

## Development of Learning Achievement in English for Marketing Subject by Using Project Work “B.E. Hometown Products Fair”

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**Abstract:** The purposes of this research were (1) to study the learning achievement of the second year Business English students, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Dusit University in English for Marketing subject after using project work “B.E. Hometown Products Fair” to have an average score at 70% or more, and (2) to study the students’ satisfaction toward the learning through project work “B.E. Hometown Products Fair” in English for Marketing subject. Quantitative research was used and research instruments were (1) the progress test and (2) the satisfaction questionnaire. Data collected from the sampling group who was 76 second year Business English students, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Dusit University. The statistics used for data analysis were frequency, means, and the Standard Deviation (S.D.). The findings revealed that the average scores of the students in English for Marketing subject were 73.25% and the students’ satisfaction of learning through project work was 87.98%.

**Keywords:** English for Marketing, Learning Achievement, Project Work, English for Specific Purposes

### 1. Introduction

According to the National Education Act, B.E. 2542 (1999), and Amendments (B.E. 2545 (2002) and B.E. 2553 (2010)) [1] in Chapter 4, Section 24, it specified the details of learning management for school to arrange the contents and activities to be related with learners’ interest and potential. It encouraged students to practice skills, thinking process, management, situation confrontation, and knowledge application in order to solve problems. In addition, activities should be designed for students to learn from real experience. Learning from doing will help them to be able to do and think, love reading, and continue their life long learning. (Minister of Education, 2009). Furthermore, in National Education Plan (between years 2017 and 2032), there are six education strategic plans. The third education strategic plan defined that “building capacity for all ages people and creating a learning society” (Minister of Education, 2017). Therefore, one objective of this education strategic plan is to support schools in all levels to arrange any activities or learning process with good quality and standardize.

Consequently, learning and teaching in higher education focuses on the subject that encourage the students to apply it in their future career authentically because higher education is the last step of their education before getting a job in their field or related field. Effective learning and teaching should concentrate on the relevance of the content in the classroom and how to apply it in the real situation which is similar to their future careers. Therefore, the researcher realized that classroom activity which appropriate and relevant to the National Education Act and National Education Plan is teaching through Project-Base Learning (PBL). However, teaching and learning through PBL effectively and focusing on students’ real learning are not easy. There are many relevant factors such as the instructor, the students, the subject, the classroom, teaching and learning media, and the university support, etc. Consequently, the first factor that need to be considered for planning this activity or project work is the content of the subject. As the features of the activity or the project work to be planned have to relate to the content of the subject and be able to really develop the students’ learning skills effectively.

For all subjects in Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Dusit University comprise of different groups, there are General Education courses, compulsory courses, elective course, internship course, and free elective course. The specialty of Business English Program which is distinguished from English Program and other programs is that all subjects in elective course are English for Specific Purposes (ESP). For examples, the ESP subjects in elective course are English for Human Resources, English for Secretaries, English for Banking, English for Import and Export, and English for Marketing. These subjects focus on teaching English skills based on the fundamental content of business. Therefore, students will gain knowledge in both business content and English skills. This is relevant to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) [2] identified the meaning of English for Specific Purposes as one branch of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) which are the main branch of general English teaching.

The main objective of the Business English program is to generate graduates with the knowledge and competency to use English in the Business field effectively (Policy and Development Strategy of Suan Dusit University, 2006). [3]

Through my teaching experience in the subject of English for Marketing, I have witnessed many problems arising in teaching this subject. Only some students participated in the classroom activities, and it was the same group of students who participated each time. For example, when I asked the entire class questions about the lesson and only a few students answered the questions. Sometimes, I asked them to write the answers on the whiteboard and the same group of students would come out and write the answers. Other students in the class hardly came to the front of the classroom to write down their answers. They seldom expressed their ideas or opinions about the subjects, and instead preferred to sit at their desks and listen to their teacher without participating.

In other words, most of the students remained passive. Furthermore, when I asked them to work in a group, they preferred to work with their friends who sat nearby. They would not cooperate with their friends when I assigned them to work in pairs or in groups. They did not share responsibility in group work, with only a few students appearing to do the work for the entire group. In conclusion, students did not possess cooperative learning skills. When I asked them to do assignments, they usually copied the work from each other and did not apply what they had learned in class. They also copied their assignments from books, Internet, or magazines instead of creating their own. When I received students' projects, I noted their poor quality of work and a lack of creativity. They did not see the connection of what they learned and what they could use in the future career. Furthermore, when the students worked in a group, they mainly spoke to each other in Thai. Students were reluctant to speak English because they were possibly too shy or lacked the self-confidence. They also were not able to communicate in spoken English.

Most importantly, the quiz or midterm scores were not satisfactory with the students not even achieving 50 percent of the total scores. There were quizzes throughout the course and a midterm examination with seventy percent of students in the class scoring less than half of the total scores. These were low achievements from most students.

Therefore, it is significant to find a way to solve these problems and investigate students learning achievement and their satisfaction using project work 'B.E. Hometown Products Fair' in the "English for Marketing" course.

## 2. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research article were (1) to study the learning achievement of the second year Business English students, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Dusit University in English for Marketing subject after using project work "B.E. Hometown Products Fair" to have an average score at 70% or more, and (2) to study the students' satisfaction toward the learning through project work "B.E. Hometown Products Fair" in English for Marketing subject.

## 3. Research Methods

### A. Research Design

The methodology of this study is action research based on the definition provided by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) [4] who describe a cycle of activities as follows: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Action research is appropriate to conduct in this situation because it is the process in which teachers investigate teaching and learning methods in order to improve their own teaching and their students' learning. (Vester, 2007). [5] It also refers to teacher-conducted classroom research that seeks to clarify and resolve practical teaching issues and problems. (Richards & Farrell, 2005) [6]

The research tools used in this action research was Project Work in the form of selling product in 'B.E. Hometown Products Fair'. This project work encouraged students to work in groups, discuss what to sell, how to produce the product, set the price, write the promotion plan, design the packaging, have their own brand name, decorate the stores, keep track of profit and loss account, etc. The students had to apply their knowledge from English for Marketing subject into this project work.

Another research tool was progress test, used to collect data from students to investigate their learning achievement and the last research tool was questionnaire. Data were collected from 71 second year students in Business English program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Dusit University and analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

### B. Research Process

Research process of this action research has divided into 4 stages consisted of planning, action, observation (or data collection), and reflection. Before the first stage of planning, the preliminary stage was completed as the prior stage as shown in Figure 1.

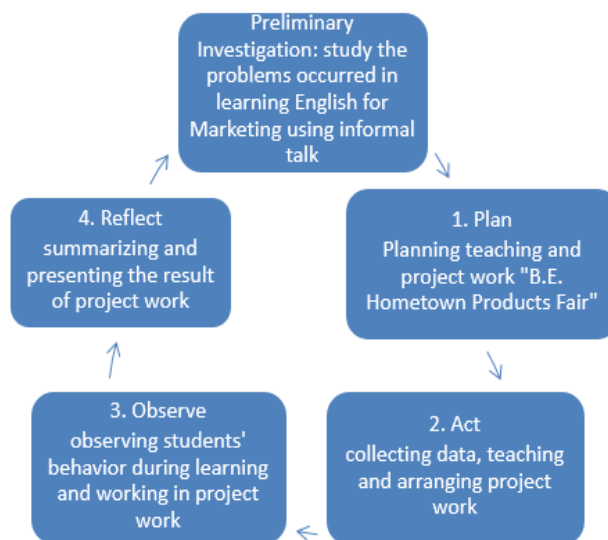


Fig.1 Research Process

4. Results

Results of the study indicated that there were 54 out of 71 students passed the progress test at the average score of 74.21 (76.06%) which was higher than the setting criteria as it showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation of Progress Test of Students after Learning through Project Work ‘B.E. Hometown Products Fair’ in the Subject of English for Marketing (n=71)

No.	Scores (from 100)	Passed the criteria (more than 70%)	No.	Scores (from 100)	Passed the criteria (more than 70%)
1	79	√	37	68	X
2	72	√	38	78	√
3	84	√	39	77	√
4	68	X	40	74	√
5	73	√	41	71	√
6	79	√	42	71	√
7	68	X	43	82	√
8	76	√	44	69	X
9	75	√	45	67	X
10	71	√	46	67	X
11	77	√	47	75	√
12	73	√	48	74	√
13	78	√	49	74	√
14	87	√	50	76	√
15	78	√	51	77	√
16	78	√	52	84	√
17	78	√	53	74	√
18	75	√	54	82	√
19	73	√	55	71	√
20	68	X	56	72	√
21	72	√	57	73	√
22	81	√	58	76	√
23	64	X	59	77	√

No.	Scores (from 100)	Passed the criteria (more than 70%)	No.	Scores (from 100)	Passed the criteria (more than 70%)
24	72	√	60	84	√
25	60	X	61	78	√
26	62	X	62	77	√
27	71	√	63	77	√
28	69	X	64	76	√
29	64	X	65	64	X
30	81	√	66	81	√
31	66	X	67	69	X
32	62	X	68	75	√
33	75	√	69	90	√
34	72	√	70	69	X
35	81	√	71	83	√
36	75	√	<b>Means = 74.21</b>		

Results of the study showed that there were 54 out of 71 students passed the progress test at the average score of 74.21 (76.06%) which was higher than the setting criteria.

Another result of the study can be found that, in overall, students were satisfied with the project work ‘B.E. Hometown Product Fair’ ( $X = 4.53, S.D. = 0.74$ ). The students were most satisfied with the fact that they gained knowledge in distribution channel after attending B.E. Hometown Products Fair ( $X = 4.67, S.D. = 0.74$ ). They were also satisfied with the fact that they could gain knowledge in promotion ( $X = 4.60, S.D. = 0.74$ ) and understood the concept of marketing mix after attending B.E. Hometown Products Fair ( $X = 4.60, S.D. = 0.63$ ). However, they were less satisfied with developing English skills ( $X = 4.13, S.D. = 0.92$ ), gaining confidence in their knowledge of English for Marketing ( $X = 4.20, S.D. = 0.77$ ), and having a chance to practice reading skill ( $X = 4.20, S.D. = 0.94$ ) as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Students’ satisfaction toward learning through project work “B.E. Hometown Products Fair”

Students’ Opinion after attending B.E. Hometown Products Fair activity.	Means ) $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation) S.D.)
.1Students realized the importance of trademark from ‘trademark designing’	4.53	0.64
.2 Students understood the concept of marketing mix	4.60	0.63
.3Students developed working skills with others	4.53	0.64
.4Students knew how to work in team	4.53	0.83
.5Students gained knowledge of English for Marketing	4.40	0.91
6. Students developed English skills	4.13	0.92
.7students satisfied in their own products presented in B.E. Hometown Products Fair	<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.64</b>
.8Students gained confidence in their knowledge of English for Marketing	4.20	0.77
9. Students gained knowledge in marketing	4.21	0.89
.10Students were able to apply marketing knowledge into real situation of selling products.	<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.83</b>
.11Students gained knowledge in producing products.	4.40	0.74
.12Students gained knowledge in setting prices.	4.33	0.72
13. Students gained knowledge in distribution channel.	4.67	0.74
.14Students gained knowledge in promotion.	4.60	0.74
.15Students had a chance to practice English listening and speaking skill.	4.33	0.72
16. Students had a chance to practice English reading skill.	4.20	0.94
17. Students had a chance to practice English writing skill.	4.47	0.92
.18Students were able to apply knowledge of marketing creatively.	4.33	0.62

Students' Opinion after attending B.E. Hometown Products Fair activity.	Means ) $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation) S.D.)
.19Students were able to solve problems in the real situation of selling products effectively.	4.33	0.62
.20Overall, students were able to learn English for Marketing from this activity.	4.27	0.80
.21Overall, students were able to comprehend the content of English for Marketing subject after attending B.E. Hometown Products Fair activity.	4.20	0.77
22. Overall, students satisfied with B.E. Hometown Products Fair activity.	4.53	0.74

## 5. Discussions

Some project work noticeably caused the students to enhance their creativity. After they worked together in groups to complete this project work entitled B.E. Hometown Product Fair, they realized that they practiced thinking skills and were able to apply their creativity with this project work.

It is important to promote creative thinking in the students' learning because they can combine it with English language and use it in their lives in the future. Lang, McBeath, & Hebert (1995) defined the meaning of creative thinking as "the ability to form new combinations of ideas to fulfil a need" (Halpern, 1984, p.324, cited in Lang, McBeath, & Hebert, 1995). They also explained that every student can have creative potential, and that you can foster that potential in your students by valuing creativity even though it may mean adjusting some established rules and procedures. In order to teach in a way that releases creativity, the teacher needs to provide an atmosphere in which students can explore original ideas without fear of criticism or ridicule. (Lang, McBeath, & Hebert, 1995) [7]

Feher (2007) also noted that it is worth putting creativities into the language classroom for many reasons. First, the students can use the language as a tool to complete the creative tasks in its original function. Therefore, creative work in the language classroom can guide the students to be ready for the genuine communication outside the classroom. Second, this creative thinking can be an important skill in the real lives of the students because it can be part of their survival strategies and a force behind personal growth and the development of culture and society. (Feher, 2007) [8]

Another positive point of applying activities in the class was integrating knowledge with authentic tasks. Students discovered that they got more experience from working on different steps in project work with their friends that in turn they could use in the future. They were able to apply these skills and knowledge to their jobs when they graduated.

Moreover, the students discovered while doing activities and project work in the class was improved their skills in applying knowledge in marketing more than English skills.

Project work is suitable with the task outside the class that requires searching for more information from authentic sources or places such as the stores, the real products, the real details of distribution channels, websites, advertised brochure, etc. I have to consider the format of project work that suitable with diverse students in this subject. This is related to what Fried-Booth (2002) [9] stated that project work is student-centered and driven by the need to create an end-product. When students finish the end-product, they will have a chance to develop their confidence and independence and to work together in a real-world environment. Students in this class have an opportunity to develop their confidence and independence in making products. Moreover, they can work together with their friends who are mixed ability. This is the task for the students to contribute their work that reflect their different talents and creativity. However, in order to make it more effective in this class, I have to teach students how to work in group. The other thing, I should assign less project work, but each project work has to concentrate on bringing up students' skills and knowledge fully. Actually, I will break the big project work into the smaller parts. And all these small project works will be combined together into the big project work. Students will have less stress and have more time to work on these project works. Teacher still has to teach students how to manage their time allocating in each project work though.

The most important thing I have to consider is the evaluation of the project work. I will make an assessment throughout the project work by dividing into small part of the project work. This way will reduce students' stress and the anxiety of the grade of this subject. As Brindley (2003, cited in Nunan, 2003) mentioned that "classroom assessment is part of the learning process, so it should be done with learners, not to them." Additionally, I will use a variety of assessment methods because it shows development of the students over time and gives the teacher a richer picture of learners' abilities in a range of different contexts as well. I will also use in-course assessment to find out how much a student has learned in each part of the project work that derived from a particular unit of instruction. (Nunan, 2003, pp.316-318) [10] Consequently I will give my students the progress test to measure

learners' language and skill progress in relation to the syllabus they have been following. As Harmer (2007) defined that progress tests are often written by teachers and given to students every few weeks to see how well they are doing. (Harmer, 2007, pp.379-380) [11]

## 6. Recommendations

### A. Recommendations for Practices

1. Students should be assigned small task in this project work which focused on English skills more than marketing knowledge such as writing product description, designing promotion brochure, etc.

2. Using project work in the classroom, especially in the English for Specific Purposes subject is suitable because students gain more knowledge and are able to apply their knowledge in the real task.

### B. Recommendations for Further Research

1. The samples tested in this study were only a small group in one subject. For the next research, it should be done with different group of students from different subjects to create new knowledge to further research.

2. For the future research, conducting the second cycle of action research based on the reflection from the first cycle should be done. In the second cycle of the action research, it should adjust many points in all four stages of action research.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings showed that students achieved learning progress and satisfied with this project work 'B.E. Hometown Products Fair'. However, they satisfied with gaining knowledge in marketing more than English skills. It also found both positive and negative results of applying project work in the "English for Marketing" course in an attempt to facilitate learning of diverse students. There were some methods that were useful for the students' learning and I should apply that again when teaching this subject in the future.

## 8. Acknowledgement

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