a synthesis of the way in which the theory and frameworks connect to flipped classroom based on previous studies and theoretical underpinnings. In the middle of the image is the pyramid associated with Bloom's taxonomy. This version of Bloom's Taxonomy is a new version as developed by (Jingbo, 2017). Based on this version, the items listed in the taxonomy refer to the following: 1. remembering - retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory; 2. understanding - constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining; 3. applying - carrying out or using a procedure through executing, or implementing;; 4. analyzing - breaking material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose; 5. evaluating - making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing;; 6. creating - reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing (p. 67-68).

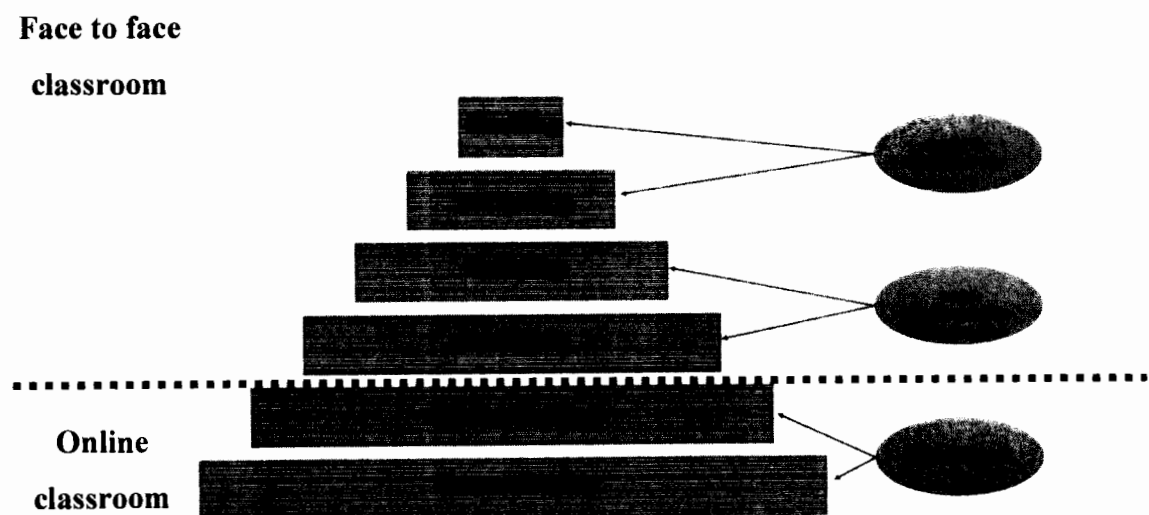


Figure 2.2 Bloom's revised taxonomy connected to flipped classrooms

Table 2.1 shows a flipped classroom approach through Bloom's taxonomy, the skills highlighted at the base of the triangle (remembering and understanding) occur outside of class without teacher supervision. Students can watch videos as many times as needed to remember information and to understand concepts. The stimuli being the information that is needed to function in class appropriately; It can be seen as a reversal in the way students view learning and the actions of those participating in the learning environment and a change in the way students' approach to functioning in a new learning environment (Skinner, 2011). When initially adopting a flipped classroom environment, this is especially significant. The middle levels of the pyramid – analyzing and applying – occur in class with the help of a teacher or peers and are more collaborative than the bottom levels. The top levels – evaluating and creating – while still having the potential to be collaborative in nature, are moving toward student autonomy. They would still occur in class but as students master a concept, they should be able to complete tasks independently and accurately. Theoretically, at least, students can re-watch videos as often as need and at their own pace in order to master the first two levels. The top four levels will be mastered under the supervision of the instructor with possible peer influence at various times.

Table 2.1 Tools used in a flipped classroom to achieve Bloom's levels of learning

Level of Learning	Traditional Classroom Tools	Flipped Classroom Tools
Remembering	Face-to-face lecture	Pre-recorded lecture, reading material, and watching video lectures independently
Understanding	Question and Answer	Reflection, peer-to-peer discussion and collaboration
Analyzing	Homework	Classroom activities such as a group discussion
Applying, Evaluating, Creating	Homework or nothing	Student projects, presentations, peer-evaluation and instructor-evaluation.

Figure 2.3 is an attempt to design a framework that has the potential to depict the dynamic nature of a flipped classroom and to illustrate how the various learning theories can apply to different stages in the learning process. Much of this depends on the teacher, the students' needs, and the content of the course being flipped. In this framework, a flipped classroom is viewed as a flexible concept where there is a certain amount of fluidity in the way theories can be utilized.



Figure 2.3 Synthesis of learning processes in flipped learning

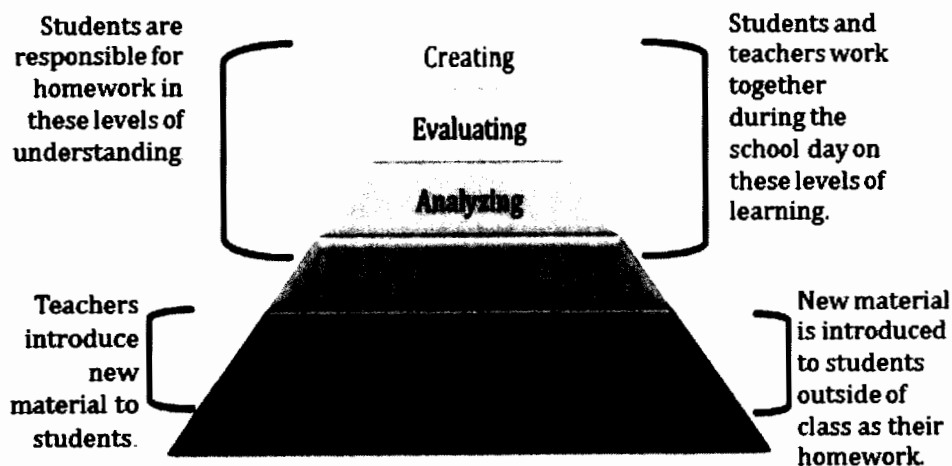
It is difficult to capture all of the methodologies incorporated into a flipped classroom context. There is a lot of freedom in the manner in which teachers present information and plan lessons, and students synthesize the content. This is both a benefit and a drawback to the concept of flipped classroom. It is a benefit because it provides a vehicle for differentiated teaching and learning. It is a drawback, however, because it is difficult to research which factors, if any, contribute to its effectiveness (Keefe, 2007). Flipped classroom is a useful tool that could be used for achieving differentiated instruction. A research study could look at the effectiveness of flipped classroom in a classroom context where students have mixed abilities. Students with lower abilities would be given support material such as instructional videos and recorded lectures that can be accessed outside the class in a flipped classroom format.

2.9 Bloom and the flipped classroom

Bloom's taxonomy, the pyramid concept depicting multiple levels of learning discussed earlier can be used as a lens through which to view the various stages of learning. The process of learning from knowledge acquisition to critical thinking activities was amended by L. W. Anderson and Sosniak in 1994. This revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy is relevant to flipped classroom in that the transmission of information, which is the basis for learning, is obtained independently and outside of class; while the assimilation of information, which requires greater critical reasoning occurs during class under the guidance of an instructor or mentor. The higher the tier portrayed on the pyramid, the more assimilation is required; whereas, the lower the level, the more transmission of information occurs, somewhat independently, but not completely, from assimilation. The areas in the middle may require a more balanced or less skewed combination of the two. The notion of describing flipped classroom in terms of assimilation and transmission was highlighted by Talbert (2012). While Bloom's taxonomy is valuable for showing the stages of learning and the type of learning that occurs at each stage, it does not explain best practices in how to master each level in a given context. The benefit of flipped classroom as it relates to Bloom's taxonomy is that students are actively supported during some of the activities that require higher order thinking. Other models and theories which explain how learning occurs at the various stages as explained by Bloom's Taxonomy include: Bloom's Mastery Learning, Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructivism. Indeed, most research on the flipped classroom employs group-based learning activities inside the classroom, based on student centered learning theories. In addition, flipped classroom as a pedagogical approach lends itself to the Mastery Model as outlined by (Bloom, 1968) and described by Anderson (1975,) which also shows some relation to the work of Skinner and operational conditioning.

Traditional Model

Flipped Model



Blooms Taxonomy

Figure 2.4 the comparison of traditional and flipped classroom

2.10 The advantages of the flipped classroom

The flipped classroom encompasses some approaches, including active and collaborative learning, problem-based learning and project-based learning. Many advantages of the flipped classroom have been covered throughout the blogosphere and elsewhere (Zappe et al., 2009), see as Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Advantages of flipped classroom

For students	For teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn at their own pace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with students in the classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage concepts with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve student attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration levels remain low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers can group students together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particular benefit to those students whose personality types and preferred learning styles impair their performance in traditional educational environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve students' ability to solve open-ended problems

In the traditional classroom, the teacher is the center of the class focus, delivering knowledge to all students. So, traditional teachers tend to teach lessons in front of their class. They, therefore, give the duty of trying to decode knowledge and understand main concepts away to the students. In this setting however, a student cannot stop a teacher every time they do not understand, which could cause them to not grasp every point of a lecture and perhaps miss important points necessary for complete understanding.

On the other hand, learning from videos at home they can play pause, rewind, and fast-forward as necessary, and watch as many times as they want allowing them to understand the lesson by their own pace. Flipped class learning is a carriage collaborative learning, social interaction, teamwork, and cultural diversity among students. This is because if one of the students cannot understand the lesson he or she can go ask a friend to explain and help them understand the lesson better. Flipped class learning also supports students helping each other, which promotes learning because everyone has different skill levels and students to whom a lesson comes easily are able to solidify their knowledge through assisting their classmates, who may also benefit from a different perspective or explanation on the lesson. Unlike a traditional class, in a flipped class, a teacher can devote time to help students develop their skills during class time.

In this system, a flipped class allows for an increase in the amount of time that a teacher is able to work one-on-one with the students who do not understand the idea of the lesson. Moreover, it encourages students to help their peers during class time, so students who need extra help can understand more than learning in the traditional class setting.

2.11 The disadvantages of the flipped classroom

Of course, as with any approach, there are also some disadvantages to the flipped classroom, as well (see Figure 2.5). One of the characteristics of the flipped classroom is that everyone learns knowledge and skills at a different pace. But this mode of operation relies heavily on students' self-motivation. Some students are not as motivated as others, and this method of teaching may allow those less motivated students to get less done (Krueger, 2012). Tests are usually provided to every student

synchronously to judge how much they have learned over a period of time. Under the flipped classroom model, every student will each be approaching tests at different times. This could also allow students to delay their learning when they are dreading the next test. Students in poor areas may not have the resources at home, (eg. computers and internet service) that the flipped classroom requires. Students who do not have personal computers or network would be forced to use public computers or network at a library or an internet café. There are some limitations if it is busy in these locale options, which is problematic. Another downside is that students spend all of their “homework time” in front of a computer screen, which adds to the student's time sitting sedentary, and does not help students to get time away from their computers, televisions, and smartphones.

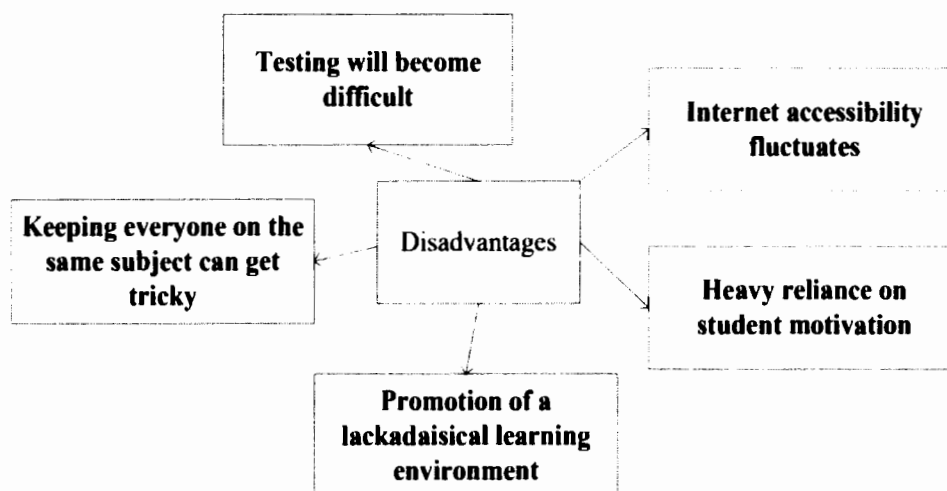


Figure 2.5 Disadvantages of flipped classroom

2.12 Related studies

2.12.1 Exploratory Practice (EP)

Hiratsuka (2016) adopted EP to enhance the team teaching in two public high schools. Participants were two pairs of teams (comprised of one foreign teacher and one local teacher,) and 76 students (participants' names and places were all pseudonyms). The paper focused on the experience of teachers participating in EP and looked into ‘the complexities and conundrums of the immensely complicated social world’. She collected data by being a classroom observer for four months using

qualitative methods such as interviewing, pair and group discussions, and story writing about their EP experience.

Judith Hanks (2015b) critically examined the implementation of Exploratory Practice in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context in a British university. The innovation involved challenges as well as opportunities for uniting learning, teaching and research. Particular emphasis was given to two teachers, who were the focus of the article: the story of one, 'Jenny', illustrated the processes of doing Exploratory Practice with learners of EAP, while the story of the other, 'Bella', provided insight into the notion of puzzles, a central feature of the Exploratory Practice framework. For these practitioners, it was clear that the integration of pedagogy with locally relevant, small-scale research activity, held a wealth of opportunities for language learning and teaching.

Crane (2015) described how the reflective teaching framework of Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright, 2003, 2005) was used in a combined German/Spanish foreign language teaching methods course at a large state university in the U.S. in order to foster ongoing reflective teaching practice and provide learning opportunities for Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) with different experiences and training. Through qualitative analysis of three teachers' written reflections, the study shows how graduate students worked with EP to understand their own classrooms and teaching programs in personally meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways. Analysis of the GSIs' reported learning outcomes and their ability to follow EP's seven guiding principles in their journals reveals key differences between the novice and more experienced GSIs, suggesting it may take time for those new to teaching to understand and fully integrate the principles into their reflective practice. Implications for methods coursework were discussed.

Banister (2018) described a teacher-researcher's experience of scaffolding his business English learners in identifying, formulating, and exploring language learning puzzles using the principles of Exploratory Practice. Adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods, the teacher-researcher reflected upon the learner-initiated and learner-centered inquiry as it played out in his UK university setting. Learners' perspectives revealed an enthusiasm for puzzling, especially when connections were established with their wider world. However, tensions also emerged,

including the opaqueness of the scaffolding role and the mind-set shift required from learner-researchers and the teacher-researcher alike. Practical recommendations for teacher-researchers in similar contexts were provided: the need to highlight connection-building between learner puzzles and learners' wider lives and the importance of recognizing distinctions between puzzles and problems.

Soomro (2018) studied about EP at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro (USJP) in Pakistan, where some teachers in the Institute of English Language and Literature volunteered to participate in the project by undertaking the principles of EP in their teaching. In this project, the researcher worked as both an EP practitioner and a teacher-consultant to a group of seven teachers at the USJP for a full academic year consisting of two semesters of four months each. The interviews were conducted twice during the project, first time after collecting data for first two RQs from those who left the project halfway and a second time after the completion of collecting data for later two RQs from those who continued until the end, in order to know the views of the participant-teachers about EP as an approach to their professional self-development. The findings show that teacher-participants found EP a practically viable option in their given circumstances and useful for their professional development as well as learning and for the teaching context in which they work.

Wu (2006) ventured to make a philosophical inquiry into EP's underlying ideas, combined with ethnographic investigation of an actual case based on a teacher-initiated research project. The inquiry was made in the light of both Western and Eastern philosophical thought, and its outcomes were analyzed and presented in the form of stories. He proposed that Exploratory Practice was best seen as a venture of experiencing authentic being through critical practices for understanding the quality of classroom life in terms of 'what is inherently so' (yin qi gu ran) and by searching for a language of Tao (the nameless). Following the route of 'being', 'understanding' and 'naming', this venture aimed at the harmonization of teachers' professional lives, where teaching is revealing being through words, and 'then conversely, learning is experiencing what a teacher's words reveal'.

Zhang (2004) explored ways of solving a problem he experienced in teaching English extensive reading to English majors in a Chinese University. Hanks

(2014) focused on the experiences of learners engaging with EP for the first time in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context.

Zhang (2004) provides much of the theoretical background to Exploratory Practice (EP) that was not possible to cover in the introductory paper to this collection. It also illustrates how the framework of EP can be invoked in the context of doctoral research. The researcher reported and commented on the reflexive doctoral study, which focused on his own professional development as an EP teacher-consultant (Miller, 2001). He added an academic investigative dimension to his already reflexive practitioner research, aiming to create opportunities for working towards enriched understandings of the unfolding of two longitudinal teacher consultancy encounters in which he worked, within EP, individually, as an EFL consultant to/with two practicing EFL teachers. He claimed that his paradoxically reflexive positioning in both his practitioner and academic research practices combined to enhance his understandings of the 'unrepresentable' management of reflection in the sessions. He captured the interactional delicacy of the evolving teacher-consultant relationship through longitudinal topic-footing frame micro-analyses.

2.12.2 Flipped classroom (FC)

In the study of Abdullah, Hussin, and Ismail (2019), combined methods of using pre and post oral proficiency tests, observation, and focus group interviews were used to examine the effectiveness of using a flipped classroom model on English speaking performance. The study population consists of twenty-seven undergraduate students who were attending the course of Advanced Communication Skills, in the academic year of 2018. A purposeful sampling technique, specifically quasi-experimental procedure was employed in this study. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data showed that the application of Flipped Classroom Model (FCM) was an effective approach in the EFL speaking classroom. The results of a paired-sample t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between pre and post oral proficiency tests $t(26) = -14.83, p < 0.001$. Moreover, it was found that students' involvement and willingness to participate in English conversational tasks, their level of commitment to studies, and their English speaking performance gradually increased over the course of the study. In light of the findings, the study recommended

encouraging teachers to employ modern technologies in their teaching strategies, particularly FCM.

Lin and Hwang (2018) studied about an online community-based flipped learning approach that was proposed for an EFL oral presentation course; moreover, a learning analytics approach was used to analyze factors affecting the students' oral presentation outcomes. An 18-week research design was implemented with the online community-based flipped classroom using Facebook as the platform for facilitating and recording peer-to-peer interactions during the flipped learning process. In addition, the students' learning performance and perceptions were collected in 3 learning stages during the 18 weeks. The experimental results reveal the online community-based flipped instruction to have more positive effects than conventional video-based instruction. The online community-based flipped instruction use of mobile devices enhanced students' English oral performance. Moreover, it was found that the high improvers had a significantly higher frequency of online participation, as well as more interactive behaviors and greater satisfaction with the flipped classroom than the low improvers. These results imply that the online community flipped classroom could not only provide learning materials and out-of-class learning for students, but could also help them become more responsible and autonomous in their learning and communication.

Wiley (2015) studied the use of a flipped classroom to instruct 112 fifth grade mathematics students from four classrooms in a suburban school district in the Midwestern United States, which used convergent concurrent mixed methods design to develop an understanding of the impact. Qualitative data was collected through classroom observations, and student and teacher interviews over the course of two units of instruction on decimals and fractions. Quantitative data was collected from two-unit posttests and an attitude survey at the end of the study. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Practices were used as a framework to analyze the teaching practices and research on students' conceptual understanding of decimals and fractions, which formed the basis for understanding student thinking during the interviews. The qualitative data suggests that this model, as enacted in this study, strongly encourages the use of rules and procedures, not always accurately, to the detriment of developing conceptual understanding. The quantitative data shows that

most students did appear to meet the state standards in the area of decimals while many more did not in the area of fractions. Of equal concern is that low achieving students had less access to the videos at home and more frequently found them frustrating or confusing.

Onyema and Daniil (2017) pointed out two distinctive needs in order for educational systems to overcome existing challenges: the need for a new learning theoretical framework, and the need to continuously educate teachers on new information and communication technology (ICT) use in classrooms. In response to these needs the UNESCO ICT-CFT Model was presented, which from the authors point of view covers the requirement for a robust framework, while also highlighting salient issues pertinent to the 21st century learner generation. They propose the 'flipped learning' model as an alternative for more engaging and impactful learning. Entrepreneurship education programs can serve as prominent avenues to actualize this proposal.

Merrill and Bruno (2015) used a case study approach to investigate teacher practices in the flipped classroom. The intent of this record of study was to examine veteran teachers' practices and perceptions when flipping their classes for the first time, and to try to determine the factors that contribute to effective implementation of the model. The findings suggested that teachers perceive that a student-centered learning environment, in which the focus was on learning as opposed to the delivery of instruction, resulted in an increase in student engagement and understanding.

2.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed EP theoretical framework, advantages and disadvantages of EP, and why I chose EP for this thesis. The argument about the flipped classroom concept and Bloom's revised taxonomy theory, which have been chosen as main theories in the designed program, has also been presented. In addition, the review discussed advantages and disadvantages of these theories and the related studies.

In the next chapter, I will draw on Exploratory Practice (EP) as a theoretical framework and methodology for this thesis study. First, the nature of this thesis will be presented. Next, the principles of EP and its guidelines will be illustrated as a framework. Then, the research plan and research methods will be discussed following by explanation of the data analysis procedure. And lastly, the quality of the research and the conclusion are mentioned.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for this study. It will first describe the nature of research and second describe the research framework. Following this, I will discuss the research plan and research methods. Following this will be an explanation of the data analysis procedure. And lastly, the quality of the research and the conclusion are mentioned.

A mixed-methods approach is used as a research method to answer four main questions:

- (1) What are the difficulties of learners in studying English for learners in a mixed-age group?
- (2) What are the learners' preferences to learn in a mixed-age English class?
- (3) To what extent does the designed program based on EP help mixed-age learners to improve their English speaking skills?
- (4) What are their perceptions towards the use of the program?

3.1 Nature of research

This research study uses a mixed-methods approach (Greene et al., 1989). It focuses on qualitative data to minimize the criticism of qualitative research on its generalizability, personal bias, or subjectivity (Dörnyei, 2007, p.39-40), quantitative data is employed to triangulate (Bryman, 2004; Erzberger and Kelle, 2003; Newby, 2014; Nightingale, 2009) and improve the validity of the data (Whitemore et al., 2001).

As there is a small sample size in the research study, the qualitative approach (Silverman, 2016) is mainly used to get in-depth data through individual semi-structured interviews as a primary source, with focus group interviews, teacher journals used as secondary sources. 'Thematic analysis' (Braun and Clarke, 2006) is mainly used to analyze qualitative data. For quantitative data (Lawshe, 1975), I collect

numeric data by adopting a rubrics scoring system through the adaptation of the rubrics scoring system of Council of Europe and Tohoku Fukushi University, Language Educators' Group to analyze and assess the learners' speaking abilities.

3.2 Research frame

3.2.1 Setting

This study was carried out at BNS village (pseudonym). It is a village located in a remote area in northeast Thailand. The classroom was operated at the courtyard for joint activities in the village to serve motivated villagers who want to improve their English for the workplace and everyday life. The class started with eight learners. Then, the only four learners who meet research conditions (see section 3.2.3) were selected to be participants of this research study.

The class layout was quite informal. In class, I need to write and explain some interesting points in Thai language or the Esan dialect as a medium instruction language, as learners use Thai as their official language and Esan as their mother tongue that is spoken in this region. My class is operated mostly in Thai in order to scaffold learners' pre-existing knowledge and foster language learning. I also give them English instructions as much as possible when they have to interact with the lessons and doing classroom activities to promote their proficiency. I also sometimes used technology to let learners experience different accents from videos.

3.2.2 Participants

The learners consist of two groups chronologically. The first group is eight motivated volunteer to be learners. This group is studied to answer RQs 1 and 2. Then, the four learners were chosen to be the second group of the participants to find the answer to RQ 3 and 4 by using homogeneous sampling. Dörnyei (2007) described homogeneous sampling as when “members of the target population are selected from particular subgroups who share some vital experience relevant to the study (p 127).” The crucial criteria for choosing participants in this research are willing to volunteer and have different ages to answer the RQs.

3.2.3 Access and ethical consideration

3.2.3.1 Contacting gatekeeper

As an insider researcher, I asked the head of the village for permission and help for the announcement for volunteers to learn English with me as a gatekeeper. According to Creswell (2014), a gatekeeper is defined as “an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of place to study” (p 233).

3.2.3.2 Ethical consideration

In qualitative research, it is crucial to gain the trust of the participants because they have the right to withdraw at any time. Therefore, I need to discuss ethical issues with participants beforehand. Creswell (2014) suggests some guidelines for ethical practices such as explaining to participants the aim of the research, refraining from deceptive practice, sharing information with participants (including my role as a teacher and researcher), being respectful of the research setting, reciprocity, using ethical interview practices, maintaining confidentiality, and collaborating with participants (p.252).

For my research, I discussed some of the ethical issues surrounding the study, which mostly consisted of explaining the consent form to the students. It was also necessary to ensure that any data would be treated confidentially, and that their private details would remain anonymous. Each of the participants signed two copies of these forms, keeping one for them and returning the other to me.

3.3 Research Plan

I made a research plan in advance to help me to organize my ideas and look for flaws and inadequacies, if any. Moreover, this plan allowed me to manage the time required to undertake this research. My research plan was created based on the ideas from EP (Dick Allwright, 2003) see more information in section 2.2.

Table 3.1 Research plan

Week	Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying literature
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing the research plan and tools
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visiting the field
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data (individual Interview) to answer RQ 1 and 2
5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing data to answer RQs 1 and 2
8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing of the lesson plans and classroom activities (Flipped classroom program) based on the data analysis
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting data (Focus group interview) to answer RQ 3 and 4
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing the data to rewrite the lesson plans and classroom activities (see chapter 4, section 4.3)
12-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewriting the lesson plans and classroom activities
14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the revised lesson plans and classroom activities (both online and face to face learning based on the flipped classroom theory) Collecting data (individual Interview)
17-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing data to answer RQs 3 and 4
21-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a report

3.4 Research framework

I used seven EP principles (Dick Allwright, 2003) (see more information in section 2.2) as a framework to conduct this research study, design the teaching program and applied them to my research plan as shown below;

Table 3.2 EP designed program

Week	EP Principles	Activities
1-4	1) Put quality of life first 2) Work to understand the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the group of the participants to introduce the research project, research objectives and other relevant issues (i.e., confidentiality and consent form) Interview to explore their puzzles and preferences to design the lesson plans
5-9	2) Work to understand the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the interviewing data to answer two first RQs and write a draft of lesson plans based on the findings
10-13	3) Involve everybody 4) Work to bring people together 5) Work for mutual development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do focus group interview to discuss the draft of lesson plans and classroom activities (flipped classroom program) designing together with learners and also to get some feedback from them Analyze the focus group interviewing data Rewrite the lesson plans and activities according to focus group interviewing analysis
14-16	6) Make the work a continuous enterprise 7) Minimize the burden and maximize sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the rewritten flipped classroom program that allowed learners to control their time of learning through both online and face to face activities

From Table 3.2 one can see the designed program was created based on EP principles (Dick Allwright, 2003) as explained in detail below;

Principle 1: Put quality of life first

To create active learning, I as a teacher, need to know learners' focus and their learning preferences that can be used everyday to improve their life quality. I used guided questions (Dörnyei, 2007, p.137) for the individual semi-structured interview (see section 3.5.1) to draw on learners' background information, their experiences and attitude toward learning English, their self-assessment of language level, and their interest levels toward skills and topics of study.

Principle 2: Work to understand the classroom

To understand the classroom, I needed to undergo three processes to of examination before thinking about improving it. First, I needed to collect puzzles or difficulties in the classroom from learners. Then, I had to analyze the data (see section 3.6) to fully understand the student's desires and write lessons accordingly, allowing the learners to solve their puzzles.

Principle 3-5: Focus on inclusivity, collegiality and mutual development for all to foster stronger engagement for teachers and learners (Judith Hanks and Allwright, 2009)

I focus on the development of all the people connected. So, after I wrote the lesson plan based on the analysis of learners' interview data, I brought those lesson plans to class and discussed with learners in the focus group interview. The purpose of this focus group interview was to bring everyone together to be involved with the lesson plans review and improving the plan according to their puzzles and preferences. Using principles 3-5, I can work to understand learners more, develop my teaching methods, and may learn about teaching from my students. Additionally, learners can explore, review, and develop themselves through code signing the lesson plans and classroom activities with me as their guide.

Principle 6: Make the work a continuous enterprise

Based on the interview results and analysis of RQs 1 and 2, a flipped classroom was used as a teaching method in this study. The lesson plans and activities that were co-created between learners and teacher would then encourage learners to learn the lessons continuously.

Principle 7: Minimize the burden and maximize sustainability

Even though this study is non-formal education, learners are fulltime workers who have many works to do during the day. Therefore, there are burdens of workloads from attending the class. So, learners and I agreed to use flipped classroom to decrease the burdens and learn with happiness. The other goal was to maximize sustainability. Sustainability can be achieved if a teacher and learners can indeed all take responsibility for the co-created lesson plans and have the collegial relationships needed to cultivate their everyday quality of life. So, activities associated with these EP designed lessons can be interesting for learners and cyclical and iterative, to over time get students used to self-learning and build learning habits to last for whole lives.

3.5 The design of flipped classroom program

Based on the answers of questions 1 and 2, EP was used as the framework for collecting and analyzing the data. The analysis indicated that flipped classroom is the most appropriate for the group of learners and data shown in chapter 3, section 3.4, principles 6-7. The analysis also showed that learners want to study English speaking skills (see chapter 4, section 4.3.1). The two most preferred topics are Hotel and Welcoming and Food and Services (see chapter 4, section 4.3.2). This group of learners is highly motivated with the readiness of technology — for example, internet connection, smartphone, and essential applications for learning. However, the learners' necessary conditions were found from the analyzed data, which are a variety of ages and knowledge and time restrictions.

According to the conditions above, I found that flipped classroom (FC) (Galindo, 2014) is the most appropriate approach for designing the program for this group of learners. Galido mentioned that FC helps in 21st-century teaching and learning. It helps busy learners to learn in their free time. It also helps different levels of learners to learn by their own pace and able to pause and rewind their teacher when they do not understand any points. Besides, it is claimed that it helps to increase teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions, which is good for speaking class (2014). After the decision, FC program was created as shown below;

Table 3.3 The flipped classroom program

Topic	Objectives	Online learning		Classroom learning	
		Activities	Hrs.	Activities	Hrs.
Greeting and welcoming guests	Learners know how to greet and receive guests in daily routines and professional hotel context	1. Learners study materials posted on the site 2. Learners following the instructions posted by the teacher via Line Application	10	WARM-UP (10 Mins) • The teacher reviews the context which was set in the online activity, asking some questions to the learners. Let learners ask their inquiries.	5
Food and services	Learners know how to have a conversation about food and restaurant services context	3. Learners use the resources to help their own learning and take notes 4. Learners ask the teacher or their peers for advice if there is any curious 5. Learners record their voice and send to the teacher via Line Application as an assignment	10	• Getting learners in groups and preparing them for creating the conversation/roleplay in different situations. MAIN ACTIVITY (100 Mins) • Helping the learners enhance their speaking ability deeper in higher levels through controlled practice activities. Work in a group and create a roleplay/project using the knowledge that has been learned from lessons. Present a roleplay/project to the class Evaluate their classmate project and give suggestions for further improvement CLOSING (10 Mins) • Helping the learners enhance their speaking ability letting them speak with their classmates on the topic learned. This will help them be free to speak in English.	5
Total hours		Online learning	20	Classroom learning	10

The table above was recreated from the results of the focus group interview. It shows teaching and learning activities for both online and face to face classroom. There are two topics for the program that are divided into 20 hours online and 10 hours face to face classroom, which were used to implement to answer RQs 3 and 4.

3.6 Research method used

3.6.1 Interviews

There are two types of interviews in this research, which are individual semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview. I used Esan dialect and Thai language with my participants for all interviews because they may be more comfortable using their first language to give more information. After that, interviews were recorded and transcribed, when back translation to the original source language was undertaken.

3.6.1.1 Individual semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview was employed to gather data to answer the RQs. To get in-depth information, it is valuable to provide sufficiently structured interviews to get enough specific topics related to the study while leaving space for the participants to engage with the interview and offer new exciting viewpoints to the study (Galletta, 2013, p.495-501). I used open-ended questions as guided questions (see chapter 3, section 3.6.1.3) so that participants were encouraged to talk freely without being forced into response possibilities (Creswell, 2014).

3.6.1.2 Focus group interview

To form the most appropriate program for the learners and to comply with the nature of EP (principles 3-4), involving everyone and working to bring people together, a focus group interview (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014; VAugusthn et al., 1996) was used with a group of the participants to investigate their perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and ideas about the lesson plans. In the end, there were co-created rewritten lesson plans developed from the focus group interview of a teacher and learners implemented in the classroom to find the answer for RQs 3 and 4.

3.6.1.3 Interview guides

To generate rich data and to conduct interviews smoothly, I needed to design and conduct semi-structured interview questions by creating an agenda for the interview guide. According to Adams (2015), semi-structured interviews consist of guiding questions that are supplemented by follow-up and probing questions that depend on the interviewee's responses. An interview guide should be generated in following steps: draft the list of potential topics carefully, edit questions for the appropriateness, implement piloting to get feedback and to refine the guide, then make final edits of the interview guide for real data collection.

These guided questions were set to four parts; first few questions, content questions, probes, and final closing questions (Dörnyei, 2007, p.137). The first few questions are not so much from the content but to create initial rapport. These questions can help them to relax and consequently encourage them to open up their mine. Second, Patton (2002) pointed out that the contents questions are focusing on the experience of learning, opinion, feelings, knowledge, sensory information, and background information. Third, probes can be emerged to follow up on the answers of interviewees and to increase the richness and depth of the responses. Fourth, the final closing question was used to close the interview and open for interviewees to have the final say.

3.6.1.4 Interview piloting

Piloting for interviews was conducted primarily for qualitative research because it is vital for the implementation of the main study. There are three interviews; each of them was piloted before being used. The first interview guide (Appendix A) was piloted and then used to find the answer to RQs 1 and 2. The following interview guide (Appendix B) was piloted and then used to find the appropriateness of lesson plans and to revise the lesson plan from the results of the focus group interview. The third interview guide (Appendix C-D) was piloted and then used to find the answer to RQs 3 and 4. Majid, Othman, Mohamad, Lim, and Yusof (2017) presented five steps in conducting the pilot study.

To begin with, I collected all interview questions from previous studies, then transcribed them into Thai and determined interview questions as interview guidelines. Next, my initial semi-structured interview questions were reviewed by experts. After that, those questions were revised by selecting some questions which are appropriate in this study.

3.6.2 Teacher journal

The teacher journal was used as text recording after the classroom to note the participants' behavior and actions within a particular context (Creswell, 2014, p.238). The teacher journals are divided into two kinds. Descriptive journals are used to record descriptions of the events, activities, and people, while reflective journals are applied to record personal thought (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). In this study, I used both descriptive and reflective journals to record what happened in language classrooms.

3.6.3 Speaking assignments

To assess the achievement of learners speaking skills, I assigned six online speaking assignments for learners. The assignments start from more natural to difficult ones and two face to face speaking assignments. I used speaking rubrics (Indayani, 2018) to score learners' works (see appendix E), which was already approved by my supervisor, who is an expert on the field. In this study, the learners' work was handed in. Then, a native speaker and I graded them by the rubric score scales. After that, the scores from two raters were compared and analyzed to see learners' progress and to confirm the validity of the scoring system.

3.6.4 Video recording

Video recording was a supplementary method of in-classroom observation. Creswell (2014) pointed out that 'images such as videotapes provide extensive data about real life as people visualize it' (p.246) and share their perceptions of reality directly. This expressed the view that words or text cannot express all of the elements of the visual in which we are interested (Mason, 2017, p.107). I intended to use this method to record and replay the picture and sound of the classroom setting to see learners' reactions and review their progress and participation in classroom. I asked learners permission to video the class, and informed consent forms were signed.

3.7 Data analysis

Data were analyzed through mixed methods; qualitative and quantitative analysis was used to analyze the results. For qualitative data, Thematic analysis was mainly used. For quantitative data, rubrics scores were computed and converted into mean scores and independent t-test to complete and triangulate the results of the study.

3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis

Thematic analysis of Interviews is the primary method of analysis used in this research to get various perspectives on the RQs. Moreover, interviews give insight into a phenomenon as they allow the participants to reflect and reason on a variety of subjects in different ways (Jugder, 2016). Then we need to analyze those perspectives into practice as Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis is used to answer RQs related to people's experiences, views, and perceptions.

3.7.1.1 Thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) presented six steps of thematic qualitative data analysis and interpretations as follows;

1) Familiarize myself with the data

I collected data from different sources; individual semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, learners' works, teacher's journals, and classroom video recordings. To understand the data, I needed to read, watch, and listen through all the data many times to get familiar with all data and relate them to my prior knowledge. The complexity and varied formats of the mixed method, qualitative data (e.g., audio recording, transcriptions, and teacher journals) and quantitative data (e.g., learners' work and assessment), lack consistent structure, but are useful for conducting a comprehensive analysis. After familiarization, I could begin coding. I would take note of initial analysis thoughts, interpretations, and questions during data collection, but it would take time to familiarize myself with the depth and breadth of the content (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

2) Generating initial codes

After I have understood and familiarized myself with all of the data, I generated a preliminary list of ideas about the content in the data and assigned a code label to the text segments. The process of coding would help me to reduce a text to descriptions and themes of people, places, or events (Creswell, 2014, p.285).

However, I needed to work systematically through the entire data set and ensure that codes would not be interchangeable or redundant.

3) Searching for themes

I used codes to develop descriptions of data. A long list of different codes may combine to form into themes. These themes may be interconnected to describe the complexity of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014, p. 266).

4) Reviewing themes

This phase begins when a set of themes has been devised, and they require refinement (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is necessary to review themes again because some themes and subthemes would not have enough data to support them, while some themes would need to be broken down further.

5) Defining and naming themes

I would determine aspects of the data that each theme captures and identified what the theme interest is and why. After that, I could conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme. Each theme was given a name that gives the reader a sense of what it is related to.

6) Producing report

The report was written by interpreting the meaning of the research. It included a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and gripping account of the story within and across the themes.

3.7.1.2 Ensuring the quality of research

Appropriate strategies and methods were adopted to ensure the quality of data collection and analysis.

1) Trustworthiness, Validity, and Reliability

Triangulation or a mixed-method (Barbour, 1998; Greene and Caracelli, 1997; Polit and Hungler, 2003) approach was applied in this research to triangulate my research data. By using multiple methods, I strive to decrease the “deficiencies and biases that stem from any single method” (Mitchell, 1986, p. 19) creating “the potential for counterbalancing the flaws of one method with the strengths of another” (p. 21).

As I used between- or across-method triangulation, I employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in the study (Denzin, 2017; Kimchi et al., 1991; Mitchell, 1986; Oiler Boyd, 1993). At least two data-collection procedures from the qualitative approach and the other one from the quantitative approach were used in this research to increase the trustworthiness (Kimchi et al., 1991). In the qualitative approach, individual semi-structured interviews and the focus group interview were combined with teacher's journals. For the quantitative approach, the procedures consisted of learners' works and assessments as a database.

Fulcher (2014) explained that to provide a valid speaking test, it is necessary to capture the relevant aspects of speaking on the one hand and prevent interference in the score from irrelevant factors, on the other. Furthermore, Noble and Smith (2015) said that validity in the quantitative approach is to make sure that the findings accurately reflect the data. Noble and Smith (2015) explained the reliability as the consistency of the analytical procedures, including accounting for personal and research method biases that may have influenced the findings. Also, talking about the reliability in spoken language testing hinges on the role of oral examiners or raters (Fulcher, 2014). So, the test must be scored by several raters with rigor scores and clear descriptions for each level of scoring. I confirm the validity and reliability of the scoring system by using two raters, one is a native speaker and another is me myself.

3.7.2 Quantitative data analysis

The rubric scores on English speaking ability on assignments were considered and converted to speaking ability of learners to see whether which subskills of their spelling performance have been improved or which one is not. The scores were also computed and converted into mean scores and independent t-test by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel to come up with, as Munn et al. (2007) suggest, more accurate and systematic description of the data. The steps of the data analysis process were involved in determining the mean scores and the standard deviation of each person to check whether or not the mean scores of assignments were significantly improved in each assignment.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research plan that was used in this study in order to understand learners' puzzles, preference of learning, and perceptions. Moreover, It also answers the question of how the EP designed program works for the mixed-age group of students in this study. It employs multiple methods in data collection and uses thematic analysis to interpret data.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of learners' interviews and the discussions of the application of the EP designed program in class practice.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of data collected using mixed methods to answer four research questions;

(1) What are the difficulties of learners in studying English for learners in a mixed-age group?

(2) What are the learners' preferences for learning in a mixed-age English class?

(3) To what extent does the designed program based on EP help mixed-age learners to improve their English speaking skills?

(4) What are their perceptions of the use of the program?

This chapter consists of two sections, which are learners' profiles and finding reviews according to the four research questions.

First, learners have low confidence to speak English, difficulty remembering the lesson learned, and find it challenging to follow the lessons taught in class. Second, their preferences in learning are the improvement of speaking skills, preferable contents, and date and time management. Third, the designed program based on EP helps mixed-age learners improve their English in many aspects, including the improvement of conversation skills, grammar knowledge, vocabulary building, and appropriateness of language used. Fourth, their two main perceptions towards the use of EP program either positive or negative. There were ten positive perceptions toward the program, including flexibility of learning pace and time, increased interactions, understanding of the content, authenticity of the program, an environment of increased peer-teaching, increased confidence, increased collaborative learning, appropriate for all ages, increased motivation, and focus on learning. The three negative perceptions that were mentioned included technological problems, too many assignments, and difficulty learning on one's own. These perceptions will be discussed further below.

4.1 Personal profile of participants

There are eight villagers who volunteered to participate in this research study. They have a variety of ages, educational backgrounds, English skills, and occupations. Pseudonyms (each of the participants was given a different letter to refer to them) are used to protect their confidentiality, see table 4.1;

Table 4.1 Personal profile of the participants

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Highest education	CEFR self-assessment	Occupation
1	A	51	M	Bachelor's Degree	B1	Police officer
2	B	50	F	Grade 12	A2	Housewife
3	C	45	F	Bachelor's Degree	A2	Bank officer
4	D	43	F	Grade 4	A1	Farmer
5	E	26	F	Bachelor's Degree	A2	Hotel manager
6	F	20	M	1 st year University student	A1	Student
7	G	16	F	Grade 9	A2	Student
8	H	11	F	Grade 6	A0	Student

As shown in table 4.1, the youngest participant is 11 years old, the oldest is 51 years old, and the average age is 33 years old. For the educational background, the lowest grade level completed among participant is 4, and the highest is a bachelor's degree. The results of CEFR self-assessment test (see Appendix G) indicated that there were differences in English language abilities between participants. Those who have completed grades 4 and 6 have not had much English education experience and are not able to communicate, so they were categorized as beginner level English users (A0-A1), while the participants who hold bachelor's degrees placed as elementary to intermediate level English users (A2-B1). Three of the participants are students, and five participants are fulltime workers from different fields.

To answer RQs 1 and 2, the data from ISSI of all eight participants were analyzed. However, to answer RQs 3 and 4, data from four participants (A, B, D, and H) who volunteered to take part in the research study was used, which is listed in the information below.

A is a fifty-two-year-old police officer with his bachelor's degree. His English ability is at the level of A1 according to CEFR self-test evaluation (Lowie et al., 2010). A is interested in improving his English skills because he wants to communicate using English at work and in everyday life. He mentioned that he wants to improve his listening skill as shown in the verbatim data below:

"I want to listen and understand what foreigners say..." (A, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

His puzzles of learning English are about pronunciation and constructing sentences for speaking. He said that it is difficult to understand native speakers as he still pronounces words incorrectly. Moreover, it is difficult to build a sentence, even if he knows every word in the sentence he stills struggles to pronounce the full sentence correctly. (A, December 11, 2017: ISSI)

B is a fifty-one-year-old housewife with her high school certificate. Her English is at the level of A2 according to CEFR self-test evaluation (Lowie et al., 2010). This is considered quite good because she studied in an open university for a while, but she did not finish the degree because she had to work during that time as well. She studied English language in university with a mostly lecture-based approach via television. She said that a positive aspect of taking class in the university was that she could choose subjects that she was interested in. She was asked about the puzzles of her English, which she identified as the frequency of using English. She can communicate with basic conversation. The skill that she wants to improve the most is speaking and listening with general topics found in daily life conversation or describing things. (B, December 11, 2017: ISSI)

D is a 43-year-old farmer with her grade 4 certificate. Her English is at the level of A0 according from CEFR self-test evaluation (Lowie et al., 2010). However, she can speak with broken English. She is an active learner. She spoke every time she could in class and answered every question I asked with confidence even if she was

sometimes wrong. She is interested in learning English because she wants to be able to speak more fluently with foreigners who sometimes visit the village. She said that she would like to learn about daily life conversation and focus on speaking and listening first (D, December 11, 2017: ISSI). Due to her background education, her English knowledge is quite low compared to others in the study. However, she is the most determined student. She always studies by herself at home when she has time. She is the first student who was present in class and reviewed all the lessons before class began. From the class last year, she was not able to read or write words in English, but she is now able to. (11 August, 2019: Teacher journal) She mentioned her purpose in joining this program was that she wanted to use her English to help operate her resort business.

“I want to understand and know how to speak English so I can help with the hotel work.” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

According to the verbatim data above, it can show that D wants to improve her speaking skill to use in her hotel business. She is an active and diligent student.

H is a 11-year-old primary student. She is studying in grade 6. Her English language is the lowest in the group. She graded herself as level A0 according from CEFR self-test evaluation (Lowie et al., 2010). She is a passive learner. Her personality is quiet and shy. She does not have confidence in herself. When she was asked questions, she was always shy and turned to her classmates for help. H is the youngest and has lowest background knowledge. Despite her lower level I was able to observe her gradual improvement. She can now communicate with simple sentences related to her daily life and her interests. (11 August, 2019: Teacher journal). She wants to learn English because she wants to improve her English skills and increase her scores in formal education as an extra benefit. The puzzle that she mentioned is about vocabulary. She believes that once she has enough vocabulary and basic structures, she will be able to communicate in English and help with her hotel business.

“I want to speak and understand English.” (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I want to increase my vocabularies. In case that I have to help with my hotel business, so I can do it and help ease the burden of others and I will have better English than my friends” (H, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

According to the verbatim data above, H wants to improve her speaking skills to use in her hotel business and to improve her education.

To summarize, all four participants have the same reasons to study speaking skills, however, they have different learning goals. A (2017: ISSI) mentioned that the English language is important now, when everyone in the world can connect to each other by using English as a tool. B (2017: ISSI) added that she wants to study English to increase her confidence when speaking English. The English language is also useful in his working life (A, 2017: ISSI). D wants to use English in her hotel business to take care of foreigner visitors and introduce them to the local village, way of life, and regular routines. (2017: ISSI). H wants to improve her English subject scores in school (2017: ISSI).

The next section will discuss all eight principles to answer the first research question. Then, the following section will be the answer to research question 2 from the eight participants. The section after that will analyze data from the group of four participants according to RQ 3. The final section is to answer RQ 4 from the group of four participants.

4.2 Difficulties of BSN learners

The findings outlined here are driven by the verbatim data of eight learners (see chapter 3, section 3.2.2) who volunteered to be the participants. To answer the first RQ, the analysis of the verbatim data indicates that there are three main difficulties that learners faced during their former English class, 1) low confidence to speak English, 2) difficulty to remember the lessons learned, and 3) difficulty following the lessons taught in class, each theme will be discussed below.

4.2.1 Low confidence to produce the language

According to the analysis, low confidence in English speaking ability is the main difficulty of all learners (A, B, E, F, G, and H). Confidence is considered a significant factor in promoting speaking, especially for L2 learners (Boonkit, 2010;

Gurler, 2015). The results of this study support Boonkit's and Gurler's works which show that the learners with low confidence find it difficult to speak, as shown in the example of A's verbatim data.

"I am not confident to speak English to foreigners without people who can help with my language used. If I need to speak one by one with foreigners without any help, I am not sure that I can talk with them." (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Moreover, the learners' accent may influence their confidence to speak L2, as shown in the following example.

"I feel like I have a strong accent when speaking English. So, I do not have the confidence to speak." (B, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

As shown in the example, one reason these participants (B, G, H, and F) may have less confidence than others is because of their accents, in this context Thai-Lao accent, which is a dialect of Thai language that mostly used in northeastern Thailand.

Another factor is teacher's negative feedback that may influence learners to have low confidence in speaking L2. The evidence from statements made by G and H suggests this may be the case,

"My teacher at the school usually tells me that I am wrong every time that I pronounce with my strong accent (Thai-Lao accent), I do not want to speak English anymore" (G, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

"Every time that teacher gives me feedback on speaking, I feel it is so difficult and not certain to speak English." (H, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Another factor influencing learners' (A, B, C, D, F, and G) low confidence is the lack of opportunity to use English in a real context. As F said,

“I do not have many chances to use and practice English language, so when I have to use it, I am not confident enough to speak it out.” (F, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The verbatim data above supports Ur's (2008) work that “the most important classroom activity is to initiate and manage activities that provide students with opportunities for effective practice.” So, creating chances to speak in real contexts is important for L2 learners to practice their skills, especially speaking skills.

In conclusion, the findings of this research study support that learners' low confidence toward speaking is caused by three main factors; learners' attitudes, negative feedback from teachers in the classroom, and the lack of opportunity to practicing the language.

The second difficulty that the learners face in learning English is difficulty remembering the lesson learned which may impact their English speaking ability; more details will be discussed in the section below.

4.2.2 Difficulty to remember the lessons learned

Apart from the difficulty of having low confidence to speak the language, the findings also revealed that every participant (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H) has difficulty in remembering the lesson learned, like the example shown below;

“The lessons taught in class are beneficial. At that moment, I can remember, but a week after that, I forgot all the lessons. I do not know what to do to solve this problem.” (E, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I can remember only 10 percent of the lessons learned, which is not enough to produce the language.” (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Many factors cause participants to forget most of the lessons learned. In this section, I will talk about the three main mentioned factors which are 1) lack of opportunity to use in real life, 2) the complicated nature of the lessons learned, and 3) lack of guidelines to remember.

The first factor is the lack of opportunity to use in real life. As Zhang (2009) said, EFL students usually have limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. This factor causes four participants (A, B, F, and G) not to remember the lesson learned, as shown in the verbatim data below.

“If I have chances to speak English every day, I believe, I can remember and can speak the language. The problem is that there is no one in the village that I can speak English with (laugh).” (B, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I learned every grammar lesson, speaking and listening skills, reading, and writing skills, but I do not have the chance to use in my daily life. So, I forgot them all.” (F and G, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The second factor is the complicated nature of the lessons learned. The data shows that if the lesson is too complicated then it can cause learners (C, E, and F) to have difficulty remembering the lessons, as shown in the interviews below.

“I cannot remember the lessons that teach about complex or academic structures at all. I want to learn simple and normal sentence structures to use in real life.” (C, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I learned many advance complicated structures, but I forget all of them because it is not applicable to use in my life.” (E, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The last factor that causes learners (D and H) to forget the lessons learned quickly is the lack of guidelines and links to their life, as shown in the example below.

“I want teachers to present guidance and link the lessons to our life. So, I can relate the lesson to my life and able to remember them easier.” (D, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

To conclude, learners faced difficulty in remembering the lessons learned because there is no chance to use lesson material in the real situations, lessons are complicated, and there are not guidelines to assist with memory.

The third difficulty that learners encounter when speaking English is that of following the lessons taught in class.

4.2.3 Difficulty to follow the lessons taught in class

English lessons play a significant role in promoting language learning, especially for L2 learners as comprehensible and fundamental input (Krashen, 1982). If learners cannot follow the lesson in class, it will affect their learning (Gibbons, 2002). The example from my research findings echoes that of Krashen and Gibbons. Some participants (A, D, E, F, and H) have difficulty in following the lessons taught in class as the example shown in verbatim data below.

“I tried so hard to follow the lessons taught in class. However, when the teacher uses English as an instruction language, my brain needs more time to process, and I cannot follow that part of the lesson.” (D, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I cannot follow the lesson and do not want to stop the teaching. So, I stop putting my attention to that class and do something else.” (H, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The analysis shows that learners (A, D, H, and E) cannot follow the lessons due to three essential factors which regard learners, teachers, and lessons.

The first factor that affects learners' ability to follow lessons is a variety of learners' knowledge as evidence shown in D's and H's interview.

“I have never learned English in school. So, I slowly understand English language. Moreover, every time that I do not understand, I do not want to stop the teacher to explain. I afraid that my classmates will be annoyed.” (D, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I can learn very slowly, especially the English language. The problem is that there is always a fast learner in the class I attended, and she understands lessons very quickly. Then, the teacher moves to the next topic, according to her. I always feel lost from the beginning to the end of the class. I do not want to learn in class because of the circumstance.” (H, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The speed of the teacher’s teaching is the second factor that causes learners to not able to follow the class, as stated in E’s verbatim data.

“I want to lecture some parts of the lesson, but the teacher does not slow down or pause for learners to take notes. So, I miss some other parts of teaching because my attention is with notetaking, not the teaching.” (E, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The third factor that causes a problem for learners when trying to follow the lesson is the difficulty of the lessons.

“Sometimes, I cannot follow the lesson because it is too difficult.” (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Some students (A, B and C) suggested that the content in the lesson affects their learning as A said,

“Teacher should teach around learners’ way of life to make sure that everyone has basic information which can help us to follow the lesson easier.” (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

In conclusion, the findings of this research show that five of eight learners have difficulty following lessons taught in class, which may affect to their learning of L2 speaking skills.

The next section presents the data analysis from ISSI in order to answer the RQ2. The purpose of this inquiry was to discover the learners’ preferences, which were used to design the program.

4.3 Learners' preferences

To answer the second RQ, the data were collected from eight participants by using Independent Semi-structured Interviews (ISSI) and Focus group interviews. The analysis of the verbatim data suggested that learners have three main preferences toward English learning, which are the improvement of speaking skills, preferable contents, and date and time management. Each preference will be elaborated on below.

4.3.1 Improvement of learners' speaking skill

From the interview analysis, the data suggested that all participants (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H) prefer to improve their speaking skills as the evidence shown below.

“I want to know how to speak with foreigners.” (C, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I see other people talking with foreigners and I want to be able to talk like them.” (E, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

In addition, D, G, and H suggested that although the data showed they would like to improve all skills, their first priority is speaking skill development as shown in the example below.

“I want to learn every skill especially speaking. It will be beneficial, if teacher can also add reading skill and vocabulary to the contents.” (D, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I want to talk with foreigners, so speaking is my first priority in language learning.” (B, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The reasons that they want to improve their speaking skills are that it is useful in their lives and to improve on a skill that they think is too low currently.

The first reason, that speaking is the most important and useful for them, is (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H) mentioned in several of their interviews. One example from C is shown in the verbatim data below.

“My preference skill is speaking, because it is the most useful skill for face to face situation.” (C, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“It [speaking skill] can be more useful in my daily life than reading and writing. (D, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

The data above is echoes study of Junio (2012) and Leong and Ahmadi (2017) who stated that the speaking skill is the most important of the four skills.

The second reason for learners’ (A, B, C, and F) preference toward improving speaking skills is their poor ability in speaking that evidence below.

“My listening and speaking skills are not very good while my reading, writing and grammar are quite good.” (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I know grammar and some basics of reading and writing already. What I want to be able to improve speaking skill to speak with foreigners smoothly.” (C, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Analysis suggests that speaking is the key skill that the participants would like to improve. I therefore designed the program to improve their speaking skills based on the data suggested by participants.

The following section will present the analysis of the data on participants’ content preferences that led to the contents of the designed program.

4.3.2 The participants’ content preferences

The data analysis shows that all the participants (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H) prefer to learn four main topics as shown in the table below.

Table 4.2 Preference topics of learners

Topics	Contents	Number of participants
Hotel and Welcoming	Hotel	6
	Welcoming	6
	Small talk	8
Food and Services	Food	6
	Services	7
	Politeness	5
Traveling and Direction	Traveling	3
	Direction	1
Others	Housework	3
	Bank	1

From table 4.2, there are four main topics that learners suggested to improve their speaking skills. The two most mentioned topics (Hotel & Welcoming and Food & Services) were chosen due to the time constraint of the program. These two topics contain of three sub-categories for each. The first topic (Hotel & Welcoming) contains of hotel conversation, welcoming guests, and small talk. The second topic (Food & Services) contains of food, services in restaurant, and the politeness in English speaking.

The next section will present information about date and time management between teacher and learners to create the designed program.

4.3.3 Date and time management

The data from eight learners (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H) shows that they are ready to start studying at any time for 30 hours course.

“I am looking forwards to studying with you. Once the lessons are ready, I am also ready to start learning.” (B, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I think 30 hours course is just right duration, not too short or too long.” (A, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

However, since the participants work fulltime, most of them (A, E, F,G, and H) said that attending class in the evening is too tiring and may cause some learners skip the class because they are exhausted as shown in the excerpts below.

“It was very difficult to me to join in class every day, because I am studying and having homework every day.” (H, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“Learners and teacher are busy on their fulltime job and mostly are too tired to learn at night of everyday. So, they may tend to skip some classes. This circumstance can cause learners’ language skills to be not improve as much as it should be.” (G, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

Some participants (A, C, E, and F) suggested that they prefer to study online which would solve the above problem by allowing learners to do lessons at a time convenient for them individually.

“I prefer to study online. I think we can use technology, such as YouTube, Line, and language teaching application. So, we can learn at home.” (C, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“We should learn online, due to everyone are not available at the same time. Moreover, we all have computer or smartphone, we can learn online very easily.” (F, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

However, G and B did not prefer one hundred percent online learning because they are not used to learning by themselves as shown in the excerpts below.

“I don’t want to study online only. I want to meet and have physical interact with teacher and classmate, too.” (G, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

And;

“I prefer to learn in class. However, the online learning also sounds good to me, but please do some activities in classroom at least once a week.” (B, 27 November, 2017: ISSI)

In conclusion, the learners’ preferences were to improve their speaking skills under the topics of Hotel & Welcoming and Food & Services via online and face to face class for 30 hours in total.

Based on the findings of RQs 1 and 2 (created according to the EP principles 1-2), I understood the classroom environment and designed the flipped classroom program to fulfill learners’ difficulties and to support their preferences. However, based on EP principles 3-5 there should be involvement of everyone for mutual development. I involved learners by providing FGI to justify the designed program (lesson plans and activities). The results of FGI is even though, there are some concern of using technology and learning by themselves at home, everyone agreed to join in this program with some suggestions to adapt the lesson plans and activities to be more appropriate with the learners and teacher.

The following section will report the analysis of my findings regarding RQ 3 and 4 in the context of a flipped class in promoting the speaking skills of my participants. However, as mentioned above, only four participants volunteered to take part in this program. I will draw the data from only these four cases.

4.4 Impacts of flipped classroom program on learners

This section reports the analysis of the collected data from the four participants (A,B,D, and H) to answer RQ 3 - To what extent does the designed program based on EP help mixed-age learners to improve their English speaking skills? The analysis indicates that the FC program may affect the participants in four main aspects 1) improvement of communication skills, 2) improvement of grammar knowledge, 3) improvement of vocabulary building, and 4) improvement of the appropriateness of language used. As summarized in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 The impact of designed program on learners

Name	Improvement on conversation skills	Improvement on grammar knowledge	Improvement on vocabulary building	Improvement on appropriateness of language used
A	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✗	✓
D	✓	✓	✓	✓
H	✓	✗	✓	✓

The information from the table shows that participation in the program may effect students' improvement of English skills. Overall, the program was effective in promoting two aspects of improvement for all participants (A, B, D, and H). For the other two aspects however, B did not mention the improvement of her vocabulary and H did not mention the improvement of her grammar knowledge. Further discussion will elaborate on these data.

4.4.1 Improvement of communication skills

All four learners (A, B, D, and H) suggested that learning via the designed program can improve their communication skills especially speaking skills as the evidence shown below.

“...I gained more knowledge about speaking. I can speak [English] more...”
(A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI).

And;

“...I had learned how to speak English [via the designed program] and improve my speaking.” (H, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

Moreover, the interview analysis also shows that all learners can better produce language under the topics learned. This can be seen in examples from B and D.

“... I am able to introduce customers to several types of accommodation such as lodges, homestays, resorts, or hotels. I can suggest what kind of room style we have, how much is the price per room, what are the amenities in the room... If they need to check out, I also learned how to reply and thank to them.” (B, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I learned a lot. I practiced saying welcome to guests, asking if they have reserved any rooms, explaining how many rooms the hotel has, describing what kind of room there is. I can explain all of these in English...” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition, the example of assignments from B and H support that they can speak more on the topics learned.

B: Can I help you?

B: Do you have reservation?

B: Can I have your name and phone number please?

B: What kind of room would you like?

(B, 6 August, 2019: Assignment 1 (online))

And;

H: Hello, good morning, may I help you?

H: Welcome to Aob Aun Homestay.

H: May I help you?

H: Do you have a ridtervation [reservation].

H: Can I have your name and phone number please?

H: Just a moment please, ladmejed [let me check].

H: What class [kind of] room do you want?

H: We has [have] five rooms with king sizes bed and one room with twelve [twin] beds.

(H, 6 August, 2019: Assignment 1 (online))

As can be seen in the assignments of B and H, they can remember and recycle sentences in the lesson learned under the topic “Hotel & Welcoming”. For example, welcoming guests, offering help, asking for personal information, introducing room types available, and giving price information. Even though H mispronounced some difficult words or phrases, H’s sentences still make sense and are communicable.

Moreover, the example of A and D’s assignments also show that they can apply the lesson to a real situation.

A: Can I have your name and phone number please?
 A: What kind of room do you want?
 A: We have 10 rooms with king side bed and 2 rooms with twin beds.
 A: It is 1000 baht per night including breakfast
 A: I’ll show you the room.
 (A, 8 August, 2019: Assignment 2 (online))

And;

D: Hello! Welcome to Green Roof resort. May I help you?
 D: Do you have a reservation.
 D: Can I have your name and phone number please?
 D: We have 5 rooms with king size bed. It’s 700 baht per night and per room.
 D: How long are you going to stay?
 D: Your room price for 2 nights is 1,400 baht. That is not including breakfast.
 D: In the room there are 2 bottles of complimentary water. Here is your room key.
 Thank you.
 (D, 8 August, 2019: Assignment 2 (online))

From the assignments shown, A and H can produce the language based on the lesson, which is seen in the underlined sentences. For instance, welcoming guests to their hotel, recommending the rooms available and prices, and presenting complimentary facilities in the room.

The data from teacher journal also shows how A improves his speaking:

“During the face to face class (Hotel and Welcoming), A did a group work with B and D. They were assigned to do a roleplay about hotel reception. A was active and produced some expressions; for example, ‘Yes, we have five people. Is there any room available?’ and ‘Ok, I’d like single room and double room for five nights.’” (17 August, 2019: Teacher journal)

Moreover, the evidence from the assignment of B and D also shows that learners can adapt and create conversation by themselves based on sentences learned in online class.

B: May I have your name, please?
 Teacher: My name is ...
 B: Thank you, Can I see your passport please?
 Teacher: Here you are.
 B: May I have your phone number, please?
 Teacher: My phone number is zero nine five six one nine ...
 B: again, please.
 Teacher: It is zero nine five six one nine ...
 B: Alright.
 Teacher: How much for the rental per night?
 B: It's 1,000 baht per night.
 Teacher: Do you accept credit card?
 B: Sorry, cash only please.
 (B, 11 August, 2019: Assignment 4 (face to face))

And;

Teacher : What do you do after the payment?
 D : I lead them to the room saying “This way please”
 Teacher : If you want to introduce things in room, what would you say?
 D : Here is your room. We have a room with king size bed with an air condition for you. This is a free coffee, free instance noodle, and free drinking water. You can also use warm water for showering by turn it on here.
 Teacher : Thank you very much.
 D : If you need any help please call this number.
 (11 August, 2019: Assignment 4 (Face to face))

The conversations above is an assignment that students were enrolled in activity about hotel and welcoming situation where teacher was pretended to be a costumer and students were hotel reservation agents. Each student needed to ask or answer at least two sentences in the situation. During the roleplay, B and D were very active and performed the improvement of their communication skills.

It is clearly shown that all four learners can produce language and speak English better on the topics learned. Apart from the improvement on communication skills, the analysis of the results also shows that three of four learners improved their grammar knowledge.

4.4.2 Improvement of grammar

As evidenced in the interview, learning via the designed program also helped three participants (A, B, and D) to improve their grammar knowledge about sentence structures such as affirmative, questioning, and question tag sentences.

The following examples indicate learners' realization of their grammar improvement beginning with this example from in the interview data of A and B.

"... I gained more knowledge about constructing sentence patterns and forming questions..." (A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

"I got to know the correct sentence construction..." (B, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition, the data below shows how A and B construct sentences and A's speaking skills in constructing sentences on his assignment.

"Hello! Have you booked a table? Is this table ok for you? Would you like to order drinks first? We have ..." (A, 22 August, 2019: Assignment 6 (online))

B also shared a similar idea. She knows how to form sentences in affirmative, questioning, and answering questions.

"Hello, teacher and everyone. My name is B. May I help you?...Do you have [a] reservation?..." (B, 6 August, 2019: Assignment)

And;

Teacher: Can you cook pork soup?

B: Yes, I can.

Teacher: Spicy soup or clear soup?

B: I can cook both kind of soup.

(Classroom video recorded, unit 2, review lesson section, 18 August, 2019)

Further evidence is found in D's conversation recorded from the classroom, which shows that she can form a sentence from new vocabulary.

D : ย่างคืออะไรคะ [What is the word for (to grill) in English?]

Teacher : grill

D : I can grill pork.

(18 August, 2019: Classroom video recorded)

To sum up, A, B, and D improved their grammar knowledge and are able to form sentences more fully than before. The most common types of sentence structures are question and response structures, for example, May I ..., Have you..., Would you..., Do you..., Can you... and the appropriate answers to these types of questions. The next section is about their improvements in vocabulary building.

4.4.3 Improvement of vocabulary

One effective elements of the program was to build up learners' vocabulary, evidence of which can be drawn from learners' interview data. Learners (A, D, and H) mentioned improving their vocabulary on the topic of food and services.

"I learn vocabulary about how to call each dish." (A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

"... I know a lot more vocabularies about hotel than before..." (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“...I practiced using vocabularies about hotel and restaurant...” (H, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

As you can see, learners (A, D, and H) stated that they know more vocabulary words about food, restaurants, and hotels from the lessons learned. In addition, a teacher journal also supports the data above and shows the strategies that help learners to improve their vocabulary building in class.

“A and H are quiet learners. When they have questions about vocabularies, they will search the meaning and how to pronounce by their own or ask friends first. Then, they note those vocabularies on their notebook.” (24 August, 2019: Teacher journal)

Moreover, A performed the improvement of his vocabularies and usage of lexical terms learned in the underlined words in students’ role play.

“H: Do you have any recommended dish?

A: Yes, we have spicy soup with prawn or Tomyamkung, grilled chicken, papaya salad, and sticky rice. We also have stirred fried vegetable and beef stewed.” (24 August, 2019: Assignment 10 (Role play))

Further evidence from D’s role play in the classroom showed how she improved her vocabularies on the hotel and welcoming topic.

D: Ok, we have rooms with single bed rates 700 baht and room with twin bed rates 900 baht/night including breakfast.

D: Of course, we have Jet Ski and fishing club, banana boat and sofa boat.
(17 August, 2019: Role play)

From the examples above, learners can retain new vocabulary to use in their real life. In addition, they explain how they improve the vocabulary. For example, the evidence from teacher’s journal shows D’s strategies for improvement of her vocabularies.

“D is a very active learner...when she does not know any word, she always asks for the meaning and note into her notebook during class. Then she can use those words.” (11 August, 2019: Teacher’s journal)

Another emergent theme from the analysis reveals that D did not only improve her vocabulary knowledge but also learned how to spell and pronounce new words. For instance, D stated that she knew how to spell words more correctly as explained in the interview below.

“...I am better in reading and spelling difficult words.” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

Apart from vocabulary knowledge, learners also stated that they can improve on the appropriateness of language used.

4.4.4 Improvement of appropriateness of language used

All four learners stated that they can improve the appropriateness of their language used as evidenced in the examples below.

A, B, and H stated that they learned to use language more appropriately and politely when discussing the topics learned in class as shown in the ISSI data below.

“I learned how to use English sentences about welcoming foreigners and ask customers if they have made reservation politely.” (A, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I can use English language to greet and welcome guests appropriately.”

(B, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I learned how to speak politely in hotel and restaurant context and I remember how to appropriately recommend foods and services, get orders, and politely cheer up the VIP room with karaoke and air condition in English language.” (H, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

They were also able to adapt the knowledge to stimulate situations as shown in the classroom activity below.

B: If we want to know the number of guests, should I say “How many people?”
 A: Yes, but I think we should add “Sir, Mam” at the end of the sentence for showing politeness “How many people, sir?”.
 (24 August, 2019: Classroom activity)

As shown in the evidence above, A, B, and H said that they improved upon the appropriateness of their English language use in hotel and restaurant contexts. The supplementary data supports the fact that A and H learned level of politeness and model verbs for politeness on the topics as can be seen in the students’ roleplay below.

H: Hello! May I help you?
 A: Yes, we have 5 people, is there any room available?
 H: How long would you like to stay?
 A: 5 nights.
 H: Ok, we have rooms with single bed rates 700 baht and room with twin bed rates 900 baht/night including breakfast
 A: Ok, I’d like single room and double room for 5 nights.
 H: Please do not smoke in your room.
 A: OK, what time do I need to check out?
 H: Please check out before noon. Here is your room’s key. Thank you very much for staying here
 H: Follow me please.
 (17 August, 2019: Role play)

And;

B: Sounds good! Ride them all! How much per all per day?
 D: 3500 baht/day
 B: Ok, we would like for all.
 (17 August, 2019: Role play)

And;

Teacher : Do you accept credit card?

B : Sorry, cash only please.

(11 August, 2019: Class recorded video)

A, B, and H can ask questions of and answer questions from costumers politely by using modal verbs/the use of the word ‘please’/ greetings and apology expressions on the topic as can be seen in the roleplay. A also added that he learned about levels of politeness in English language use.

“...I know what kind of sentences should be spoken to be polite and also gained more knowledge about the level of politeness.” (A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition, while I observed students working on a group project, a conversation emerged that shows B’s understanding of the appropriateness of language.

H: We, as a home stay, can we use “hi there” for greeting to show friendliness and to comfort costumers

B: We should stay polite saying “good morning” or “hello” is more appropriate.

A: Agreed! Tourists are ok to say “hi there” but, we, as a servant, should be polite and professional.

B: So “Good morning, may I help you?” is the most appropriate in our situation.

(17 August, 2019: FCI)

The students’ roleplay supports the fact that all participants can make conversation on these topics.

In conclusion, as the data shows, all learners can improve their speaking skills on the topics learned in many aspects such as conversation skills, grammar knowledge, vocabulary building, and appropriateness of language used. The next section will discuss the perceptions of leaners on the designed program.

4.5 The perceptions of participants towards the designed program

According to the analysis, all four learners stated that their positive perceptions were caused by the advantages given to them by program in approaching their learning. These include (1) flexibility of learning pace and time, (2) increased interaction of everyone in class, and (3) understanding of lessons (content taught). Moreover, two participants (B and H) added that participating in the program increased their confidence and was appropriate to all ages.

4.5.1 Positive Perception on the Used of the Designed Program

4.5.1.1 Flexibility of leaning pace and time

All learners stated that designed program promoted flexibility of time and pace to assist them in their own learning. Two participants (A and D) mentioned that they did not have much time to learn in class and the designed program supported their learning outside class as A stated that he could learn from videos that the designed program provided for him, which were available to him any time at home.

The flexibility of time could support the participant to learn by themselves as evidenced in A:

“...I am able to learn by myself at any time and I can learn with less participating times in the classroom...” (A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

A’s perception is similar to D who stated that the program supports her learning:

“Everyone works full time and has difference free time. So, we cannot fix the best learning time for everyone. I like participating in the program because the online learning is not disturbing my work time and I can study at home in my free time.” (D, 19 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition to time management, three participants (B, D, H) agreed that the program promotes their learning through its flexibility in managing their own learning pace. For example, they could control the teacher’s speaking speed, replay lessons, and review the lesson as many times as they need to understand it. For instance,

“If I do not understand, I replay the lesson several times until I can understand...” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“...I can pause the teaching on videos and replay the lesson immediately when I do not understand. I can learn the lesson as many times as I want. This is good for my learning...” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“When I do not understand, I will watch it again and again. I can control the speed of learning by myself.” (H, 19 August, 2019: ISSI)

The data from D also shows that the program was able to support poor/slow learners in class.

“When studying with friends in class, I do not want to ask teacher because I am afraid that the teaching would be slow down because of me. So, I don’t understand the lesson in class. But, the online learning helps me to understand more.” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

As the example shows, learners had flexibility of time and learning pace in the program. They could also learn better and understand the contents taught more thoroughly than before. The next section is about another positive perception the learners hold in regard to the designed program about the increase of classroom interaction.

4.5.1.2 Understanding of the content

All four learners (A, B, D, and H) mentioned that learning via the designed program helped them understand the lessons better and increased their opportunities to experience authentic materials. For example, B said;

“I understand the content more by learning via the designed program. The traditional approach does not provide as much knowledge as learning from the designed program.” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition, D added that the program helped her understand the lesson better because she could learn before doing activities and there were chances to ask friends and the teacher about her enquiries.

“Learning from the program, I can understand most of the lesson, because I can learn by myself from home and do activities together with friends. If I am in doubt, I can ask the teacher and friends in the class or via LINE application to get help. This kind of study is very good for me.” (D, 19 August, 2019: ISSI)

The program also helped a slow learner to understand the lesson better as can be seen in the evidence from H’s interview.

“In a traditional class where mainly studying in class, I as a slow learner, cannot follow the lessons. This makes me not understand the lessons. But I can understand a lot more when learning at home using the designed program.” (H, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

In addition, the data from A and H’s interviews reveals that another benefit of using the designed program is learning from authentic materials, which promoted their speaking when doing a role play.

“In the lesson...there are people who actually working in that career to teach us and share their experience....” (A, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“[by learning via the designed program], I use English in role play.... in classroom activities with my friends.” (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

The data from B’s interview also tells that learning from the video, she was able to concentrate on the lesson and understand the lessons more than in normal classroom.

“... I think the video is more interesting, because I can concentrate while learning ... I do not worry about anything else ...It makes me to understand the lesson easier.” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

Moreover, H also mentioned that she likes learning English via the program more than the traditional classroom as shown in the excerpt below.

“I prefer the new style program of teaching because studying online before doing homework together in class can support learners very well. Unlike the traditional approach [in Thailand], teacher teaches in class and leave students to deal with homework by their own at home. (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

The designed program helped all four learners to understand the lesson easier by learning from home and practicing in class with the videos of real conversations from real contexts. Apart from that, students also used English in stimulated situation in the classroom to practice their English in various relevant contexts.

4.5.1.3 Increase of interaction

The data also reveals that all learners have positive perceptions towards the use of designed program on classroom interaction. For instance, A, B, and D said that the designed program can increased the ways they interacted and motivated them to interact with friends and the teacher at any time as evidence shown below.

“The [flipped classroom] teaching is very effective for me in terms of increasing the interaction with teacher and friends.” (D, 19 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I like the program because it is open ways of interaction with teacher and friends. I can ask friends or teacher anytime via online channels. In addition, there are also opportunities to share ideas with friends in class.” (A, 28 August, 2018: ISSI)

Moreover, data from a teacher’s journal also showed B’s reaction and attention in class as follows:

“B always helps her friends when they do not understand, such as, teaching some points that her friend is confusing, supporting her friends when they struggle answering the questions, etc. Moreover, she asks me anytime she has question

to understand the lesson clearly. It is good that learners learned from home and do activities in class. It provides more chance for students to ask me or their friends' questions." (24 August, 2019: Teacher journal)

Apart from that, learning from home also increased their interaction in class as in this example from H's interview.

"I have learned the content and had something in my brain before attending the class. So, I can interact with teacher and friends confidentially." (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

The data from A, B, and H also suggests that participating in the program online increased peer teaching and learning especially in face-to-face activities, due to their confidence in the knowledge they had learned.

"Many times that I had error on speaking, my classmates and teacher help correcting me in class. More friends are willing to help correcting me. I have more opportunities to ask and learn from everyone." (A, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

"In the classroom, friends are all helping to teach each other... Everyone helped each other very well. Who understands the lessons learned will teach friends and then the position is alternately changing on other topics." (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

"... I have asked everyone, such as my mother, teacher, a friend sitting nearby on issues that I don't understand, they helped to teach and explain for me. This makes me to understand the lesson more." (H, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“Every time that I have questions, I wrote them down to ask friends and teacher when doing classroom activities. It helps a lot in my learning.” (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

Moreover, B and H stated that the designed program increased their extrinsic motivation to compete with their classmates.

“Learning with the designed program is very motivated. Even though, it might be hard for me at first.” (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“I must be enthusiastic because I see other people can answer in class. So, I have to try my best to able to answer question in class, too.” (B, 26 August, 2019: ISSI)

The data above shows how B and H gained motivation to learn and improve themselves.

From the interview and teacher’s journal, all participants (A, B, D, and H) revealed that they were able to learn from the teacher and their friends supporting the mutual development of everyone in classroom. This also increased their extrinsic motivation to learn more. In addition, I, as a teacher, was able develop my own skills while making efforts to improve the classroom as well.

4.5.1.4 Increase of confidence

The designed program also increased participants confidence in using the English language. As A stated, the students gained confidence through learning via the program:

“After I learned, I know what to say, at least I do not get stunned when I have to talk with foreigners. This built my confidence...” (A, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

D stated that she had more confidence while learning via the program as shown below,

“This kind of learning makes me more confidence and dare to talk to foreigners ... without feeling shy ...” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

And;

“In the past, I ran away from foreigners, but after attending to the program I approach to foreigners and talk to them.” (D, 12 August, 2019: ISSI)

4.5.2 Difficulties on the Used of Designed Program

Despite the many positive perceptions presented, there are two participants (B and H) who expressed difficulties they had while participating in the program.

For instance, the data from B’s interview (ISSI, 28 August, 2019: ISSI) indicates that her old style of learning led her to have a difficult time adapting herself to learning with the program, especially toward the beginning of the program. In addition, she commented on the problem of lacking internet connection.

“I watched the video for granted, hoping that there will be teaching in class. I got used to with the old ways of studying...” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

Despite her difficulty, the data from the interview indicated the effectiveness of the program in promoting learning.

“But once I was able to adapt to the new way of learning, it was fun and I got a lot of knowledge from leaning from Videos, because I can choose to study only parts that I am really interested in.” and “... Old people like me studying with VIDEO are good, because I have something new to do and learn new things.” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

The program helped B to learn and improve her speaking and listening skills. Even though she experienced difficulties caused by unfamiliarity with the program. After using the program for a while, she enjoyed learning and voiced that she is seeing an improvement in her learning ability.

The previous experience of learning, another theme that emerges from the analysis of her interview is extra work. However, they supported learning as evidenced in the following data,

“More work, but there is more knowledge as well. It is because I have to write down the summary and hand in to the teacher.” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

Even though B said that there are more assignments to be done, there are also more opportunities for learners as to practice and produce language.

The third difficulty for participants in the program was in remembering the vocabulary and sentences learned, as stated by H below

“I can't remember vocabularies and sentences from unit 2. It's harder than unit 1 and I watched the video less than the first unit.” (H, 19 August, 2019: ISSI)

The above evidence shows that the amount of time that H spent watching the lesson was not enough and she had difficulty learning on her own. Later in the program, however, she expressed that she was able to adapt to the nature of the program and her learning ability improved as shown below.

“At first, I think it is difficult to learn at home. Normally, Thai students learn from teacher, but now I have to learn online from videos. However, I can learn better when I get use to with it and I like to learn this way more than learning in classroom.” (H, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

At the beginning B and H faced some obstacles to learning in the designed program, but after participating for some time the program's format became more familiar and they found the learning style to be beneficial.

To summarize, even though there are some difficulties experienced by learners to adapt themselves to the designed program at first, once they get used to the program they rapidly improve. The next section will reveal the only negative found from the data collected.

4.5.3 Negative Perception on the Use of Designed Program

One participant (B) stated the only negative of the program which was that she did not have access to a strong internet connection as data shows below.

“The disadvantage is internet. The signal is not strong ...the internet is very slow.” (B, 28 August, 2019: ISSI)

In conclusion, there are four main themes of positive perceptions from all four learners on the program and only two learners (B and H) stated the three difficulties of adapting to the program, a large amount of work, and lack of internet connection. The obstacles are the overload of assignments and the familiar to the teaching style. The only negative issue that B found was in regard to internet connection problems.

The next chapter will discuss the factors that may have caused the designed program developed by EP framework to be effective or not. Possible issues related to the findings of this chapter will also be discussed in the final chapter and conclusion to this thesis study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the research study and will discuss how EP and the designed program help mixed-age learners to improve their English skills, limitations of the study, and ideas that will contribute to mixed-age classroom improvement in future research.

5.1 The summary of the research

This study explores the impacts of the designed program based on EP on speaking skills improvement of the mixed-age learners. Three research methods (i.e. EP, FC, and Bloom's revised taxonomy) are employed to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the learners' difficulties with studying English in a mixed-age group?
2. What are the learners' preferences when learning in a mixed-age English class?
3. To what extent does the designed program based on EP help mixed-age learners to improve their English-speaking skills?
4. What are the learners' perceptions towards the use of the program?

Responding to RQs 1 & 2, the learners had the difficulties related to low confidence in speaking English, remembering the lessons learned, and in following the lessons taught in class. They prefer to study speaking English by covering topics like "Hotel & welcoming" and "Food & Services". They are also not available to learn in class many times each week. According to the results of the RQs 1 & 2, flipped class is adopted as a theoretical framework to design the program.

The analysis of data collected indicate that EP was adopted as a framework to explore my puzzles. In addition, it was employed as a framework to design lessons to improve the speaking of the participants. I used EP to improve on the classroom environment where there are mixed-age learners from a village in northeast Thailand. Responding to RQ 1 (Section 4.2), it was found that there are three main difficulties that learners faced in their former English classes, 1) low confidence when speaking English, 2) difficulty remembering the lessons learned, and 3) difficulty following the

lessons taught in class. When analyzing responses to RQ 2 (Section 4.3), the result suggest that learners have three main preferences to learn English which are the improvement of speaking skills, preferable contents, and date and time management. The RQ 3 (Section 4.4) responses indicate that the FC program may affect the participants in four main ways, 1) improvement of communication skills, 2) improvement of grammar knowledge, 3) improvement of vocabulary building, and 4) improvement of the appropriateness of language used. The RQ 4 (Section 4.5) response results indicate that participants had both positive and negative attitudes towards the designed program. Participants revealed that they have positive perceptions towards the program's flexibility in learning pace and time requirements, increased interactions, contribution to their understanding of lessons (content taught), ability to increase of their confidence, and appropriateness to all ages. The only negative attitude was toward the need for internet access to complete parts of the program.

The participants' background is that they lack confidence to speak English, they also found it difficult to follow along with activities in the classroom or to remember the lessons learned. The participants wanted to improve their speaking skills, but did not have time to study. The designed program was therefore created and implemented with the participants. After the use of the designed program, all participants stated that the program had helped them to improve their communication skills, grammar knowledge, vocabulary building, and appropriateness of language used under the topics learned. Moreover, all learners revealed their positive attitudes towards the program such as its flexibility in terms of learning pace and time requirements, its ability to help learners to understand the course content, increased interactions in the classroom, and its ability to increase their confidence to produce the language. However, one participant stated that she found it difficult to study especially when she does not have internet access. It was also difficult for her to adapt herself in the beginning of the online lesson, but after she became accustomed to the online format, she actively participated in the program and found it helpful for her personal improvement. Apart from that, another one participant stated that there were a large number of assignments to do, but also that this helps her to gain more knowledge.

In summary, all participants felt positive effects and benefits from the program and had positive perceptions towards it. The only negative perception was from one participant regarding an internet access problem. The study suggests that the use of EP in mixed-age group yielded good results. The approaches that were used in the designed program should, however, be appropriate to learners. Those who want to use FC, need to consider the learners' ability to access internet and learners' literacy on technology because both could have huge effects on their learning.

In the following section, I will discuss two main factors that may influence the effectiveness of the program in promoting the learners' English-speaking ability.

5.2 Factors to make the program work

There are two main factors that make the program work. The first factor is the use of EP principles to understand learners and create an appropriate program to suit learners' preferences. The second factor is the application of the approach in the designed program, which is Flipped Classroom (FC).

5.2.1 EP as an appropriate approach to design a program for improving speaking

The findings suggest that EP facilitates my teaching by helping me (as a practitioner) design an appropriate lesson to promote English language teaching and learning for a mixed-age group; in this context the design used was flipped classroom. The main factors are the EP principles which focus on quality of life, trying to understand learners, involving everybody for mutual development, and supporting autonomous learning.

Further information of how EP helps design the appropriate program is discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Principle 1: Put 'Quality of Life' First

Responding to EP principle 1, the main focus in my study is on the students, and as practitioner researcher, the "quality of life" is considered important (Hanks, 2015).

In this study, the main focus of my teaching is the improvement of students' English-speaking skills. In this circumstance, Principle 1 helps me design a research plan to explore the students' puzzlements on speaking, which finally leads to

my understanding of students' puzzles and more appropriate design of the lessons (See Chapter 3).

In addition, Hanks (2015) puts the emphasis of the quality of life in the classroom. Echoing Hanks (ibid), classroom quality of life is the first priority in my context. In this research context, learners were asked about their preferences (e.g. topics, learning styles, etc.), in order to design the most appropriate lessons.

Accordingly, the analysis of the data collected to answer RQs 1 and 2 guided me to adopt FC as a theoretical framework to design lessons that promote learning via authentic materials like videos of various experts like hostel owners, hotel managers, etc. In other words, EP could help me create the most appropriate lesson plans and activities for learners' lives and meet their needs at the same time. Moreover, it can create an effective learning environment because learners were taught about the topic, skills, and activities that they wanted to be knowledgeable about.

5.2.1.2 Principle 2: Understand the classroom before fixing it

Responding to Principle 2, the findings suggest that EP may support the design of FC in many ways. First, EP (Hanks, 2015) promotes a stance of open-ended, puzzled inquiry for practitioners; it creates the space for practitioners to explore their puzzles while concurrently practicing the target language (p.113). Under this circumstance, EP provides a channel for me as a practitioner to understand the students' difficulties in learning (See Chapter 4) and gives me the ability to design the program more appropriately and understand the students' problems and needs (See Chapter 4).

Responding to the second principle with its prioritized focus on understanding over changing the classroom, the results suggest that EP may support teachers and students to create a learning atmosphere, since it helps the teacher understands his or her students. As evidenced in Chapter 4, EP helps me to understand my students' problems and support my design of lessons. Finally, the understanding of the students leads me to design more appropriate activities (see Chapter 3). Moreover, using EP from very first class can help teachers understand their students and be able to set appropriate lesson plans and activities for them. In my study, learners are satisfied and enjoyed the program that I designed from the understanding of learners needs.

5.2.1.3 Principle 3-5: Involve Everybody to Bring People Together and Work for Mutual Development

“What helps the teacher should also help language learners and/or other teachers, and vice versa, in a continuous loop of learning and development” (Hanks, 2015, p.119). My research study echoes Hanks in that EP can help learners to improve themselves as life-long learners. All participants stated that learning via an EP program helps improve their autonomous learning skills. In addition, the results from this study can suggest ways for other teachers to adapt and improve their mixed-age classrooms as well.

Crane (2015) shows that “EP was originally conceived as an inclusive practitioner research program that would break down barriers between researchers and teachers, as well as between teachers and learners”. (p.12) Similar to Crane (ibid), I as a practitioner researcher break down the barrier between a researcher and a teacher by understanding learners first and then creating the mutual development environment between teachers and students by engaging everyone in designing their own lessons. For example, I interviewed all learners to explore their puzzlements. I involved everyone during the design of the lesson plans. Learners also chose the most appropriate approach for them to learn by themselves with the teacher’s support. As evidenced in Chapter 3, FC is adapted to design lessons and activities (both online and face to face). According to the results, it is evident that the involvement of EP principles supports their learning and improves their speaking ability (See Chapter 4).

Principles 4 and 5: Work to Bring People Together and Work for Mutual Development Principles

Allwright & Hanks (2009) stated that EP promotes mutual development in order to have a better quality for their life (p.149). The reason why EP is likely to be effective in promoting the appropriate design of lessons in this study can be responded to with Principles 4 and 5 in which my students and I worked collegially. As evidenced in the findings, the mutual work done among students and teacher promotes learning success. Under this circumstance, the students are invited to work collaboratively to improve their learning (Chapter 3) The mutual work among the students and between the students and the teacher during their engagement in the task (during a face-to-face activity) supports their learning and speaking ability

improvement. Previous research indicates the effectiveness of collaborative learning to promote speaking. The findings of this study echoed the previous studies related to EP (Nasri & Biria, 2017; Pattanpichet, 2011; Sühendan & Bengü, 2014).

5.2.1.4 Principle 7: Make the Work a Continuous Enterprise

This research encourages participants to study by themselves and to be willing to continue their studies in the future. As Chuk (2004) concluded, both learner autonomy and teacher autonomy can be promoted through Exploratory Practice (p.15). This study's results echo Chuk in that learners show positive perceptions toward the program and show that they are happy to continuously learn by themselves in the future. As Judith Hanks and Allwright (2009) note, the EP framework is not opposed to change in the classroom, but rather acknowledges that improvements can happen through sustained work toward understanding (p.138).

The following topic is about another factor that contributes to the success of the program with mixed-age group learners.

5.2.2 Flipped Classroom as an appropriate program to promote the learning

The reason why the FC is considered to be an appropriate lesson is because of the EP principles (Judith & Hanks, 2009) that I adopted as a key to designing the program for this mixed-age class. By following these principles, the flipped classroom is chosen due to its appropriateness for my students. For instance, the promotion of learners' autonomous learning and interaction enhancement, both online and face-to-face.

Some researchers (Ramírez et al., 2014) have stated technical problems in reference to internet access as disadvantages of FC. The results from A, D, and H (ISSI, 2019) showed that learning via video from their smartphone and using the internet was not a problem. Moreover, B (ISSI, 2019) added that "I can focus more by learning via video at home." This evidence shows the advantage of the online learning towards learners. Previous studies mentioned online learning as an effective platform to promote speaking skill improvement. The evidence from the data shows the similar results and confirms that learning and teaching through FC that use both online and face-to-face learning can support learners to study better.

In conclusion, EP is considered an effective tool in promoting learning in this context. The characteristics of EP, involve everyone, is the key to make successful learning. The four learners and I engaged actively in lesson plans and activities and gave reflections on the class to deepen our understanding about teaching and learning.

5.3 Limitations of the study

There are few limitations of my research study. Firstly, the results of this research provide an in-depth localized understanding with a few high-motivation participants; this study may not be generalizable to every classroom. Second, the method used to collect data was mainly qualitative. It might cover more issues if quantitative method were used in the data collection to triangulate the results. Third, it took a long time to implement the class after getting data from interviews and classroom design discussions. Because of personal reasons, the researcher did not have time to implement the class right away. This circumstance could have caused data discrepancies to occur because learners' learning factors may have been changed during the intervals or pauses. Finally, there were some internet access problems for one participant. It would be better in the future to make sure that all learners can access to the internet before using the online lessons.

5.4 Contributions for future research

This section provides implications and recommendations for future research based on the knowledge I gained from the results of the study. Suggestions will be discussed based on recommendations in light of theory and recommendations in light of participants. Moreover, recommendations for future research will be considered. This knowledge has the potential to be used by other researchers as a guide for future research and practice.

Regarding theory, FC still has some limitations which are the technology literacy and the readiness of internet access for the learners. For future research, training can be organized on programs or applications used in the learning process to make sure that everyone is ready to learn online at home before research begins. On the other hand, there might be some other theories appropriate to a group of learners which can be discovered through group discussions on learning methods. This could allow a

researcher to find out the most appropriate theory for their learners later following the steps of EP principles.

In regard to participants, my research aimed to study a small group of learners who have different ages and learn together in non-formal education classroom. For future studies, EP could be used in the government school such as the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFE) where there are mixed-age learners in the same classroom but more likely in the national education system. In addition, EP might be good to be used in a formal education classroom with the same level of learners. Moreover, EP might be interesting to be used and explored on the bigger scale as well.

5.5 Conclusion

The study confirms that EP is appropriate to design a program for mixed-age classroom. According to the results of the study, learners show several positive perceptions and their English performance improved significantly. It also improved learners' quality of classroom life and encouraged their autonomous learning. There was difficulty, however, about the designed program (flipped classroom) due to lack of internet access for one from four learners. For future research, this should be considered the most appropriate approach to be used in the designed program. Moreover, it should be implemented on a larger group or mixed-age learners from government non-formal education schools to find out more interesting results and to fill the gap of EP theory.

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APPENDIX

Guided questions 1
for an individual semi-structured interview
(answering research question 1 and 2)

First few questions

1. ชวนคุยเรื่องทั่วไป (Small talk)
2. แนะนำข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย และความเป็นส่วนตัว (Orientation)
3. คุณชื่ออะไร (What is your name?)
4. คุณอายุเท่าไร (How old are you?)
5. การศึกษาสูงสุดของคุณอยู่ในระดับใด (What is your highest education?)
6. คุณประกอบอาชีพอะไร (What do you do for a living?)

Content questions

7. คุณชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ เพราะอะไร (Do you like learning English, why?)
8. โปรดเล่าประสบการณ์การเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษของคุณ (Please tell me about your experience of learning English)
9. ขอให้ประเมินระดับภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเองตามคำถามแบบประเมินตนเองของ CEFR จะให้คะแนนภาษาอังกฤษของตอนที่ระดับใด (Please grade your English language abilities based on CEFR self-assessment (See appendix E))
10. ถ้าคุณจะพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษของตนเอง คุณต้องการพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษด้านใดมากที่สุด เพราะเหตุใด (What is the skills that you want to improve listing from the largest to the smallest, why?)
11. คุณสนใจเรียนเกี่ยวกับเรื่องอะไรมากที่สุด เพราะเหตุใด (What is your most preference topic to learn, why?)
12. เวลาใดที่คุณสะดวกเรียนภาษาอังกฤษมากที่สุด (When do you available to study in class?)

Final closing question

13. คุณมีคำถาม เรื่องราวเพิ่มเติม หรือข้อเสนอแนะไหม (Do you have any questions or suggestions?)
14. สรุป และขอบคุณ (Summary, Thanks)

Guided questions 2
for a focus group interview
(revising the most appropriated lesson plans)

First few questions

1. ชวนคุยเรื่องทั่วไป (Small talk)

Content questions

2. เอาแผนการสอนให้ดู และวิจารณ์ พร้อมทั้งปรับเปลี่ยนให้เหมาะสมกับวิถีของผู้เรียนและผู้สอนมากที่สุด

Final closing question

3. คุณมีคำถาม เรื่องราวเพิ่มเติม หรือข้อเสนอแนะไหม (Do you have any questions or suggestions?)
4. สรุป และขอบคุณ (Summary, Thanks)

Guided questions 3
for an individual semi-structured interview
(answering research question 3)

First few questions

1. ชวนคุยเรื่องทั่วไป (Small talk)
2. แนะนำข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย และความเป็นส่วนตัว (Orientation)
3. ผมจะสัมภาษณ์ความรู้สึกเกี่ยวกับการเรียนรู้ในบทที่ ๑ เป็นภาษาไทยนะครับ (I will interview you in Thai language about your opinions on learning speaking English by using the designed program based on EP.)

Content questions

4. ได้เรียนรู้อะไรบ้างจากบทที่ 1 และ 2 (What do you learn from unit 1 and 2?)
5. สิ่งที่ได้ดี และทำได้ไม่ดี อยากปรับปรุงตัวเองในส่วนใดบ้าง (What are your strengths and weaknesses. How will you improve yourself?)
6. แล้วถ้ามีชาวต่างชาติมาในสถานการณ์จริง พอเอาบทเรียนไปประยุกต์ใช้สื่อสารได้มั๊ยครับ (If there are foreigners wants help, can you adapt the lessons to use in real life?)
7. มีปัญหาอุปสรรคอะไรระหว่างเรียนไหม (Do you have any problems during learning?)
8. ผู้สอนเป็นยังไงบ้าง ควรปรับปรุงพัฒนาอะไรไหมครับเรียนด้วยวิธีโอที่ที่บ้านเป็นยังไงบ้างครับ (What are suggestions for teacher to improve himself?)

Final closing question

9. คุณมีคำถาม เรื่องราวเพิ่มเติม หรือข้อเสนอแนะไหม (Do you have any questions or suggestions?)
10. สรุป และขอบคุณ (Summary, Thanks)

Guided questions 4
for an individual semi-structured interview
(answering research question 4)

First few questions

1. ขวนคุยเรื่องทัวไป (Small talk)
2. แนะนำข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย และความเป็นส่วนตัว (Orientation)
3. ผมจะสัมภาษณ์ความรู้สึกเกี่ยวกับความรู้สึกต่อการเรียนโปรแกรมนี้ทั้งหมดนะครับ (I will interview about your perceptions on learning speaking English by using the designed program based on EP.)

Content questions

4. เรียนด้วยวิดีโอที่บ้านเป็นยังงั้บ้างครับ (How do you find learning with videos at home)
5. ใช้อุปกรณ์อะไรเรียนออนไลน์ (What is the tool for online learning?)
6. เรียนช่วงไหน (When do you learn?)
7. มีปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคอะไรไหม (Do you have any difficulties of learning by using the program?)
8. ระหว่างเรียนเองที่บ้านแล้วไปทำงานด้วยกันที่ห้องเรียน กับเรียนที่ห้องเรียนแล้วไปทำการบ้านที่บ้านแบบไหนดีกว่ากันครับ มีข้อดีข้อเสียต่างกันอย่างไร (Between learning at home and do activities together in class, and learning in class then do homework at home, which one do you prefer? What are their benefits and drawbacks?)
9. หากมีข้อสงสัย แก้ไขยังงั้ (If you have questions or problems about the lesson, what do you do to fix it?)
10. อยากให้เสริมวิดีโออื่นเพิ่มไหม (Do you want me to add any videos?)

Final closing question

11. คุณมีคำถาม เรื่องราวเพิ่มเติม หรือข้อเสนอแนะไหม (Do you have any questions or suggestions?)
12. สรุป และขอบคุณ (Summary, Thanks)

Speaking Fluency Assessment Rubric

Categories	0-Not able to perform	1-Inadequate	2-Needs improvement	3-Meets expectation	4-Exceeds expectations
Range	Uses only few words and expressions or inadequate vocabulary.	Uses only basic, simple words and simple phrases. Sometimes uses inadequate vocabulary, which hinders the student from responding properly	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorized phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situation and makes frequent errors in word choice.	Has enough language to get by, with varied vocabulary and expressions learned in class with some hesitation and circumlocution and make only a few errors in word choice.	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, uses appropriate expressions and a wide range of vocabulary learned in and out class.
Accuracy	Cannot use appropriate sentence structures. Cannot put words in proper word order.	Uses only basic structures in a memorized repertoire and makes frequent errors.	Uses a variety of structures with frequent errors or uses basic structures with only a few errors.	Uses a variety of sentence structures but make some errors.	Uses many different structures depending on contexts with only a few grammatical errors.
Fluency	Speaks very little or does not speak at all.	Speaks with much hesitation, yet can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Speaks with hesitation but can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Speaks with some hesitation, pausing for grammatical and lexical planning in longer stretches of free production, but it does not usually interrupt the flow of conversation.	Speaks smoothly with little hesitation, few noticeably long pauses which does not interrupt the flow of conversation. Speaks with confidence.
Interaction	Can hardly communicate; always misses questions from the conversation partner and cannot respond.	Ideas and purpose are not clear; usually does not respond appropriately or clearly and as the result, needs a lot of help communicating.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements, but sometimes does not respond appropriately. Sometimes ideas are not clear and hard to understand, rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can initiate, focus on the conversation most of the time and communicate effectively on topic that are familiar or of personal interest; generally, responds appropriately and tries to develop the interaction.	Gives clear ideas. Communicates effectively; almost always responds appropriately. Keeps the conversation going by asking follow-up questions.
Coherence	Cannot link group of words or use linker connectors.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linker connectors like "and" or "then".	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.

Rubric modified from - Council of Europe, 2001 - Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use and Tohoku Fukushi University Language Educators' Group (TFU-LEG) - Foreign Language Assessment Rubrics.

Rating Table

Name	Range (4 points)	Accuracy (4 points)	Fluency (4 points)	Interaction (4 points)	Coherence (4 points)	Total (20 points)	Comments
Jim							
Pot							
Wee							
Tarn							

Signed

CEFR self-assessment

การฟัง

- A1 สามารถฟังและเข้าใจคำเกี่ยวกับสิ่งของที่อยู่รอบตัวได้ เมื่อพูดซ้ำ ๆ ชัด ๆ
- A2 สามารถฟังคนพูดเกี่ยวกับ ข้อมูลส่วนตัวเบื้องต้น หรือครอบครัวโดยจับใจความได้ว่าผู้พูดต้องการสื่ออะไร เมื่อเขาพูดซ้ำ ๆ ชัด ๆ และประโยคสั้น ๆ ได้
- B1 สามารถเข้าใจ ใจความสำคัญของรายการทีวี วิทยุภาษาอังกฤษเข้าใจ ใจความสำคัญหลัก ๆ ของ ชาวต่างชาติเมื่อพูดด้วยระดับความเร็วปกติ
- B2 สามารถเข้าใจการกล่าวปราศรัย และการบรรยายเกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่มีความคุ้นเคยได้ และฟังเข้าใจข่าว รายการโทรทัศน์ และภาพยนตร์ได้

การอ่าน

- A1 สามารถอ่านชื่อ คำ ประโยคสั้น ๆ ในป้ายเตือน โปสเตอร์เข้าใจ
- A2 สามารถอ่านบทความสั้น ๆ เกี่ยวกับโฆษณา ตารางเวลา เมนูอาหาร จดหมายระหว่างบุคคล และเดาออก ว่าเป็นเรื่องเกี่ยวกับอะไร
- B1 เข้าใจบทความยาว 1 หน้ากระดาษขนาด A4 ที่มีคำศัพท์ที่พบเจอได้บ่อย ๆ หรือในจดหมายระหว่าง บุคคล
- B2 สามารถอ่านข่าวและนวนิยายได้

สนทนา

- A1 สามารถนำคำมาปะติดปะต่อกันให้คู่สนทนาเดาได้ว่าเราต้องการสื่ออะไร โดยไม่ต้องถูกไวยากรณ์ และ สามารถตอบคำถามง่าย ๆ ในชีวิตประจำวันได้
- A2 สามารถสื่อสารในหัวข้อที่คุ้นเคย สามารถคุยกับต่างชาติได้แบบสั้น ๆ แต่ไม่สามารถเข้าใจทุกอย่าง พอที่จะสามารถพูดคุยด้วยตนเองได้
- B1 สามารถสื่อสารได้ในระดับท่องเที่ยวตามลำพังได้ และสามารถสนทนาในชีวิตประจำวันได้
- B2 สามารถพูดคุยกับเจ้าของภาษาได้ในระดับความเร็วปกติ และถกเถียงประเด็นต่าง ๆ กับต่างชาติได้

การพูด

- A1 สามารถใช้ประโยคสั้น ๆ ในการอธิบายที่ที่ตนอาศัยอยู่ และอธิบายลักษณะของคนที่รู้จักได้
- A2 สามารถเรียงร้อยประโยคเป็นเรื่องราว เพื่ออธิบายเกี่ยวกับครอบครัว ชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ การศึกษาของตน และงานที่ทำปัจจุบันได้
- B1 สามารถเรียงร้อยประโยคเป็นเรื่องราว เพื่ออธิบายเกี่ยวกับประสบการณ์ ความฝัน ความหวัง เล่านิทาน ให้เหตุผล และเสนอความคิดเห็นได้
- B2 สามารถนำเสนอผลงาน แสดงให้เห็นถึงข้อดี และข้อเสียของสิ่งที่กำลังนำเสนอได้

การเขียน

- A1 สามารถเขียนโปสการ์ดสั้น ๆ ได้ และสามารถกรอกรายละเอียดต่าง ๆ ของตนเอง ในแบบฟอร์มได้
- A2 สามารถเขียนจดหมายสั้น ๆ ถึงเพื่อนได้
- B1 สามารถเขียนเรื่องราวตามหัวข้อทั่วไปที่กำหนดให้ได้ สามารถเขียนจดหมายเล่าประสบการณ์และความ ประทับใจได้
- B2 สามารถเขียนบทความรายงานสถานการณ์ต่าง ๆ ได้อย่างดี

My translation, Block, D. (2015). Social Class in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, P.26-27.

List of Assignments

Topic	Assignment	Activities	Note
Hotel & Welcoming	1 (Individual)	Repeat sentences from the lesson learned	Online voice recorded
	2 (Individual)	Apply sentences from the lesson learned	
	3 (Individual)	Create sentences from real situation	
	4 (Individual)	Make a real conversation with teacher to see learners' improvements	Face to face conversation
	5 (Group work)	Create the real conversation for assigned situations	Role play (in class)
Restaurant & Services	6 (Individual)	Repeat sentences from the lesson learned	Online voice recorded
	7 (Individual)	Apply sentences from the lesson learned	
	8 (Individual)	Create sentences from real situation	
	9 (Individual)	Make a real conversation with teacher to see learners' improvements	Face to face conversation
	10 (Group work)	Create the real conversation for assigned situations	Role play (in class)

List of videos used in online class

Topic	Video	Title of the videos	Length	Links
Hotel & Welcoming	1	Speak up: Homestay Owner เจ้าของโฮมสเตย์ ตอน 1	12.56 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit1-1
	2	Speak up: Homestay Owner เจ้าของโฮมสเตย์ ตอน 2	15.21 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit1-2
	3	The workshop: Hostel Front Officer พนักงานต้อนรับโฮสเทล ตอน 1	13.30 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit1-3
	4	The workshop: Hostel Front Officer พนักงานต้อนรับโฮสเทล ตอน 2	13.06 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit1-4
Food & Services	5	Speak up: Waiter บริการร้านอาหาร ตอน 1	13.11 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit2-1
	6	Speak up: Waiter บริการร้านอาหาร ตอน 2	11.12 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit2-2
	7	29 คำและประโยคทำงานร้านอาหาร ที่ อปไปใช้ได้เลย Tina Academy Ep. 82	15.25 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit2-3
	8	ฝึกพูดภาษาอังกฤษ พูดใหม่ในร้านอาหาร	3.21 mins	http://bit.ly/EP_Unit2-4

VITAE

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