

2007-11-01

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### Recommended Citation

Chimroylarp, Noppawan (2007) "The Development of an Intensive English Course for Buddhist Missionary Monks Using Task-Based Instruction," *PASAA*: Vol. 41: Iss. 1, Article 5.

DOI: 10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.41.1.5

Available at: <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/pasaa/vol41/iss1/5>

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## **The Development of an Intensive English Course for Buddhist Missionary Monks Using Task-Based Instruction**

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### **Abstract**

The study was aimed at developing an intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks using task-based instruction, studying the effects of task-based instruction on the learning outcomes of the students as well as exploring their views on TBI. The subjects of the study were thirty students selected from a class of the Buddhist missionary monk training program, and they were to provide the quantitative data. Twenty students, selected based on their pre-test scores as the representatives of the high ability group and the low ability group, provided qualitative data by writing logs during the course and being interviewed at the end of the course. A questionnaire was sent to the monks to follow up on the outcome of the students using English in the real situations a few months after the course. It was found that monk students and the Buddhist missionary monks on duty needed to use English in order to accomplish fifteen top tasks, which can be divided into two categories: work-related and survival skills. These needs were incorporated into lesson topics and the contents of the course using task-based instruction as the principal method of teaching. After implementation, the post-test scores of all students were significantly higher than the pre-test scores especially in terms of speaking skills, but not in listening skills. The findings from qualitative data indicated that when

implementing TBI, more practice time was needed and that authentic props as well as modern multimedia would be useful classroom materials.

### **Background of the study**

“Buddhist missionary monks” refers to Thai Buddhist monks who are going to stay in Thai monasteries abroad to impart the Buddha’s teachings to Thai people and foreigners there, and whose assignments are approved by the Sangha Supreme Council. These monk students are to be trained in a number of skills, including English before they are sent on their overseas missions.

This study is aimed at developing an official syllabus for an intensive English course for missionary monks to be assigned positions abroad. The class contained around 70 mixed-ability students. Some were beginners while others graduated with an English major degree or spent some time abroad. However, most students had a Bachelor’s Degree with some proficiency in English. Therefore, the class materials were moderated and geared towards the intermediate level. This presented some problems for the weaker students while other students found them not challenging enough. In addition, the time allotted to the Intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks in this program was only 35 hours, which was too short to allow adequate comprehensible input (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Given all the constraints of the program, there is a need to revise the existing curriculum and find the best alternative teaching approach for these monk students.

In the discussion with former students who are now working in the United States and the United Kingdom, it has been suggested by all of them that the real need of the missionary monks is the ability to communicate especially through conversation so the listening and speaking skills are essential and should be emphasized. Since the main point of the training is to enable students to communicate and perform certain tasks and activities in real life, a task-based approach is proposed in the study.

## **Literature Review**

The task-based approach began to interest educators when Prabhu (1987) developed his syllabus 'through communication' rather than 'for communication' in 1980s. He emphasized the importance of process or how to achieve acquisition using communication. The term 'task' has been defined differently. Some state that a task is a piece of work (Long, 1985; Crookes, 1986; Nunan, 1989). Some identify it as a set of work plans that involve learners and teachers with some key words such as 'with purposes or goals' (Breen, 1987; Ellis, 2003a). Some associate it with classroom activities that are controlled by the teacher to require students to exchange meaning through some processes (Prabhu, 1987; Candlin, 1987; Carrol, 1993; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998). The meaning of task in this study focuses on both process and product. In constructing a task-based syllabus four steps have been suggested (Ellis 2003b). First, syllabus designers need to determine the goal of the course, and then they make a broad choice of task types and specify the themes. After that, the tasks are specified and sequenced according to their complexity.

A task-based syllabus consists of three phases. This study uses Willis's framework which consists of three phases as proposed by Prabhu (1987) and Willis (1996). The pre-task is the phase to introduce the topic and task to students and provide them with useful words and phrases, as well as task instructions. The task cycle is the phase during which students work on the task, prepare to report, and report the result. The language focus is the phase where students examine and discuss specific features of the text or transcript, and the teacher has students practice new words, phrases and patterns occurring in the data either during or after the analysis. According to Ellis (2003b), the teacher should ensure an appropriate level of task difficulty and establish clear goals for each task-based lesson. The teacher must develop an appropriate orientation to enable the students to perform the task, encourage students to take risks, and ensure that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons and are primarily focused on meaning when they perform a task. The teacher should also provide students with opportunities to focus on form, and require students to evaluate their performance and progress. Ellis (2003b) concluded

that task-based methodology creates opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative knowledge building.

The task-based approach has been used in teaching English for about two decades. Prabhu (1987) applied it to some classes in primary and secondary schools in southern India in 1979. The results showed that students learned more vocabulary than expected in the syllabus and they could express their ideas naturally. Coleman (1987) used it at the university level in Indonesia and found that it worked well even in a large class of 110 students. Lee (2002) studied the effects of task complexity on the complexity and accuracy of oral production in L2 of 82 Korean students. He found that more complex tasks would elicit less fluent but more accurate as well as more complex language in L2 oral production. Hunter (2005) used task support with graphics and varied processing with second year Japanese engineering students and found it worked for both beginners and advanced students.

In the Thai context, Sumate (1996) developed her activating English language skills curriculum using task-based approach for fifth and sixth grade students in private schools in Thailand. She developed a curriculum that consisted of all key elements and used task as the unit of analysis. After teaching, she found that the experimental group achieved higher mean scores than the control group. Vadhanamara (1996) studied the effects of task-based activities on English language communicative ability of second year students at the Royal Thai Air Force Academy. She also found that the integrated skills and each skill of the students developed by using task-based activities were better than those of the students taught by using the activities in the instructor's textbook adopted by the English Language Center, Defense Language Institute, USA. Une-aree (2002) developed an English course for the School of Fine and Applied Arts at Bangkok University using the task-based learning approach and found that the approach increased motivation and created a sense of achievement in students. Similarly, Rattanawong (2005) studied sixth grade students in Ayuthaya province and also found that task-based instruction promoted her students' learning both cognitively and affectively because the students enjoyed studying and developed their learning

skills consecutively. All these studies tended to suggest the task-based approach was successful in their educational contexts. However, no research has been conducted with an intensive ESP course in Thailand. Therefore, it is a challenge to investigate whether it can work well in an intensive course for Buddhist missionary monks. This study will be beneficial to the Buddhist Missionary monk Training Program and the missionary monks who are going abroad. Even monk students who have participated in the program but are not assigned to an overseas mission can apply their improved skills to use with foreigners who come to visit their temples. As this is the first research conducted on English for the missionary monk profession, it contributes to the ESP area as pioneer research with this specific group of students. It also serves as an additional study to enrich the area of research concerning the use of task-based instruction for mixed-level adult students in English language teaching in Thailand.

### **Research questions**

The study attempts to answer these questions:

1. What are the language needs of Buddhist missionary monks?
2. Is task-based instruction (TBI) workable in an intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks?
  - 2.1 To what extent does TBI increase learning outcomes?
  - 2.2 What are the views of the monk students on TBI?
3. How can TBI be made effective in the intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks?

### **Scope of the study**

The study focused on 30 monks who took the intensive English course, which was part of the Training Program for Buddhist Missionary Monks going overseas. The training took place during April and May 2006 at Buddha Monthon, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand.

**Research method and procedure**

A mixed research design, composed of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, is used in this study. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the quantitative data alone may not be enough to justify the trustworthiness of the study. Secondly, the qualitative data provides in-depth information which can add insights and understanding that might be missed when only one method is used. Thirdly, a mixed research design can provide complete answers to a range of research questions that a single research design cannot.

**Population and samples**

Thirty samples in this study were systematically selected from the 77 monks enrolled in the program. They were given a pre-test to assess their English listening and speaking skills before the course started. The test consisted of two parts: the first part was taken from the listening section of the CULI test, a standardized test constructed by Chulalongkorn University Language Institute; while the second part which focused on speaking was created by the researcher based on the syllabus to be used. The students were ranked according to their scores and categorized into two groups of ten students: a high ability and a low ability group. These students were considered as the key informants who were interviewed and asked to write a student's log after each lesson. As this study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data, all the samples were used to arrive at the quantitative data while the key informants provided the qualitative data.

**Data collection**

As this study included both ESP course design and evaluation, the data have been collected in two parts. First, it was collected for a needs analysis. Then, after the needs were transferred into a course and implemented, data were collected for course evaluation. The needs analysis was to answer the first research question, "What are the language needs of Buddhist missionary monks?", and the course evaluation was to answer the second and third research questions, "Is task-based instruction

workable in an English course for Buddhist missionary monks?” and “How can TBI be made effective in the intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks?”. The instruments used for data collection and the time of distribution are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Data collection

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Time of distribution</b>
<b>For needs analysis</b>		
Needs survey questionnaire	To obtain information about education needs	Before the course
Semi-structured interview questions for stakeholders	To obtain in-depth information regarding the syllabus, the needs, the classroom instruction, materials and content, and the evaluation of the program	Before the course
<b>For course evaluation</b>		
Pre-test	To measure students' English proficiency concerning their listening and speaking skills and to distinguish students into the high ability and the low ability groups	Before the course
Post-test	To measure students' English proficiency concerning their listening and speaking skills	After the course
Open-ended interview questions for key informants	To obtain in-depth information regarding content, atmosphere, teaching methods, feedback, etc.	After the course



<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Time of distribution</b>
<b>For course evaluation</b>		
Student's log	To obtain in-depth information regarding content area, teaching method, feedback, lessons, teacher's attention to students, students' attitude etc.	At the end of each day of instruction.
Teacher's diary	To obtain in-depth information regarding teacher's attitude to the lessons taught, the students' participation, teaching method, classroom management, etc.	At the end of each unit
Follow-up Questionnaire	To obtain in-depth information regarding missionary monks-on-duty's opinion on the lessons taught, teaching method, classroom management, etc.	A few months after the course ended and the graduate left for their mission abroad

### **Data analysis**

The quantitative data from the needs survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, (mean, percentage, and standard deviation) while the qualitative data from the interview were analyzed by content analysis.

For course evaluation, the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed by comparing the mean scores of the listening and speaking skills before and after the course. Cohen's d was then used to measure the effect size. Since the number of subjects was only 30 and the representatives from each ability group were only ten, Wilcoxon-z was used to find out the significant difference between the high and low ability groups. The significant level was set at 0.01 to verify the reliability.

The qualitative data from the students' logs, and interview, the teacher's diary, and the open-ended part of the questionnaire were analyzed by content analysis.

## **Findings**

To answer the first research question, "What are the language needs of Buddhist missionary monks?" the language needs assessment was conducted using a set of questionnaires. Two groups of respondents provided the data: the monk students in class and the missionary monks who had already graduated and were on duty abroad. The results were compared using the mean scores. The acceptable level of mean scores for inclusion in the syllabus was set at 3.75. The majority of needs involved oral communication skills. All the needs were listed according to the mean scores, then the top fifteen tasks mentioned by both groups were divided into two categories: work-related and survival skills. They included listening to instructions or announcements and responding properly, listening to lay people's problems and responding based on Buddhist teachings regarding the proper way of life/practice, listening and responding to phone calls, asking and answering questions, discussing issues of interest with other people, talking about Thai culture and beliefs, describing and answering questions about illness, explaining the monk's roles and duties in Thai society, explaining and discussing Dhamma issues, discussing the significance of daily chanting, talking about monk's roles and requisites, reporting problems or requesting assistance about health and belongings, reading and responding to instructions, schedules, or announcements, reading signs and maps and following directions, and filling out required forms and documents. These needs were later translated into nine main topics according to what a missionary monk needs to accomplish. The lesson outline based on the needs analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Outline of the Lesson Topics

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
1	Applying for visas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Filling forms and documents required</li><li>2. Asking and answering questions about oneself</li></ol>
2	Boarding the plane	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reading instructions, signs, schedules, or announcements and responding properly</li><li>2. Listening to instructions or announcements at the airport and on the plane.</li><li>3. Making a polite request</li></ol>
3	Reporting problems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reporting problems</li><li>2. Requesting assistance</li></ol>
4	Requesting information from different sources (telephone, face to face)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Asking and answering questions</li><li>2. Listening and responding to phone calls</li></ol>
5	Getting around	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Asking and following directions</li><li>2. Reading signs and maps</li></ol>
6	Visiting a doctor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Listening to instructions or questions and responding properly in the doctor's office, or at a clinic</li><li>2. Describing and answering questions about own illness</li><li>3. Reading medicine labels</li></ol>

Unit	Topics	Tasks
7	Talking about monks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explaining monks' roles and duties in Thai society</li><li>2. Describing monks' roles and outfit</li><li>3. Discussing the significance of daily chanting</li></ol>
8	Talking about Thai culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describing Thai culture and belief</li><li>2. Comparing Thai and Western culture</li></ol>
9	Explaining Dhamma issues & discussing cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explaining and discussing Dhamma issues</li><li>2. Listening to congregations' problems and answering based on Buddhist way of life</li></ol>

The lesson plan and materials were created according to this outline using Willis's framework (1996). (See a sample lesson plan in the Appendix.) They were validated by experts, tried out and used in the main study.

To answer the second research question, "Is task-based instruction workable in an English course for Buddhist missionary monks?", the pre-test and the post-test scores were compared. Results showed that both groups received significantly better scores in the speaking part, but no significant difference was found in the listening part. Overall, the high group has a higher degree of improvement than the low group as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 Mean scores of Listening and Speaking in Pre and Post-tests  
All the participants (N=30)

	Test Scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Speaking	Pre	0	194	94.05	63.07	-3.88*	1.04
	Post	2	219	155.53	54.81		
Listening	Pre	5	16	9.10	2.63	-1.55	0.25
	Post	6	17	9.78	2.78		

\*p<0.01

Table 4 Mean scores of the High and the Low Ability Groups

High group (N=10)

	Test scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Speaking	Pre	102	194	146.45	33.11	-2.70*	1.73
	Post	175	219	190.45	13.68		
Listening	Pre	7	16	10.05	2.79	-1.41	0.21
	Post	7	17	10.65	2.82		

\* p<0.01

Low group (N=10)

	Test scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Speaking	Pre	0	87	41.65	34.62	-2.70*	1.63
	Post	2	172	120.60	58.70		
Listening	Pre	5	12	8.16	2.19	-0.92	0.30
	Post	6	14	8.90	2.58		

As students performed significantly better in speaking when the task-based approach was applied, and it was interesting to investigate further in which aspects or which components of speaking skills the students made improvement. Results showed that in general the students made significant improvement in grammar and fluency while moderate gains could be found in communication, vocabulary, and pronunciation. When comparing the high and low groups, the high group did better than the low group in every component. Results are illustrated in Tables 5-7.

Table 5 Mean scores of Speaking Sub-Components

All participants (N=30)

	Test Scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Communication	Pre	0	39	19.85	12.52	-3.92*	1.06
	Post	1	45	32.60	11.47		
Grammar	Pre	0	37	18.18	11.93	-3.82*	1.17
	Post	0	44	31.58	10.92		
Vocabulary	Pre	0	38	18.70	12.50	-3.83*	0.93
	Post	1	44	29.75	11.20		
Pronunciation	Pre	0	39	19.85	12.27	-3.92*	0.92
	Post	1	43	30.40	10.46		
Fluency	Pre	0	41	19.08	10.46	-3.92*	1.11
	Post	1	45	32.30	13.19		

\*p<0.01

Table 6 Mean Scores of the High Ability Group in Speaking Sub-Components

High group (N=10)

	Test Scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Communication	Pre	21	39	29.90	6.57	-2.81*	1.90
	Post	36	45	39.85	3.36		
Grammar	Pre	19	37	27.90	6.67	-2.80*	1.96
	Post	36	44	37.90	2.72		
Vocabulary	Pre	20	38	29.05	6.71	-2.81*	1.52
	Post	30	44	37.45	4.00		
Pronunciation	Pre	21	39	29.60	6.17	-2.81*	1.59
	Post	33	43	37.35	3.07		
Fluency	Pre	20	41	29.95	7.72	-2.81*	1.65
	Post	36	45	39.65	3.06		

\*p&lt;0.01

Table 6 shows that the high ability group gained the most in terms of grammar knowledge (effect size of 1.96), followed by communication (1.90), fluency (1.65), pronunciation (1.59), and vocabulary (1.52).

Table 7 Mean Scores of the Low Ability Group in Speaking Sub-Components

Low group (N=10)

	Test Scores	min	max	$\bar{x}$	SD	Z-value	Cohen's d
Communication	Pre	0	18	9.80	7.95	-2.80*	0.82
	Post	1	36	25.35	25.35		
Grammar	Pre	0	16	8.45	6.78	-2.67*	1.67
	Post	0	35	25.25	12.47		
Vocabulary	Pre	0	17	8.35	6.84	-2.67*	1.51
	Post	0	34	22.05	10.82		
Pronunciation	Pre	0	20	10.10	8.27	-2.81*	1.39
	Post	1	32	23.45	10.68		
Fluency	Pre	0	17	8.20	6.70	-2.81*	1.60
	Post	1	36	24.95	13.10		

\*p&lt;0.01

It can be seen from Table 7 that the low ability group gained at a large level in all areas. Like the high ability group, the low ability group seemed to gain the most in their grammatical knowledge (effect size of 1.67), followed by fluency (1.60), vocabulary (1.51), pronunciation (1.39), and communication, in which their scores increased the least (effect size of 0.82).

In answer to the research question, "What are the views of the monk students on TBI?", findings from students' logs and the interviews as well as the teacher's diary indicated that the students expressed positive views towards the lesson content, task-based instruction, materials, and evaluation.

Here are the quotes from the students' logs and the interviews: H is used to represent student in the high group and L is for student in the low group.



**Views on lesson content:**

- H1: *The contents are good and useful. The content of Lesson 6 was too long; the teacher should reduce the content to fit the limited time.*
- L1: *The lesson contents are good, not too difficult, nor too easy. They are well planned for the mixed level class and meet the needs of missionary monks. The vocabulary is appropriate for use in real situations.*

**Views on task-based instruction:**

- H6: *I'd like to work in groups and present the results in front of the class because it provides the students the opportunity to express their ideas and listen to feedback from the teacher and classmates. We also learned how to manage good teamwork.*
- L1: *at first, I was so embarrassed to go up to the front of the class to present, but when I had to do it, I was able to do it and it was fine. It made me feel braver to do so.*
- L2: *The teaching methods and the materials used in class were all good; the problem is the background of the students. I've no background in English so I couldn't catch up with what's going on.*

**Views on teaching materials**

- H2: *If possible, videos should be used more as teaching materials.*
- L8: *In general the materials were good but they may be too difficult for some students.*

### **Views on evaluation**

H5: *It is good to evaluate students' performance in every lesson. But the form is too long. The instruction should be made clear to students and be specific.*

L2: *As for the evaluation, it depends on the teacher. If I were the teacher I'd focus more on the poor students, but as a student I'm not the kind who has high self-confidence, so I'm very scared to go up in front of the class. Anyway I'm encouraged so much when I study here.*

### **Views on length of time**

H3: *The lessons were good but sometimes they continued for too long. The teacher should give the students a break and not worry about the unfinished lesson. I want the class to go on happily and I am concerned about the teacher's health.*

L7: *Studying English for the whole day was too much; if possible I'd like to study only two or two and a half hours per day, every day.*

A follow-up questionnaire was sent via e-mail to all the samples who started working in overseas temples to have them report on their performance in the real situations. Ten responses were received.

The findings from the questionnaire indicated that the missionary monks felt they need to use English in every situation taught. One person wrote that he faced the problem of his baggage being damaged when he arrived at the airport abroad and he had to report the problem and request help which was a similar situation to what he studied in class. Others reported problems they faced and suggested some other tasks for inclusion in the syllabus, for example the answers to questions when they were interviewed at immigration. All the respondents also mentioned the problems caused by pronunciation. They emphasized that the next class should focus on how to pronounce words correctly so that the

foreigners understand what the monks mean. However, they all agreed TBI was a suitable method to prepare them for real life abroad.

For the last research question, “How can TBI be made effective in the intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks?”, the answers were based on students’ logs, and interview after the course, the follow-up questionnaire, and the teacher’s diary. Here are some interesting findings. For example, it was suggested that some part of the contents could be adjusted according to their usefulness and necessity. Both students and teacher agreed that TBI was practical, useful, challenging, and appropriate to use for preparation for the mission abroad, and the evaluation in class using role play and presentation was appropriate and useful in preparing the students for the real situations; however, more practice time was needed and the modern multimedia would make the lessons more interesting, so videos or films should be added.

### **Discussion and Implication**

Based on the findings from the post-test, it appears that students’ speaking skills significantly improved after task-based instruction but not their listening skills. The reasons are: First, the course was designed based on the students’ needs and the need for speaking skills weighed four times more than listening so more oral communication practice occurred in the class than listening practice. Thus, in the post-test, their listening scores did not improve much. Second, there was not enough time for students to practice listening in class, and neither the teacher nor the program could provide additional listening materials for the students to practice on their own. Therefore, the students did not receive enough comprehensible input to acquire the listening skills in a short time (Krashen and Terrel, 1983). On the other hand, the TBI used in class was likely to increase students’ speaking opportunities, especially for those with low affective filter. According to the TBI approach, students are given a lot of opportunities to practice both in groups and individually. It is obvious that in the initial step in the task cycle, students are supposed to discuss in English about the task until the group arrives at a conclusion. Then

the group members plan how to and decide who will present the result. Then the whole group helps the presenter to prepare the presentation in English. At this point the fast students can help the slow students in the group, and all students also have a chance to share ideas among the group members, as well as co-construct the knowledge in the peer teaching environment (Williams and Burden, 1997; Sanchez, 2004). As students take turns in giving presentations, they are afforded equal opportunities to practice speaking. All this may explain the significant increase in the speaking skill.

As for each component of speaking skills, students in both high and low ability groups seemed to improve the most in grammar. This is probably due to the fact that TBI also places some emphasis on grammar practice although communication is given first priority. Also, it could be because the monks have had relatively strong background in grammar. As the graduates from the monk university mentioned, reading and writing were emphasized when they studied in their former classes. Therefore, prior knowledge in grammar may facilitate the construction of grammar knowledge especially when they have a chance to work together. Moreover, during the language focus phase, students are allowed to ask questions about sentences to be used in certain situations, reinforcing their knowledge of grammar.

The success of TBI for teaching oral communication skills as found in the study yields an important pedagogical implication. The factors that make teaching speaking in this study successful are as follows: first of all, the ESP contents specific to this group of students are based on the real needs of the monks preparing themselves for overseas missions, so they have clear goals to fulfill and they have high motivation to learn the course. Second, the content is suitable for the learners. Third, peer learning/instruction helps push one another beyond their potential to the Zone of Proximal Development, so this confirms Vygotsky's theory that the interaction among peers can help enhance learning performance. Lastly, the anxiety-free classroom and non judgmental atmosphere of collaboration made students feel relaxed and learn better (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

Findings from qualitative data indicated that surveying students' needs before teaching the course can increase students' motivation because students believe that the course is really tailored for them and they will pay attention to lessons to see if they satisfy their needs. It is also useful to conduct needs assessment at various stages of the course (Brown, 1995). Especially, it is useful to follow up on how students use English in real situations after the end of the course. This is to ensure that their needs are met in real life.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research was conducted in a class of 77 students but the focus was on 30 participants and 20 key informants. The main findings from the study can be summarized in three areas: needs analysis, learning outcomes, and course evaluation. It was found that monk students and the Buddhist missionary monks on duty needed to use English in order to accomplish fifteen top tasks, which can be divided into two categories: work-related and survival skills. These needs were incorporated into lesson topics and the contents of the course using task-based instruction as the principal method of teaching. After implementation, the post-test scores of all the 30 students were found to be significantly higher than the pre-test scores, especially in terms of speaking skills, but not in listening skills. In particular, they improved substantially in grammar and fluency. The majority of both the students and the graduates felt that the course helped a lot in preparing them for their mission abroad. The findings from qualitative data indicated that when implementing TBI, more practice time was needed and the authentic props as well as modern multimedia would be useful classroom materials.

However, it is recommended that there should be an evaluation of this program within the next five years which may reconfirm the hypothesis or may lead to another revision. And if possible, there should be a follow-up survey of stakeholders' attitudes towards the work performance of missionary monks on duty abroad who attended the intensive English course for Buddhist missionary monks using task-based instruction. Also, an experimental research study which compares TBI with other

methods of teaching may provide alternatives for the administrators who arrange training for missionary monks going abroad. As some of the monks may not want to go to work abroad, the development of EAP course using content-based instruction for the monks who may need English for other purposes than being missionaries is worth studying. Moreover, to verify whether English is really necessary for monks, an ethnography research on monks studying in monk universities with plans to study abroad for a higher degree may reveal interesting findings related to this issue.

### **The Author**

Noppawan Chimroylarp has taught intensive English courses for monks in a training program for Buddhist missionary monks before they leave for their mission abroad since 1998. She has a PhD in English as an International Language, specializing in English Instruction from Chulalongkorn University. She is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Kasetsart University.

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