

Language Learning Strategies Instruction via English for Community-based Tourism Blended Lessons to Enhance Speaking Ability of Thai EFL Youth Guides

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the English-speaking ability of the high and low-proficiency youth guides after studying English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons and examine their use of total and individual learning strategies in these blended lessons. The sample group consists of 32 youth guides who were secondary students from Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. They were selected by using a cluster random sampling technique. The instruments included an English for Community-based Tourism Youth Guides blended lesson, a speaking test and the rating scale, a language learning strategies questionnaire and a coding scheme. Means, standard deviations, paired-samples t-test and content analysis were used in data analysis. Results from the study showed that the performance of the high- and low-proficiency youth guides' groups had a significant difference between pre- and post-tests in both the total and six speaking aspect scores at the .00 level. The scores of both groups significantly improved. The results also indicated that the youth guides always used their learning strategies to learn during the three blended lessons. The high-proficiency youth guides utilised each language learning strategy in more meaningful, systematic, sophisticated and holistic ways than the low-proficiency youth guides. These results yielded insightful and substantive data about the instruction of language learning strategies in English within a specific field, English for community-based tourism with blended learning in Thailand.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies; Language for Specific Purposes; Blended learning; Speaking Ability; English for Community-based Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Recent data from 2022 shows that Thailand received 11.15 million foreign visitors, which increased tremendously from 2021's data due to the wide-ranging effects of the broad pandemic, particularly on the tourist industry. Results from 2021 showed about 428,000 visitors travelling in Thailand (Sriring, 2023). The major success in tourism is the growth in the demand for human resources, especially the youth employed in this area who act as ambassadors whilst hosting the visitors. This group of youths were considered to be the youth guides who possess the necessary knowledge of their hometown and, at the same time, can use English to allow them to welcome and give guided tours to the tourists. As a result of this growth, there is a shortage of tourism staff, particularly youth guides, especially English for Community-based Tourism youth guides who can deal proficiently with linguistically diverse tourists. The youth guides must be proficient in English speaking skills, particularly English, for community-based tourism communication.

English for Community-based Tourism is a subset of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that poses precise vocabulary, structure and content knowledge to communicate successfully (Douglas, 2000; Phaiboonnugulkij et al., 2021; Purba et al., 2022; Shinde & Shinde, 2022). This ESP ability results from an interaction between the two areas of knowledge, utilising strategic knowledge that acts

as the mediator between the abovementioned areas. Strategic knowledge is a significant ability in learning English, and it is part of language learning strategies. Language learning strategies are the ways that learners use their thoughts consciously and take action to achieve their learning goals (Chamot, 2004). These strategies are significant in language learning because they are tools for active and self-directed learning, an essential part of communicative competence (Oxford, 1994).

In ESP ability, these strategies act as a mediator to relate between specific background knowledge, language knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge to form the specific content area ability. Language learning strategies in contemporary academia are focused on metacognitive strategies that require higher-order thinking that youth guides utilise while learning English for community-based tourism. They are made up of 4 strategies: assessment, goal setting, planning and control of linguistic execution. These strategies are significant tools in learning a language, and they can be explicitly taught and trained.

Owing to these significances, the effects of these language learning strategies, instruction, and metacognitive strategies on speaking proficiency are widely investigated with positive results (Pitenoe et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2021). However, very few studies have been conducted in the context of community-based tourism, especially with the blended learning platform in speaking ability. Adding to this, there is an urgent need to investigate the use of these language learning strategies in English for Community-based Tourism, especially in the context of Thai students and, most importantly, in the speaking ability of the youth guides. Given the nature and significance, the following research questions and hypotheses are formulated:

1. Are there any significant differences between pre- and post-speaking test scores of the low and high-proficiency youth guides studying through English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai?

2. Are there any significant differences in total and individual learning strategies between the youth guides with low and high proficiency through English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons?

Research hypotheses:

Research hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between pre-test mean scores and post-test mean scores of English speaking ability of the youth guides who studied through English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons at a .05 level.

Research hypothesis 2: There are significant differences in total and individual learning strategies between the youth guides with low and high proficiency through English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons at a .05 level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES-BASED INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Language learning strategies are the manners in which learners use their thoughts consciously and take action to achieve their learning goals (Chamot, 2004). These strategies are significant in language learning because they are tools for active and self-directed learning, an essential part of communicative competence (Oxford, 1994). In this study, language learning strategies are emphasised as metacognitive strategies, which are the higher-order thinking that youth guides utilise while learning English for community-based tourism blended lessons. They consist of four strategies: assessment, goal setting, planning and control of linguistic execution.

The effects of teaching metacognitive strategies on English language learning have been explored in many skills with varied results. Some studies found positive effects of metacognitive instruction that could increase students' achievement scores (Bozorgian & Alamdari, 2018; Pitenoe et al., 2017). However, some studies did not find any effects of teaching these metacognitive strategies on students' achievement (Suwanarak, 2019).

The effects of metacognitive instruction on Chinese EFL university students attempting speaking tasks were investigated by Zhang et al., (2021) with 130 university students. The results show that the Chinese EFL university students were not actively using metacognitive strategies to respond to the speaking tasks despite their high English proficiency level. This may be due to the lack of access to metacognitive instruction, as reported in the oral survey. For pedagogical benefit, it was suggested in this study that problem-solving centre strategies and instruction should be implemented in classroom activities. Then, multiple-metacognitive strategies instruction should be implemented after students have mastered the single metacognitive strategies.

Adding to this, Jafari et al., (2021) found positive effects of metacognitive instruction with 90 advanced EFL adult learners from the Language Institute in Iran. Results show that metacognitive instruction was effective in enhancing learners' speaking ability. The reason may be that metacognitive strategies helped learners to engage in speaking activities and create an interactive learning environment. This instructional method played a significant role in improving learners' reflection and self-assessment.

Similarly, Pitenoe et al., (2017) confirm the positive effects of metacognitive instruction on 75 Iranian intermediate EFL students. Results showed a relationship between metacognitive strategies and students' content writing achievements. Metacognitive strategies instruction proved to be effective in enhancing EFL students' writing ability. Bozorgian and Alamdari (2018) also found the positive effects of metacognitive instruction with the difference in the skills of 180 male and female Iranian students. The findings showed positive effects of metacognitive instruction through dialogic interaction on learners' learners multimedia listening comprehension and their metacognitive awareness in listening skills.

In contrast, a study by Suwanarak (2019) showed no significant effect of strategy instruction on the control and experimental groups of 219 undergraduate students in Thai universities. To be precise, they did not use significantly different frequencies of their strategies. However, the instruction did help to raise awareness in using their learning strategies. The finding showed the different patterns of strategy use between high- and low-strategy users. It was concluded that the high-strategy users tended to have more metacognitive knowledge, which enabled them to identify, monitor, and assess their learning outcomes.

USE OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, SPEAKING SKILL

Metacognitive strategies are a sub-set of language learning strategies and part of the so-called 'strategic competence' in ESP ability by Douglas (2000). It is the conscious thoughts and actions the learners take in their learning to achieve their learning goals (Chamot, 2004). These strategies are significant in language learning because they are tools for active and self-directed learning, an essential part of communicative competence (Oxford, 1994). Metacognitive strategies are used in both language formulation and production. It is defined by Douglas (2000) as the higher-order thinking that the language learners consciously use to formulate and produce the language. In ESP ability, metacognitive strategies act as a mediator to related English language knowledge and Community-based tourism content knowledge to formulate and produce the language when

learners study the lessons. Metacognitive strategies are also defined by Oxford (1994) as the direct strategy.

Metacognitive strategies are investigated on how they are utilised, their relationship with characteristics/traits of learners and their patterns of use in relation to proficiency levels. The results of the differences in the frequency of strategies used are inconclusive as these choices depend on learners' characteristics (Oxford, 1994). However, highly proficient language learners utilise their metacognitive strategies to resolve communication problems in a particular pattern, as found in these recent studies (Jafari et al., 2021; John et al., 2021; Othman et al., 2022; Thawarom et al., 2022). It is concluded that regardless of the number of metacognitive strategies used, selecting fewer and more appropriate strategies is more effective in promoting speaking skills in the context of ESP (Damanik, 2022).

The recent study by Othman et al., (2022) investigated language learning strategies used by Engineering undergraduates in their oral presentation skills. The results showed that students used more metacognitive and cognitive strategies than social and affective strategies. They frequently employed the strategies of planning and self-evaluation. For these reasons, students may need to use these strategies to achieve their goals and be actively involved in selecting, monitoring, and evaluating their learning to achieve their goals and solve problems with their oral presentation.

Differences in metacognitive knowledge when performing ESP speaking tasks are notable between the high and low-proficiency university students in Thailand. Thawarom et al. (2022) analysed and compared metacognitive knowledge when performing ESP speaking tasks with these groups of university students. A total of 34 first-year students participated in this study for the Technical English course. Results showed that the greatest difference in the individual metacognitive knowledge between the two groups was in task knowledge. The reason for the high use of strategy knowledge in metacognitive strategies may be the result of the nature of the task requiring them to perform speaking purposively and meaningfully. Students should be trained about metacognitive knowledge at the very first stage of a learning task.

Similarly, Bojović (2020) found that Engineering students frequently employed their metacognitive strategies in ESP class. Results from frequent use of these strategies may be from the explicit teaching of these strategies, and awareness training was applied in this group of students. It is suggested in this study that the number of speaking strategies used was less important than students' ability to utilise them with the task and their learning styles that capably combined them with related strategies.

On the contrary, the results on the indifferences and infrequent use of metacognitive strategies are found in some recent studies by Damanik (2022), Zhang et al., (2021) and Phaiboonnugulkij (2018). Damanik (2022) investigates language learning strategies used by Indonesian learners in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The findings revealed that the participants used various language-learning strategies in learning English for IELTS. The strategies used most frequently were metacognitive, whereas the least frequently used were memory strategies. The reason that metacognitive strategies were the most favourable strategies may be due to the participants being aware of ways to plan, manage and assess their own learning. Metacognitive strategies helped them to manage and control their learning.

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) BLENDED LEARNING IN SPEAKING SKILL

Speaking skills in ESP have precise characteristics of technical terms, structures, and specific related content knowledge that is used in a particular situation. In learning to speak, language learners are required to use accurate grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and knowledge about when and how to communicate (Shinde & Shinde, 2022). In the context of ESP, blended learning is also employed to facilitate English language learning with some positive results. However, strict consideration of the use of blended learning should be taken into account in terms of linguistic support, the design of activities, the role of facilitators, learning resources, and the ratio of face-to-face and online learning.

Shinde & Shinde (2022) aims to develop ESP speaking skills of students through the use of Activity-based Learning technique. A total of 100 first-year Engineering students participated in this study. Their speaking skills were assessed on confidence level, fluency, accuracy and content understanding. Results show the development in their speaking skills from grade D (poor) to C (average) and B (good). They were also provided with multiple learning resources, which gave them the chance to review and prepare their studies. This included authentic activities, namely formal meeting arrangements in the classroom. Similar improvements were found in the recent study by Purba et al., (2022). This study aims to improve nurses' ESP communicative competence by digital storytelling instruction with 125 participants. Results showed that their communicative competence improved significantly through this technology-integrated method.

A recent study from Bagheri and Zenouzagh (2021) shows that effective technology-integrated language learning innovation can connect learners through collaborative activities and allow them to learn through discussing and exchanging their ideas. With this regard, Godwin-Jones (2020) added that blended learning in language puts emphasis on connecting the classroom to the real world through language and community. Self-learning effectively promoted language learning through these mixed learning modalities. The emphasis was on being active learners gaining knowledge through inquiry. One of the key elements of a blended classroom was the activities that lecturers used apart from the content of the core textbook. They can use activities to promote self-learning from all available online and offline resources. Learners were able to learn through media interaction with peers to develop language and social skills through culture, feedback and reflection in a blended classroom, as found in recent studies (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Barrett & Liu, 2019; Meskill et al., 2020). Adding to this, the effectiveness of a blended learning method depends on the student's needs and requirements. Faculty staff should tailor their courses and blended learning teaching models to meet students' preferences (Zamri & Narasuman, 2023).

ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

English for Community-based Tourism is a subset of ESP with the course contents and syllabus design drawn specifically from subject specialists in the target area, which is Khokkrachai Sub-district, Kornburi District in Nakhon Ratchasima province in Thailand. As a result of the richness of both the natural and historical attractions and the potential for community-based tourism, Khokkrachai is one of the major areas of community-based tourism attractions in Nakhon Ratchasima, and the area has been supported and funded by both the province and Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University as an area-based research project.

English for Community-based Tourism in the Khokkrachai area aims to develop the speaking skills of the youth guides in the community. The course underpins metacognitive instruction with the integration of ESP with technology instruction and ESP ability and assessment criteria (Douglas, 2000; Phaiboonnugulkij, 2018) to assess the youth guide speaking ability. The youth guides were instructed in the blended learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

This research is pre-experimental with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The population in this study was the youth guides at Khokkrachai Sub-district, Kornburi District Nakhon Ratchasima. They studied in Grade 9 in the second semester of the academic year 2020. The sample group consisted of 32 students from Baan Marbgrad School, Khokkrachai Sub-district, Kornburi District Nakhon Ratchasima.

They were selected by using a cluster random sampling technique from their schedule to ensure students could participate in this research study throughout the entire semester. The study required students with an English language proficiency level who had passed an English foundation course from Grade 8 from the standard criteria of the school. The sample had participated in the English for Community-based Tourism Camp arranged by their school. Out of the population of 60 students' batch, a total of 32 were selected for participation in the present study.

The sample group was categorised into high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups based on their test scores from an English Speaking Test for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai Area, Kornburi District, Nakhon Ratchasima. Youth guides with scores above 42.31 were in the high-proficiency group, whereas those with a score above 19.50 were in the low-proficiency group. The total score of the test was 60 from three test tasks. They had to get permission to participate in this research project from their parents in the consent form according to the Code of Ethics number HE-111-2020.

INSTRUMENTATIONS

NEED ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE

A need analysis questionnaire was developed by the researcher to investigate the Target Language Use (TLU) tasks and situations, language knowledge and aspects required in English for Community-based tourism tour guides, and criteria for assessing their language knowledge from the subject specialists in the fields. These questionnaires were administered to all related stakeholders, including Community-based Tourism (CBT) tour guides, tourists, English for Tourism teachers and youth guide students. The questionnaire consisted of four parts.

In Part One, demographic information of the content area specialists was required from the respondents. Part Two and Part Three consisted of a 4-point Likert scale asking the degree of importance of the tasks, situations, and language knowledge that were most likely to be used by CBT youth guides. In addition, Part Three touched on language use in giving guided tours in CBT and context. Part Four was also a 4-point Likert scale asking about criteria used in assessing CBT language use in speaking skills with open-ended questions from the youth guides.

ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM YOUTH GUIDES AT KHOKKRACHAI SUB-DISTRICT, KORNBURI DISTRICT,
NAKHON RATCHASIMA BLENDED LESSON (TEACHER AND STUDENT MANUALS)

English for Community-based Tourism Youth Guides at Khokkrachai Sub-district, Kornburi District, and Nakhon Ratchasima blended lessons are the lesson plans for both teachers and students trained in this course. The lesson plans in the present study are also called Teacher and Student Manuals. Metacognitive instruction underpins the lesson plans with the integration of ESP-with technology instruction in teaching methodology and ESP ability and assessment criteria (Douglas, 2000; Phaiboonnugulkij, 2018) to assess the youth guide speaking ability. All the information obtained from the subject specialists from a need analysis questionnaire was used in the content and syllabus design of the lessons.

Firstly, youth guides were introduced to the unit's objectives and were explicitly introduced to the learning strategies and the metacognitive strategies in this study. They were instructed on the single strategy first and, later on, how to assess what was required to complete the learning activities and tasks, and they set their goal by studying what was required from the unit's learning activities. Then, they were required to plan what to do to achieve their learning goal, both individually and as a group. They were then trained to retrieve and organise the language knowledge elements needed to succeed with their plans. They finally self-assessed their performance individually or in a group based on the criteria in each unit. Most of the time, they were required to self-study the content before the training and completed exercises online, except for some group assignments. Researchers would act as facilitators to give guidance to them through a series of activities. The ratio of online self-study to on-site was 30:70. There were three lesson plans altogether.

ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM FOR YOUTH GUIDES AT KHOKKRACHAI ATTRACTIONS
SPEAKING TEST AND THE RATING SCALE

The English for Community-based Tourism for Youth Guides at Khokkrachai Attractions Speaking test was used as both a pre- and post-test in this training course for the youth guides at the Khokkrachai area. All the test tasks and contents were related to what had been taught and the expected performances of the youth guides in English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai. It consisted of 3 test tasks: Giving a welcoming speech to the tourists, Giving a guided tour of Khokkrachai attractions, and Giving polite suggestions about the dos and Don'ts of Northeastern Region attractions in Thailand. The total time for taking the three test tasks was 7 minutes, with a total of 60 marks.

Youth guides were required to take the speaking test with the researcher, who was the lecturer of the course, and two lecturers who also taught them in this training course. They first selected, read the prompt from the screen and talked based on the task requirement. Their responses were video recorded and uploaded to the system. The test was piloted with 10 Grade 9 students from Baan Mabgrad School, and they were excluded from the main study. Two raters rated their responses later for reliability and validity of the scores. This test was validated by three experts in the field, and it posted high content and construct validity at an IOC value of one. It was revised before being converted into an online version.

THE RATING SCALE

An analytical rating scale was used in this study and adapted from Douglas's (2000) framework of assessing LSP ability, Fulcher (2003) and Phaiboonnugulkij et al., (2021), Phaiboonnugulkij (2018) for English for Tourism speaking ability with technology integrated instruction. The rating scale consisted of six aspects: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, content and gesture. The criteria were accuracy, range, complexity, completion and appropriate use of these speaking aspects. Each aspect was made up of four ability bands, starting from band level 1 (a poor user), 2 (a fair user), 3 (a good user), and 4 (a very good user).

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM YOUTH GUIDES AT KHOKKRACHAI SUB-DISTRICT, KORNBURI DISTRICT, NAKHON RATCHASIMA QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire on the use of language learning strategies was developed under the notion of strategic competence in LSP ability by Douglas (2000), Language learning strategies (Oxford, 1994), and metacognitive strategies used in an Internet-integrated speaking skill in English for Domestic Tourism lesson by Phaiboonnugulkij (2018). The emphasis is on the use of metacognitive strategies on how youth guides with different proficiency levels exploited these strategies to facilitate their speaking skill in the CBT context.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts that aimed to elicit the metacognitive strategies used. Each part consisted of a 4-point Likert scale rating the frequencies of these metacognitive strategies used. These metacognitive strategies consisted of assessment, goal setting, planning and control of linguistic execution. Each strategy was made up of five statements signifying how they employed the strategies based on the definition for the youth guides to rate their frequencies. A total of 20 statements were provided with four open-ended parts in each of the sub-strategies for them to write down the full details of how they actually used these strategies in their learning of each unit. There were a total of 60 statements and 12 open-ended parts across the three units.

CODING SCHEME

A coding scheme was used to classify and provide insight and details on how the youth guides utilise their language learning strategies in the CBT context. The definitions of the sub-strategies were revised and adjusted to be used in this context. Metacognitive strategies consist of 4 independent strategies: assessment, goal setting, planning, and control of linguistic execution. Assessment strategies are used to determine what is needed, what one has to work with and how well one has done to achieve the tourism communicative goal and objective of the lesson. Goal-setting strategies are used to identify how to achieve the objectives of the lesson. Planning strategies are employed to decide how to use the existing English language knowledge and Community-based tourism-related content knowledge to achieve the objective of the lesson and communicative goal in the tourism context. Control of linguistic execution strategies is used for retrieving and organising what language knowledge elements are needed to succeed in the planning strategies.

This coding scheme was validated and piloted before the main study. Then, the coders were trained to transcribe and categorise the reported metacognitive strategies. Two coders participated in this study to ensure the consistency and validity of the coding method. One researcher was a coder, and another was an English lecturer at NRRU, holding an M.A. in English language studies with six years of teaching experience.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected using the following procedures. Youth guides were pre-tested on their speaking ability using an English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai Attractions Speaking test. Prior to the actual training, they were first introduced and oriented on how to use metacognitive instruction in the blended lessons with the Students’ Manual. They were trained in the Youth Guides Camp Project arranged by their school during a semester break. They studied three lessons with self-study in online and on-site modalities. All of them were asked to fill out the consent form for their permission to participate in the present study from their parents since they were under 18 years of age.

At the end of each lesson, they were asked to complete the language learning questionnaire about the frequency and how they used these metacognitive strategies in their learning. They were required to write in full detail how to use these strategies in the questionnaires to provide concrete examples in each lesson and sub-strategies. The data on the frequency was statistically analysed, and the use of metacognitive strategies in the lessons from the questionnaires was transcribed into the coding scheme by the coders. At the end of the training, they were post-tested with the speaking test and administered with the opinion questionnaire.

RESULTS

The results in relation to research questions are presented as follows.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: ARE THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-SPEAKING TEST SCORES OF THE LOW AND HIGH-PROFICIENCY YOUTH GUIDES STUDYING THROUGH ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AT KHOKKRACHAI?

The results from the comparison of the post-test mean score of the high- and low-proficiency youth guides’ speaking ability with the pre-test mean score in 6 aspects are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. The comparison of the post-test means score of the low and high-proficiency youth guides’ speaking ability with the pre-test mean score in six speaking aspects

Proficiency group	Speaking aspects	Total scores	Pre-test		Post-test		MD	t	Sig
			\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.			
Low	Vocabulary	10	2.37	.83	5.23	1.15	2.85	7.17*	.00
	Grammar	10	2.12	.80	5.14	1.16	3.02	7.83*	.00
	Pronunciation	10	2.00	.73	4.41	.99	2.41	8.05*	.00
	Fluency	10	1.62	1.05	4.64	1.14	3.02	8.22*	.00
	Content	10	1.95	.81	5.04	1.00	3.08	9.07*	.00
	Gesture	10	1.56	.74	3.89	1.17	2.33	6.39*	.00
	Total	60	15.50	4.97	28.50	5.81	13.00	6.41*	.00
High	Vocabulary	10	4.77	.67	7.24	.41	2.47	14.90*	.00
	Grammar	10	4.52	.65	7.27	.44	2.75	17.92*	.00
	Pronunciation	10	4.43	.88	7.27	.25	2.83	10.73*	.00
	Fluency	10	4.54	1.10	7.31	.27	2.77	11.31*	.00
	Content	10	4.66	1.01	8.02	.44	3.35	14.31*	.00
	Gesture	10	3.45	1.12	7.33	.79	3.87	12.12*	.00
	Total	60	35.74	6.38	44.45	1.88	8.70	6.12*	.00

* $p \leq .05$

Table 1 illustrates the differences between the post-test mean score of the low and high-proficiency youth guides' speaking ability and the pre-test mean score in six speaking aspects. In general, the low-proficiency youth guides had higher mean differences between total pre- and post-test scores ($t(15)=6.41, p=.00$) than the high-proficiency youth guides ($t(15)=6.12, p=.00$). Specifically, the low proficiency youth guides had the pre-test scores of 15.50 and they can reach 28.50 for their post-test scores ($\bar{X}_{pre}=15.50, SD.=4.97; \bar{X}_{post}=28.50, SD.=5.81$). Their pre-and post-test scores were equivalent to a poor level. Although this group had significantly improved their speaking ability, their scores were still nearly at the pass level at 30. As for the high proficiency youth guides, they had pre-test scores of 35.74, and they can reach 44.45 for their post-test scores ($\bar{X}_{pre}=1.56, SD.=.74; \bar{X}_{post}=44.45, SD.=1.88$). This equates to progress in their speaking ability from fair to good level.

To be precise, low-proficiency youth guides had the highest mean difference in content ($\bar{X}_{pre}=1.95, SD.=.81; \bar{X}_{post}=5.04, SD.=1.00$) that they improved from low to fair level. Similar progress was found in vocabulary and grammar. Adversely, the lowest mean difference was in a gesture that their pre-and post-test scores were at a low level ($\bar{X}_{pre}=1.56, SD.=.74; \bar{X}_{post}=3.89, SD.=1.17$). However, the high-proficiency youth guides had the highest mean difference in gesture ($\bar{X}_{pre}=3.45, SD.=1.12; \bar{X}_{post}=7.33, SD.=.79$) whereas the lowest mean difference was in vocabulary ($\bar{X}_{pre}=4.77, SD.=.67; \bar{X}_{post}=7.24, SD.=.41$). This shows they can progress from a low to a good level for their speaking ability in these two speaking aspects and the remaining four aspects. From these results, the hypothesis 1 was accepted. This is because the significant difference at .05 levels in all the individual speaking aspects and total speaking scores is notable in both groups.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: ARE THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN TOTAL AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STRATEGIES BETWEEN THE LOW AND HIGH-PROFICIENCY YOUTH GUIDES THROUGH ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AT KHOKKRACHAI?

The results from the means score of individual and total frequencies of learning strategies of the low and high-proficiency youth guides are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Mean scores of individual and total frequencies of learning strategies of the low and high-proficiency youth guides

Types of Speaking Strategies	N	Proficiency levels				Meaning	MD	t	Sig
		Low		High					
		\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.				
Goal setting	16	3.23	.44	3.19	.30	Always	.04	.28	.78
Planning	16	3.29	.45	3.33	.25	Always	-.04	-.36	.71
Assessment	16	3.36	.36	3.27	.29	Always	.08	.75	.46
Control of linguistic execution	16	3.25	.51	3.26	.36	Always	-.01	.04	.97
Total	16	3.28	.42	3.27	.25	Always	.01	.12	.90

* $p \leq .05$

Table 2 illustrates the differences between the mean scores of individuals and total frequencies of the learning strategies of the low and high-proficiency youth guides' groups. Generally, the two groups did not use significantly different frequencies of 4 individual learning strategies: Goal setting ($t(30)=.28, p=.78$), planning ($t(30)=-.36, p=.71$), assessment ($t(30)=.75, p=.46$) and control of linguistic execution ($t(30)=.04, p=.97$). Their total learning strategies were also not significantly different ($t(30)=.12, p=.90$). In other words, they always used both individual and total strategies across the three lessons.

The low proficiency youth guides' group reported the highest frequencies of assessment ($\bar{X}=3.36$, $SD=.36$), followed by planning ($\bar{X}=3.29$, $SD=.45$), control of linguistic execution ($\bar{X}=3.25$, $SD=.51$) and goal setting strategies ($\bar{X} 3.23$, $SD=.44$) orderly. Alternatively, the high proficiency youth guides' group reported an almost identical pattern of use as their counterpart with the highest frequencies of planning ($\bar{X}=3.33$, $SD=.25$), followed by assessment ($\bar{X}=3.27$, $SD=.29$), control of linguistic execution ($\bar{X} 3.26$, $SD=.36$) and goal setting strategies ($\bar{X}=3.19$, $SD=.30$) respectively.

Interestingly, the low-proficiency youth guides' group slightly outnumbered the high-proficiency group on the use of goal setting and assessment strategies, while the reverse was true in planning and control of linguistic execution strategies. The latter one was scarcely noticeable in the difference. From these results, the hypothesis 2 was rejected. This is because there are no significant differences at .05 levels in all the individual and total learning strategies between the two groups.

CONTENT ANALYSIS FROM THE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES CODING SCHEME

This section presents content analysis from the language learning strategies coding scheme. The first letters, "H" and "L", refer to the high- and low-proficiency of the youth guides, while the number means the number of participants. The last letter, "U", means the unit, followed by the number of that unit.

Generally, the high-proficiency youth guides utilised each individual metacognitive strategy in more meaningful, systematic, sophisticated, and holistic ways than the low-proficiency youth guides in their learning. On the contrary, the low group used their learning strategies by emphasising a single element, such as sharing work with friends, and they focused mainly on technical terms. The details of how the two proficiency groups employed their individual learning strategies are as follows.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The high proficiency group used assessment strategies to evaluate their presentation and check for accuracy and all details. They assessed what they had done in series and reviewed their work. On the contrary, the low proficiency group assessed their presentations at the word level and relied mostly on teacher approval. The examples are as follows:

H1U1: I evaluate the presentation by checking the accuracy, asking the teacher, and asking a friend.

H1U2: I can explain the folk museum quite well, but I still need more content and time to practice.

L3U1: (I) evaluate the work by checking it over and asking the teacher.

GOAL SETTING STRATEGIES

The high proficiency group used goal-setting strategies to set goals in a meaningful and explicit way to reach the unit objectives. On the other hand, the low proficiency group focused only on a single element to achieve their goal. The examples are as follows:

H7U1: I set a goal to greet the tourists by talking to my friends, sharing work, and doing our best at presentation.

L8U1: (I) Aim at how to use vocabulary.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

The high proficiency group used planning strategies to plan their work in more systematic and holistic ways with more details than the low proficiency group. Conversely, the low proficiency group did not report that they could plan in detail. The examples are as follows:

H11U2: I planned to speak about the Hundred-Year-Old Wooden Bridge by sharing the work with my friends, planning the speaking person, choosing the content writer, and deciding on who will find information.

L5U3: I prepare my presentation.

CONTROL OF LINGUISTIC EXECUTION STRATEGIES

The high proficiency group used their control of linguistics execution strategies to retrieve and organise concrete elements to succeed with their plan. They were also concerned about the value needed to present to the tourists. In reverse, the low proficiency group relied mainly on single elements, including words and reasons. The examples are as follows:

H7U1: I think of vocabulary and contents before I speak, such as Sam Glur Escarpment. I ask my friends to search for information.

L4U1: I think of vocabulary before I speak, such as Makha.

L7U3: I check the work before turning it in by asking the teacher.

DISCUSSIONS

DIFFERENCES IN THE PRE- AND POST-TOTAL AND SIX INDIVIDUAL SPEAKING ASPECT SCORES OF THE LOW AND HIGH PROFICIENCY YOUTH GUIDES THROUGH ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AT KHOKKRACHAI BLENDED LESSON

The results showed a significant difference between the pre-and post-total and six individual speaking aspects test scores of the youth guides at the .00 level from the two groups; therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Results from a significant difference in the pre- and post-total and six individual speaking aspects scores of the two proficiency groups correspond to the recent studies of Shinde & Shinde (2022), Purba et al., (2022), Phaiboonnugulkij et al. (2021), Zhang et al., (2021) and Pitenoe et al. (2017). These authors found a significant improvement in the learner's ESP speaking ability through the use of metacognitive instruction and technology-integrated instruction. Shinde & Shinde (2022) investigated the ESP speaking skills of Engineering students through the use of the Activity-based Learning technique. The results show that their ESP speaking skills have improved significantly. Similarly, Purba et al., (2022) aim to improve nurses' ESP communicative competence through digital storytelling instruction. Results show that their communicative competence improves significantly through a technology-integrated method. Adding to this, Phaiboonnugulkij et al. (2021) confirm the improvement of speaking for the youth guides learning through English for Geotourism language innovation that incorporates blended learning with social constructivism.

The main reason for the significant improvements may stem from the effects of metacognitive instructions on ESP speaking ability, as evident in some recent studies (Pitenoe et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2021). These studies found that ESP learners, who were instructed explicitly

on how to use these metacognitive strategies, were able to take control and manage their own learning effectively by resolving difficulties in communicative tasks. In this study, the youth guides were first instructed with the notion of metacognitive strategies in each unit. They then were trained on how to utilise these metacognitive strategies in their learning activities. They were taught how to assess what is needed in their learning tasks, set goals to achieve a task, plan their linguistic and CBT content knowledge resources and retrieve and organise linguistic elements to succeed with their plan. They were finally able to manage their own learning, and the results were an improvement in their English for CBT speaking skills.

The reasons for the differences between the pre- and post-total test scores of the two proficiency groups for six individual speaking aspects may be due to the blended learning environment that connects the classroom to the real world through language and community (Godwin-Jones, 2020). This includes blended teaching methods that meet students' needs and requirements (Zamri & Narasuman, 2023). In this blended learning, youth guides would take control of their own learning as active learners that they needed to acquire the knowledge in class and on their own through a series of self-study interactive exercises. They had the opportunity to gain knowledge through inquiry.

Concerning the difference in the mean scores of the two proficiency groups' pre- and post-six speaking aspects, all are significantly different at the .00 level, and the most noticeable is the use of gestures in the high proficiency group, which may be due to confidence and anxiety in the use of language that associates with language proficiency level as seen in the works of Bojović (2020) and Phaiboonnugulkij et al. (2021). In these studies, high-proficiency learners were more confident in using the language in their speaking skills. The high-proficiency youth guides had adequate linguistic knowledge, and they were more confident in using these gesture aspects. They had significantly better scores in this speaking aspect. In reverse, the low-proficiency youth guides needed to allocate their linguistic resources to respond to the learning task that they were being confronted with. Consequently, these factors affected their confidence to use gestures effectively.

In the low proficiency group, the highest mean difference is found in content, which may be from metacognitive instruction that enables them to know the task and linguistic requirement to respond to the test tasks effectively. They knew how to assess specific content required in the test tasks. This included knowing specific technical terms and particular language structures to respond to the prompt. Thus, the low-proficiency youth guides' group had the highest progress in content, and the highest mean scores were found in the high-proficiency youth guides' group.

FREQUENCIES IN TOTAL AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STRATEGIES BETWEEN THE LOW AND HIGH PROFICIENCY, YOUTH GUIDED THROUGH ENGLISH FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOUSIM AT KHOKKRACHAI BLENDED LESSON

Results from mean scores on the individual and total frequencies of learning strategies by the youth guides from both the low and high-proficiency groups were not significantly different at the .00 level; therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected. The results showed that they always utilised their learning strategies to study English for community-based tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons. These results are relevant to the previous studies (Damanik, 2022; Othman et al., 2022; Phaiboonnugulkij, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). These results show prominent features of specific strategies associated with the proficiency levels of ESP learners. Othman et al., (2022) found that the learners were in favour of using metacognitive strategies in their oral presentations. They frequently used these metacognitive strategies across learning tasks. In the present study, the two

proficiency groups had quite similar total language learning strategies, and their individual strategies across units were not much different.

The major reason for the high frequencies of the learning strategies used by the two proficiency groups may be the effects of metacognitive instructions on ESP speaking ability, as evident in these recent studies (Phaiboonnugulkij, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). Metacognitive instruction provides the conditions needed for learners to be aware of their learning, enable them to engage in speaking activities and create an interactive learning environment. Youth guides can reflect, assess, set goals, and plan and monitor their own learning. This metacognitive instructional approach was found to contribute to ESP speaking development. From this realisation, the two groups reported not much difference in the frequency of the use of metacognitive strategies. In this study, both proficiency groups were taught what metacognitive strategies were and how to utilise them in their learning. Individual strategies were focused, and then the groups of strategies were introduced to them in one learning activity to show them how explicitly they benefit their learning.

Another reason for the high frequency of use of these learning strategies across proficiency levels and units may be from the purposive selection of these strategies and the precise type and requirement of learning activities in ESP scenarios. High-proficiency youth guides purposively selected some language learning strategies that would work for them, which resulted in fewer appropriate strategies, as can be seen in the present study. However, the low-proficiency youth guides may try a number of different strategies, a trial and error strategy, which may result in higher use.

These results are pertinent to the study of Damanik (2022) and Suwanarak (2019) that found no difference in metacognitive strategies in ESP learners. In addition, the precise type and requirement of learning activities in ESP scenarios would affect the metacognitive strategies used, which are seen in the study of Thawarom et al., (2022). These authors found that ESP students reported high use of metacognitive strategies from the nature of speaking tasks that required them to perform meaningful speaking performances purposively in specific scenarios. However, the salient difference is noticeable in the pattern of strategy use between the two groups of students (Suwanarak, 2019). In the present study, the high-proficiency youth guides utilise each individual metacognitive strategy in more meaningful, systematic, sophisticated and holistic ways than the low-proficiency youth guides, as illustrated in the qualitative content analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to compare the post-test mean score of the low and high-proficiency youth guides' English speaking ability with the pre-test mean score and examine total and individual learning strategies between the two groups studying through English for Community-based Tourism at Khokkrachai blended lessons. The results from the first research objective showed that their speaking ability improved progressively after studying through these blended lessons. The highest and lowest mean differences were noticeable in content and gesture in the high group, whereas gesture and vocabulary were evident in the low group. These results confirm that language learning strategies instruction with blended lessons can effectively promote speaking skills in English for Community-based Tourism.

Results from the second objective indicated that the youth guides always used their learning strategies to learn three blended lessons. In other words, the two proficiency groups do not use different frequencies of their learning strategies. The major reason for the high frequencies of the

learning strategies used by the two proficiency groups may be from the effects of metacognitive instructions on ESP speaking ability, the purposive selection of these strategies used and the precise type and requirement of learning activities in ESP scenarios. Importantly, the salient difference was found in the patterns of individual language strategies used to respond to the learning activities, particularly in the high-proficiency youth guides' group. Patterns of language learning strategies are important in utilising these strategies effectively and meaningfully, enhancing their ESP speaking ability.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study focused mainly on the four language learning strategies for instruction in speaking skills; other learning strategies should be investigated in a future study and in different skills. For implication, the results of the present study yield insightful information about how the specific characteristics of language use in CBT context with blended learning and metacognitive instruction could effectively promote the speaking ability of the youth guides in ESP fields. This data should be implemented in other ESP lesson plan designs and course instruction in the Thai context. Additionally, the pattern of use of language learning strategies from the highly proficient learners should be instructed to the less proficient learners to effectively improve their ESP speaking skills.

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