Improving English Education in Thailand by Modeling Classroom Behavior

HAI Yang
y050730@gmail.com

Matthew HARRIS
matthewblakeharris@hotmail.com

Pranom JITKLANG
glang30@yahoo.com

Mahidol Wittayanusorn School
364, Moo 5, Salaya, Phutthamonthon
Nakhon Pathom 73170
Thailand

Tel: 662-849-7000
Fax: 662-849-7102

IMPROVING ENGLISH EDUCATION IN THAILAND BY MODELING CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT

English classroom behavior across Thailand is highly influenced by long-held traditions, culture and values. By comparing Thai secondary education classroom behavior with that of Chinese classes working at the same level, we have constructed a model of Thai students' English classroom behavior. Comparison is made from surveys conducted by schools with students demonstrating similarly wide range of performance and ability in English. We also suggest effective ways to improve English teaching in Thailand for both Thai and foreign teachers of English by incorporating this model with the theories of J. Kunin, so as to help avoid culture conflict, motivate students' interest and make better use of existing standards and practices.

KEYWORDS: English, classroom, behavior, model

GOAL

English classroom behavior across Thailand is highly influenced by long-held traditions, culture and values. This has positive and negative effects on students' classroom achievement in English.[1]Despite their significance, these effects have yet to be seriously studied. In this paper, we present research modeling Thailand high school students' English classroom behavior and possible methods for applying this model to improve English education.

RESEARCH

Behavior research is based on a professional standard for data collection and analysis.
    2.1. Instrument
        We have built a questionnaire focusing on issues that can lead to misunderstandings for English teachers, especially foreign teachers by applying Herbert and Attridge's approach to modeling behavior and applying it to groups of students in Thailand and China.[2]

    2.2. Procedure
        2.2.1. Build a reliable instrument, as mentioned;
        2.2.2. Select suitable schools to obtain data;
        2.2.3. Collect data;
        2.2.4. Analyze data and model

    2.3. Check reliability
        Guidelines laid out by Rowley were observed to insure the data's reliability.[3]
        2.3.1. School selection

In Thailand, we selected two schools for obtaining data: Mahidol Wittayanusorn school, a national science high school with students from 50 out of Thailand's 77 provinces, and

Kajanaphisek School, a local high school of Nakhon Pathom province. Altogether 87 students from the two schools participated in the research.

In China, we invited Yunnan Normal University's attached high school, a local school in Kunming city of Yunnan province with average academic performance, and Shanghai Weiyu high school where most students are from Shanghai and demonstrate a higher level of performance. 120 students from the two schools participated in this research.

2.3.2 Informing the participants
Before the participants answered the questionnaire, teachers of that schools acting as organizers informed their student very clearly as to its research nature and instructed them to answer as truthfully as possible as it would be confidential and have no effect on their score.

ANALYSIS

The behavior we studied can be divided to two categories:

3.1. Participation

3.1.1 Reading after the teacher is a common technique in the classroom. How many repetitions can students readily accept? The following data was obtained from the two different countries.

	Time	1	2	3	4	5	_5	Total
Thailand	person	2	36	35	5	3	1	82
	%	2.4	43.9	42.7	6.1	3.7	1.2	100
	Time	1	2	3	4	5	_5	
China	person	19	45	19	2	7	6	98
	%	19.4	45.9	19.5	2	7.1	6.1	100
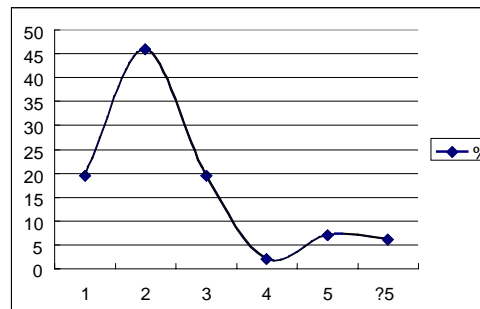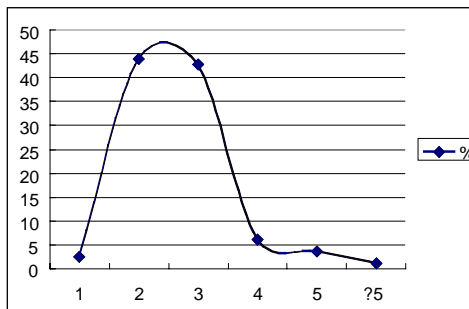
3.1.2 Very common classroom activities have different degrees of acceptance.

|	Activity	Read after teacher	Read after media	Copy text	Role play	Do simulate test sheets	
Thailand	person	20	19	2	43	3	87
	%	22.9	21.8	2.3	49.5	3.5	100
China	person	27	30	1	45	12	115
	%	23.4	26.1	0.8	39.2	10.5	100
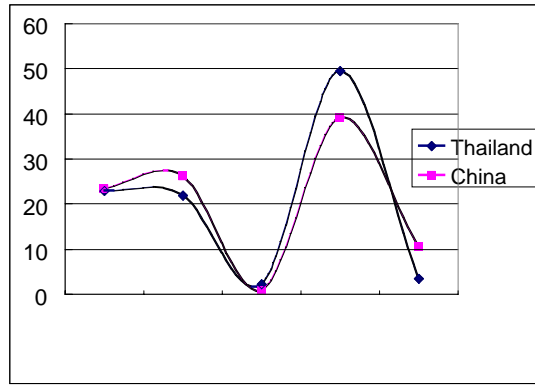
3.2. Interaction
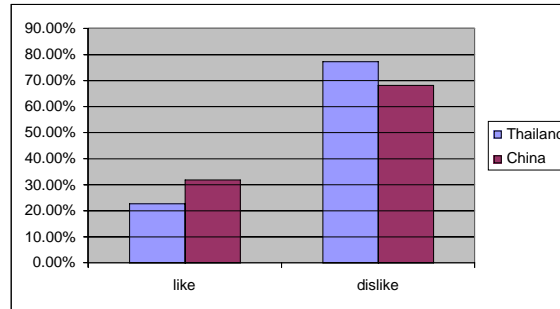#### 3.2.1. Interaction with peers

Groups competition and individual competition are very frequently conducted as it requires students to engage themselves in the activity and interact with their peers. Thai students and Chinese student show different levels of interest in this activity.

	Groups competition		
	like	dislike	Total
Thailand	45	42	87
	51.7%	48.3%	100%
China	97	21	109
	82.2	17.8	100%
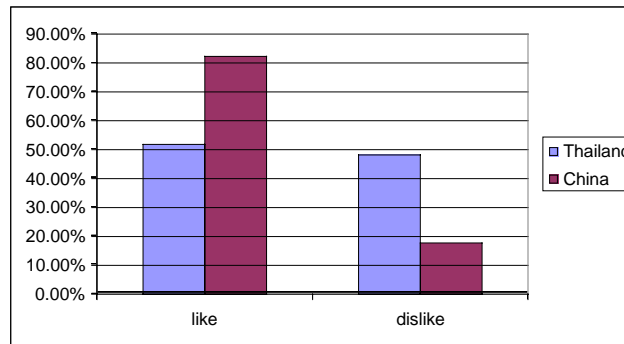
	Individual competition		
	like	dislike	Total
Thailand	20	67	87
	22.9%	77.1%	100%
China	37	80	117
	31.6%	68.4%	100%

3.2.2. Interaction with teacher

When teachers ask students to read lessons in advance, the results are often unsatisfactory.

Read the lessons in advance				
	Often	Seldom	Never	Total
Thailand	16	61	9	86
	18.6%	70.9%	10.5%	100
China	37	73	10	120
	30.8%	60.8%	8.4%	100
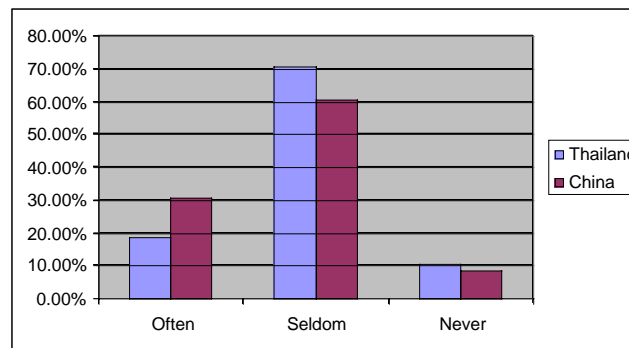
CONCLUSION

By comparing data, we found apparent behavioral differences, and made the following conclusions:

- 2-3 times is the appropriate frequency for reading text after teaching
- Role play is the most welcome activity.
- Only half of students enjoy group competition and even less enjoy individual competition.
- Less than 20% of student really read lessons in advance of a teacher's instruction

Other behavior observed:

- Like to help the classmates answer question when teacher order one answer question, but it is almost never occur in China;
- When teacher ask the whole class a question, most students don't answer it, even they understand it and can answer it quit well;
- Don't take it serious in late for the class;

The items in this research are limited, but the results may be helpful to English teachers in Thailand who may be confused by Thai students' classroom behavior and how, in this environment, their teaching practices can lead to unsuccessful classroom management.[4]

REFERENCES

1. Hoge, R. D. and Luce, S. Predicting Academic Achievement from Classroom Behavior, Review of Educational Research, Vol. 49, No.3, 1979

2. Herbert, J. and Attridge, A Guide for Developers and Users of Observation System and Manuals, American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1975

3. Rowley, G. L. The Reliability of Observational Measures, American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1976

4. Kounin, J. Discipline and group management in classrooms. Krieger Pub Co, New York, 1977