Developing Tasks to Foster Thai Students' Willingness to Present in English

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Abstract—It is evident that there are many factors that influence degrees of willingness to present among second language (L2) learners. Within the current context, less proficient students have shown clear signs of reluctance to deliver presentations in English language classrooms. Based on the researchers' assumption and previous existing literature, there are two variables (i.e., topics for presentation and preparation time for presentation) central to the phenomenon situated. This article describes a pilot study which investigated to what extent a speaking task designed on the basis of two key factors (i.e., speaking topics relevant to students' background knowledge and extended preparation time) produces a positive impact on Thai students' degrees of willingness to present in English. Under study, 15 undergraduates in a Thai university were encouraged to deliver a presentation about a secret tourist attraction in their city. Flipped learning was also adapted and utilized as an approach that offered students more preparation time to deliver their presentations. Findings gained from students' written reflections and a willingness to present scale demonstrated that students' degrees of willingness to present were positively influenced by the task design. Pedagogical implications are also provided in this study.

Index Terms— willingness to present, speaking tasks, flipped learning, L2 speaking

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is considered to be a salient aspect of second language (hereafter L2) education as mastery of speaking skills facilitates the language learning process (Lee, 2019; Riasati, 2018; Shen & Byfield, 2019). Among many language learners, this key attribute brings about increased opportunity for L2 practice and authentic use of L2. Competence in English speaking skills also serves as a priority for many learners as they generally measure their degree of success based on their improvement in speaking proficiency (Riasati, 2018). Thus, it is of particular significance to encourage learners to communicate in English effectively.

Within the current context, it was observed that beginner learners at CEFR A2 level proficiency were less confident to make presentations in English communication skills course classrooms when presented with an opportunity. To elaborate, the students did not do well in their presentations. This evidence was witnessed in their presentation performance. Many students often gained 6 out of 10 points for their presentations practiced in English communication skills classrooms. Within the current context, the number situated above is considered an indicator of a low degree of willingness from students to give presentations (McCroskey, 1992).

It was also discovered that many students were reluctant to volunteer to talk in front of the class and to exchange ideas with their peers. Thus, the researchers used a scale of willingness to talk (see APPENDIX A for further details) adapted from McCroskey (1992) to lend support to this view. In the scale, there is a set of questions that allows the investigators to measure the students' degrees of willingness to present in English. The students' willingness to deliver English presentations was gauged by means of three levels: low, medium, and high. In this study, we employed these three levels as there is no concrete means of measuring students' willingness to make presentations available (McCroskey, 1992; Pattapong, 2013; Riasati, 2018). The best way to measure willingness to make presentations relies on student awareness of approaching or avoiding the initiation of making presentations. Therefore, we adapted the scale from the previous literature (i.e., McCroskey, 1992; Pattapong, 2013; Riasati, 2018) to measure willingness to deliver presentations in English of Thai students. In each level, we assigned 1 point to a situation in which students showed a low degree of willingness to present, 2 points to a situation in which they demonstrated a higher degree, and 3 points to a situation where they showed a very high degree. In this study, a mean score of 2.00 out of 3.00 was established as an

acceptable degree of willingness to give presentations among the students. From the scale, it was revealed that the students felt less willing to give presentations in English language classrooms (mean score 1.60 out of 3.00, SD 0.73).

It is assumed that there are two factors that influence students' willingness to deliver presentations in English language classrooms. Firstly, it was witnessed that some tasks originally designed to enhance students' speaking proficiency were not relevant to their background knowledge. As the students in this study came from the discipline of history, it is reasonable to claim that the topic discussed could be considered irrelevant to their background knowledge. Secondly, it was discovered that preparation time provided for students to perform a presentation task was quite limited. To elaborate, all students were given an opportunity to present an advertisement for a product within a 1 hour 30 minute period of time. In this regard, a group of three to five students had approximately 30 minutes to prepare for a 10-minute presentation. Obviously, this evidence suggests that two factors, namely presentation topics and planning time, may impede less proficient students' delivery of presentations in an English classroom context.

To alleviate the problem situated above, the aim of this study is to develop a task that takes into account familiar topics and preparation time to enhance degrees of willingness to present in English among Thai students. Previous literature (e.g., Riasati, 2018; Shen & Byfield, 2019) has supported that higher levels of willingness to deliver English presentations allow students to gain more exposure to practice in L2 English and authentic language use. Additionally, this key element assists in facilitating the learning process of L2 English students. This study aims to answer the following research question:

To what extent does the task designed, based on familiar topics and preparation time, contribute to the students' degrees of willingness to deliver presentations?

This study was conducted in the hope that findings will provide useful insights into how to promote L2 students' willingness to present, which is an important characteristic of effective communication (Riasati, 2018).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine whether tasks developed in accordance with two factors (i.e., preparation time and topics associated with students' discipline of history) foster the initiation of making presentations in English. In this section, theoretical concepts regarding the two attributes assumed to have influenced the students' willingness to present are thus discussed in detail. For convenience, relevant issues are structured and elucidated as follows.

A. Willingness to Deliver Presentations in English Classrooms

Willingness to present in English classrooms refers to a situation in which students are willing to approach the initiation of giving presentations and sharing ideas with their peers and teacher (McCroskey, 1992; Riasati, 2018). There are various characteristics of students' behavior that help identify their degrees of willingness to deliver presentations. In other words, students have higher degrees of willingness to deliver presentations when they volunteer to give a presentation in front of the class, answer when the teacher asks a question, help other classmates answer questions, or exchange ideas in class (McCroskey, 1992; Pattapong, 2013; Riasati, 2018).

There are many factors that contribute to willingness to present among L2 learners. Riasati (2018) proposed that topics of discussion and classroom atmospheres are largely attributable to students' motivation to talk in an English classroom context. A study by Lee (2019) revealed that L2 self-confidence and anxiety emerge as primary sources of influence on L2 learners' willingness to talk. Riasati and Rahimi (2018) further support that topics of discussion and classroom atmospheres are significant in enhancing students' degrees of willingness to deliver presentations.

Within the context of Thailand, Pattapong (2013) showed that Thai students' willingness to give presentations is due to various variables. She further demonstrated that task design is considered to be a salient aspect that influences L2 students' willingness to present. There are two key attributes that affect students' predisposition toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of making presentations. The first attribute involves the topic of a task. The other variable emerging as a key source of influence on students' willingness to present is the preparation time given for a task. Syed and Kuzborska (2019) also indicated that topics and opportunity are two important variables that influence L2 learners' willingness to present in a classroom context. In order to facilitate students' willingness to talk in English, it is important for teachers to take into account such variables. Therefore, from the studies reviewed above, it can be concluded that a particular task implemented in an English-speaking classroom affects students' willingness to present in English. In this study, it is assumed that students' levels of willingness to present are influenced by the task designed. More importantly, preparation time and topics provided for students to deliver presentations have the potential to facilitate degrees of willingness to present in an English language classroom. As such, the assumption under study is established based on this theoretical background.

B. Flipped Classroom Approach

This study developed a speaking task to facilitate higher degrees of willingness to present among Thai students. As noted earlier, two factors have been assumed to have influenced students' degrees of willingness to make presentations. The first factor involves insufficient preparation time, and the second factor deals with topics that influence students' willingness to deliver presentations in an English language classroom.

In this study, the flipped classroom approach has been adapted so that students are given more preparation time to deliver presentations on topics that are relative to their background knowledge. Thus, this study has provided discussion regarding the notion of the flipped classroom approach and how this approach produces a beneficial effect on learners' speaking ability.

The flipped classroom approach has gained popularity among L2 scholars in the past few years (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Hung, 2017). Initially implemented in a chemistry course of Bergmann and Sams (2012), the flipped classroom has provided beneficial effects for many L2 educators (e.g., Chen Hsieh et al., 2016; Hung, 2017; Suranakkharin, 2017). Within the flipped learning condition, students are given exposure to various modes of classroom activities, while they are provided with video lectures for out of class time. Learning materials can be made available online by teachers or can be sourced from YouTube or other similar resources. In contrast, students under traditional approaches to instruction are engaged in lectures during class time. Students within the traditional classroom are assigned to do homework activities out of class time. Previous literature has shown that flipped learning proves to be highly beneficial to the language learning process (e.g., Hung, 2017; Suranakkharin, 2017). First, the flipped classroom offers students more time to engage in learning content. Second, the flipped learning provides teachers with more time to stimulate learners using a wider variety of interactive and enhanced classroom activities. Figure 1 provides a clearer account of the difference between the traditional and flipped classrooms.

Figure 1. Comparison Between Traditional Classrooms and Flipped Classrooms (University of Washington, n.d.)

As illustrated in Figure 1, students taught using the traditional approach are mainly exposed to a lecture during class time. However, students taught using the flipped classroom approach are engaged in a lecture delivered electronically. Homework activities designed for students in the traditional classroom are assigned to be completed outside of class time, whereas learners in the flipped classroom are provided more time to do interactive activities with their peers and teacher. This essential attribute allows teachers to spend less time delivering lectures and more time facilitating and supporting students (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Hung, 2017).

In L2 pedagogy, previous literature has provided support for the success of employing the flipped classroom approach. A major reason for its benefits is that students are offered more time to learn the content outside of class time and to do interactive classroom activities with peers and teachers during class time. More time is allowed for students to learn content and to do classroom activities, which ultimately helps enhance the language learning process. Much previous research has lent support for the success of using the flipped classroom approach to facilitate students' speaking ability. For example, Wang et al. (2018) investigated the effects of using flipped instruction based on Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on beginner Chinese learners' oral proficiency development. The findings revealed that learners taught using the flipped classroom approach showed significant progress in oral proficiency. Additionally, the students in the flipped classroom showed more out of class time investment in the learning process. These students had more positive attitudes toward the course taught through the flipped classroom approach. Therefore, it is clear that more outside of class time offered to students under flipped instruction helps develop their speaking proficiency.

A seminal investigation carried out by Hsieh et al. (2016) further supports the implementation of flipped instruction to promote students' speaking ability. Participants were exposed to learning English using the LINE smartphone application. The findings illustrated that flipped instruction motivated the participants to engage in oral interaction, which ultimately encouraged them to become more active speakers in class.

From the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that the flipped classroom approach provides more preparation time for students and is an important source of influence on their willingness to present. Accordingly, this study has taken into account the flipped classroom approach to facilitate the current students' levels of willingness to deliver presentations in English.

III. METHODOLOGY

Task design is regarded as an essential attribute for success in learning English (Kanoksilapatham & Suranakkharin, 2019). This study thus aimed to develop a speaking task that would allow students to gain higher degrees of willingness to present. The task under study was developed in accordance with two fundamental principles. First, a topic for the task was considered associated with students' background knowledge. This notion was proposed based on the assumption that speaking topics students are familiar with will foster higher degrees of willingness to give presentations (Pattapong, 2013). Second, the task offered students more preparation time before they had to deliver presentations in class. This

concept was framed within the flipped classroom approach. Previous literature (e.g., Hsieh et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018) regarding L2 pedagogy has shown that flipped learning produces a positive impact on the language learning process. This study thus adapted flipped learning to provide students with more preparation time outside of class time to do the speaking task during class time.

To gain a thorough understanding of the methodology process, this section initially describes the participants of this study. Then, an explicit description is given of how the task was constructed. The section also explains the procedure for implementing the task in a flipped classroom. This section ends with a detailed account of the data collection and analysis.

A. Participants

In this study, 15 Thai sophomores from the discipline of history participated. The current participants' English language ability was specified as CEFR A2 Level. They signed up for the subject of English Communication Skills, which was designed to motivate them to communicate in English more effectively. This English course was offered on a 2 hours and 30 minutes per week basis. During class sessions, the students were encouraged to practice their speaking skills for approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. As discussed, preparation time given in a task is assumed to be a crucial factor that affects students' willingness to present. The topics for presentations are assumed to be less relevant to the students' background knowledge or their discipline of history.

This group of students was selected to take part in this study on the basis that the task designed with respect to previous literature would help them advance their speaking skills.

B. Instrument

In this section, the development and implementation of the task are explained. This study developed a task to promote students' willingness to deliver presentations in an English classroom. The task adapted from Hendra et al. (2019, p. 30) was administered for only a single period of time. In this study, a presentation topic that was related to students' background knowledge was selected. In this respect, the speaking topic *Secret Spot* was chosen for the participants. This topic was considered appropriate for the students because it is associated with their discipline of history. Figure 2 illustrates how the task was constructed.

Time to Speak
Secret Spot

(Hendra et al., 2019, p. 30)
Step 1 (During class time)
Discussion
Look at the pictures and talk in a group of 3-5 people. Do you think these places are popular with tourists? Which one would you like to visit the most? Why?
Step 2 (Outside of class time)
Research
In the same group, think of an interesting place in your city that tourists might not be familiar with. You can go online for ideas. Then, prepare a presentation about the interesting spot. Use the information below or any other information. Students are given approximately one week to prepare for this speaking task.
Further information includes:
How do you get there?
Is it important to make a reservation before you go?
Do you need to bring anything with you?
What is the best way to get there?
What activities should you do when you arrive there?
Step 3: (During class time)
Present: Give your presentation about the secret spot to the class (7-10 minutes). All students are encouraged to ask questions. This will help to promote higher degrees of willingness to give presentations among students.

Figure 2. The Speaking Task

This task was examined for content validity. That is, it was sent to two researchers in the fields of English language teaching and applied linguistics to determine whether it was relevant to the target students' background knowledge and thus was able to motivate them to present with more confidence.

The study adapted flipped learning as an instructional method that allowed students to perform the task with extended preparation time. As presented in Step 2 in the task above, the flipped classroom approach provided the students with more outside of class time to prepare for their actual presentation in the classroom. This group of students was thus given more time to give presentations and share ideas with their peers and teacher.

In this study, the students' written reflections (see questions for this instrument in APPENDIX C) were gathered as another source of data. The scale of willingness to give presentations was also employed to describe the students' degrees of willingness to present after the implementation of the task (see APPENDIX B for further details).

C. Data Collection and Analysis

This study aimed to investigate to what extent the task developed promoted students' willingness to make presentations in an English classroom. The participants were asked to answer questions designed specifically to measure their levels of willingness to present. The questions were grouped into two main themes: extended preparation time and topics for presentation. To measure the students' degrees of willingness to present, the scale adapted from previous studies (McCroskey, 1992; Pattapong, 2013; Riasati, 2018) was administered. The scale required the students to identify a level of low, medium, or high for a particular statement (see APPENDIX B for further details of the scale). An acceptable level of willingness to present was established as equal to a mean score of at least 2.00 out of 3.00. In this study, the researchers sought permission from the students. Specifically, the objective of this study was explained to the students, and they were informed that this study would not affect their final grades.

IV. Results and Discussion

This study aimed at developing a speaking task based on two variables (i.e., extended preparation time and familiar topics) to promote students' degrees of willingness to deliver presentations. The data were gathered from students' opinions toward their willingness to present after the implementation of the task. The willingness to present scale was also administered to measure the students' degrees of willingness to present in English. For convenience, the findings are organized as follows.

A. Students' Opinions toward Willingness to Give Presentations

In this part, the findings are categorized into two factors: preparation time and topics for presentation.

1. Preparation Time

Based on the findings, the students stated that they were provided with more preparation time to give a presentation. Preparation time is a key factor that encourages students in the classroom to speak in English with more confidence. As one student stated, "More preparation time for all speaking tasks help me speak English better. Because I am not good at English, I feel more motivated to speak English when I am provided with much preparation time." One student further expressed that "speaking tasks will be easier if I am given more preparation time. This will make me more confident in speaking English in the classroom." The findings seem consistent with Pattapong (2013) and Lam (2019) in that students feel more confident performing speaking tasks with extended planning time than those without extended planning time.

Under flipped instruction, more time allowed for students to learn content and do classroom activities ultimately aids in fostering the language learning process. Previous literature supports the success of employing the flipped classroom to enhance students' speaking ability. For example, Wang et al. (2018) revealed that students instructed using the flipped classroom approach demonstrate significant progress in speaking performance. Students in the flipped classroom also show more out of class time investment in the learning process. As discussed, it can be concluded that more out of class time provided for students in the flipped classroom helps enhance their speaking performance.

2. Topics for Presentation

The participants pointed out that the task design matched their backgrounds (i.e., proficiency and field of study). This also affected higher degrees of willingness to present among the participants.

As one participant indicated, "The task is interesting to do because the topic seems to be related to my field of study. Thus, I feel more confident in speaking English when doing the speaking task." Another participant expressed that "I enjoy doing a speaking task that I feel familiar with. I like to do speaking tasks relevant to my everyday life. And speaking tasks should be suitable to my proficiency, too." One of the participants also stated that "I do a speaking task better when it is not too difficult. Also, I do a speaking task quite well if it is related to my field of study." The findings concerning speaking tasks concur with those of Pattapong (2013) in that tasks designed in accordance with students' backgrounds (i.e., proficiency and a specific field of study) help establish higher levels of their willingness to deliver presentations.

B. Students' Degrees of Willingness to Give Presentations

In this study, 15 students were selected to provide opinions associated with their willingness to give presentations after the implementation of the task. Again, there were four questions embedded in the willingness to present scale (see APPENDIX B for further details). The first two questions encouraged the students to identify to what extent the task with extended preparation time fostered their levels of willingness to deliver presentations. The other two questions aimed at exploring whether the topic they were familiar with helped promote their willingness to give presentations. The findings are outlined as follows.

1. Preparation Time

The students were asked to identify a particular situation that best represented their level of willingness to present from a scale of low, medium, and high.

As discussed, there were two questions designed to measure whether preparation time was considered a key indicator of the students' willingness to deliver presentations. In this study, a mean score of at least 2.00 out of 3.00 was considered a good indicator of willingness to present among the students. The results showed that the current students were willing to present when they were prepared. Also, more preparation time motivated them to give presentations with confidence (a mean score of 2.67; SD 0.49).

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Lam (2019) in that students feel more comfortable to do speaking tasks with extended planning time than those without extended planning time. To elaborate, tasks that allow more preparation time help enhance students' motivation to present in English. In this study, the flipped classroom approach had been adapted to promote students' willingness to give presentations. The students were given more preparation time before they delivered actual presentations in the classroom. This evidence suggests that more preparation time outside the classroom plays a key role in supporting a higher degree of willingness to present among students. A study by Chen Hsieh et al. (2016) further supports the implementation of flipped instruction to promote students' speaking ability as they proposed that flipped instruction helps engage students in oral interaction, which ultimately motivates them to become more active speakers in an English language classroom.

2. Topics for Giving Presentations

Again, there were two questions specifically designed to investigate whether preparation time served as an important indicator of students' willingness to deliver presentations. The findings demonstrated that the students wanted to talk about a topic they were familiar with and interested in (a mean score of 2.60; SD 0.51). From the findings, it is suggested that topics for presentations play a pivotal role in promoting students' willingness to give presentations in an English classroom context. These findings have been supported by several other researchers. For example, Pattapong (2013) proposed that students' motivation to talk in English is affected by task design. More concisely, if students do not find the topic of a particular speaking task interesting or relevant to their lives, they are probably going to be reluctant to reach the initiation of giving presentations.

V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has pedagogical implications in several respects. First, this study provides insights into how to design a task that facilitates students' degrees of willingness to present in English language classrooms. As demonstrated in the findings, tasks with extended preparation time motivate students to give presentations in English. In addition, topics for presentations are considered to be a key source of influence on L2 students' willingness to deliver presentations. Therefore, teachers who encounter the same type of teaching problem may adopt the suggestions offered in this study to develop tasks that truly motivate students' willingness to present in an English language classroom.

Previous literature revealed that degrees of willingness to present are influenced by situational variables, for example, interlocutors, topics, and perceived opportunities (Syed & Kuzborska, 2019). Riasati and Rahimi (2018) further support that there are several factors (e.g., topics of discussion, effects of interlocutor, and classroom atmospheres) identified as having an impact on students' willingness to present. Thus, teachers may design speaking tasks based on such contributing factors to help promote students' willingness to present in English.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study developed a task with the aim of promoting students' willingness to give presentations. The task developed to enhance levels of willingness to present among the participants took into account two variables. The former variable involves preparation time given for students to give a presentation. The latter variable deals with topics for presentations. Specifically, the task topic of Secret Spot was deemed to be relevant to the students' background knowledge.

The data were collected through students' written reflections and the use of a scale that allowed them to identify their levels of willingness to present. The findings display that the task developed based on the factors of preparation time and topics for presentations has the potential to promote students' higher degrees of willingness to give presentations.

This study has some limitations. First, this study focused special attention on the effects of the task on the students' degrees of willingness to give presentations. Further studies should investigate whether the same task type produces an effect on students' speaking proficiency. Researchers could also examine how different types of tasks promote speaking

proficiency among L2 learners. This study was carried out on a single period of time basis. Replicating this study may bring about different research results. Specifically, researchers may spend an entire semester investigating the effects of this type of task on students' willingness to present or speaking ability. Previous research has identified the various benefits of using technology to promote learners' language learning. Thus, it is important for teachers to engage students in self-initiated use of technology to promote their willingness to present or their speaking proficiency outside of the classroom (Lai & Gu, 2011).

APPENDIX A. WILLINGNESS TO PRESENT SCALE (FOR TEACHERS)

Directions: This willingness to present scale intends to gain information regarding students' willingness to present in English. In each type of situation, indicate 'low', 'medium', or 'high' that best represents students' willingness to talk. It should be noted that Low = 1, Medium = 2, and High = 3.

Thematic questions	Willingness to present scales		
	Low = 1	Medium = 2	High = 3
1. Volunteer to talk in front of class			
2. Volunteer to answer when the teacher asks a question			
3. Want to help other classmates answer a question			
4. Want to present opinions in class			

APPENDIX B. WILLINGNESS TO PRESENT SCALE (FOR STUDENTS)

Directions: This willingness to present scale intends to gain information regarding your willingness to present in English. In each type of situation, indicate 'low', 'medium', or 'high' that best represents your willingness to talk. It should be noted that Low = 1, Medium = 2, and High = 3.

Thematic questions	Willingness to talk scales		
	Low = 1	Medium = 2	High = 3
Preparation time			
1. I want to talk about a topic when I am prepared.			
2. I want to talk about a topic with confidence when I am prepared.			
Total			
Speaking topic			
3. I want to talk about a topic I am familiar with.			
4. I want to talk about a topic I am interested in.			
Total			

APPENDIX C. AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: This set of questions has been prepared to gain your opinions toward your degree of willingness to present in an English classroom. Write answers for the following questions.

1. Did the teacher give you more time to prepare for the task regarding the Secret Spot?

2. Do you think more preparation time allowed for a particular task motivates you to present in an English language classroom?

3. Did you find the task interesting to do? Does it match your field of study?

4. Does the task assigned encourage you to present in the classroom?

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