Applying LINE Application To Develop English Language Proficiency Skills: Case Study Of First Year Undergraduate Students In A University, Thailand

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Abstract

This is quantitative research with the objective of studying the implementation of LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students of a university in Thailand. This research is a mixed study of qualitative and quantitative research with the following findings: 1) It is found that, implementing Line application to develop the English language proficiency skills can be used and set up in the lesson plans of the learning and teaching in class and outside of classroom programs and in general communication. 2) The comparison results in implementing Line application to develop English language proficiency skills between the experimenting group and the control group, it is found that overall, the experimental group of students could develop their English language proficiency skills in all the 14 categorized skills, at a higher level than the control group of students (students learning with the normal methods) and 3) Comparing the results in implementing Line application to develop English language proficiency skills between the first year students of social science and health science students, it is found that overall, the development of English language proficiency skills of the group of social science students, are at a higher level than those of the health science group of students with no statistical significance. Considering in each category of skill, it is found that in 9 categories of skill, the social science students have a higher level of developing proficiency skills than those of the health science students and in 5 categorized skills, the health science students have a higher level of developing proficiency skill than of the social science students with no statistic significance.

Keywords: Learning management, implementation of LINE application, developing English language proficiency skills

Background Information

Today's global society has changed according to globalization, enabling the people to access the modern technology to use in obtaining a wider range of knowledge in education, searching for more updated information through mobile phones or tablets. When the daily life of modern generation is related to communication and the effective, appropriated tools are needed, therefore, the variety of applications has an increasingly important role in today's communication, especially LINE application which is easily accessible and popularly used through IOS or Android system and on any PC computer, notebooks (Huedhun, 2017; Pitoonpong, 2018; Waewsak, 2018).

The specific important characteristic of LINE application is the direct communication between the sender and the recipient of LINE messages. From messages, pictures, document files, posters, stickers, logos, to sending video clips, voice conversations (voice call) or voice recordings, including sharing links of other external websites, according to the purposes of the senders such as sales promotion, public relation on marketing, where the recipient could give the feedback immediately, and the sender could also assess the result of such promotion or marketing immediately. Apart from this, LINE application is useful in creating Group Line or Group Communication such as, family group, specific friends' group, working group, nature lover's group, etc. and the user can choose the specific target group to join. Furthermore, the LINE recipient can also block any specific messages and conversations (Huedhun, 2017; Tathong et al., 2019; Kuljitchueawong, 2013).

With the specific characteristic of LINE application as the above mentioned, the users can implement LINE application in various working processes within the companies (Pitoonpong, 2018), in the industrial field (Tansupong, 2015), using in surveying public opinion polls and receiving comments (RYT9, 2013), also, implementing the application in education such as training the nursing students which is practicum training (Tathong et al., 2019). That is, if in implementing the applications, which the students nowadays prefer to use in their daily lives, as a communication tool to develop the English language proficiency skills, the students would be able to self-study, develop their learning in vocabulary memorization, knowing and being able to distinguish the correct vocabulary used in the correct context, identifying the idioms, phrases, conversational terms in different situations, be able to identify phonology and phonetics, the correct tones and pronunciations, reading scripts correctly or short passages clearly, according to the nature of language learning in listening and speaking program (Kabooha, 2016).

Therefore, it is of the researcher's opinion that in order to increase the utilization of LINE application in education, there should be a study on the implementation of LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills in listening and speaking program for the first-year undergraduate students at a university in Thailand. This would be beneficial towards the students using LINE application in their learning, the group of classmates, teachers, instructors, the curriculum and the academic administrators. Apart from being able to develop the quality and the efficiency of learning and teaching, the other organizations, or groups relating to developing the communities, other local administrative offices, will also benefit from the information and the findings from this study and would be able to use this innovative method in developing the English language proficiency skills for the communities or for the other professional groups in the area and be ready to be the center of the ASEAN community in the near future.

Research Objectives

1. To study the implementation of LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students in a university in Thailand.
2. To compare the findings from implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students in a university in Thailand, between the experimental group and the control group of students.
3. To compare the findings of implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills of first-year undergraduate students in a university in Thailand, between a group of social science students and a group of health science students.

Research Methodology

This research consists of 3 phases:

Phase 1: Implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills This phase is qualitative research.

The sample group consisted of instructors who designed the teaching method by implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills. The students used the Line application regularly, closely supervised by the instructor. The data is collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 5 instructors who designed the teaching method, with 16 first year undergraduate students who used LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills, and 4 supervising instructors, totaling up to 25 key informants. The sample group is selected using the Snowballing technique and triangular validation, the data will be further analyzed and concluded.

Phase 2: Comparing the findings from implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students in a university in Thailand, between the experimental group and the control group of students.

This phase is quantitative research.

The research population consisted of 300 first year undergraduate students in a university in Thailand who studied English language in at least one basic course per semester, totaling 2 consecutive semesters. The sample group is selected through random sampling, from the first-year undergraduate students of English language, studying basic English. The sample group consisted of 169 people, the number was selected from the Krejcie and Morgan Table. The 84 first year undergraduate students of basic English language program composed the control group, studying basic English language the normal, usual way, while 85 other first-year undergraduate students are in the experimental

group, using LINE application in their basic English language study program.

Variables in this study are as follows:
1) The independent variable consisted of 2 groups of students: the control group and the experimental group.

2) The dependent variables are the findings from implementing LINE application in developing the English language proficiency skills, consisting of issues in memorizing vocabularies and phrases, understanding the phonology and phonetics, correct reading, script reading, passages reading, daily conversations, making speeches, public speaking, diary writing, daily reports or other writing and speaking on specific topics.

The instrument used in the research is the questionnaire the researcher has set up on the level of English language proficiency skill, obtained from implementing LINE application, with the discriminant value between .493-.816, and a reliability index of .90. Statistics used in this research are mean and t-Test.

Phase 3: Comparing the findings from implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills between the social science group of students and the health science group of students.

This phase is quantitative research.
The sample group consisted of first year undergraduate students, studying basic English language in 2 consecutive semesters. The 85 social science group of students who implemented LINE application in their learning, consisted of 42 students from the Business Administration, Humanities, and Education faculties, and 43 health science students from the Nursing Science and Public Health faculties.

Variables in this study are as follows:

1) The independent variable consisted of 2 groups of students: the social science group of students and the health science group of students.

2) Dependable variables are the findings from implementing LINE application in developing the English language proficiency skills, consisting of issues in memorizing vocabularies and phrases, understanding the phonology and phonetics, correct pronunciation, correct reading, script reading, passages reading, daily conversations, making speeches, public speaking, diary writing, daily reports or other writing and speaking on specific topics.

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The duration of study for the 3 phases were from June 2020 to March 2022.

Research Findings
The findings from the study are as follows:

1. The implementation of LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills

It is found that, for the instructors/teachers who designed the teaching and learning, the instructors who supervised the teaching and learning, and the students who attended classes regularly, the following findings are consistent:

1.1 The learning format
It is found that the learning format used by implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills is through various class-hour activities involving practicing the skills, practices outside of the classroom, and completing projects or assignments out of class-hours. Activities have been through specific LINE-Group application (Group Communication) where students and instructors could access the application to communicate creatively with one another through Line groups or individual chats, and in the case where the instructors think it is necessary to help a particular individual privately.

1.2 Activities used in developing English language proficiency skills
It is found that the media used in conducting the activities in the application consisted of passages, pictures, documented files, posters, video clips, stickers, conversational voice calls, voice recordings, sharing links of external websites, and sharing other information.

It is found that the activities used in practicing English language proficiency skills consisted of understanding the phonology and phonetics of English language with accurate listening and speaking, and correct pronunciation. By practicing the correct use of vocabularies, identifying and distinguishing the words and phrases, listening to various audio clips of diverse topics, listening to different English accents (British English, American English, Australian English, etc.), practices for reading scripts or reports, making conversations in different situations and under diverse topics, practices for public speaking, and short public readings. Apart from this, there are practices for diary writing, report writing, writing a summarized story board derived from video clips, and writing essays in various topics.

It is found that the proficiency skills in English language obtained, consisted of accurate usage of English vocabularies and phrases, understanding the phonology and phonetics of English language with accurate listening and speaking, correct pronunciation, being able to converse in various topics and in different situations, being able to present a

report, public speaking, speeches and diary writing, writing reports and essays under specific topics.

2. Comparing the findings of developing English language proficiency skills,

between the experimental group and the control group.

The comparison of the findings on developing English language proficiency skills, between the experimental group and the control group, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The comparison of the findings of implementation of LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills, between the experimental group and the control group (N=169)

Individual activities	Experimental group (85)		Control group (84)		t	p
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Accurate memorization and use of vocabularies and phrases	4.694	.4635	4.357	.4820	4.633**	.000
Listening and speaking/ pronunciation	4.635	.4842	4.345	.4783	3.917**	.000
Listening to specific topics	4.658	.4769	4.261	.4423	5.611**	.000
English script reading	4.588	.4950	4.297	.4599	3.954**	.000
Reading short passages	4.670	.4727	4.297	.4599	5.197**	.000
Daily conversations	4.611	.4902	4.309	.4650	4.112**	.000
Speaking on the given topics	4.529	.5021	4.261	.4423	3.676**	.000
Public Speaking	4.552	.5001	4.369	.4854	2.425*	.016
Reading passages of given topics	4.611	.4902	4.404	.4937	2.735**	.007
Reading specific books	4.647	.4807	4.261	.4423	5.421**	.000
Diary writing	4.376	.5971	3.892	.6015	5.245**	.000
Report writing on specific situations	4.411	.4950	3.988	.5909	5.049**	.000
Writing of a brief report	4.423	.4970	3.976	.5142	5.749**	.000
Writing of specific topics	4.600	.4928	3.976	.5372	7.864**	.000
Overall	4.572	.1747	4.214	.1637	13.738**	.000

* p< .05   ** p< .01

According to Table 1, it is found that overall, the experimental group which implemented LINE application, had a higher level of developing English language proficiency skills than that of the control group, with statistical significance of .01.

Considering each individual activity, it is found that 13 out of 14, including accurate memorization and use of vocabularies and phrases, listening and speaking with correct pronunciation, listening to specific topics, reading short passages, English script reading,

daily conversations, speaking on the topics given, reading specific books or given passages, diary writing, report writing on specific situations, writing of brief reports, and writing on specific topics, the experimental group had a higher level of developing English language proficiency skills than that of the control group, with statistical significance of .01. There is an exception of one skill, public speaking, where the experimental group had a higher level of developing skills, with statistical significance of .05.

3. Comparing the findings of developing English language proficiency skills, between the social science group of students and the health science group of students.

The comparison of the findings of implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills between the social science group of students and the health science group of students, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The comparison of the findings of implementing LINE application to develop the English language proficiency skills between the social science group of students and the health science group of students (N=85)

Individual activities	Social Science Group (42)		Health Science Group (43)		t	p
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Accurate memorization and use of English vocabularies and phrases	4.714	.4572	4.674	.4741	.394	.694
Accurate speaking and listening	4.714	.4572	4.558	.5024	1.499	.138
Listening on the given topics	4.595	.4968	4.720	.4538	-1.217	.227
English script reading	4.690	.4679	4.488	.5057	1.913	.059
Short passages reading	4.714	.4572	4.627	.4890	.841	.403
Daily conversations	4.714	.4572	4.511	.5057	1.939	.056
Speaking on the topics given	4.571	.5008	4.488	.5057	.761	.449
Public Speaking	4.595	.4968	4.511	.5057	.769	.444
Reading the passage on given topics	4.666	.4771	4.558	.5024	1.021	.310
Reading specific books	4.690	.4679	4.604	.4947	.821	.414
Writing a diary	4.357	.6176	4.395	.5830	-.293	.770
Writing a report on the given situations	4.404	.4968	4.418	.4991	-.128	.898
Writing a brief report	4.404	.4968	4.441	.5024	-.342	.733
Writing on specific topics	4.571	.5008	4.627	.4890	-.526	.600
Overall	4.600	.1893	4.544	.1566	1.471	.144

[*] p< .05   [**] p< .01

From Table 2, the comparison of the findings of implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills between the social science group of students and the health science group of students, it is found that overall, the development of English language proficiency skills of the social science group of students, is higher than that of the health science group of students, with no statistical significance.

When considering each individual activity, it is found that in 9 activities, the social science group of students had a higher level of development skills than that of the health science group of students, with no statistical significance. These consisted of activities regarding accurate memorization and use of English vocabularies and phrases, listening and accurate speaking/ pronunciation, English script reading, short passage reading, daily conversations, speaking on given topics, public speaking, and reading specific passages and books.

Teachers need to readily adapt their teaching and learning process in order to keep up with the changes. This is applicable for

teachers, coaches, and learning facilitators. Optimal Blowfish Algorithm based Technique for Data Security in Cloud, Tripartite partite key assignment scheme for security of cloud data classes are also would be benefit to the health education management and technology industry sustainability (Reddy, Bindu,2017, Reddy, bindu, Praveen, 2017; Reddy, Bindu, Praveen, 2016). Survey of Precision Medicine Strategy Using Cognitive Computing for English proficiency and A dataset for automatic contrast enhancement of microscopic malaria infected blood RGB images, Data in brief and Image Segmentation Technique Using SVM Classifier for Detection of Medical Disorders also included in digital literacy era to understand the digital literacy in health, food, education and technology aspects for English proficiency (Ramu et al, 2018, somasekar et al, 2019, Janardhan et al, 2019).

There are 5 activities where the health science group of students had a higher level in developing English language proficiency skills than that of the social science group of students, with no statistical significance. These include listening on the given topics, diary writing, writing on specific situations, writing brief reports, and writing on specific topics.

Conclusion

The findings can be concluded as follows:

1. It is found that the implementation of LINE application to develop English Language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students of a university in Thailand could be used in the format of learning and teaching, as a media in learning and teaching and used in practice activities to develop English language proficiency skills as follows:

The format of implementing LINE application in the learning and teaching process to develop English language proficiency skills is through various activities on the application, both, during the scheduled class time and outside of class time, using the LINE Group Communication together with personal LINE application in the case of individual help.

Tools used in teaching and learning by LINE application consisted of passages, pictures, document files, posters, video clips, stickers, conversations with voice call and voice recordings, sharing links of external websites, and other information search tools assigned by the instructors.

Activities to practice the skills in English language proficiency involved techniques in 4 skills of English language proficiency: vocabulary memorization, being able to identify and distinguish between accurate use of vocabularies and phrases, listening to news announcer, listening to the audio clips in a variety of context and topics, listening and understanding the phonology and phonetics to be able to speak and pronounce the words and sentences accurately, reading English language scripts, making conversations on different topics and in diverse situations, the practice for making speeches on given topics, the practice for public speaking, reading short passages and specific topics. Practice in writing consisted of, resume writing, diary writing, brief reports on various video clips and essays on specific topics.

2. The comparison of the findings from implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills, between the experimental group of students and the control group, it is found that the experimental group of students who used the LINE application, overall, could develop the skills in English language proficiency, in 14 activities which consisted of: accurate memorization and use of English vocabularies and phrases, understanding the phonology and phonetics, listening and accurate speaking/pronunciation, listening and understanding specific topics, English script reading, short passage reading, daily conversations, speaking on specific topics, public speaking, reading specific

passages and books, diary writing, writing reports on specific situations, writing brief reports and essays on specific topics, at a higher level than that of the control group of students or the group who learned through the normal, usual way.

3. The comparison of the findings from implementing LINE application to develop English language proficiency skills of the first-year undergraduate students of a university in Thailand, between the students in the social science program and the health science program. It is found that overall, in all the 14 activities; there is no difference in the level of development skills in English language proficiency of the social science group of students and the health science group of students.

Discussion of Results

It is found from the study that the implementing of LINE application to develop the skills in English language proficiency, overall, had no difference between the social science group of students and the health science group of students. However, when considering each individual activity, there are 9 activities where the social science group of students had a higher level of skill development than that of the health science group of students, with no statistical significance. While in the other 5 activities, the health science group of students had a higher level of skill development than that of the social science group of students, with no statistical significance. This is consistent with the nature of the social science group of students and the health science group of students.

That is, the social science group of students has the interest to develop the skills in memorizing the vocabularies, being able to identify and distinguish between accurate use of vocabularies and phrases, understanding the phonology and phonetics, listening and accurate speaking and pronunciation, listening and understanding the specific topics, English

script reading, short passage reading, daily conversations, speaking on given topics, public speaking, reading specific passages and books, diary writing, report writing on specific situations, writing brief reports and essays on specific topics. Therefore, the instructor should also pay attention to the nature of the group of students in developing the skills in English language proficiency.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further use of the research findings

It is found from the study that LINE application could be implemented to develop English language proficiency skills in the forms of teaching and learning by LINE application, using the media of LINE application and practice activities to develop the skills in English language proficiency through LINE application. Therefore, the administrators of higher educational institutions and any other education-related administrators should attempt to elevate the implementation of LINE application, in order to develop other skills in other courses, other programs or subjects, especially in online learning management and teaching to be of more interest in the future.

From the study it is found that, the experimental group of students could develop English language proficiency skills, overall, at a higher level than that of the control group of students who learned through the normal method, in all the 14 activities. Therefore, the administrators of higher educational institutions and instructors, should apply this innovative lesson learned to establish good guidelines for practical learning, in order to be able to disseminate to those interested in other courses or programs, to develop teaching techniques using other applications, and consistently align with the further advancement of technology.

Recommendations for further research

It is found from the study that the experimental group of students, who used the LINE application, was able to develop English language proficiency skills, overall, in all 14 activities, at a higher level than that of the control group of students, who learned through the normal method. As this was only a study on first-year graduate students of a university, there should be a further study conducted on other students as representatives of nationwide universities, in order to additionally verify the findings, to be an exemplar for further development of the teaching and learning methodology.

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