การพัฒนาทักษะการออกเสียงที่มีปัญหาของนักเรียน
ชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายโดยวิธีธรรมชาติ

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาแนวการสอนโดยแนวคิดวิธีธรรมชาติว่า สามารถช่วยทักษะการออกเสียงของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในการออกเสียง ในเสียงที่มีปัญหาได้หรือไม่ และ 2) ศึกษาแนวการสอนโดยใช้แนวคิดวิธีธรรมชาติว่าช่วย ทักษะการออกเสียงของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในการออกเสียงในเสียงที่มีปัญหา ได้อย่างไร

กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ศึกษาในครั้งนี้เป็นนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย ในโรงเรียน สังกัดเอกชนแห่งหนึ่งในจังหวัดขอนแก่น จำนวนทั้งสิ้น 8 คน โดยกลุ่มตัวอย่างเหล่านี้ คือ นักเรียนผู้ที่มีปัญหาการออกเสียงมากที่สุด เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยประกอบด้วย แบบ ทดสอบการอ่านออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียน แบบสัมภาษณ์กึ่งโครงสร้าง และอนุทินการเรียนรู้ ทั้งนี้ แผนการเรียนการสอนจำนวน 6 แผนถูกออกแบบภายใต้แนวคิด การสอนโดยวิธีธรรมชาติร่วมกับการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการ (action research) อันประกอบ ด้วยวิธีการสอนต่างๆ ทั้งหมด 6 วิธี อันประกอบด้วย การใช้บทความ เพลง ภาพยนตร์ เกม ภาระงาน และบทสนทนา วิธีการสอนทั้ง 6 วิธีนี้ประกอบไปด้วยการนำเสียงที่มีปัญหา นั่น ก็คือ เสียงท้ายที่ออกเสียงด้วย /d/, /t/ และ /ɪd/ มาใช้ในกิจกรรมต่างๆ ข้อมูลที่ได้จะถูก นำมาวิเคราะห์โดยการวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหา

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) คะแนนของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในการอ่าน ออกเสียงจากแบบทดสอบการอ่านออกเสียงหลังเรียนสูงขึ้น หลังจากนักเรียนมีการเรียน โดยใช้แนวคิดวิธีธรรมชาติ และ 2) การสอนโดยแนวคิดวิธีธรรมชาติได้รับการยืนยันว่าเป็น วิธีที่มีประสิทธิภาพในการช่วยการพัฒนาทักษะการออกเสียงภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้น มัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย การศึกษาในครั้งนี้ยังชี้ให้เห็นถึงนัยยะของการวิจัยทางการสอน สำหรับครูผู้ที่ต้องการพัฒนาทักษะการออกเสียงของนักเรียน

คำสำคัญ: การสอนโดยแนวคิดวิธีธรรมชาติ เสียงที่มีปัญหา นักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอน ปลาย ผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

Improving Upper Secondary School Students' Pronunciation Skill on the Problematic Sounds through the Natural Approach

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to investigate whether or not the Natural Approach could help Thai students improve their pronunciation skills on the problematic sounds and to investigate how the Natural Approach could help students improve their pronunciation skills on the problematic sounds. The participants were eight upper secondary school students in Thailand. The instruments consisted of English pronunciation pre-test, post-test, a semi-structured interview, and a learning log. Six lesson plans specifically designed based on the Natural Approach together with the cycles of action research included passages, songs, movies, games, tasks and series, and open dialogs that comprised the problematic sounds which were the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /ld/. The data were analyzed using mean scores, percentages and content analysis. The findings revealed that 1) the scores of the students' English pronunciation skills were higher after learning through the use of Natural Approach, and 2) the Natural Approach was proved to be an effective way to help the students improve their English pronunciation skills. Finally, the findings also suggest pedagogical implications for teachers who wish to improve students' pronunciation skills.

Keywords: The Natural Approach, Problematic Sounds, Upper Secondary School Students, Thai EFL

INTRODUCTION

When someone asks, 'How old are you?' and you reply, 'I'm sick,' instead of 'I'm six,' the person who is listening may think that you are actually 'sick' (Narksompong, 2007: 1). That is the reason why clear and correct pronunciation is important. Morley (1998) stated that the first thing that can impress the listeners when the speakers address someone else is pronunciation. If the speakers pronounce clearly and correctly, the listeners are able to understand easily of what the speakers are trying to express. In contrast, misunderstanding of many cases may occur when words are inaccurately pronounced. Consequently, practicing pronunciation is very important for Thai English speakers as improving their pronunciation skill before and can promote confidence and make them feel less unwilling in speaking English. (Niamthet, 2016: 3)

In Thailand, English is taught according to the Thai curriculum from kindergarten level to the upper secondary school levels. However, Kwandee and Sawaddikun (2012) stated that teaching of English in Thailand has been a failure. Thai students learn English for more than ten years, but most of them cannot use English to communicate on a daily basis. A study from ministry of education (2009) found that most Thai students in upper secondary education still have difficulties of pronunciation problem in communication.

During the researcher's role as a teacher of English for a Thai secondary school, students had to take the four skills tests semi-annually. These tests were a part of the school's policy in the English subject to examine the development of each student. The results of the test showed that students had good basic skills of English during the first semester of 2018. However, students often got low scores in speaking skills. At the school where the study took place, English pronunciation was considered one of their most challenging problems. According to

the classroom observations during the English skills test in the first semester of 2018, the students made mistakes in pronouncing and also had a problem in English pronunciation of the final sounds. Then, when the researcher and the native speaker identified the students' pronunciations, we found that the most problematic sounds were the final sounds especially /d/, /t/ and /id/. However, the traditional teaching of the pronunciation in the final sounds of –ed: /d/, /t/ and /id/ had not been as successful as expected. Students were not taught appropriate pronunciation strategies effectively. The teacher had just provided information about the pronunciation of the –ed final sounds, then the students had to remember the sounds of those words. They did not have a chance to practice each sound repeatedly.

To solve the students' pronunciation problems, the most important thing must be a change in the approach adapted by the teacher to teach the students. The researcher deemed that giving students a variety of activities could help them in developing the pronunciation skill because repetitive but various examples enable comprehension by listeners despite them not understanding all the words and structures in it. According to Krashen's theory of language acquisition, giving learners various examples helps them acquire language naturally, rather than learn it consciously. Thai teachers usually teach pronunciation passively. They listened to the teacher, repeated it once, and took notes about the sound the teacher pronounced. Furthermore, teachers need to try and provide their learners with opportunities for more than merely mechanical classroom practice. Therefore, the researcher explored an approach which would be able to give them an optimal variety of examples as Krashen (1982) defined which were comprehensible, interesting and/or relevant, but not be grammatically sequenced and be in sufficient quantity. Therefore, the Natural Approach was the

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chosen approach in this study to improve the students' pronunciation skills. Krashen and Terrel (1995) stated that the general goal of Natural Approach is the ability to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

Besides, Terrell assumed that the main purpose of language was the communication, thus, the Natural Approach started focusing on communicative abilities and the Natural Approach was being developed in order to send well-structured messages by using the foreign language. The learner's role is trying to learn the language in the way teacher normally teaches in the classroom. On the other hand, teacher's role is more demanding. The Natural Approach required the teacher as the source of the input in the target language so that student can feel comfortable. Also, the teacher has to create a comfortable classroom atmosphere so that students have a low affective filter and learn as much as they can. Besides, teachers have to choose the activities that they are able to manage and to use in the class.

Based on the merits of the Natural Approach method, it was deemed worthwhile to find out if it would provide a solution to the pronunciation problem. In this study, the Natural Approach was used to teach students in a classroom. Since, students were unable to pronounce the problematic sounds which were the final sounds, particularly in the closing of final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/, the Natural Approach was designed for them to acquire this skill.

Purposes of the Study

1. To investigate if the Natural Approach helped improve upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill with the problematic sounds.

2. To investigate how the Natural Approach helped improve upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill with the problematic sounds.

Research Questions

In accordance with the research purposes mentioned previously, two research questions were derived as follows:

1. Can the Natural Approach improve upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill on the problematic sounds?

2. How does the Natural Approach help the improvement of upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill on the problematic sounds?

Literature Review

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is vital for good communication and should be incorporated into classroom activities. Particular attention must be paid to the teaching methods of EFL teachers. EFL teachers should help their learners to pronounce the English words accurately and increase their awareness towards the importance of pronunciation in their classes, including improving their own pronunciation and speaking skills in and outside the classroom. Teachers should use different techniques and strategies for teaching pronunciation. For instance, EFL learners can increase their confidence through listening and speaking to native and non-native speakers of English. The aim of teaching pronunciation to learners is not to ask them to pronounce like native speakers.

How to Teach Pronunciation

Many pronunciation techniques could be used to teach and help students to facilitate and acquire pronunciation skills. For example,

teachers could include listening, imitating or repeating, reading aloud, phonetics and using syllables in the classroom. The present study focuses on listening and imitating and reading aloud/ recitation techniques. Using these techniques, students are able to copy the utterance and repeat it aloud as soon as they hear it. Indeed, teachers should be provided with a good background in theoretical knowledge, practical classroom skills and access to good ideas for classroom activities of pronunciation. In the current study, pronunciation lesson plans were based on the Natural Approach and the cycles of action research.

The Natural Approach

In the current study, tasks and activities to teach pronunciation were developed based on the oral communication development principles of Krashen & Terrell (1995): 1) affective-humanistic, 2) problem solving, 3) games, and 4) content activities. The following tasks were created:

1. Listening passages were constructed for students from various sources, including native speakers, the audio record from 'text to speech' program, and the recording of native speakers in different accents. There were three activities in this task: listen and match, listen and tick, and listen and find the differences (Sookyossri, 1999).

2. Songs and 3. movies were the 'content activities'. By 'content' Krashen & Terrell (1995) mean any activity in which the purpose is to learn something new, other than language. As in all other acquisition activities, the important characteristics are maintaining student interest and ensuring comprehensible input.

4. Games can serve as the basis for an acquisition activity and are therefore not a reward nor a 'frill', but an important experience in the acquisition process (Krashen & Terrell, 1995). Games qualify as an acquisition activity since they can be used to provide comprehensible

input. Students are normally interested in the outcome of the game and, in most cases, attention is focused on the game itself and not the language forms used to play the game.

5. Task and series are a problem-solving activity based on Krashen & Terrell (1995). Comprehensible input in problem-solving activities is supplied in several ways. Often, the instructor gives comprehensible input in explaining the problems to be solved. This study used this technique for stimulating student narration as well as providing input as the 'series'. This consists of the lists of the –ed words that make a story. The students create the story using the language at their particular level. The instructor may ask the students to imagine that this is what is going to happen, or to give their reaction to each event. Comprehensible input in a series activity can be supplied by the 'teacher talk', which may precede the students' creation of the story or accompany it.

6. Open-dialogs are considered affective-humanistic activities. Krashen & Terrell (1995) stated that affective activities attempt to involve students' feelings, opinions, desires, reactions, ideas and experiences. For the dialogs, Krashen & Terrell (1995) argue that the use of open dialogs gives students the means to produce somewhat beyond their acquired capacity in early production stages.

Research Methodology

1. Participants and setting

Based on the result of the four skills test which was developed by the school during the first semester of 2018, the 50 students of grade 10A had an intermediate level of basic skills of English while the 50 students of grade 10B had a higher level of basic skills. The researcher chose the 10A students to be the participants since they had problems with pronouncing the final sounds. In the classroom, when students

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got involved with pronunciation, they were unable to comprehend the pronunciations. They were unable to pronounce the final sounds of the words in the passages or when they spoke out.

To research the problem thoroughly, the researcher and the English native speaker gave the 50 students of grade 10A a passage which consisted of a mixture of final sounds to test pronunciation. Finally, the researcher and the native speaker identified the 50 students' pronunciations and found that there were eight students who had the most questionable pronunciation skills, with the most problematic sounds being the final sounds /d/, /t/ and /id/. Thus, the participants of this study then were eight students of class 4/1 who were studying in their second semester of 2018.

2. Research Instruments

There were three kinds of instruments used in this study.

The English pronunciation tests were the pre-test and post-test consisted of the passages in which words of the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/ were mixed for students to pronounce. The tested words were unknown to the students. Those words used in the tests were collected from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. The English pronunciation pre-test and post-test were given to the participants before and after learning by using the Natural Approach. They were passages in which there was a mixture of 20 words of the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/ for the participants to pronounce. The tested words were unknown to the students in order to aid in checking pronunciation errors. The participants got one point when they pronounced the target words correctly and zero when they pronounced them incorrectly.

A semi-structured interview was constructed. There were nine semi-structured interview questions which were written in Thai. The semi-structured interview was evaluated by three experts who were in

the field of language testing and English language teaching. The experts rated each item according to the objectives of the test and how the readers comprehended the test items by rating on the evaluation form. Then, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated. The semi-structured interviews were given to eight students after they had done all the lessons. It was asked to students to elicit how the natural approach help the improvement of students' pronunciation skill on the problematic sounds.

Students' learning logs were used to investigate how the Natural Approach affected the students' English pronunciation skill during the implementation at the end of each lesson, to find out the problems of students' learning and to associate the relationship of what they had learnt with prior knowledge. Teacher asked with guided questions for students to write what they thought, what they understood together with their attitude. The guided questions were able to benefit for students to express their opinions freely. Then, students were asked to make a note with was related to each lesson. They might write about, 'what I had learnt today?', 'what I did not understand?', 'how was my action in a class?', 'how was my feeling with a lesson?', 'which was the problem in my learning?', etc. These instruments were used as qualitative measurements.

3. Procedures

The study covered one semester of the 2018 academic year which lasted two months from February to March. The research procedures were as follows.

3.1 In the first week, participants received the English pronunciation pre-test to measure the students' English pronunciation skills before implementation of the study.

3.2 The participants learned through six lesson plans

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specifically designed based on the Natural Approach together with the cycles of action research which included passages, songs, movies, games, tasks and series and open dialogs that comprised the problematic sounds. During this time, the researcher collected the data of participants' pronunciation. Meanwhile, the students' learning logs were used at the end of each lesson to see students' reflection.

3.3 English pronunciation post-tests were administered to all participants one day after the final lesson to measure the students' English pronunciation skills after implementation of the study. Then, the semi-structured interview was also given to all participants after the post-test.

4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the different instruments were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively and quantitatively. There were three inter-raters to check students' improvement in terms of correcting the final sounds when students pronounced the words. The three inter-raters consisted of two specialists in pronunciation; two native speakers who are American and English and one specialist in English teaching at school who is an English teacher for a Thai secondary school. English pronunciation tests were checked and collected the scores by checklists. Then, the scores of pronunciation tests were taken the average and calculated as a percentage to see the rates of pronunciation accuracy and errors. Content analysis was used to analyze the data in semi-structured interviews and students' learning logs.

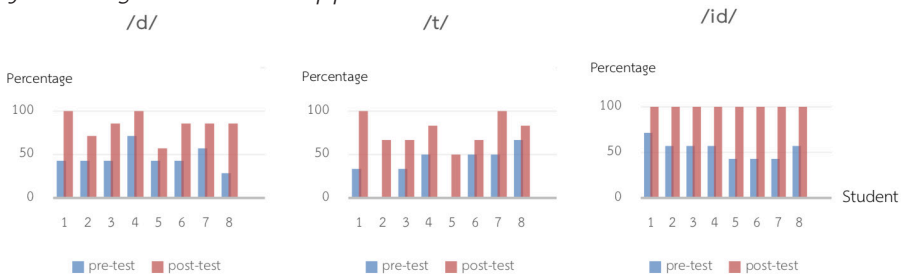## Findings

1. Students' English pronunciation skill

Research question 1: Can the Natural Approach improve upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill on the problematic sounds?

Graph 1 *The English pronunciation Pretest and Posttest Scores*
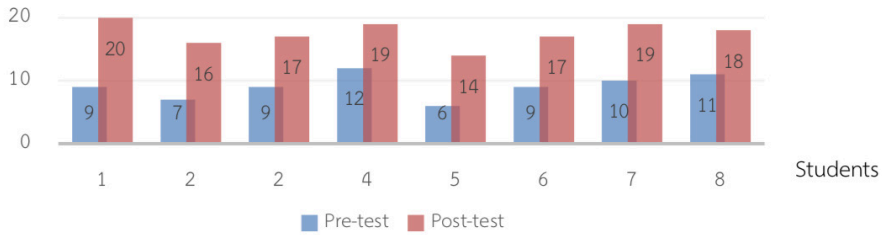
Scores

From graph1, it was found that all students achieved higher scores when they learned using the Natural Approach. In addition to the results of the pre-test and post-test, the increased scores of students' pronunciation indicates that the use of the Natural Approach could improve students' English pronunciation.

Graph 2 *English pronunciation test in Terms of Percentage before and after using the Natural Approach*

From graph2, all students' pronunciation of the three final sounds is increased. The average percentage of the final sounds /d/, /t/ and /id/ are 83.92, 77.08 and 100 percent respectively. The scores of the final sound /id/ are the highest. Meanwhile the average scores of the final sounds /d/ and /t/ are higher than 70 percent.

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2. How the Natural Approach improved the students' pronunciation skill.

Research question 2: How can the Natural Approach help the improvement of upper secondary school students' pronunciation skill on problematic sounds?

2.1 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview was used to assess the students' opinions on the use of the Natural Approach on their level of proficiency after taking the post-test of English reading comprehension.

According to items 1-5 of a semi-structured interview, the study used several listening activities including passages, songs and movies. From these activities, students started to classify some –ed final sounds from listening to the native speaker's accent although they did not know the unknown words in this passage. When they listened to each sound without translating the meaning, students felt comfortable because the passage was not difficult for most of them. The final sounds were clear to listen to. After that, they tried to find out why each word had different final sounds. Then, they started to discover how to differentiate each sound because there were some repeated final sounds in the passages, songs or movies. Finally, they noticed that there were three final sounds of the –ed final consonants. Furthermore, students stated that songs and movies were comfortable and relaxing activities and they helped students pronounce the words naturally. However, songs and movies were too difficult for all students to listen to the final sounds of the specific words.

The last three questions of a semi-structured interview were games, task and series, and open dialogs which were the activities that helped students in real situations that may happen in daily life. Games helped most students revise the problematic sounds from the

previous activities of passages, songs and movies. The situation they found in each game encouraged them to pronounce the correct final sounds in a real situation. Task and series helped students in the way to promote the interactions in class together, revise the rules from the previous listening activities to pronounce the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/ and practice pronouncing in a real situation, storytelling, which the teacher created for the students. Open dialogs was one activity which students could practice their pronunciation in a real situation that may happen in their life. They could use any words, any sounds that they had learned from the previous activity to make one dialog together. Each pair could use the appropriate vocabulary to make their dialog and they tried to use the words that they were sure in pronouncing correctly. Then, they could present their dialog using the correct final sounds.

3. Students' learning logs

To confirm how the Natural Approach helped improve students' pronunciation skills on problematic sounds, students' learning logs were one instrument used. The researcher aimed for students to write down anything what they had learned, the problems they found, the advantages, the suggestions and anything after learning through each input because the researcher could know the development of students' learnings from each input from their writing. From what they wrote, the research can be summarized into the details as follows.

3.1 Discrimination of the problem sounds

The problem sounds in all activities are /s/ and /z/ final consonant sounds. Most words end in -c, -s, -z and -ss such as danced, closed, recognized, and dressed. The least problem sounds are /c/ and /z/ in the final consonant positions. The students seldom had problems with the words that end in /c/ in the final consonant positions because

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its sound is like letter −s. The students seldom have problems with the words that end in /z/ in the final consonant positions because its sound is as same as its final consonant. The most problematic sounds are from the words that end with letter −s. Students could only understand one rule. That is, the words which end in −ss in the final position have /s/ sounds in the final position such as missed, dressed, discussed, therefore, they all have the /t/ final sound. Finally, students were always confused with the words such as pleased, used, closed which end with letters −sed but its sound is /z/ in the final consonant position which is /d/ final sound, and also the words such as promised and cursed which also end with letter −sed but its sound is /s/ in the final consonant position which is /t/ final sound.

3.2 The suitability of each activity

There were six activities in this study, and they were divided into two main groups, listening activities and the activities that can be used in a real situation. Passages, songs and movies were the listening activities. Games, task and series, and open dialogs are the activities that can use in a real situation. The activities that students could distinguish the most sounds was listening activities and 'passages' which extremely affected students in distinguishing the final sounds. Songs and movies were the listening activities that helped students the least in distinguishing the final sounds. The rest of the activities were the activities that students can use in a real situation and the researcher found that all activities encouraged students to enjoy the activities with little stress despite not learning efficiently with some activities and they truly pronounced the words after the listening activities.

Discussion

The results indicate that using the Natural Approach for learning and teaching can improve students' pronunciation of words with problematic sounds. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test scores, students improved their pronunciation following six lesson plans based on the Natural Approach. These results are consistent with previous studies (Masruddin Stain, 2013). Specifically, (Masruddin Stain, 2013) examined the use of the Natural Approach (NA) in developing speaking skills. Students reported positive attitudes towards the NA because it relies on using the interests of the students. The NA is also popular with language teachers and makes the learning environment as stress-free as possible, which is particularly important for beginning learners. The NA uses authentic materials for practicing English such as brochures, or maps, as well as visual aids and games.

However, there were some words from the pre-test and post-test which the students still incorrectly pronounced after using the NA in the classroom. Students incorrectly pronounced 'released' in the pre-test and 'supposed' in the post-test. These words both end in /z/ and belong to the /d/ final sound. The words 'impressed' in the pre-test and 'endorsed' in the post-test were also incorrectly pronounced and these words both end in /s/ and belong to the /t/ final sound. According to these results, the students still showed some difficulties to discriminate sounds. Krashen & Terrell (1995) examined the effect of such difficulties on second language acquisition theory for speaking. According to the Input hypothesis, speaking is not absolutely essential for language acquisition. The Input hypothesis claims that the best way to teach speaking is to focus on listening (and reading) and spoken fluency will emerge on its own.

Students also received semi-structured interviews and scored each input. These results indicate that when passages were used as the input in the NA, all students' acquisition scores increased. This finding is consistent with previous studies that showed that students' language acquisition increased when the NA was used in teaching (Duran, 1993). Moreover, passages helped students improve their listening to the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/. Indeed, students started to classify some –ed final sounds from listening to a native speaker. Thus, passages could positively effect the pronunciation acquisition of students. Similarly, Khaghaninejad & Maleki (2015) studied the effect of explicit pronunciation instruction on listening comprehension in Iranian English Learners and found that the students improved their listening comprehension significantly at the end of the seven-week pronunciation instruction. This improvement may be attributed to the pronunciation instruction that the groups received.

Songs were rated as difficult for most students to hear the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /id/. This may be due to the lyrics, rhythms, voices or the connected speech. Moreover, the average percentage scores of all student's pronunciation during listening to songs were low. This shows that songs were a weak input for teaching in this study. The finding is consistent with the study of Phintuyothin (2011) who studied the use of English songs to improve the pronunciation of problematic English consonant sounds for Thai learners. It was found that the direct-teaching method is more effective than the use of English songs in improving student pronunciation of more phonemes (Phintuyothin, 2011). Supeno (2018) also suggested that using songs to improve students' can offer a lot of advantages for both the teacher and the students, the biggest question is how the songs should be chosen. It is suggested that teachers consider the students' level, their age, and the kind of music/songs they like.

Movies were therefore a weak teaching input in this study. This may be due to the several different accents in each movie or some scenes in each movie were too fast to hear. Hidayatullah (2018) also studied the use of Western movies on improving students' pronunciation. It was found that the movies did not improve the students' pronunciation however, the method was novel and some students seemed confused during the activities.

Games were the most useful in helping students to revise the problematic sounds. Thus, as previously found (Nguyen, 2015) games could positively effect the pronunciation acquisition of students. When playing the games, students felt relaxed and they were eager to learn pronunciation and take part in the activities in the class. Games therefore have a positive effect on increasing the students' motivation to pronounce and improving their pronunciation.

Task and series in storytelling promoted interactions in the class and helped students revise the rules to pronounce the problematic sounds and practice pronouncing in a real situation. Thus, task and series could positively effect on the pronounced acquisition of students. Rafiq Al Qhozali (2017) also showed that the speaking skills of students improved through storytelling activities supported by several activities including 1) using classroom English; 2) engaging the students in pre-communicative activities; 3) encouraging them to use dictionaries; 4) appreciating their participation and achievement; 5) setting a fun atmosphere of learning. Lucarevschi (2018) also showed that storytelling is an effective tool in the development of English pronunciation in Brazilian learners of English as a foreign language. However, the effect sizes were weak (Lucarevschi, 2018).

Finally, open-dialogs helped students practice their pronunciation of the problematic sounds in a real situation. Dewi (2011) previously

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studied the improving students' speaking skill through dialog and also found that teaching speaking through dialogue can improve students' speaking skill. Dialogue can therefore be implemented effectively in the speaking class.

Consistent with previous reports (Krashen & Terrell, 1995), the results of this study showed that passages, games, task and series, and open-dialogs had a positive effect on students' pronunciation and students reported satisfaction with the use of the Natural Approach. In the Natural Approach, a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication, as well as the provision for comprehensible input, provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition. Furthermore, the last three lesson plans, games, task and series, and open-dialogs were designed to help students in pronouncing in a real situation. The findings revealed that all students could pronounce in the given situations. Whenever the teacher gave students a task, the grammar used in the sentences in which students pronounced were not important, but the final sounds in which students pronounced were more important. This finding is in accordance with Sam (2016) who stated that the Natural Approach of teaching English language is an effective approach, which advocates for natural language learning language and, more importantly, with little emphasis on grammar. By contrast, songs and movies were the input that were the least useful and provided little assistance in language pronunciation.

Conclusion

The results of the study were divided into two parts in accordance with the research questions. 1) With regard to students' pronunciation improvement, it was found that the Natural Approach

was effective in improving the students' pronunciation skills. The comparison between the students' pre-test and post-test scores, along with the results of post-lesson tests, indicated that the students improved their pronunciation of English words with the final sounds of /d/, /t/ and /ld/ after learning through the Natural Approach. 2) With regard to the Natural Approach, the designed activities based on the Natural Approach together with the cycles of action research were proven to be an effective way to help the students improve their English pronunciation skill on the given final sounds as passages, songs, movies, games, tasks and series and open-dialogs were the authentic materials that helped foster and encourage students to identify and be able to pronounce those words with the problematic sounds correctly. Finally, the findings also suggest pedagogical implications for teachers who wish to improve students' pronunciation skills.

Recommendations for Further Studies

In this study, the Natural Approach was limited to investigate only the final sound of –ed, which has three final sounds, /d/, /t/ and /id/. This approach can also be used to teach the pronunciation of consonants, vowels, stress, rhythms and intonations. Future studies can examine the ability to produce and perceive the target sounds in more contexts as well as the acquisition of other types of English inflections. Moreover, the approach in this study can be applied in teaching other positions such as the initial or middle, or other sounds, such as cluster sounds, or other final sounds that cause problems in pronunciation for Thai students.

In this study, listening to songs and movies seldom helped students comprehend the pronunciation's rules. This is perhaps because the lyrics in the 12 songs might be too difficult for students, the rhythm

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of each song might be different, too fast or some unknown words may have been used. Listening to the movies might be difficult because of the accents, sounds, or other details. Thus, in future studies, songs and movies should be selected only if the rhythm is comprehensible, the singers' voices are clear enough, the speed of the song is appropriate, and the complexity of the structures and the vocabulary is not too difficult for the students. That is, future studies should choose inputs with appropriate details to encourage the participants to listen and to improve their pronunciation.

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