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Dr. Uten Laping
Lecturer in Department of
Buddhist and Philosophy,
Mahamakut Buddhist
University, Lanna Campus
Thailand

Problems in class of English for Buddhist academic purpose a case study of master degree students, Master of Arts program in Buddhism and philosophy, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Lanna campus, Thailand

Dr. Uten Laping

Abstract

The objectives of this research article were to investigate factors affecting teaching and learning process in English for Buddhist Academic Purpose class. 2) To explore causes of problems for teaching and learning process in English for Buddhist Academic Purpose class. 3) To provide the recommendations for improving teaching and learning methods in English for Buddhist Academic Purpose class. It was hypothesized that several factors namely, subject content, teaching method, lecturers, students and class environment have the influence on the quality of teaching and learning in English Buddhist Academic Purpose class. To test this hypothesis, the researcher conducted the focus group interview, which included 17 Master Degree students per each lecturer in the academic year 2015. The respondents answered questionnaires and data were analyzed by using percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi-square test. It was found that 1) Factors like subject content, teaching method, lecturers, students and class environment have highly affected the teaching and learning process in English for Buddhist Academic Purpose class. 2) However, the result of the hypothesis test showed that those mentioned factors did not cause any problems in English for Buddhist Academic Purpose 3) Students have commented that since learners' English skills are quite different, it may cause difficulties in teaching and learning process in the class. Hence, before starting the class, students should be taught Basic English grammar. Students must have an opportunity to practice their skills with native English-speaking teachers.

Keywords: Subject content, teaching method, lecturers, students, class environment, problems of teaching and learning

1. Introduction

1.1 Importance and cause of the problems for the research

In accordance to the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2020), the plan has aimed to strengthen and develop the potential of education and learning quality standards to international accepted. Thus, for 2016, the National Research Council of Thailand has a strategy to develop research information for proposing to the government and public acknowledgement by aiming to have an effective information management tool so that research works could be published and utilized for both government and public sectors. The Master of Arts Program in Buddhism and Philosophy Mahamakut Buddhist University, Lanna Campus Thailand has objectives to 1) leverage students learning and have a capability in study Buddhism and philosophy in both academic and practical ways 2) students could integrated learning and adapt their knowledge to use in accordance to laws, tradition, and social culture 3) students have highly attempt in their duties and responsibilities 4) students could understand themselves and others and could live with happiness in the society 5) students have moral and ethic, and public consciousness, and could solve problems with reasonable solutions, while have English knowledge in Buddhism. In the past, there were problems that students learning Buddhist in English Academic subject have still lacked of skills in studying and using English for translation and writing in academic style.

Correspondence
Dr. Uten Laping
Lecturer in Department of
Buddhist and Philosophy,
Mahamakut Buddhist
University, Lanna Campus
Thailand

Students have only studied by remember and translate a document from 'Google Translation'. As a result, it has caused a problem in the study. From this reason, a research, who is a lecturer for this course and a teacher for English learning for Buddhist Academic study, would like to find out outcome on three aspects including to clarify whether students in this program could achieve the Thai qualifications Framework for Higher Education III, to find out problems for students' learning, and how the university could outline the course syllabus and program of this subject to serve students' learning with highest efficiency in the future.

2. Research Questions

1. Students have problems in study in English for research subject or not?
2. Factors including studying, teachers, program, and environments have influenced on students study or not?

3. Research objectives

1. To study factors that could influence students on English study in Buddhist Academic.
2. To study factors that cause problems for students on English study in Buddhist Academic.
3. To suggest how to develop the English study in Buddhist Academic program for a better learning in the future.

4. Research Hypothesis

1. Factors about content, teaching method, students, and environment, which have relevant to learning problems for students in English for Buddhist Academic study.

5. Research outcome

1. To learn that various factors have influenced on learning and studying. A lecturer could adapt some problems for developing teaching technique in English for Buddhist Academic study.
2. To leverage quality of students from Mahamakut Buddhist University, in particular on English skill so that they could improve their learning about Buddhism in the next step.
3. To provide suggestions for studying and teaching of the subject.

6. Research Methodology

This is a quantitative research for studying about problem in class of English for Buddhist Academic for Master Degree students, Master of Arts Program in Buddhism and Philosophy Mahamakut Buddhist University, Lanna Campus. Targeted group for this research are students enrolled during 2013-2015 totaling 17 students. Those are included eight students from the first year, and nine students from the second year. For the researching tool, a researcher has concentrated on validity, and reliability in accordance to three steps included:

1. Review of related literature for the research.
2. Consider each questions that have be raised covering in both closed-ended questions and opened-ended questions.
3. Bring the research outcome for professionals' evaluation in validity of content of the questionnaires and interviewing paper.

6.1 Data collection method

For the primary information, the researcher has collected from questionnaire, which was done, following to the below steps:

- 1) Specific send the questionnaire to the targeted group
- 2) Collect replies of the questionnaire, check for completion and correction of the questionnaire
- 3) Evaluate information that have been gathered from the questionnaire, which were derived from both closed-ended questions and opened-ended question

6.2 Quantitative research analysis

6.2.1 Descriptive statistics

The statistics that have been utilized for analysis is descriptive statistics, which are included frequency, percentage, average, and standard deviation. The frequency and percentage have been used for analyzing the information from the first part, which are general information of the sample group. Then, average and deviation will be used in the second and the third parts of the questionnaire.

7. Research outcome

1. Content factor has influenced on teaching and learning of English for Buddhism academic. The research has conducted a closed-ended questions to evaluate opinions about content factor, which could affect teaching and learning of English for Buddhism academic.

Content factor		Rate of opinion		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1	It is difficult in writing an English article for studying of English for Buddhist Academic	4.18	.728	Very
2	It is difficult in reading an English article for studying of English for Buddhist Academic	3.88	.600	Very
3	It is difficult in proposing and discussing Dhamma principle in English article	3.82	1.074	Very
4	It is difficult to study in writing an English article about Buddhism	3.65	.862	Very
5	Content for the English for Buddhist Academic subject is too difficult for students	3.65	.786	Very
Total		3.836	0.81	Very

In accordance to the table 1, it found that the content factor has strong influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate at $(\bar{X}) = 3.8$ and the standard deviation rate $(SD) = 0.81$ the top three content factors that have highest score in opinion rating included 1. It is difficult

- in writing an English article for studying of English for Buddhist Academic
2. It is difficult in reading an English article for studying of English for Buddhist Academic
3. It is difficult in proposing and discussing Dhamma principle in English article

Table 2: Teaching and learning method factor could influence the study of English for Buddhist Academic

Teaching and learning method factor		Rate of opinion		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1	The descriptive teaching method is an interesting method	3.82	1.074	Very
2	The discussion teaching method is interesting	3.94	.966	Very
3	To teach by conducting a group activity is an interesting method	4.00	.791	Very
4	To give a presentation in front of the class in an interesting method	4.06	.659	Very
5	A role playing is an interesting method	4.00	.791	Very
Total		3.964	0.856	Very

From the Table 2, it found that teaching and learning method has high influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate (\bar{X}) = 3.964 and standard deviation rate (SD) = 0.856. The top three factors

that high rate of influence are 1. To give a presentation in front of the class in an interesting method 2. To teach by conducting a group activity is an interesting method and 3. A role playing is an interesting method.

Table 3: A lecturer factor that could influence teaching and learning of English for Buddhist Academic

A lecturer factor		Rate of opinion		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1	Punctuation and responsibility on duty	4.35	.862	Very
2	Have knowledge in teaching content	4.65	.606	Very
3	Inform objective of the study before teaching	4.53	.717	Very
4	Have ability to describe and transfer knowledge and content	4.59	.618	Very
5	Apprise useful moral and ethics during describe	4.53	.717	Very
Total		4.53	0.704	Very

From Table 3, it found that a lecturer factor has strong influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate at (\bar{X}) = 4.53 and have a standard deviation (SD) = 0.704. The top three factors that have

highest influence on a lecturer factor included 1. Have knowledge in teaching content 2. Have ability to describe and transfer knowledge and content and 3. Apprise useful moral and ethic during describe

Table 4: A student factor that could influence teaching and learning of English for Buddhist Academic

A student factor		Rate of opinion		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1	A student is regularly interest and concentrate for studying English for Buddhist Academic	3.71	.772	Very
2	A student is actively to study during a learning hour of English for Buddhist Academic	3.82	.809	Very
3	A student like to think about vocabularies, sentences, or wording that related to a study of English for Buddhist Academic	3.47	.874	Very
4	A student has read books in advance before joining the class	3.53	.874	Very
5	When a teacher could not teach clearly, a student will ask the teacher immediately	3.76	.970	Very
Total		3.65	.860	Very

Following the Table 4, a student factor could influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate at (\bar{X}) = 3.568, while have a standard deviation rate (SD) = 0.860. The top three factors that have highest influence on a student learning included 1. A student is actively to study during a learning hour of English for

Buddhist Academic 2. When a teacher could not teach clearly, a student will ask the teacher immediately, and 3. A student is regularly interest and concentrate for studying English for Buddhist Academic

Table 5: Environment factor that could influence teaching and learning of English for Buddhist Academic

Environment factor		Rate of opinion		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1	Adequate amount of tables and chairs	4.12	.697	Very
2	Clean and tidy classroom	3.76	1.091	Very
3	Good air-flow in the classroom	3.76	1.200	Very
4	The classroom's atmosphere has encourage students to have a consciousness to study	3.71	1.160	Very
5	Classroom has modern and useable equipments and tools for teaching and learning	3.88	.857	Very
Total		3.846	1.00	Very

Following Table 5, environment factor has high influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate at (\bar{X}) = 3.846, while have a standard deviation (SD) = 1.00. The top three factors that have highest

influence included. Adequate amount of tables and chairs 2. Classroom has modern and useable equipments and tools for teaching and learning, and 3. Good air-flow in the classroom.

Table 6: Problems in teaching and learning English for Buddhist Academic

Problems in teaching and learning	Rate of opinion		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Result
1 English grammar learning	3.24	.831	Very
2 Writing an English article	3.47	1.068	Very
3 A retrieval of Buddhist Academic in English	3.53	1.068	Very
4 Communication in English	3.47	.874	Very
5 To present an article in English	3.41	1.004	Very
6 To describe in English	3.47	1.125	Very
Total	3.43	.995	Very

Following Table 6, problems in teaching and learning English for Buddhist Academic has high influence on the studying of English for Buddhist Academic with an average rate at $(\bar{X}) = 3.43$ and have a standard deviation $(SD) = 0.995$. The top three factors that have highest influence on problems in teaching and learning included 1. A retrieval of Buddhist Academic in English 2. A writing an English article and 3. To describe in English

8. Research Summarize

8.1 Content factor: The content of the course syllabus should be adapted in accordance to other learning sciences of learning such as science and social in order to integrate teaching contents. Students should be promoted for bi-lingua (English-Thai) study, while students should be encouraged to learn more English vocabulary, in particular vocabulary about Buddhism academic.

8.2 Teaching and learning factor: Students should be a center for teaching and learning. In the 21st decade, a field trip or travelling are one of efficiency tool for supporting student's learning, while a lecturer should integrate teaching and learning method with other subjects so that students could have a direct experience and understand better in English communication as they could directly learn from native speaker.

8.3 A lecturer factor: A skillful lecturer should adapt their teaching method to the current social environment. The lecturer should pay more attention to students, who have weak English abilities and encourage students to learn and increase their English skills.

8.4 A student factor: Since English does not be used in students' daily living, their learning has not successful. With difference background in English, it has obstructed teaching and learning. Students should be encouraged to develop their English abilities before studying.

8.5 Environment factor: Environment could influence students learning English. Good environment with technology and good media could encourage students' learning. The classroom has some noise as it is too close.

9. Research Discussion/Comment

The research outcome could address problems in teaching and learning as follows:

9.1 Content factor: The content factor has strong influence on the teaching and learning. It is found that it is difficult in writing an English article, reading an English article, as well

as difficult to proposing and discussing Dhamma articles and essays.

9.2 A teaching method factor: The teaching method has strong influence on teaching and learning, in particular the presentation method in front of the class, following teaching by using a group activity, and a role playing.

9.3 A lecturer factor: The lecturer has high impact on teaching and learning. It found that factors involved lecturer could influence teaching and learning included have knowledge in teaching content, have ability to describe and transfer knowledge and content, and the lecturer apprise useful moral and ethics during describing.

9.4 A student factor: The top three student factors that have highest influence on a student's learning included a student is actively to study during a learning hour of English for Buddhist Academic; and when a teacher could not teach clearly, a student will ask the teacher immediately; and a student is regularly interest and concentrate for studying English for Buddhist Academic.

9.5 Environment factor: The top three environment factors that have highest influence on teaching and learning included adequate amount of tables and chairs, classroom has modern and useable equipments and tools for teaching and learning, and good air-flow in the classroom.

10. Suggestions

1. Suggestions on policy, the content of the subject should be adopted in accordance to other sciences such as science and social in order to integrate teaching content.
2. Suggestions for people
3. Students should be encouraged to study a bilingual (English-Thai)
4. Students should be a center of learning in the 21st decade.
5. Travelling and field trip are useful for encouraging students' learning.
6. Suggestions for future research
7. A research about English teaching method for writing articles about Buddhism should be done.
8. A research about effectiveness of English for Buddhist Academic Subject study should be done.

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