**Using English Discoveries Online to Improve Language Proficiency Level of BRU Students**

Rosesamon Panduangkaew and Purisa Watcharenwong

English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University

**ABSTRACT**

 The purposes of this research were to compare the students’ achievement before and after using English Discoveries Online, and to investigate the satisfaction of using English Discoveries Online in the first semester of the academic year 2017 at Buriram Rajabhat University. The research instruments comprised a set of courses on English Discoveries Online; the randomized exit-test only control group design method was employed. Statistical analyses revealed significant differences in language proficiency. Findings are as follows: 1) the academic achievement of the students instructed by EDO was higher than those studied in the classroom. And 2) the students’ satisfaction with the instruction using EDO was higher than learning without EDO.

**Keywords: Language Proficiency Level, Online Learning, English Discoveries**

**INTRODUCTION**

A more recent definition of language proficiency was provided by Council of Europe in the form of the Common European Framework of Reference (here forth CEF(R)) for languages. In CEF (2001), competency is the term used for all the knowledge (gained through experience and learning), skills and characteristics an individual has developed and used to communicate with others. There are a number of aspects to consider when defining the English language proficiency of academic professionals examined in the present study. In addition, there are certain foreign language skills that academics entering working life need to have upon graduation based on a government decree guiding universities’ language requirements. It “aims to support learning, either by providing the learners themselves with information that can influence what they do, or by providing their teachers with information that can help them adjust teaching in order to improve their students’ language proficiency” (Huhta, 2010). According to TEA (2012), Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) define the four stages of second language acquisition called English language proficiency levels. The four proficiency levels are beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. The listening and speaking assessments are based on ongoing classroom observations and student performance in daily interactions. The PLDs also describe how well ELs at each proficiency level are able to understand and use English to engage in grade-appropriate academic instruction. However, the six reference English levels are widely accepted as the global standard for grading an individual’s language proficiency. The Common European Framework outlines the abilities expected from students at each level: beginner (A1), elementary (A2), intermediate (B1), upper intermediate (B2), advanced (C1), and proficiency (C2).

Online learning is a form of medium technology that is often used in this era of rapid development. This is an important step towards achieving a world-class education and competitive. This approach to online learning began to grow dramatically in the late 1990s and early 21st century learning medium this allows us to communicate either in close proximity or far and in which we are present; with the condition that technological devices such as computers and internet lines exists. Interaction in learning can be further simplified by using online technology medium as well as this technology makes it easy and efficient, it can also improve students' self-motivation (Granito & Chernobilsky, 2012). Online learning is being incorporated into the traditional classrooms, known as blended or hybrid learning, with tremendous success, especially for credit recovery, advanced placement (to promote college-readiness), continuity of learning during a pandemic, dual enrollment, and more (Nielsen, 2010).

 English Discoveries is the complete English language learning solution. It provides educators with effective and user-friendly tools to maximize student learning outcome. It can also be adapted to meet specific needs of product training. It is offered ongoing technical and pedagogical support throughout the duration of practice to ensure success (IT Edusoft Co., Ltd., 2017). English has reached people globally due to the development and use of information and communication technology. The present study aims to shed light on the English language needs and language proficiency of students in Buriram Rajabhat University.

**OBJECTIVE**

1. To compare the students’ achievement before and after using EDO

 2. To investigate the students’ satisfaction of using EDO

**METHODOLOGY**

**Population**: All students who enrolled in the English for Communication 0001201

**Research Instruments**:

The instruments used for this study were: EDO (Placement test, Units’ learning, Exit Test)

English Discoveries comes with a comprehensive set of integration tools. This enables English Discoveries teachers to take the product beyond the self-access learning mode and turn it into a completely integrated solution. EDO consisted of the following courses:

1. First Discoveries: 8 units
2. Basic:
	1. Basic 1: 8 units
	2. Basic 2: 8 units
	3. Basic 3: 8 units
3. Intermediate
	1. Intermediate 1: 8 units
	2. Intermediate 2: 8 units
	3. Intermediate 3: 8 units
4. Advance
	1. Advanced 1: 8 units
	2. Advanced 2: 8 units
	3. Advanced 3: 8 units

**RESULT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the English proficiency level of BRU students in relation to the language needs posed by their grading. More specifically, the dominating role of English in the world was discussed in addition to the definitions of language proficiency in daily life.

As mentioned above, the informants all use English in the written form more than in spoken interaction in their work. Correspondingly, the proficiency was better in both writing and reading skills (C1) than in speaking (B2). This emphasis on written mode work tasks is closely related to the nature of

conducting research; written documents such as articles, research plans, drafts of research papers, different kinds of reports and emails are the main tools the researchers work with to convey information among each other as well as to wider audiences. Especially in international cooperation the written documents

are the most important and perhaps the only means for communication. Additionally, writing and reading as communication activities are less bound to the immediate contexts in which the communication is taking place. Also, written mode of communication allows more freedom in terms of time of producing and possibilities in editing output. Moreover, what further highlights the role of written mode in the informants’ work, is the fact that relevant literature at work is most commonly English. In other words, the exposure to English, either by writing texts or by reading texts is greater than exposure to English in the spoken mode. Most commonly English was used in the written mode in emails, writing articles and commenting on the works of others. Based on the examination of relationship between researchers’ English proficiency and work related language needs, it is obvious that their work tasks, in terms of frequency of use, require them to have more skills related to producing and understanding written output than spoken productions skills. Therefore, as the informants’ overall average of written language skills, writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary was effective operational proficiency, CEFR level (C1), their language proficiency can be seen to correspond with their written mode language needs. The informants’ language proficiency in spoken production and interaction in terms of frequency of use also corresponds with their language needs. However, as spoken skills are not employed frequently in demanding situations such as giving speeches and presentations as well as in

negotiations, there is a discrepancy between the level of proficiency and the language needs concerning demanding spoken situations.

**DISCUSSION**

An efficient language learning pattern (see below) starts with the student’s content. To gain initial proficiency from beginner to advance, they need real-world practice that builds on stations. English Discoveries Online provides just such an opportunity. It's an ideal complement to students’ English lessons.

**Figure 1.** Online Learning Dabbagh, N., & Bannan-Ritland, B. (2005)

The study of Murray et al., (2012) stipulates that if a student has a high frequency of interaction, student achievement will also increase because of the interaction process is the process of sharing information with each other. According to Dabbagh (2007), the emerging characteristics of the online learner and ensuing pedagogical implications and suggests that exploratory and dialogical online learning pedagogical models are most effective for supporting and promoting these characteristics.

 **CONCLUSION**

The study aimed at examining the English language proficiency of environmental researchers who all use English at work as well as at comparing the measured proficiency with the language needs the informants expressed they had. The comparison was used as a basis for suggestions for language training possibilities. All in all, the work of the informants of the present study, environmental researchers, would benefit from strengthening their spoken skills in English.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**REFERENCES**

CEFR. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (2001). Council of Europe [online]. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\_EN.pdf. (20 November, 2018).

Dabbagh, N. (2007). The Online Learner: Characteristics and Pedagogical Implications. Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 7(3), 217-226. Waynesville, NC USA: Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education. Retrieved December 11, 2018 from https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/22904/.

Dabbagh, N., & Bannan-Ritland, B. (2005). Online learning: Concepts, strategies, and application. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Granito, M., & Chernobilsky, E. (2012). *The Effect of Technology on a Student ’ s*

*Motivation and Knowledge Retention*. NERA Conference Proceedings 2012, (17).

Huhta, M. (2010). Language and Communication for Professional Purposes: Needs Analysis Methods in Industry and Business and their Yield to Stakeholders. Department of Industrial Engineering and Management. Helsinki University of Technology.

IT Edusoft Co., Ltd. (2017). English Discoveries*: Scope and Sequence*. Bangkok.

Murray, M., Pérez, J., Geist, D., & Hedrick, A. (2012). Student Interaction with Online

Course Content: Build It and They Might Come. Journal of Information Technology

Education: Research, 11, 125–140.

Neilsen, L. (2010). *The Introductory Guide to Online Learning*. The Innovative Educator. Retrieve from: https://theinnovativeeducator.blogspot.com/2010/11/i-recently-attended-virtual-school.html.

Texas Education Agency, (2012). *Supporting English Learners in Texas*. Retrieve from http://www.elltx.org/proficiency\_level\_descriptors.html

Wang, Q. (2010). *Using online shared workspaces to support group collaborative learning.* Journal of Computers & Education, 55, 1270-1276.

