
The Use of Anchored Instruction for Chinese Speaking Skills: A Case Study of Travel Agency

Staff.

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to (1) examine the effectiveness of anchored instruction in enhancing students' Chinese speaking skills and (2) find out the students' perception towards the use the anchored instruction in enhancing Chinese speaking skills. Mixed methods were employed and 15 adult students were involved in the study using anchored instruction. Six Lesson Plans of 180 minutes each (1 Lesson Plan = 2 Sessions) were used. Anchored instruction was applied and taught for 12 sessions (2 sessions per week) within the time period of one and a half months. The researcher collected the quantitative data through Pre-test and Post-test and collected the qualitative data through classroom observation and perception interview.

The quantitative data were interpreted using mean, standard deviation and t-test with $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance. The qualitative data were analyzed using the classroom observation and perception interview. The results showed that the use of anchored instruction was effective in improving participants' Chinese speaking skills and they had positive perception towards the use of anchored instruction in improving Chinese speaking skills.

Keywords: Anchored Instruction, Chinese Speaking Skills, learners Perception, Language Teaching Method, Adults Teaching.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the gradual establishment of the world market, China, has become increasing important. China has been playing a significant role in South East Asia and all over the world. The country has expanded its territory in the region's economy, social and technological areas, and its cultural impact around the world. At present, Chinese has become as important as the English language. The importance of Chinese language positions itself to become the most spoken language in the world, and many countries in the west are looking for its relevance in the future global economy. Its popularity among Thai people has made it to be rapidly important in the study of foreign language in Thailand.

As more and more Chinese tourists choose Thailand, learning Chinese has become an urgent task for the tourism industry in Thailand. In 2016, Thailand attracted 8.75 million tourists from the Chinese mainland and it expects around 9 million this year. In a larger picture, trade and investment are blooming, while cooperation under

the Belt and Road Initiative is under way. Speaking Chinese becomes an important advantage of competition in Thailand now. Especially for the tourism industry, they need to contact directly Chinese customers. So Chinese speaking ability has become very important. How to improve Chinese speaking skill is becoming a problem.

In recent years, Anchored Instruction has been gradually applied to the Chinese speaking teaching as a foreign language. In Reform of Oral Chinese Teaching Based on Anchored Teaching, the author believes that anchored instruction is to mobilize students' interest in learning, improve students' participation, change the role of teachers in the teaching process, and improve oral Chinese teaching.

In the Anchored Instruction, teachers play a guiding role, students learn independently and build their own knowledge system. It helps teachers to update their teaching ideas and let students play a major role, and helps students to actively use Chinese communication and improve their ability to apply Chinese in real life. From all mentioned above, the use of anchored instruction for Chinese speaking skills should give benefits to adults students in Chinese learning, teachers as well as other stakeholders. This should shed some light on effective teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To examine the effectiveness of Anchored Instruction in improving travel agency staffs' Chinese speaking skills.

2.2 To find out travel agency staffs' perception on the Anchored Instruction in improving Chinese speaking skills.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The researcher applied the mixed-methods to carry out the study. Mixed-methods is a type of research methodology which embeds qualitative data and quantitative data in a study. It provides an alternative method to traditional quantitative and qualitative approaches. The researcher used achievement tests to gather quantitative data. Classroom observation during the sessions and perception interview were conducted for the qualitative data after the teaching experiment. Three professors checked the appropriateness and the validity of the instruments according to research objectives. The scores of IOC were calculated and analyzed. The average score of all instruments validity (IOC) in total was 0.94.

3.2 Participants

The student participants in this study consisted of 15 students, including 5 females and 10 males. They were Thai employees of a travel agency in Bangkok. The students (10 males, 5 females) were in the age range of 21-43 years old.

3.3 Company Setting.

The study was conducted in a travel agency, north of Bangkok. This travel agency was established in 2013 and currently has branches in Phuket and Samui.

3.4 Research Instruments

Following research instruments were employed to gather quantitative data and qualitative data.

3.4.1 Lesson Plans

The researcher developed six lesson plans, 90 minutes in each class, in total of 180 minutes in a week (1 Lesson Plan = 2 Sessions), incorporating media (videos) to be used in the class. The researcher taught 12 sessions (two sessions per week) in a duration of one and a half months.

Table 3.1 Lesson Plans

Lesson	Topic	Hours
1	Self-introduction	3
2	Shopping	3
3	Transportation and direction	3
4	Location	3
5	Food	3
6	Time	3

3.4.2 Perception interview

In order to understand each student's perception towards Anchored Instruction, the researcher conducted a perception interview with each student. The researcher explained each statement clearly to the students while conducting the interview. The interview questions were comprised of 10 items. The data were collected through students' responses.

3.4.3 Pre- and Post-tests

The achievement tests consisted of 10 questions, the researcher asked the questions and each student answered. The teacher assessed the students' performance according to the rubrics. Pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the study and post-test was conducted at the end of the study. The students were asked to speak on the same questions. Ten questions were used to test students' ability to organize simple sentences.

3.4.4 Classroom observation form

Observation is a method of collecting qualitative data in a research through systematically recording the behaviors of the participants during the activity. It helps a researcher to understand the participants' feelings through their behaviors (Subba, 2016). The classroom observations were carried out with the help of two colleagues who had teaching experience in Chinese, during the intervention of the speaking lessons. The observers observed in the third and last session.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The first research objective is to examine the effectiveness of Anchored Instruction in improving travel agency staffs' Chinese speaking skills. Pre-test (before the research) and Post-test (after the research) were conducted to the participants to examine the outcomes. Individual participant's scores of Chinese speaking in Pre-test and Post-test were compared by grouping into five categories; 4.21-5.00 = Excellent, 3.41-4.20 = Very Good, 2.61-3.40 = Good, 1.81-2.60 = Fair, 1.00-1.80 = Poor. From the pre-test and post test results by the analysis with a mean score and standard deviation found that Pre-test scores' were in a fair level as mean score of 2.34 (S.D. = 0.243). By the analysis of each aspect, it was found that four aspects were in a fair level and only one aspect (content) was in a good level. Post-test of Chinese language on the overall aspects was found in a fair level as the mean score of 2.55 (S.D. = 0.148). By analyzing each aspect, it was found that three aspects were in the fair level and two aspects (content and fluency) were in a good level. The overall four aspects of assessment –vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension, each aspect of Chinese language skills showed a higher average score in the post-test than that of in the pre-test. It suggested that anchored instruction in students' lesson was effective in improving their Chinese speaking skills.

Table 4.1 Pre-test and Post-test: Paired Samples T-Test

Comparison	Pretest		Posttest		Mean difference	t	P-value
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.			
Overall 4 aspects	2.34	.243	2.55	.148	0.21	-4.825	.000*
Significance level: $p < 0.05$							

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.2.1 Perception Interview Analysis

The second objective of the study was to find out the students' perception on the use of anchored instruction in Chinese speaking learning. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information from the interview of each participant. Open-end 10 questions were used with 15 students. Each question and the answer resulted from the interview was analyzed. It revealed that the use of anchored instruction in classroom made learning fun, exciting and joyful. It also motivated participants to speak Chinese and helped to develop their confidence in speaking Chinese. Participants expressed that the contents of class like dialogues, rich vocabulary, good pronunciation and involvement of audio-visual senses attracted participants' attention in learning and gave them a new learning experience. Therefore, from the results of the perception interview, the researcher concluded that students had positive perception towards the use of anchored instruction in improving Chinese speaking skills.

4.2.2 Classroom Observation Data Analysis

The prime purpose of the classroom observation was to supplement and confirm the findings of the quantitative data. The data collected were analyzed using content analysis. Participants were observed participating actively in anchored instruction class. It was found that the participants were enjoying the lesson, motivated to share their ideas, trying to speak Chinese during the activities. Furthermore, the participants' confidence in speaking Chinese was boosted over the time when the anchored instruction was used. Hence, the result of classroom observation proved that the use of anchored instruction was effective in improving Chinese speaking skills.

5. Discussion

This study had two major findings. The first outcome was that the use of anchored instruction was effective in improving students' Chinese speaking skill. The second finding was that students had positive perception towards the use of anchored instruction which was effective in improving students' Chinese speaking skills.

5.1 Improving Chinese Speaking Skills

The first finding from this study was the improved Chinese speaking skills of the travel agency's staff. The study showed significant difference in the performance of the post-test compared to that of the pre-test. The means of the pre-test and the post-test were 2.34 and 2.55 respectively showing a difference of 0.21 and a significant p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), standard deviation were used to test hypothesis and compare the different of the result of Pre-test and Post-test. The post-test result observed a smaller increase in the scores. Such increase in the post-test scores and the enhancement of Chinese speaking skills was attributed to providing anchored instruction for Chinese speaking learning.

5.2. Participants' perception

The second finding was that the students had a positive perception after using anchored instruction. It was in line with the finding of Shi Yuanyuan (2014) who conducted a study on "Elementary oral Chinese as a foreign language classroom teaching strategy" and conducted that anchored instruction in raising students' enjoyment in learning, participation in Chinese speaking and sharing their knowledge. The study also found that participants exhibited a relative good level in anchored instruction classroom which helped to enhance their speaking skills and stimulated them to be more interactive. Also it was observed that students encouraged themselves in boosting confidence and removing fear of making mistakes while speaking Chinese.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study researched the teaching technique to develop Chinese speaking skills of adults at one travel agency in Bangkok, using anchored instruction. The population consisted of 15 students (all Thai employees of this travel agency) at this travel agency, the study aimed to (1), examine the effectiveness of anchored instruction in improving participants' Chinese speaking skills and (2), find out the participants' perception towards the use the

anchored instruction in improving Chinese speaking skills. The quantitative data were collected through achievement test and the qualitative data were collected through classroom observation and perception interview. The following conclusions were drawn after analyzing the data collected through mixed-methods.

6.1.1. The Result of Achievement Test

The first objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of anchored instruction in improving students' Chinese speaking skills. Pre-test (before the research) and Post-test (after the research) were conducted to the sample group to examine the outcome. It was found that in the overall aspects and each aspect of Chinese language skills showed a higher average score in the post-test higher than in the pre-test, it suggested that anchored instruction in students' lesson was effective in improving their Chinese speaking skills in some aspects.

6.1.2. The Result of the Classroom Observation Data Analysis

The prime purpose of the classroom observation was to supplement and confirm the findings of the quantitative data. The data collected were analyzed using content analysis. Participants were observed participating actively in anchored instruction class. It was observed that participants were enjoying the lesson, motivated to share their ideas, trying to speak Chinese during the activities. Furthermore, it was observed that participants' confidence in speaking Chinese was boosted over the time when the anchored instruction were used. Hence, the study concluded that the result of classroom observation supported the finding of qualitative data collected through classroom observation proving that the use of anchored instruction in improving Chinese speaking skill.

6.1.3. The Result of Perception Interview

According to the perception interview, most interviewees said that the anchor instruction helped them established a learning model. Five fixed learning steps help them learn by themselves, it benefit for them to become an independent learners after class, it is very significant for adult learners.

Therefore, from the result of the perception interview, the researcher concluded that students had positive perception towards the use of anchored instruction in improving Chinese speaking skills.

6.2 Recommendations for Chinese Teachers

(1) Teachers should try to use anchored instruction to motive students and let students practice the situations by themselves. Interruption by the teacher need not happen every time that they make mistakes.

(2) Renewing the teaching concept and give play to the main role of students. Under the guidance of the anchored teaching mode, teachers should give students enough time to think and provide a lot of practice opportunities in the oral classroom. The teacher should be the designer, participant and facilitator of the oral class.

(3) When designing a Chinese oral class activity, teachers should create a real situation for students according to the theme of the textbook, and visually display the theme of the textbook to achieve the purpose of stimulating students' learning motivation and creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

(4) Teachers should change the single evaluation method and pay attention to formative evaluation. When teachers evaluate the teaching effect of anchored instruction teaching, teachers should pay attention to observe the students' learning process, record the students' gains and deficiencies in the learning process, and combine the summative evaluation with the formative evaluation.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Study

(1) The study was limited to a section of 15 Thai adult students. For further studies, similar research can be conducted to a bigger sample size and different grade levels.

(2) To have more reliable and significant results, the future studies need to be carried out over a longer period of time.

(3) This study focused only on students' perception. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies can be conducted to find out the opinion of teachers in using anchored instruction in Chinese speaking class.

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