

Developing English Sociolinguistic Competency through Scenario-Based Learning Methods

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Abstract

This quasi-experimental study tested the use of scenario-based learning (SBL) to develop the English sociolinguistic competency of grade 7 students. The research objectives aimed to compare the English sociolinguistic competency test results of students taught with SBL (the experimental group) to students taught by traditional teaching methods (the control group), and to compare the English sociolinguistic competency test results of the experimental group before and after treatment with SBL lessons. The main research tools used in this study were four SBL lesson plans for the experimental group, four traditional lesson plans for the control group, and a thirty-item multiple-choice English sociolinguistic competency *pre-test/post-test*. The research tools were inspected and revised by experts and tested in a try-out before starting the study. Both the experiment and control groups were given the same *pre-* and *post-tests*, and both groups were taught the same lesson content and themes, with only the methodology differing. The results of the study showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups' *post-test* scores. The experimental group showed significant development of their English sociolinguistic competency, when comparing before to after SBL treatment. While this study proved that SBL can be used to develop grade 7 students' English sociolinguistic competency, it did not prove SBL to be more effective at developing English sociolinguistic competency than traditional methods. It is possible that factors such as student motivation and SBL lesson stage timing had an impact on the results. Further research should be conducted to investigate this.

Keywords: English sociolinguistic competency, grade 7 English teaching, scenario-based learning

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Introduction

English language studies are currently still an important part of standard education in Thailand and a compulsory subject in Thai secondary schools. Students are expected to meet a certain set of English language learning goals as set forth by the Ministry of Education by the end of their secondary education. Among these goals, the 2008 Thai National Curriculum expects students to acquire the knowledge and ability to communicate, not only with correct grammar, but with language and mannerisms which are appropriate for various communicative situations. This means that students must be able to adjust their choice of words, tone, and register to fit real-life or life-like situations (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2008). This ability to use language “appropriately” in a particular situation matches the definition of sociolinguistic competency (Mede & Dikilitaş, 2015). Sociolinguistic competency comprises the awareness and skills needed to adjust one’s language to match the social circumstances in a situation. Since its inception by Dell Hymes in 1972, sociolinguistic competency has become a standard indicator of language users’ communicative competency. Sociolinguistic competency is also one of the three key components in the communicative language competence model, as proposed by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2020). As the CEFR guidelines have been integrated into the Thai education system since 2014, English sociolinguistic competency seems all the more important for Thai students to master (Office of the Basic Education Commission Ministry of Education, 2014).

Though the goals and guidelines of the National Curriculum and the CEFR are useful, simply having them in the education system does not mean that Thai secondary students will learn to be competent users of English. There are many other factors that affect students’ English language development, including the methods being used to teach in most classrooms. Research on secondary-level English education in Thailand reveals several issues regarding how English is being taught in classrooms. The standard use of commercial English textbooks can make English feel unrelatable to students’ lives and interests (Rattanakornkul & Torut, 2017). Deductive teacher-centered methods such as lectures, rote memorization, and writing drills are still often the default methods used in English classrooms. (Mejang, 2017). Students lack opportunities to use English actively in a social context, where they can try out the language with others and learn from the results of their experiences. English classroom activities should provide communicative experiences that mirror real-life situations on topics that are interesting and relatable for students (Dechatiwong na Ayutthaya, 2024). The emphasis should be more on developing the communicative competencies needed for accurate and appropriate English communication in the modern world. This would ensure that Thai students not only know how to make English communicative acts but can also appropriately act them out.

Though much research has been published on issues concerning secondary English language education in Thailand, there has been little focus on its sociolinguistic aspects. As the goal of learning English is to develop communicative competency, and as sociolinguistic competency is a key component of communicative competency, it is important to research, measure, and develop methods to increase students’ sociolinguistic competency.

To develop English sociolinguistic competency, students need to experience communicating in a variety of simulated situations. There are many types of experiential learning that could help facilitate this “learning by doing,” but not all types are suitable for regular classroom lessons. The type of experiential learning used must be safe and simple enough to be implemented in ordinary classrooms by ordinary teachers, such as scenario-based learning (SBL). In SBL lessons, students learn by taking action within a supposed scenario presented in class. The scenario provides the framework for the lesson and helps direct students’ learning (Weston, 2018). Students are allowed to make choices and try out ideas within the framework of the scene. This gives them an active role in learning (Budhai & Skipwith, 2021). SBL is also very versatile. There are many types of SBL for different levels and numbers of learners. SBL does not require specific equipment or technological capabilities. The versatility and active student-centered qualities of SBL make it a potentially useful method for teaching English language competencies, including sociolinguistic competency.

Literature Review

1. Sociolinguistic Competency

1.1 Theoretical Framework: Communicative Competence

Sociolinguistic competency is one of a set of competencies within the theoretical framework of communicative competence. Nguyen and Ly (2020) called communicative competence “the objective of language learning,” and it is necessary for language students to both produce and receive information.

Since Dell Hymes’s simple two-component model in 1972, there have been several prominent models of communicative competence. Most models include sociolinguistic competency or a component identical in meaning and function with a slightly different name. (For example Celce-Murcia et al.’s “sociocultural competence.”) (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Sociolinguistic competency has a prominent role in communicative competence because communication is a social act that uses language to make and receive meaning. The particulars of society one is communicating in dictates the type and tone of language used.

1.2 The Definition and Importance of Sociolinguistic Competency

English sociolinguistic competency is the ability to have successful communication in a variety of social situations in which there are various social and cultural factors present that will affect the language and way it is used (Nguyen & Ly, 2020). A sociolinguistic competent communicator is able to adjust their tone, communication method, and manner to suit the circumstances best. Without sociolinguistic competency, even the most grammatically correct or clearly pronounced messages may be misunderstood or considered inappropriate in a particular situation. Sociolinguistic competency is, therefore, a crucial part of effective communication (Hymes, 1972; Mede & Dikilitaş, 2015). Overall, it helps language users have more effective and cohesive communication encounters in the society in which they communicate. As the name implies, sociolinguistic competency is the communication skill one needs to use language to navigate social interactions. Therefore, it seems logical that one needs instances of social communication to learn and develop it. Language learners cannot be

expected to be sociolinguistically competent communicators if they are never exposed to different social communicative situations in which to practice and develop this skill.

2. Scenario-Based Learning (SBL)

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Scenario-based learning is based on constructivism and situated cognition. This type of learning places learners in control of their own learning experience (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). It focuses on learners gaining knowledge and developing skills through active engagement with learning materials and their environment (Roth & Jornet, 2013). Students acquire new knowledge from their direct experiences or encounters and add it to their existing base of knowledge (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). SBL was developed from Lave and Wenger's 1991 proposal of situated learning. They claimed that learning within the context of an experiential situation is better for preparing learners to use real-world knowledge and skills than traditional learning methods (Lave & Wegner, 1991; Naruponjirakul, 2019). Situated learning requires learners to be immersed and guided deeper into a society of experts in the field in which they are studying (Lave & Wegner, 1991). SBL differs from situated learning in that it does not require this social aspect. This difference makes it easier to adapt and use SBL in various learning situations.

2.2 The Definition and Types of SBL

SBL is a learning method that allows learners to use knowledge and practice skills that they will need to perform in real life within the context of a scenario. It places learners in a staged situation, where they can safely learn through trial and error. It is an inductive, learner-centered method with the goal of preparing learners to meet real-world demands (Clark, 2013; Naruponjirakul, 2019). Weston (2018) calls it a dynamic style of learning where teachers set up and teach a lesson through a supposed scenario that directs students' actions and learning. SBL has developed along with the technology of the times and has been adjusted to fit the needs of various classes, subjects, and types of learners. There are independent types that allow a single learner to work through a scenario on their own, learning by processing their own experiences in the scenario. There are group or social SBL lessons in which learners navigate a scenario together and help one another reach their goals. Some examples of this type of SBL include roleplay scenarios, task-based scenarios, and problem-based scenarios (Errington, 2010; Mamakli et al., 2023). Scenarios can vary in complexity and length depending on the goals of the learning.

Research Objectives

1. To compare the results of grade 7 students taught by SBL with the results of the control group
2. To compare the English sociolinguistic competency of grade 7 students in the experimental group before and after the use of SBL

Research Questions

1. Will students in the experimental group have significantly higher English sociolinguistic competency test scores after treatment with SBL than students in the control group?
2. Will the use of SBL significantly improve the English sociolinguistic competency test scores of students in the experimental group?

Research Hypotheses

1. Grade 7 students in the experimental group taught with SBL will have higher English sociolinguistic competency *post-test* results than the *post-test* results of grade 7 students in the control group.
2. Grade 7 students in the experimental group taught with SBL will have higher levels of English sociolinguistic competency after treatment with SBL.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study requires the following three main components:

1. Population and research sample group of grade 7 Thai students with comparable levels of English knowledge and proficiency.
2. Scenario-based English subject lesson plans that adhered to the standards and goals of the students' regular curriculum and promoted target sociolinguistic competency objectives. In addition, a set of traditional lesson plans for the control group were identical in theme, lesson content, and quality, and differed only in methodology.
3. Pre-test and *post-test* to assess students' English sociolinguistic competency before and after treatment.

2. Population and Sampling

The population in this study consisted of 144 grade 7 students in the Gifted and Talented Program (GATE Program) at Suankularb Wittayalai School, Bangkok. The research sample group consisted of 60 grade 7 students studying in the GATE Program at the Suankularb Wittayalai School. These 60 students were divided into a thirty-student experiment group and a thirty-student control group. The researchers selected a sample group of students from a larger population by random cluster sampling. This was done by reviewing the English test scores of the population and selecting students whose test results were within a range of 14-27 points out of 30 points total score. 30 students were randomly selected to be the experimental group and thirty students were randomly selected as the control group. The experimental group students were taught the SBL lesson plans, and the control group students were taught the traditional-style lesson plans normally used for this subject. Regular class groups, teachers, classrooms, and class times were maintained for students in both groups to reduce differences and distractions and to align with the school's ethics and fairness policies.

3. Research Instruments

3.1 Testing Tools: The Lesson Plans

The testing tools included eight English-language subject lesson plans. Of these eight, four were designed as SBL lesson plans to be used with the experimental group. The other four for the control group were traditional-style lesson plans, as normally used for teaching this subject. Both sets of lesson plans contained identical learning goals, objectives, and themes, with differing methodologies. Each lesson plan could be used to teach three, fifty-minute class periods.

A different type of SBL was used for each of the four lesson plans designed for the experimental group. The types of SBL selected contained activities that matched the content and themes of the lesson plans. Since the different types of scenarios included different activities, the students were able to practice all four main English language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. The types of SBL used for each lesson plan are outlined in Table 2.

The SBL lesson plans followed a staged implementation model constructed by the researchers to conduct this study. The staging in this model was based on other existing SBL implementation models and expert recommendations found in published research. In particular, Naruponjirakul (2019), Smith, Warnes, and Vanhoestenbergh (2018), and Tupe (2015) inspired the model used in this study. (See Table 3 for details.) The model followed a sequence of three main stages, each of which had smaller substages. The stages of the SBL model used in this study are as follows:

1. Initiation Stage:

1.1 Hook or “trigger event”: an initial occurrence to get attention and pull students into the situation.

1.2 Accept roles: Students were assigned or choose roles to act as during the class.

2. Action stage:

2.1 Take action: Students began to act according to a role in the scenario.

2.2 Self-determination: Students took control of the narrative and directed the story through independent choices.

2.3 Challenge: Appearance of obstacles or challenges that students must overcome.

3. Discovery stage:

3.1 Insight: Students gained new knowledge or understood something better through completing a challenge, task, or solving a problem.

3.2 Conclude: Students drew conclusions from the experience, and thus added new information to their existing knowledge base.

Table 1

SBL Lesson Plan Details

The Four Types of SBL Used in this Study (in Sequential Order)	Lesson Plan Topic, Content, and Sociolinguistic Competency Objectives	Main Language Skills Practiced
1. Case-based scenario: Introduction and ice breaker stories with student-led decisions which effect conversation outcomes.	<u>What do you like?:</u> Choosing words appropriate to the situation; adjusting tone and language patterns appropriately with awareness to level of directness and tone of the statement.	Listening, Reading, and Writing
2. Task-based scenario: Hosting a house tour and visiting another's home.	<u>Welcome home:</u> Using vocabulary, phrases, and manners appropriate to the situation. This includes speaking as either host or guest.	Speaking and Listening
3. Speculative scenario: Giving opinions about possible future outcomes about home types and housing in a changing world.	<u>Living space:</u> Sharing facts and opinions on possible future outcomes. Using English vocabulary and phrases appropriate for specific social topics.	Reading and Writing
4. Roleplay scenario: Café scenes to practice making and taking food and drink orders.	<u>Let's eat:</u> Using English in role-play situations that similar to real- world situations. English for making and taking food/drink orders.	Speaking, Listening, and Reading

The lesson plans for the control group followed the traditional teaching pattern of introduction, implementation, and conclusion, which is normally used for teaching grade 7 English. Examples of classroom activities in the control group lesson plans include interactive lectures, textbook materials, videos, worksheets, conversation activities, and game-like quizzes, all of which were regularly used for teaching this subject at Suankularb Wittayalai School.

The lesson plans for both groups were sent to five qualified experts for item-objective congruence (IOC) inspection. The experts evaluated the lesson plans by comparing them to a list of ten quality assessment criteria. The experts also provided extra written feedback with specific suggestions for improvement. All four SBL lesson plans for the experimental group passed the IOC inspection, with only minor suggestions for improving the English sociolinguistic competency objectives and evaluation methods for each lesson plan. The objectives needed to be worded more concisely and in a way that showed a clear connection to the SBL activities in each lesson. Evaluation methods needed to be described in clearer detail

for the teacher to properly assess student sociolinguistic competency while using the lesson plans. The traditional lesson plans for the control group required more revision and improvement than the SBL lesson plans. The inspectors felt that there was a lack of detail in the lesson stages. There was concern that the control group teacher would not have enough information to use the lesson plans effectively. Therefore, the control group lesson plans had to be revised before passing the IOC inspection. The researchers used the IOC evaluation results and feedback to further improve the lesson plans before conducting try-outs.

Table 2

The SBL Stages and Recommended Key Aspects Used as Inspiration for the Model Used in This Study

Tupe (2015), <i>Problem-based multimedia SBL</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaining attention 2. Informing the learners of the objectives 3. Stimulating recall of prior learning 4. Presenting the stimulus 5. Providing learning guidance 6. Eliciting performance 7. Providing feedback 8. Assessing performance 9. Enhancing retention and transfer learning
Smith, Warnes, and Vanhoestenbergh (2018), <i>Key aspects of SBL</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Challenge: an attention-catching issue that interests students. 2. Narrative: a storyline that connects events in the scene 3. Choice: students analyze the options available, possible outcomes, then take action. 4. Roles and role-play: the fictional and/or real roles students play in the scene. 5. Authenticity: element of realism and/or connection to real life.
Naruponjirakul (2019), <i>Skills-based and problem-based scenarios</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facing a scenario <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Inform students of the objective 1.2 Stimulate recall of previously learnt materials 1.3 Students informed of the scenario type and activities 2. Tackling the problem <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Students form their groups and assume roles in the group 2.2 Instructor gives resource recommendations for the activity 2.3 Students take independent action 2.4 Teacher acts as a facilitator and guide 2.5 Students share their results 2.6 Teacher gives feedback and suggestions 2.7 Students record their learning outcome in writing 3. Learning independently <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Instructor assigns independent task for evaluation 3.2 Students informed of evaluation criteria 3.3 Teacher informs students of their individual learning results

3.2 Research Tools: The English Sociolinguistic Competency Test

The test items were designed to test students' sociolinguistic competency in contexts that were relatable to them and linked to the content and themes of the lessons in the treatment. To keep grading as objective as possible and test scores easily quantifiable, all test items were designed as multiple-choice. Additionally, multiple-choice test items can be used to test different cognitive processes, such as those in The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Baghaei et al., 2020; Haataja et al., 2023). Therefore, test items could theoretically test lower-order thinking skills (such as memory of appropriate vocabulary) or higher-order thinking skills (such as analyzing the particulars of a communicative situation) (Baghaei et al., 2020).

An initial fifty-item draft test was constructed and sent to five qualified experts for IOC inspection. The experts also provided additional feedback on how the test items could be improved. The researchers used the IOC results and feedback to revise the test items to be more consistent with the test's stated objectives. The test was revised twice before it was deemed ready for use with the research sample group. The result was a thirty-item multiple-choice test, which was used as both the *pre-test* and *post-test* of this study. The *pre-test* and *post-test* were identical, meaning that both contained the same items presented in the same order.

3.3 Trying Out the Tools

The revised lesson plans were tested with a tryout group of 30 grade 7 students at Suankularb Wittayalai School, who were not in the research group but whose English subject knowledge and skills were comparable to the research group. The thirty-item *pre-test/post-test* was likewise tested with the same thirty-student tryout group. After the tryout, both the lesson plans and test results were analyzed. The lesson plans and tests were revised and checked a final time before use with the research sample group.

Research Process

1. Pre-testing

The *pre-test* was conducted with both the experimental and control groups in June 2024, before starting treatment with the lesson plans. The *pre-test* was conducted during normal class periods by students' regular foreign English teachers. The completed *pre-tests* were collected and graded by the students' English teachers. They were then given to the researchers, who recorded and saved the results for comparison and analysis after the *post-test*. Although only the results of the experimental and control groups were analyzed for this study, the test was used with the whole research population in order to be fair to the students. All students took the *pre-test* on the same date.

2. Treatment with the Lesson Plans

The experimental group's English teacher used the four SBL lesson plans to teach the experimental group. Treatment took place over eight weeks, starting in June (after the *pre-test*) and ending in August. The control group was taught by their regular English teacher using traditional lesson plans during the same eight-week period. The researchers checked in with

both teachers intermittently. The teachers gave updates on student progress and some initial feedback on their experiences using testing tools.

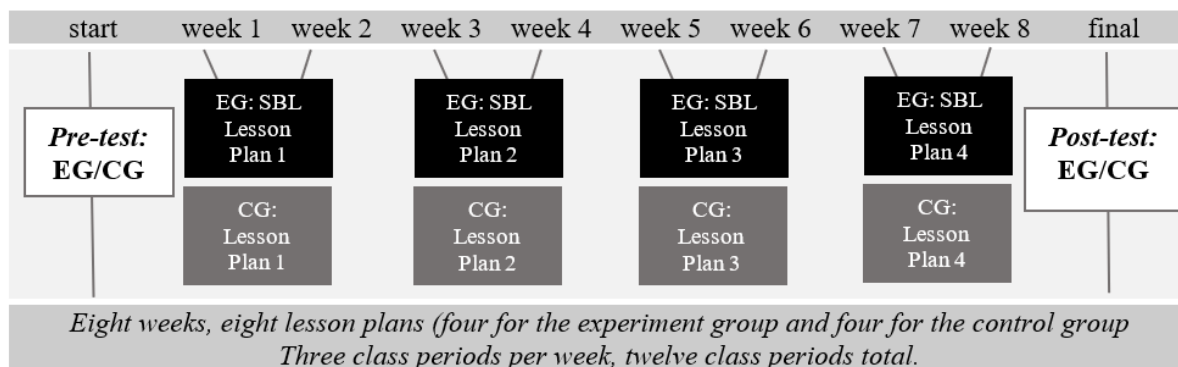
3. Post-testing

In August, at the end of the eight-week treatment period, the experimental and control group teachers administered the *post-test* to their students. Similar to the *pre-test*, the *post-test* was used by the students' regular English teachers during normal class-learning periods. The students' English teachers graded the *post-tests* and then gave the results to the researchers. The researchers recorded and saved the results for comparison and analysis. As with the *pre-test*, the *post-test* was used with the entire research population and on the same date to maintain fairness. The resulting datasets from both the experimental and control groups were used to conduct data analysis and draw conclusions.

After the *post-test*, the researchers also collected feedback from the English teachers of both groups. They provided their opinions on their experiences using lesson plans and an English sociolinguistic competency test. This extra information was also used to help draw conclusions and give the researchers insight into how to develop SBL and English sociolinguistic competency lessons and tests in the future.

Figure 1

Timeline for the Testing and Treatment in This Study



EG = Experiment group CG = Control Group

Results

The *post-test* results of the experimental and control groups were compared using an independent *t*-test to determine if there was a significant difference. The resulting value was .401. Since this was greater than the significance threshold of .05, used for this study, it indicates that the results were not significant. The English sociolinguistic competencies of the experimental group students taught with SBL and the control group were not significantly different. Concerning the first research objective of this study, researchers must accept the null hypothesis.

Table 3*Comparison of Post-test Score Results between the Experimental Group and Control Group*

Group	Full Score	<i>M</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>t</i> -value	Sig.
Experiment group	30	24.17	3.09	.85	.401
Control group	30	23.43	3.61	.85	.401

* $p \leq .05$

Concerning the second research objective, the researchers used a paired *t*-test to compare the experiment group's *pre-test* and *post-test* results. The resulting value was .000, which was less than the .05 significance threshold used for this study. In summary, the experimental group had significantly higher levels of English sociolinguistic competency after treatment with SBL. For the second research objective of this study, researchers can reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4*Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group.*

Experiment Group	Full Score	<i>M</i>	<i>SD.</i>	<i>t</i> -value	Sig.
<i>Pre-test</i>	30	21.80	2.71	4.95	.000
<i>Post-test</i>	30	24.17	3.09		

* $p \leq .05$

Discussion

For this study, the results showed no significant difference in English sociolinguistic competency between students taught with SBL and students taught with the traditional methods used at the Suankularb Wittayalai School. In both groups, most students' *post-test* scores were higher than their *pre-test* scores. The control group's *post-test* scores were 2.17 points higher on average when compared to their *pre-test* scores. The experimental group's *post-test* scores were 2.37 points higher. In short, the experimental group was neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by the SBL treatment. After careful research and review of the data, the researchers will discuss three possible reasons why, in this study, SBL was no more effective than traditional teaching methods. These are constructivist explanations, student motivations, and the importance of time and timing.

1. Constructivism: Sociocultural Learning and MKOs

One explanation may be found in SBL's theoretical framework of SBL. SBL is based on constructivism and the theory of situated cognition, which are related to sociocultural cognitive theories (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010; Roth & Jornet, 2013). According to these theories, there are particular social and motivational factors that are necessary for learning to be effective. An important character in this social type of learning is the "more knowledgeable other" (MKO) (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, an MKO is a teacher, helper, or more knowledgeable or proficient student who helps guide other students through the learning process. Their examples and feedback are arguably as necessary as the materials used in the

learning process (Dechatiwong na Ayutthaya, 2024; Vygotsky, 1978). The presence of reliable MKOs in a class could positively affect the overall learning outcome, especially in social learning situations such as SBL classes. It is possible that students in the research sample group were still uncertain as to who the reliable MKOs were in their classes.

Transitioning from primary to secondary school can be challenging for students. As their first year of secondary school begins, students must adjust to higher academic expectations, heavier responsibilities, and more difficult tests (Hongchayangkool, 2013; Strand, 2020). The students in research group for this study were likely no exception. Additionally, the students in the research sample group were all new to the school, having all transferred in from various primary schools around the country. It is possible that the students were still unsure as to who their class MKOs were. Students who were proficient enough to be MKOs themselves may not have been confident enough to lead their peers. Even the English teachers were all still new to the students. This may have caused them to refrain from asking questions or expressing their ideas confidently in the class scenarios. In stating this, the researchers are not implying that SBL, or similar methods of learning, are not effective or shouldn't be used for grade 7 students. grade 7 students may, however, need more time to adjust to their new social groups before these methods can produce any significant results. This of course is theoretical and more research is necessary to test its validity.

2. The Role of Student Motivation

In order to effectively engage in an SBL lesson, one needs to have some intrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation would create a feeling of responsibility for one's role in the scenario which would inspire one to take action in the scenario and follow through to completion (Budhai & Skipwith, 2021; Mamakli et al., 2023). Supposing students were still unsure of their place in their new social group (as discussed in the preceding paragraph), it's possible that this uncertainty decreased their motivation. Students may have lacked the confidence necessary to fully commit to their roles in the SBL classes (Mamakli et al., 2023). Lack of extrinsic motivations could have also affected students' willingness to engage with the lessons. The students in this study received no special treatment or rewards for participation in the classes and tests. The classes and tests as were integrated into the students regular weekly English classes. This was purposefully done so as not to skew the results or distract from the goals. The researchers did not want the students and teachers to have to act unusually during the study or to be inconvenienced by extra duties.

3. Time and Timing

Time and timing may also have influenced the results of this study. The time students have to complete each stage of an SBL lesson may not be the same as how much time they actually need. Other published research experiments using SBL expressed similar issues with time and timing in SBL lessons (Mamakli et al., 2023; Mead, 2022). Though none of the SBL lessons were omitted, the teacher of the experiment group remarked that giving students enough time with all of the scenario stages was at times challenging. The time needed to successfully work through an SBL lesson will likewise depend on many variables which the teacher will need to

plan ahead for. It is better to have extra time for students to reflect on and process their learning results than to have to rush through the final stages of the lesson. Similarly, “timing” of the stages of a lesson is important when planning and implementing an SBL lesson. Each SBL lesson may need more or less time for students to work through its stages depending on what type of scenario is used. For example, in this study, the experiment group needed very little time to move from the “accept roles” stage to the “take action” stage in the case-based scenario (SBL lesson plan 1). However, they needed much more time in the “accept roles” stage of the restaurant roleplays of SBL lesson plan 4. When choosing the type of scenario for an SBL lesson, it should be kept in mind that the type of scenario affects the stages timing and that students will need sufficient time to complete all the scenario stages and process their learning.

4. The Positive Effects of SBL

A comparison of the experiment group’s *pre-test* to *post-test* scores, showed significant development. This implies that SBL is an effective method of developing students’ English sociolinguistic competency. Other published research on the use of SBL likewise reported significant positive learning outcomes. Tupe (2015) reported significant improvement in fifty-one grade 6 students’ English listening, reading, and writing, test scores after treatment with an SBL multimedia program. Mamakli et al. (2023) compared the use of SBL with an experiment group and problem-based learning with a control group in their two-group quasi-experiment. The results showed similarly significant improvement for both groups. This is similar with the findings of this study; both groups showing significant development but no clear indication of one method being more significant than the other.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the researchers conclude that SBL is an effective method for teaching English sociolinguistic competency to grade 7 students. Even though there was no evidence that it was any more effective than traditional learning methods, it was not any less effective either. SBL can be used to diversify classroom activities and give students an opportunity to learn and practice language competencies through participation in a scene and to draw their own learning conclusions from the experiences.

Recommendations

For future research, it may be useful to conduct a study comparing the effects of blended learning style and flipped-classroom style SBL treatments with grade 7 students studying English. Both the students’ academic results and their level of satisfaction with the treatment should be analyzed and compared to draw conclusions on ways to effectively use SBL with grade 7 students. The researchers also suggest that more data be collected on grade 7 Thai students’ preconceived concepts of what “appropriate” and “inappropriate” English language is in the context of a situation. This could help English educators and curriculum planners to incorporate useful and accurate elements of sociolinguistic competency into English lessons for grade 7 Thai students.

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