

ความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อการเรียนในหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษกรณีศึกษา โรงเรียนกมลาไสย จังหวัดกาฬสินธุ์

The Students' Opinion in Learning via the English Program: A Case Study at Kamalasai School, Kalasin Province

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the students' opinions in learning through the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalasai School. The informants were 335 students studying in the English for Integrated Studies program in both lower and upper secondary school levels received from simple random sampling. The mix-method research design was employed in this study. The research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire with two parts, including rating scale (quantitative) and open-ended question (qualitative). Mean (X) and standard deviation (S.D.) were used to analyze the quantitative data, while coding technique was employed for the qualitative data analysis. The results in the quantitative part revealed that the students had the positive opinion on learning through the English for Integrated Studies program in all aspects. On the other hand, the results in qualitative part revealed some problems in three aspects about learning through the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalasai School, namely 1) the textbook and learning materials, 2) the language used in teaching, and 3) the appropriateness of the subjects taught in English. This could be concluded that the students had the positive opinions on learning through the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalasai School, but there were three main aspects as mentioned earlier being needed for adjustment.

Keywords: English program, teaching, students' opinions in learning, English for integrated studies, secondary school levels.

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ คือ เพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนโรงเรียนนมกลาไสยที่เรียนโดยใช้การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษ กลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลคือนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นและตอนปลายที่เรียนโดยใช้การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 335 คน โดยได้มาจากการสุ่มอย่างง่าย การศึกษาในครั้งนี้เป็นการวิจัยแบบผสมผสานทั้งเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษาแบ่งออกเป็น 2 ส่วน คือ แบบสอบถามแบบมาตรฐานประมาณค่า ใช้สำหรับเก็บข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ และ คำถามปลายเปิดซึ่งใช้สำหรับเก็บข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพ สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย (\bar{X}) และ ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน (S.D.) ส่วนข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพถูกวิเคราะห์โดยใช้เทคนิคการถอดรหัส (Coding) ผลการศึกษาเชิงปริมาณพบว่า นักเรียนมีความคิดเห็นของการเรียนโดยใช้การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษในเชิงบวกในทุกด้าน แต่ในทางตรงกันข้ามผลการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพแสดงให้เห็นถึงความคิดเห็นที่สะท้อนให้เห็นปัญหาในการเรียนโดยใช้การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษ ใน 3 ด้าน ดังต่อไปนี้ 1) ด้านตำราเรียนและวัสดุการเรียน 2) ด้านภาษาที่ใช้ในการสอน และ 3) ด้านความเหมาะสมของรายวิชาที่นำมาสอน ซึ่งอาจสรุปได้ว่า การเรียนโดยใช้การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษ ของโรงเรียนนมกลาไสยทำให้นักเรียนมีความคิดเห็นของการเรียนในเชิงบวกแต่ก็ยังมีปัญหาสำคัญ 3 ด้านที่ต้องได้รับการแก้ไข

คำสำคัญ: การเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ, การสอน, ทักษะคิด, การบูรณาการภาษาอังกฤษ, ระดับมัธยมศึกษา

Background of the Study

Globalization has made English the 'global contact' language or lingua franca (Brown, 2013). In fact, English as a lingua franca (ELF) is by far the most common form of English in the world today. That is why many academic supporters such as Wardhaugh (2010) and Modiano (2009) argue that English has become "a language of cultural importance, and in a growing number of fields, English is now considered in many quarters to be a basic requirement in the labor market" (Modiano, 2009). For this reason, it is being used all over the world and can no longer be said to 'belong' to countries such as England or the United

States. Researchers such as Modiano (2009), Yule (2010), and Wardhaugh (2010) believe that the English language is the link between the emergence of new identities and social status. Moreover, the English has been selected as the official language for the ASEAN Community, to be announced in 2015. As mentioned earlier, this has clearly shown the reason why English is the international language.

Thai economy is to highly continuing to expand well in all aspects (Bank of Thailand 2012). The government, therefore, invested a lot of funds to promote and put the country forward to the regional and international markets. This requires the



workforce to develop their English language skills up to the standard of business communication. Such demand can be seen in business organizations requiring their employees to have highly functional language skills enabling efficiently to perform their business. Many jobs require the applicants to be fluent in English. Knowledge of English as the second language is a requirement in globalization era.

To cope with the challenges and competition of the rapid growing economics in the globalization of which English plays the important role in international communication, the Ministry of Education of Thailand launched a new form of English education to the public schools in 2002. This new and innovative form of English education was a transition from traditional English as a foreign language (EFL) classes to English content-based classes (Phonlabutra, 2007). The major rationale for this innovative English education was to build high proficiency in English of the Thai students for the country's competition in the global economy (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2003). This new and innovative form of English education was official by called the English Program (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2003).

However, the results of the program evaluations in 2003 and 2004 revealed several problems addressed by Thai teachers who taught the English content-based program across the country. The problems

addressed including a lack of qualified bilingual content teachers, the insufficiency of the instructional materials to cover the local curriculum and the academic progress of the students lagging behind their peers in the Thai program. The evaluation report also revealed the students' problem in understanding the subject content taught in English. These problems led to students repeating the same content in Thai (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2003).

According to the problems indicated above, it was necessary to conduct a research in the newly implemented English instruction program in Kalasin Province. Because of there are three schools in Kalasin Province providing this kind of English program including Anukoolnaree School (Smart-Class), Kalasinpittayasan School (MEP), and Kamalasai School (EIS). Although there were many schools providing the English program in Kalasin province, the researcher was interested in investigating the school providing the EIS program because it is the newest English – content based program offering to students in Kalasin province and it was widely spread through many schools in Kalasin province.

English for Integrated Studies (EIS) was a model of bilingual education in which students learn core subjects (Mathematics, Science and Computer) in English. Students were expected to acquire the English abilities through learning models in the core subjects in English. Basic literacy of Mathematical



Symbol and Methodology (MM Model), and the Science learning skills (observation, comparison, classification, transferring and inferring as Observing Knowledge Model (OK Model)) led to better comprehension of the second language. The online computer and software resources allowed both students and teachers to have self-directed learning. With the use of SSF (Simple, Short, Familiar) English as a medium of instruction, the fluency of both teachers and students in English as the second language should be accelerated. The EIS approach is not only to teach the students on the concepts of the lessons, and letting them learn and understand the content of the subjects, but also to train the teachers on how to utilize their basic learning experience and teaching skills to be used in teaching English content textbooks following the EIS model (The Association of English for Integrated Studies of Thailand. 2013).

Consequently, this study aimed at investigating the problems of the English instruction program of the schools in Kalasin province. However, this was the first phase of the main research to cover all schools in Kalasin province which offering the English instruction program. This, therefore, focused on studying the problems in implementing the English for Integrated Studies program at only in Kamalalai School.

The Objective of the Study

This study aimed at investigating the

problems through the students' opinions in learning in the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalalai School, Kalasin province.

Research Methodology

Informants

The populations were 2,524 Mattayomsuksa 1 – 6 students, learning in the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalalai School in the academic year of 2013. The informants were 335 Mattayomsuksa 1 – 6 students derived through the purposive sampling method.

Instrument

The research instrument used for gathering the data in this study was the five-point rating scale questionnaire with 10 items adapted from Kramsook (2008), with the reliability of 0.87. There was also the open-ended question in the second part of the questionnaire for qualitative data collecting.

Data Collection

The triangulation technique was employed in collecting the data in this study in terms of different type of data containing the quantitative data were from the Likert' Scale questionnaire and the qualitative data were from the open-ended question. The questionnaires were distributed to the informants studying in the English for Integrated Studies program at Kamalalai School and they were asked to complete



all parts of it. The completed questionnaires were checked for the completion and gathered by the researchers for the analysis.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed by the quantitative method through the statistical software. Descriptive statistics, namely mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D.) were used to verify the students' opinions in learning through the English for Integrated Studies program.

The criteria for evaluating of questionnaire were adapted from

Suppasetserree (2005) for the appropriateness in this study. The data from a five-point rating scale was calculated for the arithmetic means and standard deviation. These means showed the students' attitudes toward learning via the EIS program. The criterion of means was from a range divided by number of levels created. The following criteria were used for interpretation.

The qualitative data in the second part of the questionnaire were analyzed using the coding method.

Table 1 The Interpretation of Mean Score of Students' Opinions on Learning in the English for Integrated Studies Program.

Mean Score	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.99	Students stated highly negative opinion towards the statement
1.00 – 2.99	Students stated negative opinion towards the statement
2.00 – 2.99	Students stated moderate opinion toward the statement
3.00 – 3.99	Students stated positive opinion toward the statement
4.00 – 5.00	Students stated highly positive opinion toward the statement

On the other hand, the results from the open-ended part of questionnaire were analyzed and presented qualitatively as described below:

1. The researchers carefully read through the answers from the open-ended part of the questionnaire regarding opinions in learning in the English for Integrated Studies program of the informants at

Kamalasai School.

2. Each opinion which was consistent and proper in the present investigation was accordingly identified, and the codes were then given to such opinion (Open Coding). The researchers had to be very carefully at this step to ensure that every single reported opinion was identified accurately and properly.



3. The researchers started to identify the similarities and differences among the reported statements. It was found that the informants produced altogether 157 statements about opinion on learning in the English for Integrated Studies program. The researchers started to categorize these statements for the next step.

4. The researchers had to group these 157 statements according to the similarities of the context or situation in which the opinion reported employing by informants (Axial Coding). The researchers tried the preliminary classification based on the reported purposes of strategy use. Initially, there were 19 groups of statements.

5. The researchers considered these opinions according to the “how” the informants feel about learning in the English Integrated Studies program. As a result, the researchers had to read every statement very carefully to make sure these reported statements in each group shared the similar characteristics in the context. Finally, based on the 157 statements, 19 main groups

emerged. It was not easy to code each opinion into the suitable group and to find the suitable name to cover most because some reported opinions seemed to overlap others.

6. At this step, the researchers did some revision and made the discussion with colleagues who work as an English Ph.D. lecturer to check the validity of content. At this stage, the working definition for the present study was also taken into consideration when classifying the emergent opinions (Selective Coding). Reclassifying the initial reported opinions creates the three main categories of opinions.

Results

There were two main parts of the results of the study regarded the purpose of the study. They were quantitative part and the qualitative one as presented below:

The results in quantitative part received from the questionnaire were presented in the table below:



Table 2 The Results of the Students' Opinions on Learning in the English for Integrated Studies Program.

Number	Statement	(\bar{X})	S.D.
1	Tuition Fees	3.08	0.95
2	Ability to convey knowledge of teachers	3.34	1.04
3	The improvement of listening ability after learning through EIS program	3.13	0.86
4	The improvement of speaking ability after learning through EIS program	3.04	0.88
5	The improvement of reading ability after learning through EIS program	3.09	0.86
6	The improvement of writing ability after learning through EIS program	3.13	0.90
7	The sufficiency of the knowledge gained	3.20	0.97
8	The sufficiency of learning facilities in classroom	3.21	1.05
9	The sufficiency of learning resources	3.08	1.01
10	The overall satisfaction of the EIS program	3.28	1.09
Total		3.16	0.95

Table 2 revealed that the total of students' opinions on learning in English for Integrated Studies program were positive ($X = 3.16$). The mean scores of all items reported by the students were at the positive level between 3.04 – 3.34. This meant that the students had the positive opinions on learning in English for Integrated Studies program.

As mentioned earlier, there were two kinds of data gathered in this study namely quantitative and qualitative. Consequently, the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions in the third part of questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively through the three phases of the coding technique (Cresswell, 2002) including open

coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The data analysis through the coding techniques revealed three main students' opinions on learning via the EIS program including: 1) the textbooks and learning materials, 2) the language used in teaching, and 3) the appropriateness of subject taught in English which could be explained as follow:

Regarding the opinions in textbooks and learning materials, the informants revealed that they needed more learning materials, reliable internet connection, and more necessary books. Examples of informants' comments were:

"I need the modern learning materials".



“I need new and more textbooks in the library”.

“I need the better internet”.

Based on the third category of students’ opinions in learning through the English for Integrated Studies program, which was the opinion on language used in teaching, the informants mentioned that they often did not understand the content taught by the teacher in English. Examples of informants’ comments were:

“I need the explanation in Thai”.

“There should be explanation in Thai for understanding”.

“I have a limitation in English especially speaking and listening skills, so I do not understand all of the content taught in English”.

“I understand the teacher’s question, but I cannot answer in English”.

According to the opinions in the appropriateness of subject taught in English, the informants mentioned that some subjects should not have been taught in English, because they could not get the fully understanding from learning in English. Examples of informants’ comments were:

“I think the mathematics, physics, and biology should not be taught in English, because I did not understand all of them”.

“Teaching in English is good, but the important subjects should be better taught in Thai”.

“I would like the teacher to focus more on content”.

“The content is not appropriate”.

According to the data obtained from both parts of the questionnaire, it was found that the informants had the positive opinions in learning in the English for Integrated Studies program. However, the data obtained from the open-ended part implied that there were four main categories of informants’ opinions should have been considered to make it a better English program.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed that the students had positive opinions in learning through the English Integrated Studies program with the mean score (X) of 3.16. However, the results from the qualitative parts reported that there were some points needed to be improved. The results from both quantitative and qualitative parts could be discussed below:

Based on the results presented in Table 2, the highest mean score of students’ opinions in learning through the English Integrated Studies program was at Item 2 which was “Ability to convey knowledge of teachers”. This might be related to the good preparation of Kamalalai School providing the English Trainings for the teachers assigned to teach in the English Integrated Studies program, such as the “Workshop on EIS Training for Thai Secondary & High



School” (Kamalasai School, 2012). Moreover, the result from the informal interview with the teacher teaching in the English for Integrated Studies program also revealed that the Director of Kamalasai School gave them the opportunity to take the short course training in English in Singapore. This might be one of many good preparations of the school to deal with the provision of the English for Integrated Studies program.

On the other hand, the Table 2 presented the lowest mean score of the students’ opinions in learning through the English for Integrated Studies program is item 4, “The improvement of speaking ability after learning through EIS program”. This might be related to the students’ limitation of the English, especially the communicative skills. This affects their learning in both to understand the teacher’s lecture and to do their assignments. The students’ limitation of English communicative skills caused the learning problems for students both listening to the lecture and to answer the teacher’s quizzes or to present their assignments in front of the class. This was correspondent with the study of Pawapatcharandom (2007), investigated the language problems of the students studying in the international program stated listening skills, speaking skills, and sociocultural skills on second language learning were language barriers for students respectively.

Although the results in the quantitative

part showed that the students had the positive opinions in learning through the EIS program, the results from the qualitative part implied some problems emerged in this program. Regarding the results in qualitative part, there were three main problems reported by the informants including 1) the textbooks and learning materials, 2) the language used in teaching, and 3) the appropriateness of subject taught in English.

For the first problems, the opinions in textbook and learning materials, this might be related to learning through English for Integrated Studies program, the subject content were taught in English required the students to search for more information and to help them fulfill what they did not understand in class and what was not be fully understood. The schools providing the English program should pay more attention on the preparation on the sufficient learning materials and resources to study for the students. This was correspondent to the study of Samawathdana (2009) who stated that the sufficient text books and learning media for the program should have been selected and provided from both Thai and English language. It was important to consider materials in terms of what the learners might suggest as teaching materials. Besides, this was also supported by the study of Forman (2005) who stated that textbook do not represent simply one resource among many: they are central to pedagogy



and appraisal of their effects when utilized by non-native, bilingual teacher is fundamental to an understanding of Thai EFL. Moreover, this was confirmed by the study of Song (2011) who suggested that bilingual education should focus on several issues as we introduce the teaching materials. Firstly, the teaching materials should respect domestic specialties' characteristics and needs, including basic knowledge and latest development. Secondly, the teaching materials should catch up with the development of international relevant specialties, being in accordance with the requirements for social needs. Thirdly, the teaching materials should take the conditions of bilingual education in each country into consideration. Fourthly, the teaching materials should be coordinated with other courses. This could be said that learning sufficient materials and resources were very important for learning through the English for Integrated Studies program.

The language used in teaching was reported by the informants as the second problem in learning through the English for Integrated Studies program. According to the students' limitation in English, they addressed that they needed Thai explanation while listening to the English lecture for more comprehension. The informants reported that some content is difficult to fully understand, this made them more difficult when learning in English. This was also consistent to the study of Samawathdana (2009) who stated

that the language needed for their future seemed to be expressing their opinions, listening to presentations and lectures, listening to foreigners, as well as giving explanations and instructions in two languages. Moreover, this was confirmed by the study of Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) stated that every classroom must also have one native-English teacher and one native-English teacher. This method enables a balanced approach to sharing between learners. Classroom content is either English-only or first language-only and students are expected to assist and learn from one another. That was the reason why the results in the qualitative part reported that the students needed Thai explanation together with learning via the English medium in the English for Integrated Studies program for the effective learning.

For the last point of the results in the qualitative part, the opinions in appropriateness of subject taught in English, almost of the informants revealed that the core subjects which were important for their universities admission score, such as mathematics, physics, biology, and chemistry should not be taught in English. Because of the scores of those would highly affect the students' major in higher education. They needed those subjects taught in Thai for fully understanding for raising their scores for the universities admission. Moreover, this program should be started with the easy subjects to make both teachers and



students familiar studying in English. This corresponded with the study of Song (2011) who stated that colleges and universities can try bilingual education firstly from easy courses. Increase time for these courses and insure the teaching effect. Enhance students and teachers' confidence in bilingual education. Open bilingual courses from easy to hard and step by step. That was the reason why the informants raised that point on the appropriateness of the subjects taught in English in the English for Integrated Studies program.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that the students had positive opinions in learning through the English Integrated Studies program with the highest mean score of students' opinions on learning through the English Integrated Studies program. The Item 2, "Ability to convey knowledge of teachers," had the highest meanscore. This might be

related to the good preparation of Kamalasai School providing the English Trainings for the teachers assigned to teach in the English Integrated Studies program. While the lowest mean score of the students' opinion on learning through the English for Integrated Studies program was Item 4, "The improvement of speaking ability after learning through EIS program". This might be related to the students' limitation of English, especially the communicative skills which affect their learning in both listening to teacher's lectures and creating their assignments. The results quantitative part also implied some problems occurred in this program. Regarding the results in qualitative part, there were three main problems reported by the informants including 1) the opinions in learning materials and resources, 2) the opinions in language used in teaching, and 3) the opinions on appropriateness of subject taught in English respectively.

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