

The Video Blog Based Role Play Lessons to Enhance English Oral Communication Skills for Tourism Students

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Abstract

Technologies have played crucial roles in people everyday lives. Blog is one of technologies which is very popular among the language teachers that they use it as a means of providing learning opportunities to learners without any restrictions of time and place, thus learning can be occurred not only in a classroom which convenient to the learners. Video blog is considered as a useful tool to improve students' English oral communication skill because it is used video rather than written text as a primary media source. Besides, video blogs can also include still images, movies, sound, and metadata to further annotate the site (Educause Learning Initiative, 2005). Apart from video blog, role play is another popular instructional technique which has long been used by the language teachers to help students improve their English oral communication skills. Role paly provides the opportunity for students to practice a target language in a meaningful context as it provides authentic language experiences which students can improve vocabulary (Cook, 2000; Sullivan, 2000a). Because "role play brings real-world situations into the classroom where students need to imagine a role, a context, or both, and improvise a conversation, the context

is determined, but students develop the language as they proceed” (Doff, 1990: p. 232). Through role play activities, students can improve interpersonal and communicative skills (Milroy, 1982; Woodhouse, 2007), increase motivation, cultural and nonverbal behavior (Scarcella & Crookall, 1990). With regards the usefulness of both video blog and role play technique, the researcher developed the Video Blog-Based Role Play (VBRP) lessons to enhance English oral communication skills for tourism students at Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand.

Keywords: Video Blog, Role Play, English Oral Communication Skills, English for Tourism, Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

BACKGROUND/ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Tourism industry is one of an importance tools to develop Thailand’s economy because it generates foreign revenue and employment which contributes around 10 percent of the GDP. In 2015, Thailand welcomed foreign visitors around 29.88 million people who 60-70 percent are repeated visitors. Thus, the industry needs employees who can communicate foreign languages particularly English well to understand the visitors and respond to their needs. Many tourism internships and their managers in the tourism industry reflected that, students need to be trained English for Tourism specifically the terminology relating to hotel business and some technical terms in tourism. The students could not communicate well in English so that they did not confident to have direct contact with international visitors. The researcher then tries to find an appropriate way to help them improve their English oral communication skills. Role play is an effective technique that brings real-world situations into the classroom where students can practice the target language in a meaningful context with fun and safe environment. Students can take different roles in different social contexts, thus they can improve their vocabulary, confident, social interaction, and oral communication skills. Regarding technology plays significant role in people everyday lives, many language teacher make use of technology particularly video blog which uses video as a primary resource to improve students’ English oral communication skills. Through blog, students can post their video clip, visit their friends’ blog, leave comments and share ideas or learn from each other. Hence, this study tries to develop the video blog based role play (VBRP) lessons to enhance English oral communication skills for tourism

students. The objectives for this study therefore to; 1) evaluate the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons used by tourism students based on the 80/80 standard; 2) compare students' English oral communication skills achievements before and after using the VBRP Lessons, and 3) investigate the tourism students' opinions toward learning through the VBRP Lessons.

METHODS

Research Design

This study is a quasi-experimental research using One-Group Pre-test-Post-test design (Creswell, 2003) as follows:

Group A O1..... X O2
O1 = pre-test
X = treatment
O2 = post-test.

At first the participants were measured their English oral communication skills using a pre-test regarding the tourism situations. Students worked in pairs, pick a role card and negotiate their role with partner who would be a tour guide and a tourist. Students performed their role play which video recorded by the researcher and keep as evident for their learning achievement. Later, students learned the VBRP Lessons in which the contents were selected from students' needs analysis. This study consisted of two lessons; 1) Songkran Celebration in Northern Thailand, and 2) Social Etiquette for Visiting Thai Buddhist Temples. After finishing learning the VBRP Lessons, a post-test of English oral communication skills was given to all participants. Once again, students worked in pairs to perform role play and video recorded by the researcher. To investigate the students' opinions toward learning the VBRP Lessons, a 5 point Likert scale questionnaire and semi-structured interview were employed to all participants. To conduct the present study, it was divided into 2 phases; 1) developing the VBRP Lessons, and 2) investigating the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons, and analyzing students' opinions toward learning VBRP Lessons.

Phase I: Developing the VBRP Lessons. To develop the VBRP Lessons, the researcher developed the VBRP Instructional Model and had the experts in the fields of English language teaching and instructional systems design to evaluate whether or not the

model is appropriate to be used as a guideline for developing the VBRP Lessons. Once the model was approved by the experts, the researcher conducted students' needs analysis through questionnaire. The obtained data was used to design the VBRP Lessons.

Phase II. Investigating the Efficiency of the VBRP Lessons and analyzing students' opinions toward learning VBRP Lessons. Once the VBRP Lessons were developed, they were tested for efficiency of the process (E_1) and product (E_2) through different try-out studies (individual, small group, and field testing) based on the standard criterion set of 80/80 (Brahmawong, 1978). The result of each try-out study, was revised based on students feedback until meet the standard criterion set, then the lessons were ready to administer in the trial-run or actual classroom experiment.

Participants:

The participants were third year tourism students at Mae Fah Luang University (MFU) in Thailand. They were selected based on a purposive sampling method and that was an intact class of English for Tourism in semester 1 of the academic year 2015. Thus, there were two groups of participants included in this study; 1) participants for the try-out studies to evaluate the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons, and 2) the participants for the experiment. The participants for the try-out studies included 52 junior tourism students at MFU, Thailand. They had mixed ability of English proficiency levels (high, moderate, and low). The criterion to classify students' English proficiency was based on their previous English grade: English 3 Course prior taking English for Tourism Course. Among the 52 participants, 6 students were conducted the individual testing, 12 students did the small group testing, and 34 students for the field testing. Participants for the experiment were included 36 junior tourism students at MFU who took English for Tourism Course in semester 2 of the academic year 2015. This group of participant was selected based on the purposive sampling method which was taken from one intact class of English for Tourism Course at the MFU.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments in this study were included; 1) the VBRP Lessons; 2) Pre-test and Post-test; 3) questionnaire, and 4) semi-structured interview.

1. The VBRP Lessons

VBRP Lessons are online lessons which developed based on the students' needs analysis for teaching English for Tourism Course at the MFU. The major techniques for this instruction were video-recording the students' performance of role play activities, then broadcasting video clips on blogs where the other students in the class and the teacher could share ideas, and give suggestions to enhance Tourism Students' English oral communication skills. The learning activities for both lessons such as watching video and answer the questions, learning tourism vocabulary through various exercises, and conducting video role play clips and posted them on the blog where friends could leave comments, and etc. Before starting the lessons, students were introduced how to create their own blog, how to put the web link, how to post their video role play clips, as well as how to leave comments or reply peers' comments if needed. Then the VBRP Lessons' efficiency was assessed through individual testing, small group testing, and field study testing. The video blog-based role play lessons in this study consisted of two units: 1) the celebration of the Songkran Festival and 2) the social etiquette for visiting a Thai Buddhist temple in which each unit last for six hours per week

2. Pre-test and Post-test

A pre-test with precise rubrics, relating to tourism situations was given to test students' English oral communication skills before learning the VBRP Lessons. The rubrics to assess learners' English oral communication skills for this study was adopted the assessment components from the Analysis Oral Assessment Scale (AOAS) developed by Kost (2004). The reasons to adopt the AOAS as a rubric to assess the tourism students at the MFU because it provides clear components, easy to understand, and it is used to assess the EFL students' oral communication skills. However, the MFU context is different from the study of Kost (2004), thus some descriptions in each component were adapted. Therefore, the researcher partially adapted the descriptions as well as the scoring criterions. The rubric to assess the students' oral communication skills consisted of 5 components; vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and comprehension. Each component had specific description with different speaking ability levels (inadequate, poor, good, very good, and excellent) and each level was valued differently ranging from 0 to 5 respectively. To mitigate the English oral communication skill rating discrepancies, thus the inter-rater training was conducted before the main study. Apart from the researcher, this study included two raters who teach English Speaking Course to the university students at least 5 years, they have

experience of using role play technique to teach English Speaking Course, and they also use blogging in their English teaching courses. In the end of the semester, a post-test on English oral communication related to tourism was given to all participants in order to find out their English oral communication skills improvement and how they feel about the using of VBRP Lessons in studying English for Tourism course.

3. Questionnaire

To elicit the participants' opinions towards the VBRP Lessons, the researcher employed a questionnaire. Because of a very limited study relating to video blog role play to enhance students' English oral communications skills, thus, the researcher reviewed the literature relating to blog and role play for language teaching and learning as well as the relevant studies concerning with using role play technique to improve students' speaking skills and using video blog to improve students' speaking skills. The questionnaire in this study consists of two parts, Part I: General Information, and Part II: Students' Opinions toward the use of Video Blog-based Role Play Lessons. All questions in Part I were created by the researcher, but in Part II the questions were adapted and adopted from Suppasetsee (2005), Min-Chen-Tseng (2008), Ru-Chu Shin (2010), Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012), Islam and Islam (2012), and Phuetphon (2012). The reasons to adapt and adopt the questionnaire from the previous studies as mentioned above because they had approved appropriate from the experts and they were used in a similar context of this study to enhancing EFL students' English oral communication skills. The questionnaire in this study consisted of two parts: participants' general information which had 10 questions, and participants' opinions toward VBRP which consisted of 18 questions.

4. Semi-structured Interview

To gain insights information from the participants on learning through the VBRP Lessons as well as to prevent misunderstanding, thus, semi-structured interview was used Thai, a native language of the participants and the researcher, would use during the interview session to communicate better. The interview question consisted of five questions. The questions were administered with the target students right after they finished doing a post-test of video role play which lasted about ten to fifteen minutes for each pair. This study interviewed all 36 participants and recorded the interviews to avoid missing out some important information in case of taking note and it might have some effects in the data analysis. To get insightful information from all students, the

researcher interviewed a pair of students at a time so that every students had equally opportunity to talk and the shyness ones would not dominated by the talkative students. For a start, the researcher made understanding with students for the reasons to interview them, the length of each interview, the necessity and significance of students' feedback, and asked their permission to record the interview session. Once the students were ready to begin, the first question was asked and students were encouraged to talk or express their feeling freely. If the students did not really want to talk regarding they had no ideas or they felt shy, the researcher would prompt and encourage them to speak out. To improve the reliability of the instrument, the interview questions were checked by the experts via index of item objective congruence (IOC) and they were piloted with the MFU Tourism Students, who were not involved in the study.

DATA COLLECTION

For the VBRP Lessons, the efficiency test was conducted through three stages of try-out; 1) individual testing (1:1), 2) small group testing (1:10), and 3) field testing (1:100).

Individual Testing (1:1)

Six tourism students at the MFU with mixed ability of English proficiency levels took part in this test. Students were required to take VBRP Lessons, do exercises and conduct video role play. Students were asked about opinions on the lessons and the students' feedback was used to revise the VBRP Lessons. The students' achievement scores from the exercises and the video role play were calculated for the process and product's efficiency based on the 80/80 efficiency criterion. The purpose of the try-out was to investigate the quality of the lessons in terms of content, difficulty level, and language use. The VBRP Lessons were then modified and were try-out in the next stage of small group testing.

Small Group Testing (1:10)

This stage of try-out included twelve tourism students who have mixed ability of English proficiency levels at the MFU. Students were classified into high, moderate, and low English proficiency levels so each level consisted of four students. The procedures of the small group testing were the same as that of the individual testing. The purpose of this try-out was also to find out the quality of the VBRP Lessons in

terms of content, difficulty level, and language use. Students' feedbacks would apply in the next stage of try-out (field testing).

Field Testing (1:100)

At this stage, thirty four tourism students who have mixed ability of English proficiency levels were included. Students were asked to study the VBRP Lessons, complete online exercises, and conducted video role plays. The procedures of the field testing were the same as those conducted with individual and small group testing. The results of the try-out were analyzed to evaluate the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons based on 80/80 standard criterion set. The purpose was also to find out the quality of the lessons in terms of contents, difficulty level, and language use. Once the lessons' efficiency could meet the standard criterion set, the lessons would ready to be used in the trial-run or actual classroom experiment.

To elicit students' opinions toward leaning the VBRP Lessons, the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used right after students had completed the post-test of conducting video role play clip.

DATA ANALYSIS

The obtained data from pre-test, post-test and questionnaire were calculated for the arithmetic means, standard deviation, a Paired sample t-test while the qualitative data obtained from interview was analyzed using content analysis. To analyze the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons, the standard criterion 80/80, (E_1/E_2) formulae was employed (Brahmawong, 1978)

$$E_1 = \frac{\bar{X}}{A} \times 100$$

$$E_1 = \text{Efficiency of the process}$$

$$\bar{X} = \text{Mean score obtained by all students from the exercises, assessments, and learning activities}$$

$$A = \text{Total score of the exercises in the lessons}$$

The percentile of E_1 is taken from a mean of exercises and activities. Here, E_1 refers to the efficiency of the process; \bar{X} refers to the mean score obtained by all students from the exercises; and A refers to Total score of the exercises in the lessons.

$$E_2 = \frac{\bar{F}}{B} \times 100$$

- E_2 = Efficiency of the product
 \bar{F} = Mean score obtained by all students from the test
B = Total score of the test in the lessons, (Brahmawong, 1978).

The percentile of E_2 is taken from that of the post-test. Here, E_2 refers to the efficiency of the outcome in which the learners' behavior is changed after taking the lesson; \bar{F} refers to the mean score obtained by all students from the test; and B refers to Total score of the test in the lessons.

RESULTS

Results of the Efficiency of the Video Blog-Based Role Play Lessons

In respond to research objective number 1, to evaluate the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons used by tourism students based on the 80/80 standard. The results of the VBRP Lessons' efficiency of each stage were as follow:

Results of the Individual Testing (1:1)

For the Individual Testing (1:1), the efficiency of process (E_1) and the efficiency of product (E_2) of the two units were as follow:

Unit 1 66.66/64.66

Unit 2 68.42/66.00

The results revealed that both two VBRP lessons' efficiency did not meet the standard criterion set of 80/80 (E_1/E_2). Students found three problems while learning the VBRP Lessons. First, the poor sound quality of the video role play as a result of wind blowing, bird singing, vehicle's engine, and inaudibly conversation. These effects caused students had difficulty understanding the conversations in the video and could not do the exercises properly. Thus, the video role play clips were remake in the studio. Second, the pictures used in the exercises were unfocused and confused students. It led to misunderstanding. Thus, the researcher selected the relevant pictures, put an arrow or make circle at the spots which wanted to focus and replace them in the exercises. Finally, some students confronted with unfamiliar vocabulary used in the lessons because they were not used much in their daily conversations. The solution for unknown vocabulary, the researcher provided online dictionary in the lessons that they can look-up for meaning and pronunciation quickly and conveniently. According to the

students' comments, the researcher revised the lessons and used them with another twelve students for the small group testing.

Results of the Small Group Testing (1:10)

In the small group try out, the efficiency of process (E₁) and product (E₂) of the two units were as follow:

Unit 1 73.12/72.50

Unit 2 75.65/74.16

The efficiency of both VBRP Lessons were slightly higher than in the individual testing but still lower than the standard criterion set of 80/80 (E₁/E₂). At this stage of try-out, students reflected that the lessons were interesting and useful for their future career as a tour guide. However, some problems were found in this stage. First, each lesson has too many exercises that students had to spend a lot of time to complete them. Thus, the exercises for each unit were reduced. Second, it was time consuming to conduct video role play clips since the students had to prepare script, rehearse role play, and conduct role play. Some pairs redo their video role play clips many times and they were very tired from their busy schooling schedule in that semester. To mitigate students' tiring from their busy schedule which may occur in the field testing stage, the researcher set well plan and extended the duration of try-out. The students could manage their time when to do exercises as well as to conduct video role play clips. Third, some examples of video role play clips as well as the questions in the exercises were too long and difficult to understand so that they could not answer the questions properly. The researcher therefore modified the long video and revised questions in the exercises. To help students understand the contents in the example of videos, the researcher provided video script that they could download for better understanding while watching the videos. Finally, some pictures in the exercises were imbalanced in sizes that they were either too big or too small so that the researcher resized and selected only the precise pictured in responding to the students' comments. After revising the VBRP lessons in accordance with the students' comments, the researcher planned for the field testing schedule more carefully to avoid the limitation of time. Besides, the researcher contacted the target students to check their class schedule and make appointment with 34 students who would be a target group for the field testing to do the try-out study on their free times. After revising the VBRP Lessons in following the students' feedback, the lessons were ready to be used with the field testing.

Results of the Field Testing (1:100)

The efficiency of the process (E_1) and product (E_2) of the two units were as follow:

Unit 1 81.76/80.29

Unit 2 81.91/80.88

It can be seen that the efficiency of the VBRP Lessons of both process (E_1) and product (E_2) met the standard criterion set of 80/80 after revising the lessons in accordance with the students' comments. The students enjoyed the lessons and enthusiastically conducted the role plays. However, few problems were also found in the field testing. First, some students needed to spend more time to complete each exercise than what was given by the researcher. They added that conducting role play was time consuming so that they should have been given enough time to complete the task. Thus, the researcher allocated more time for students to be able to complete the exercises. Second, some students were very busy with their semester schedule regarding they study very hard in the semester which the researcher conducted a field testing so that they did not have much time to participate in the field testing. To solve problems occurred in the field testing stage the researcher checked students' study plan and their semester schedule to plan when and where the actual experiment should be conducted and taken place. Finally, a few students commented that the teacher's blog for VBRP lessons was not beautiful and few pages of the language pattern contained too many written texts. The solution for this problem, the researcher then changed the template of blog and added some pictures relevant to the language pattern used in the lessons. Once the three types of try-out study were done, the VBRP lessons would be used in the trial run stage with 36 students who were a different group of the try-out group.

Before implementing the VBRP lessons in the trial run with another group of tourism students at the MFU, the 36 students were given pre-test about different tourism situations to see their background knowledge or English oral communication skills. Herewith was the result of English oral communication skills pre-test of the tourism students at MFU.

Results of the Trial Run

The efficiency of process (E_1) and the efficiency of product (E_2) of the two units were as follow:

Unit 1 81.92/80.4

Unit 2 82.35/81.00

The result of the trial run stage revealed that the efficiency of the process and product of the VBRP lessons met the standard criterion set of 80/80 (E_1/E_2). This phenomenon might resulting from the revision of the VBRP lessons in each stage of the different try-outs including Individual Testing, Small Group Testing, and Field Testing. Consequently, it could be said that the VBRP lessons of the two units are efficient and can help students to enhance their English oral communication skills effectively.

Students' English Oral Communication Skills Achievements Before and After Using the VBRP Lessons

Rely on the research objective number 2, to compare students' English oral communication skills before and after learning the VBRP Lessons, the results revealed that in Unit 1, the average score of the pre-test for English oral communication skills was 7.29 (SD = 3.01) and the average score for the post-test of English oral communication skills was 14.24 (SD = 2.96). For Unit 2, the average score of the pre-test of English oral communication skills was 7.29 (SD = 2.47) and the average score of the post-test of English oral communication skills was 14.76 (SD = 2.65) which indicated a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores at .05 level ($P = 0.000$, $P \leq 0.05$). This means that the students who learned the VBRP lessons significantly improved their English oral communication skills.

Table 1: Results of the Students' English Oral Communication Skills Achievements Before and After Using the VBRP Lessons

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unit 1 : Pre-test	36	5.00	15.00	7.2917	3.01040
Unit 1 : Post-test	36	10.00	20.00	14.2361	2.96223
Unit 2 : Pre-test	36	5.00	11.25	7.2917	2.47307
Unit 2 : Post-test	36	11.25	20.00	14.7569	2.65282
Valid N (listwise)	36				

Students' Opinions Toward Learning Through VBRP Lessons

The results revealed that in overall, the students have positive opinions toward the VBRP lessons ($\bar{x} = 4.19$, $SD = 0,379$). When considering each statement, the highest mean score was 4.42 and the lowest was 3.83. The first three highest mean score that students rated to the statements were: "VBRP lessons can be applied in real situations

when conducting tours and role play technique helps them to increase fluency in English oral communication” as highest (\bar{x} = 4.42, SD = 0.554), (\bar{x} = 4.42, SD = 0.649) followed by “Using blog is an effective way to share knowledge and exchange ideas with others” (\bar{x} = 4.39, SD = 0.494), and “VBRP lessons can help students to increase knowledge of tourism vocabulary” (\bar{x} = 4.36, SD = 0.798) respectively. In the other hand, the three lowest mean score that students express their opinions toward the statements were: “Learning through VBRP lessons can increase students’ ability to use computer applications” (\bar{x} = 3.83, SD = 0.737) followed by “Reviewing group members' videos can help students to improve their English oral communication skills” (\bar{x} = 3.89, SD = 0.785), and “It doesn't take a lot of time learning how to use blogs” (\bar{x} = 3.92, SD = 0.692) respectively, as shown in Table 2. Based on the criterion of means interpretation proposed by Suppasetserree (2005), the mean scores between 3.68-5.00 students have positive opinions toward learning the VBRP Lessons. Therefore, this study can be concluded that students have positive opinions toward learning the VBRP lessons.

Table 2: Results of Students’ Opinions toward Learning the VBRP Lessons

Statements	N	\bar{x}	SD
1. VBRP lessons can be applied in real situations when conducting Tours	36	4.42	.554
2. Role play technique helps students to increase fluency in English oral communication	36	4.42	.649
3. Using blog is an effective way to share knowledge and exchange ideas with others	36	4.39	.494
4. VBRP lessons can help students to increase knowledge of tourism vocabulary	36	4.36	.798
5. Role play technique helps students to increase self-confident when having English conversation	36	4.33	.632
6. Students can visit and learn something from their classmates' Blogs	36	4.33	.478
7. Role play technique increases the interaction opportunity with Friends	36	4.31	.624
8. Role lay technique is suitable for English for Tourism course	36	4.28	.741
9. Blog provides more opportunity to learn English for Tourism outside of classroom	36	4.25	.500

Statements	N	\bar{x}	SD
10. Blog is easy to use for learning English for Tourism	36	4.22	.422
11. Role play technique allows for the exchange of knowledge between friends	36	4.19	.577
12. Role play technique can make English for Tourism learning Enjoyable	36	4.14	.683
13. It is fast and convenient for the students to update information on the blogs	36	4.11	.667
14. Learning through VBRP lessons can improve students good relationship with their classmates	36	4.00	.756
15. The instructor and peers' comments on blog can help students improve their English oral communication skills	36	3.97	.654
16. It doesn't take a lot of time learning how to use blogs	36	3.92	.692
17. Reviewing group members' videos can help students to improve their English oral communication skills	36	3.89	.785
18. Learning through VBRP lessons can increase students' ability to use computer applications	36	3.83	.737
Total	36	4.187	.379

RESULTS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The data obtained from semi-structured interview revealed that the respondents in this study liked the VBRP lessons due to the lessons were interesting, convenient, and collaborative. What they like most about the lessons were the exercises of the VBRP lessons, the video role play clips activities, and the examples of video role play offered by the teacher respectively. All of them felt that the lessons could be used practically due to the VBRP lessons provide with language input and authentic language use. They expressed their opinions that they did not get direct problem from the lessons but some of them had problem of the Internet signal, log-in system, confuse of coordinate with friends, insufficient background knowledge as well as had no laptop when using the VBRP lessons. However, if the other English courses could be designed using blog all of them wanted to learn such as English for Aviation, English for Hotel Management, and English for Greater Maekong Sub-Region respectively.

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