Can After-School English Tutorial Sessions
Improve Law Students' Test Scores?

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลสัมฤทธิ์ของโครงการสอนเสริมภาษาอังกฤษหลังเลิกเรียน เพื่อ
พัฒนาคะแนนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่หนึ่ง โดยเปรียบเทียบคะแนนทดสอบก่อนการทดลอง (pre-test) และ
คะแนนทดสอบหลังการทดลอง (post-test) ของนักศึกษากลุ่มที่เรียนเสริม และกลุ่มที่ไม่ได้เรียน ด้วยการวิเคราะห์
และทดสอบค่าเฉลี่ยของประชากร 2 กลุ่มที่ไม่เป็นอิสระจากกัน (Paired-sample t-test) และโดยการเปรียบเทียบ
ระดับพัฒนาการระหว่างนักศึกษาทั้งสองกลุ่มด้วยการวิเคราะห์และการทดสอบค่าเฉลี่ยของประชากร 2 กลุ่มที่เป็น
อิสระจากกัน (Independent sample t-test) ผลการศึกษาพบว่ากลุ่มของนักศึกษาที่เรียนเสริมมีผลคะแนนสอบ
หลังการทดลองมากกว่าคะแนนสอบก่อนการทดลองอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ และเมื่อเปรียบเทียบคะแนนพัฒนาการระหว่าง
กลุ่มนักศึกษาที่เรียนเสริมและไม่ได้เรียนเสริมยังพบว่ากลุ่มที่เรียนเสริมมีคะแนนพัฒนาการมากกว่ากลุ่มที่ไม่ได้เรียน
อย่างมีนัยสำคัญเช่นกัน

คำสำคัญ: บทเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ, คะแนนสอบภาษาอักฤษ

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine whether an after-school English tutoring program
has the ability to improve first-year students' English test score. Pre- and post-tests were given to
students who participated and did not participate in the tutorial sessions. Paired-sample t-test was
used to compare the average score of the pre- and post-test of students who participated in the
sessions. Independent sample t-test was also used to compare the improvement of the students
who participated and did not participate in the sessions. The results show significant improvement
on the post-test score of students who participated in the sessions. It also shows that the
improvement of students who participated in the sessions was significantly greater than the
improvement of students who did not.

Keywords: English tutorial sessions, English test scores

Introduction

It is common among Asian students to go to cram schools believing that those extra hours and money will be paid off on their report cards. Does the extra effort really help with their score? Does it really help when it comes to subjects that require skill practice like English? Tutorial sessions outside classroom is not a new concept in English language teaching field. According to many research studies done on English tutoring programs focusing on different language skills especially writing confirm that students spending extra time being tutored outside class show better performance in their regular classes (Zerin & Zafar, 2017, Wu et al, 2013, Santoro et al, 2006, All Otaiba, 2005)

In Thailand context, a study of English language tutorials in Thai university students was done to investigate the motivation of the learners due to the popularity of cram schools among Thai students (Thongchaona, 2001). The study investigated the motivation, but never actually looked at its success in terms of students' performance. Spending extra effort outside class is commonly inferred to be better than doing nothing; however, without comparing the learners academic achievement, we will never know if it is effective. This current is, therefore, designed to answer this question among Thai university students.

A survey conducted by a university in Thailand on the satisfaction of employers toward graduates found that graduates' English language proficiency is one of the issues employers were not satisfied with. Language Institute of the university was, therefore, responsible for this matter. Several projects and activities were initiated in order to solve the problem. An after-school English tutoring project was one of them. The tutorial sessions were designed to help first-year undergraduate students improve their English test score.

The English proficiency of Law students was the main focus of the researcher. Not only because English is one of the most important skills for their future career, but the school of Law was also one of the schools that employers reported they were less than satisfied with the English communication skills of its graduates according to the survey mentioned earlier. This study aims to investigate the value of the tutoring program in a small scale so if the program produces satisfactory results, it will be implemented on all students.

Materials and Methods

Using a quasi-experimental design to collect and analyze data in quantitative research method, the purpose of this study was to investigate improvement of English test score of students who participated in the after-school tutorial sessions, and to examine whether the improvement is significantly higher than those who did not participate in the sessions.

To obtain the best result, this research relied on both primary and secondary resources. Primary resource focuses on pre- and post-test scores from three parts of open-ended questions on vocabulary, reading and writing. Secondary resources include books, journals, and websites regarding what has been done in this area. This quasi-experimental research was conducted in these following steps: asking a research question; studying previous literature; formulating hypotheses; identifying independent and dependent variables; plan of the research design, population, samples and data collection; collecting data; analyzing the data; and forming a conclusion.

The tutoring program was scheduled to finish in ten weeks, took place two days a week and one hour a day. The course focused on grammar, vocabulary, speaking and writing, which were the skills that employers needed the most according to the survey. In order to measure if the project was effective, students from the school of Law taking fundamental English course, including those who participated and who did not participate in the tutoring program, took pre- and post-tests, before and after the sessions. Although it was a voluntary activity, students who had low pre-test score were encouraged to participate in the sessions.

Research Questions

Question 1

Are the after-school tutorial sessions effective in improving first year students' English test scores?

Question 2

What is the difference in the achievement of English test scores of students who participated in the sessions and students who did not?

Population and Sample

Sample group used in this study were first-year undergraduate students from a university in Bangkok. The total population consisted of thirty-nine first-year Law students who enrolled in a fundamental English course. There were twelve male and twenty-seven female students. The samples were selected using purposive sampling method. They consisted of the whole population, all thirty-nine students. They were all from the same section, taught and assessed by the same teacher in their fundamental English class and tutorial sessions.

The samples were divided into two groups. The first group was the sample of fourteen students who participated in the tutorial sessions; the second group consisted of twenty-five students who did not participate in the tutorial sessions. This tutoring program was not free; therefore, the participation of the program was voluntary and so the population could not be divided into equal portions. The following diagram shows the process of data collection.
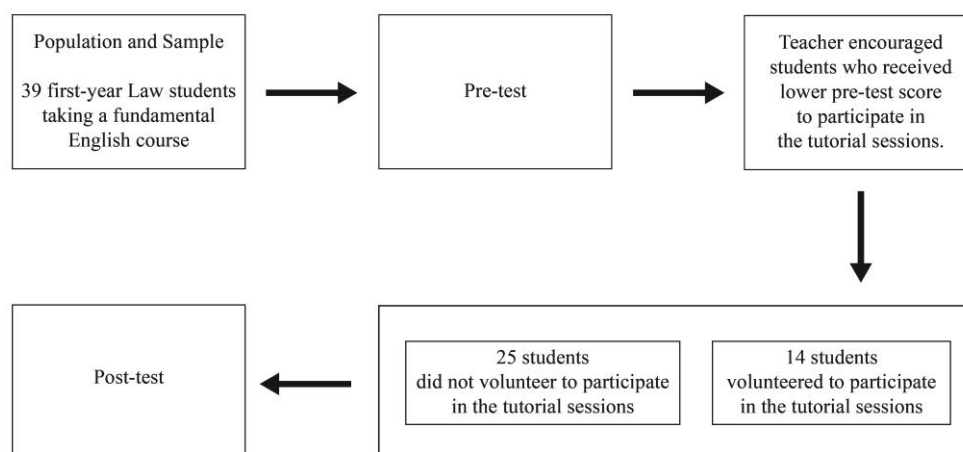
Figure 1. Population and Sample

The Literature Scope

Buzash (1994) did a survey to investigate students' perception of an intensive French summer program for high school students. It was an all-day-long program that focused on building language skills and reviewing existing skill. The program was evaluated by students and it was found that students felt that they gained new skills, confidence and enthusiasm.

Al-Jarf's study was about an online instruction that was integrated into a traditional English class. It was found that students who participated in the online sessions had significantly better score in grammar when compared to students who did not participate in the sessions (2005).

Denton, et al (2004) conducted a study on tutoring programs of English reading in bi-lingual Spanish students. It was found that students who participated in the programs had much better improvement on word recognition comparing to students who did not. However, there was no difference in word attack and sentence construction skills.

Hur and Suh (2010) investigated the effectiveness of an intensive English course for international students in the USA in terms of its ability to improve students' test scores and their attitude toward it. It was found that post-test scores in most of the students were significantly higher than pre-test score. However, students' attitude showed that improvements on the course content are still needed for the next program.

Zimmer, Hamilton, and Christina (2010) examined the effectiveness of an after-school tutoring program on Math and English reading. The program was organized in order to improve elementary, middle school and high school student's proficiency. The result showed that students improved greatly on mathematics, but there was limited evidence showing improvement on English reading.

Guy and Lownes-Jackson (2012) conducted a research study on a web-based tutorial on grammar for communication. Students did pre-test and post-test to measure whether the tutorial worked. It was found that students had significant improvement.

In secondary level student context, a study conducted by Virajaneekornpant (2013) on the use of computer assisted language learning outside class was found effective in terms of students' academic achievement and satisfaction.

Armana & Ramadan (2011) studied the effectiveness of a remedial course designed for seventh grade students who had low academic achievement. It was found that the extra course was effective and should be continue as it was able to improve the students' writing score.

Huang's study on the effectiveness of a five-week English remedial course for low English proficiency students was very much related to this current study. The researcher did pre- and post-tests as well as survey asking for perception of the participants. The result showed that students who participated in the course improved significantly on their test score and their self-perception of their grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Huang, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

Independent variables

After-school English tutorial sessions

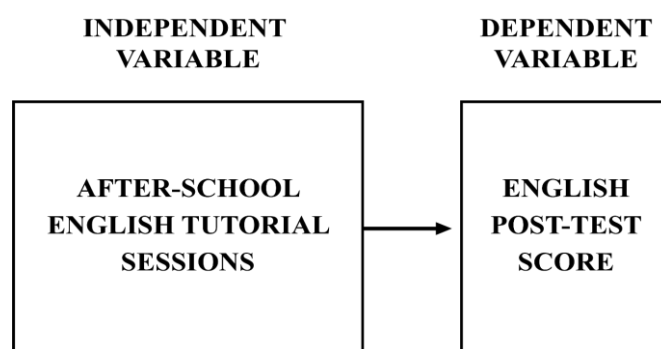**Dependent variables**

English post-test scores

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Research

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

$H_0 1$: After-school English tutorial sessions do not improve students' English proficiency.

$H_a 1$: After-school English tutorial sessions improve students' English proficiency.

Hypothesis 2

$H_0 2$: There is not any difference in improvement between students who participated in the tutorial sessions and students who did not.

$H_a 2$: There is difference in improvement between students who participated in the tutorial sessions and students who did not.

Research Instrument

The tools used in the experiment were the after-school English tutoring for first-year students, as well as the pre- and post-tests.

The after-school English tutorial sessions included twenty hours of tutoring activity. Students practiced using grammar and vocabulary they had learned in their fundamental English class to read, write, listen and speak. They also did some exercises resembling to the pre- and post-test and received feedback and explanation from the teacher. In addition, they could bring their assignments from the fundamental English class to the tutoring sessions to consult with the teacher.

The study examines the English score of students who participated and did not participate in the after-school English tutorial sessions. Both groups of students took an English skill test (Pre-test) before the sessions started, and a learning achievement test (Post-test) after the sessions finished. Both pre- and post-test were the same.

The tests consisted of three parts of open-ended questions exam for general English language, validated by instructors from Language Institute of this university. To assess their vocabulary and grammar knowledge and application, students completed some short conversations in the first part of the exam; wrote a short descriptive paragraph to describe a picture in the second part; and read a short passage and answered five questions in the last part of the exam. All exam items were related to the vocabulary and grammar learned in class. Students who did not participate in the sessions also took the same test in order to compare the difference of the students' improvement.

Collection of Data and Data Analysis

All scores from pre-test and post-test in experimental groups and control groups were collected and analyzed using SPSS. The after-school English tutorial sessions were analyzed by comparing the average score of the pre- and post-test to see whether the improvement was statistically significant. Paired-sample t-test was used to measure the difference.

Students' English skill improvement of the two groups was also compared in order to see whether the improvement of the two groups was significantly different. Independent sample t-test was used in order to measure this difference.

Results

Hypothesis 1

$H_0$1: After-school English tutorial sessions do not improve students' English proficiency.

H_a1: After-school English tutorial sessions improve students' English proficiency.

Table 1

Means Summary for pre-test and post-test

	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	12.78	5.75	14
Post-test	20.42	3.54	14

Table 2

T-test for mean difference between pre-test and post-test

	Mean Difference	SD	Sig.	N
Pre-test &Post-test	-7.64	4.36	0.00	14

The paired-sample t-test was conducted to measure whether the scores on pre- and post-test are different. The results indicated that the mean of post-test score (M = 20.42, SD = 3.54) was significantly better than the mean of pre-test score (M = 12.78, SD = 5.75), t (13) = -6.55, p = 0.00. That means the course was effective in terms of its ability to improve students' proficiency. The first null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected.

Hypothesis 2

$H_0$2: There is not any difference in improvement between students who participated in the tutorial sessions and students who did not.

H_a2: There is difference in improvement between students who participated in the tutorial sessions and students who did not.

Table 3

Means Summary for improvement of test score between students who participated and did not participate in the sessions

	Mean	SD	N
Took	7.64	4.36	14
Did not take	4.04	3.51	25

Table 4

T-test for mean difference between students who participated and did not participate in the sessions

	Mean Difference	Sig.
Took & Did not take	3.60	.008

The independent sample t-test was calculated to compare the improvement of the test score between the students who participated and did not participate in the sessions. The t-test was t (37) = 2.81, p = 0.008. Thus, the second null hypothesis was rejected.

The result indicated that the score improvement of students who participated in the sessions was significantly higher than the score improvement of the students who did not participate in the sessions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The hypothesis testing results showed that both null hypotheses were rejected because there is difference between the pre- and post-test of the students who participate in the sessions; moreover, the improvement of the experimental group was significantly higher than the improvement of the control group. The result of this study confirms the findings of Huang (2010), Hur & Suh (2010), Virajaneekornpant (2013), Guy & Lownes-Jackson (2012), Armana & Ramadan (2011) and Al-Jarf (2005) studies in terms of its ability to improve the students' score.

Due to the results of both hypotheses, the program should continue as it can improve students' test score. In addition, more students should be encouraged to participate in the sessions.

When looking at the pre-test score of the whole population, there were still many students who received low score but did not participate in the program. To that end, in the future a survey research should be conducted to investigate the reasons why those students with low proficiency did not want to participate in the program and what can be done to help them.

It would also be interesting to know the students' perception toward the course and toward their proficiency. Although some of them might not have much improvement, they might have gained more confidence and positive feeling toward language learning. Therefore, a self-perception questionnaire should be distributed in the future research.

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