Using Social Network Sites for Language Learning and Video Conferencing Technology to Improve English Speaking Skills: A Case Study of Thai Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This study explores the use of video conferencing and social media technology in improving English speaking skills, which Thai students struggle the most. Data were collected from 6 participants who conversed with native and fluent speakers of English via a videoconferencing application with the use of a few other social media websites for a certain period of time. They were assessed on their speaking competency before, during and after the practice to see their improvement. Their perception towards the practice was also investigated through an interview. The findings demonstrate outstanding improvement on lower level participants. Thus, findings suggest that this online practice could be a suitable remedial course for learners with lower English speaking competency. Finally, most of the participants thought that this way of learning improved their English speaking skills and confidence. However, technical and time constraint issues are found.

Keywords: technology, English speaking skill, computer assisted language learning, computer mediated communication

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language in non-native English speaking countries like Thailand has always been a challenge and has not been successful (Punthumasen, 2007). Reasons are varied which include emphasis given on certain skills and areas, teaching strategies, the curriculum, the context of learning the language, and qualifications of the teachers (Punthumasen, 2007).

In Thailand, students spend twelve years or more learning the language but because teaching English emphasized more on grammar translation neglecting other skills especially listening and speaking, communicating in English becomes a problem (Saengboon, cited in Khamkhien, 2010). In addition, there is not much opportunity for students to use the language in everyday life (Dhanasobhon, 2006; ONEC, 2003 cited in Noom-Ura, 2013). Universities and schools have to find effective ways to improve the English speaking skills of students as they would be the future workforce of the country. English teachers have to seek better teaching strategies or means of teaching speaking.

Since teachers are catering to generation X students who grow up in technology era, teachers could use technology in teaching speaking and students can use their digital devices to communicate with foreign friends to improve their English speaking skills. Social media sites and language learning applications abound which give students much opportunity to practice speaking (Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012b; Lomicka and

Lord, 2012; Mills 2011, cited in Lomicka and Lord, 2016; Harrison & Thomas, 2009). Video conference is another technology that could be utilized for practicing English speaking. This technology is a powerful tool because learners are able to communicate with someone face to face online and can receive prompt feedback (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1996, cited in Beldarrain, 2006).

The aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the use of social media and video conferencing technology to improve the English speaking skills of undergraduate students in a private university in Bangkok and to determine their perception on the use of these technologies.

Objectives of the Study
1. To determine if the use of video conferencing technology and social network sites in practicing English speaking could improve the English speaking skills of EFL students in a private university in Bangkok
2. To investigate students' perceptions on the use of video conferencing technology and social network sites in practicing speaking English

Research Questions
1. Can the use of video conferencing technology and social network sites in practicing English speaking improve the English speaking skills of EFL students in a private university in Bangkok?
2. What are the students' perceptions on the use of video conferencing technology and social network site in practicing speaking English?

Significance of the Study
This study offers an alternative means of learning English specifically speaking, thus, this methodology using video conference and social media technology could substitute old and traditional way of learning English. Students could explore wider use of social media applications in learning English. Thai students, in particular, could practice speaking English with native speakers in real time.

Literature Review
Social Media and Language Learning
Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are widely used for exchanging information and sharing personal experiences. Social media users are able to connect with people around the world and can make friends with strangers (Boyd & Ellison 2007, cited in Harrison and Thomas, 2009). In addition to having social friends, these sites could also be used for language learning (McBride, 2009). Various researches have been conducted on the use of these sites in language learning. (Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Stevenson and Liu, 2010; Clark and Gruba, 2010)

Video Conferencing and Second Language Learning
Video conferencing application is a communication tool that can be used by second language learners to improve their English speaking skill. Mouhadjer (2013) By using this application, learners have more opportunities to interact with other language learners and people from different parts of the world who speak the target language (Coverdale-Jones, 2017). Through this means, language learners are exposed to different cultures, language usage and accents. This, in turn, could help them understand and learn how words in a particular language are used (Ip, 2012). A study conducted by Eguchi found that language

learners who used video conferencing technology produced more English language output when conversing with partners from different cultures than when conversing with students from the same culture since conversing with people from different cultures creates information gap which facilitates language production (Eguchi, 2014). Utterances are also found to be longer when using video conferencing than utterances produced in classroom dialogues (Gruson & Barnes, 2012).

Using video conferencing technology gives another advantage. Conversing or chatting through video conference could give language learners some cues as to what their conversation partners are talking about through their body language, facial expressions and nods (Wang, 2004).

On the other hand, the use video conferencing in learning English speaking could pose some problems such as the amount of time used for preparation which could be a problem for those who are busy with other commitments (Hampel and Hauck, 2004, Ip, 2012) and the complexity of the technology that will be utilized. It is therefore, important and necessary to conduct trainings for prospective learners (Ip, 2012).

Methodology
Participants
Participants represent bilingual program students from the School of Communication Arts, Accounting and Humanities in a private university in Bangkok.

Selection of Participants
There were eighty one students in the bilingual program. Twenty students volunteered to take part in the study but only six participants were selected based on certain criteria. The six participants were categorized according to their speaking ability based on IELTS speaking criteria: elementary, lower-intermediate, and intermediate. They were also identified as either an extreme case or a paradigmatic case. Extreme cases in this study included those who were most-likely and least-likely to succeed. They were identified using Naiman, et al's "the Good Language Learner Qualities:"(a) taking an active approach to the task of language learning, (b) recognising and exploiting the systematic nature of language, (c) using the language they were learning for communication and interaction, (d) managing their own affective difficulties with language learning, and (e) monitoring their language learning performance" (cited in Norton and Toohey, 2001, p.309). Paradigmatic cases are participants who represent the characteristics of the majority of the population. This representation could ensure that the results would be generalizable according to Flyvbjerg (2006).

Table 1 *Participants' English Speaking Competency and Group*

	Elementary	Lower-intermediate	Intermediate
Most-likely to succeed	C1		A1
Least-likely to succeed		B2	A2
Paradigmatic	C2	B1	

Table 1 shows the English speaking competency of each participant and the group each belongs.

Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. Data were collected from recorded conversations of participants with their practice partners and partners they found in social media sites, self-reflection reports of both the participants and their partners, the researcher's observation, interview, and the speaking performance of the participants with their speaking partners to determine the participants' improvement in English speaking. A final interview with the researcher was conducted to determine participants' perceptions on the use of video conferencing technology and social media sites in learning speaking English.

Data Collection
Preparation

Before the speaking practice commenced, participants were briefed about the study and were given training on the use of social media applications such as ooVoo and Edmodo.

Initial Speaking Competency Assessment

A preliminary speaking test was conducted to determine the participants' initial English competency. The participants selected three topics of their interest and were assessed by an IELTS examiner and the researcher on their initial speaking ability on these three topics using the IELTS criteria: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammar and accuracy, and pronunciation. Results of this test were used to determine if there was improvement in the speaking skills of students at the end of their conversation practice.

Conversation Partners

Speaking practice was done with two groups of conversation partners: the practice partners, an American student and a Chinese student who are fluent English speakers and the real partners who the participants found in social network sites for language exchange.

Actual Conversation Practice

Before the actual conversation practice started, each participant downloaded some conversation materials available on Edmodo and self-studied them. Each participant completed nine conversation practices with three different partners on three topics the participant selected using video conferencing technology which recorded the meetings. These recorded conversations were used by the participants to reflect on what transpired during the conversation and used the reflection to write reports of their perception towards their conversation practice. These recorded conversations were also submitted to the researcher and the IELTS examiner for assessment. Observation was made on each participant during the practice which was documented to gauge any improvement in speaking. Areas of assessment included fluency, lexical resource, grammar and pronunciation. In addition, observation on other qualities the participants exhibited during the practice was also made such as confidence in speaking and commitment.

Final Speaking Competency Assessment

At the end of the practice, a post-test was conducted by the same IELTS examiner and the researcher to determine speaking improvement after the end of the practice.

Final Interview

A final interview was conducted to determine the participants' perception on the use of technology to practice speaking and the practice in general. The data collection process of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Data Collection Process*
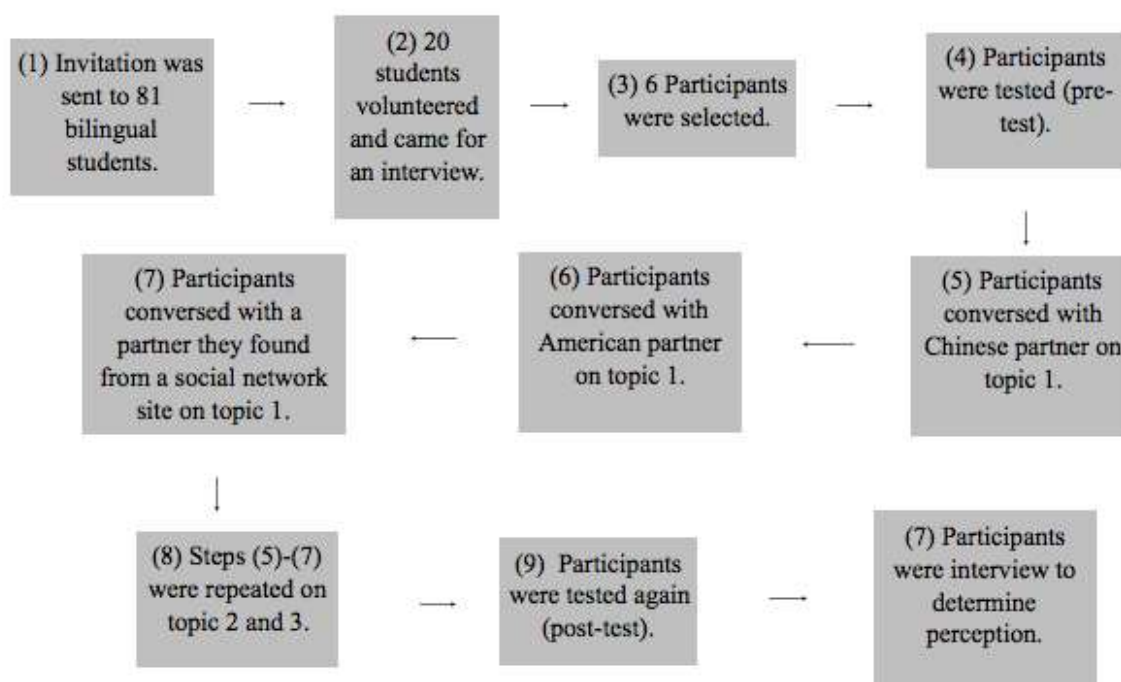
Findings

Research question 1: Can the use of video conferencing technology and social network site in practicing English speaking improve the speaking skill of EFL students in a private university in Bangkok?

To answer the first research question, Table 2 and 3 show the average scores of each participant's improvement based on their pre-test scores, practice scores, and post-test scores. Information on each participant' performance coming from the researcher's and practice partner's observation is also presented in order to show how each participant improved their speaking skill.

Table 2 *Pre- and Post-test Scores Shown in Categories*

Pre-test & Post-test Score

Participant	A1		A2		B1		B2		C1		C2	
Level	Intermediate		Intermediate		Lower-intermediate		Lower-intermediate		Elementary		Elementary	
Group	Most-likely		Least-likely		Paradigmatic		Least-likely		Most-likely		Paradigmatic	
Test	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Fluency & coherence	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Lexical resource	5	6	5	5	5	4	5	6	3	5	4	6
Grammar & Accuracy	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5
Pronunciation	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Overall	5	5.75	5.5	5	5	4.75	5	5.25	3.5	5	4	5.25

Two participants with outstanding improvement scores were C1 and C2. Both of them were in elementary level. Regarding their groups, C1 was a most-likely to succeed learner and C2 was a paradigmatic learner. The two participants whose scores did not improve were B1 and A2. They were from different groups and levels.

It is possible that this speaking practice using social network site and video conferencing has the capacity to improve most of the participants' post-test score, especially the participants with low speaking competency.

Table 3 *Practice Scores of Each Participant*

Practice Scores

Participant	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Level	Intermediate	Intermediate	Lower-intermediate	Lower-intermediate	Elementary	Elementary
Group	Most-likely	Least-likely	Paradigmatic	Least-likely	Most-likely	Paradigmatic
First half	5	4.88	4.90	5.09	4.73	4.73
Second half	5.11	5.01	4.94	5.21	4.84	4.94

Practice Scores

Participant	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Improvement on practice score (second half - first half)	+0.11	+0.13	**+0.04**	+0.12	+0.11	**+0.21**
Average practice score	5.05	4.95	4.92	**5.14**	**4.78**	4.82

The practice score given was also based on IELTS speaking criteria. It could be noted that without considering the pre- and post-test scores, all participants had some improvement on the second half of their practice. The practice score in the first half is the average score of the first five conversations while the practice score in the second half is the average score of the last four conversations with the partners. The participant with the highest practice score improvement was C2. He was in elementary level and paradigmatic group. The participant who had the lowest improvement was B1. She was in the lower-intermediate level and also in the paradigmatic group. Most participants' average practice scores agreed with their speaking competency. The participants with higher speaking competency were assessed and it was found that they had higher average practice score than the participants with lower speaking competency. The average practice score in the second half shows that this speaking practice has the potential to improve all of the participants' practice scores.

Results of Observation on Each Participant's Speaking Skill Improvement
Participant A1
This participant has always been a competent speaker in the American partner's opinion. The Chinese partner also said participant A1 was "quite fluent when answering basic questions" since the first time they met. Since the participant is already quite fluent, not much improvement was observed, but in terms of the length of her talk, the improvement was quite obvious. The American partner also wrote on his report that "A1 did seem to express herself more as our conversations progressed. I don't know if this was an improvement in vocabulary or a display of greater confidence." In her pre- and post-test, her answer to each question also showed improvement in length, which could be due to the increase of her confidence or range of vocabulary as reported by the American partner. This, thus, improved her score in lexical resource, grammar and pronunciation areas, but not her fluency.

Regarding her pronunciation, both the American and Chinese partners thought that she was quite clear in her pronunciation and easy to understand. Her real partner commented that participant A1 had strong Japanese accent, though. Her Japanese accent is possibly due to watching a lot of Japanese animations on YouTube. From the researcher's observation, although there were quite a few words this participant pronounces incorrectly, she conveyed her thoughts clearly and it was quite easy to understand her in most situations. The examples of words that she pronounced incorrectly causing misunderstanding were child /chill/, pregnant /pigeon/ and unusual /ensual/.

Participant A2

This participant's speaking competency was the highest among all of the participants at the beginning of the practice. Her pronunciation was very clear and it seemed to be her strongest area. She pronounces and stresses many words correctly that most Thai people pronounce and stress incorrectly.

However, it was very hard to determine if her fluency increased because she seemed very shy and did not talk much and long since the start to the end of of the practice. It seemed like she talked very little to avoid making errors. She did talk longer in her post-test, which could probably be due to the increase of her confidence. Her grammar and lexical resource also seemed to remain the same. Both partners also felt the same. Although she made more grammatical errors causing her to receive lower score in her post-test, considering the length of her talk, it could be deduced that she gained more confidence in speaking; thus, she spoke more and cared less about making errors.

According to the researcher's observation, participant A2 is a very shy person. The American partner also mentioned that he felt this participant seemed very shy at the beginning of the practice but then she was able to gain more confidence and carry a decent conversation with him. He also thought that participant A2 has the softest and the most gentle and polite personality. With longer and consistent practice, she might be able to get rid of her shyness and finally show some improvement.

Participant B1

This participant had less time to do the whole practice because she was called to replace another participant who had dropped out one month after the study had started. In order to finish the practice before the Chinese partner graduated and before the American partner went back to his country, her practice was quite hasty. Her attitude was very positive and pleasant, though. She never showed she had problems being rushed. Her post-test score was, however, lower than her pre-test, which could be due to the less time she spent on preparing and practicing.

According to the Chinese partner's report, at the beginning of the practice, she felt that this participant "is willing to speak and have a good amount of vocabulary to support her discussion." However, towards the end of the practice, her comments on participant B1's lexical resource changed. She commented that "due to the limited vocabulary, she was able to describe the places she likes to travel and the animals she likes in a very simple way." This comment also relates to P's lower post-test score due to the decrease of her lexical resource score.

The American partner, on the other hand, commented that this participant improved mostly in her confidence but not in other areas. He also felt that her pronunciation was the clearest. It was a consensus of both partners and the researcher that participant B1's communication skill is good.

Participant B2

Although possessing none of good language learner qualities, participant B2 showed some improvement on his post-test score. Both the American and Chinese partners, however, agreed that they saw very little improvement in this participant because they thought he is already good in speaking. The American partner wrote in his report that participant B2 "remained well spoken and confident." In some topics he was comfortable with, for example fashion, they both thought that his grammar and lexical resource were excellent. Regarding

his pronunciation, the American partner commented that this participant "has always been pretty easy to understand, but with time I would say it was easier to understand his pronunciation." It was observed that words usually mispronounced by Thai were pronounced correctly by him. Ending sounds such as t, s, k, and -ed were uttered clearly and correctly by this participant.

During the practice, although it seemed he was not shy like participant A2, there was no indication that he could carry on or lead conversations. The Chinese partner suggested in her report that he should "learn how to respond more than short answers. It's okay to tell stories and give details when someone asks a question." According to the American partner's report: "I struggled talking with B2 from time-to-time because I don't think he was as engaged as the other participants. He didn't seem interested in the conversation and may or may not have wanted to be there. It was difficult to arrange meeting times with him and didn't show up for a few of the arranged times. This was aggravating at times, so I felt that B2 really didn't want to be a participant." However, apart from being one of the least-likely to succeed participant, participant B2 also admitted that he did not devote much effort on the practice due to load of his mainstream course projects and assignments.

Participant C1

This participant was assessed to have the lowest speaking skill among all participants. However, there was a consensus among the partners, the researcher and the IELTS examiner that this participant had the biggest improvement in all areas: fluency, lexical resource, grammar, pronunciation, comprehension and confidence.

The American partner commented that participant C1 "had a good flow of conversation that I didn't see in the other participants." His pronunciation has improved since the American partner claimed that he understood this partner much better the more they talked. He also agreed that participant C1's lexical resource improved and had the potential to get better with more practice as participant C1 "asked the meaning of words that I would say and would work out the appropriate word for what he was thinking." His comprehension also improved as the partner thought that "C1 understood a lot more and responded much better by the end of our sessions."

The Chinese partner also agreed there was improvement in all areas in this participant. She commented that his understanding was quite poor the first time they met. She wrote, "C1 had a hard time understanding what I was trying to ask him." In their second meeting, the Chinese partner could feel some improvement on participant C1's confidence and lexical resource. In their last meeting, she commented that participant C1 was able to explain using longer sentences.

From the researcher's observation, this participant was very active and tried very hard. Although he was the only participant who had a part-time job at night, he never cancelled any meetings. He normally came an hour earlier before each meeting and was willing to wait until dark to talk to his real partner. The American and Chinese partners could see this, too. His commitment and enthusiasm along with all of the good language learner qualities making him one of the most-likely to succeed could be the reason behind his success.

Participant C2

This participant started off very bad according to the IELTS examiner and the American partner. His Thai accent was very strong and very hard to understand, which was partly because of the braces he was wearing.

At the beginning of the practice, the Chinese partner commented that participant C2 "had a hard time understanding what I was trying to ask him. His vocabulary is very limited and doesn't know how to structure a complete sentence." However, in her last meeting with this participant, she expressed surprise and commented that "C2 has made a very significant progress of comprehending my questions. He is more confident in speaking in English." The American partner's comment, however, disagreed with the Chinese partner's in terms of the participant's improvement. He felt that participant C2's comprehension and lexical resource have always been decent but "didn't respond timely or well." The only problem for participant C2 according to the American partner was his confidence that did not seem to improve from the beginning to the end of the practice. The American partner commented that "C2 seemed intimidated and scared to talk to me from start to finish." The American partner, therefore, did not think this participant improved. The American partner's comment was mostly negative because he conversed with this participant only during the first half of the practice due to his busy schedule. Therefore, he did not have a chance to see C2's improvement at the end of the practice.

From the researcher's observation, although this participant has only a few good language learner qualities, he was one of the participants who tried very hard. His commitment could be another reason he turned out to have the second highest improvement on his post-test score and the highest improvement on the average second half of his practice score.

Research question 2: What are the students' perceptions on the use of video conferencing technology and social network site in practicing speaking?

To answer the second research question, the participants' final interview answers are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 *Summary of Participants' Perceptions towards the Use of Technology in Practicing Speaking*

Participant	Duration of each meeting	Frequency	Good points	Bad points	Intention to continue
A1	Good	Once a week was fine.	- It gave her a chance to meet new foreign people. - It helped her to be more confident to speak English with foreigners. - She learned many new words from her practice partners. - Technology helps her to be able to be specific about the age, gender and interest of the partners so she can go deeper about the topic. - Having a computer in between herself and her partner makes her feel much safer and relaxed.	- There were some connection problems like voice delay or freezing picture.	Not sure
A2	Good	Once a week is just right.	- It gave her more chance to speak in English. - It improved her speaking skill.	- She was not happy when the Chinese partner was away for months because it made her lose momentum and forget the skill she had been gaining. - There were some connection problems.	Maybe if she has time.
B1	Good	It should be every other day or every two days.	- It was fun. - Talking via computer made her feel less shy. - It improved her confidence.	It did not improve her English because it was not frequent enough.	Not without the researcher

Participant	Duration of each meeting	Frequency	Good points	Bad points	Intention to continue
B2	Suitable	It should be every day.	It helped him to speak better.	The whole practice and preparation took too much time and he was already very busy with his assignments from his mainstream courses.	Not sure
C1	Good	Once a week is appropriate	This practice helped him to be more fluent and to say what was in his mind easier without knowing how, when and why.	- He did not have enough time to prepare for each meeting. - There were a few times he was disconnected while talking to his partner.	Maybe if it's free.
C2	Good	It should be every day.	- This practice helped him to speak much better. - It gave him courage and confidence to speak up.	none	Yes, definitely

There were several positive points addressed by the participants. The first benefit was on speaking improvement. Five out of six participants believed that the use of technology for practice could improve their speaking. Secondly, half of them perceived the development of confidence. Lastly, two of them thought that talking via computer made them feel less shy, safer, and relaxed.

Regarding bad points, there are two main problems they mentioned: technical and time management problems. Half of them experienced the connection problems. Although the devices used by the participants of this study were brand new, the devices of the real partners still created some unavoidable technical problems. The second problem is time management. Two of the participants found that it was very difficult to manage their time to prepare for the practice.

Discussion

Table 2 indicates that this practice was likely to work best with elementary level learners. If learners were in lower-intermediate level and above, there seemed to be less room for improvement. This could partly be related to the study of Lin and Fang (2010) regarding the perception of advanced English learners towards the use of CMC to practice speaking. The participants of that study did not feel that online chatting help improve their English. Although the study did not indicate that learners' higher English competency was the factor of the failure, those learners were all advanced learners receiving over 530 points on the TOEFL score. A study conducted by James (2016) also confirms that videoconferencing technology has the potential to develop Spanish speaking skill of post-beginner students

although further investigation is needed to prove whether students with higher speaking competency would experience the same development. However, it could be noted that without considering the pre- and post-test scores, all participants improved their speaking skill as shown in Table 3. Further study, nonetheless, could be conducted to determine if lower level learners' improvement would remain stable once they reach a certain level of competency.

As shown in Table 3, all participants had some improvement on their practice scores. However, the rank of their improvement in this table was different from Table 2. Participant C1, who had the highest post-test score improvement came in the fourth place in his practice score improvement. Participant A2, whose post-test score was lower than her pre-test score, came in the second place in her practice score improvement. Although most of their average practice score agreed with their speaking competency, the rank of their improvement on the second half of their practice does not show any particular pattern. Their group and speaking competency did not have any impact on the level of their improvement. Further investigation should be done to identify other factors that affect inconsistencies of results shown in the two tables. B1, however, was ranked very low on both tables. This could be because she was called to participate in the study a month later after the practice had started to replace a participant who had dropped out. Her practice was quite hasty that affected her score results, therefore, the score results are inconclusive.

From the practice partners and the researcher's observation, participants' initial speaking competency affected their improvement. The participants who had higher speaking competency before participating in the study were observed to have less improvement while the participants who started the practice with elementary level were observed to show outstanding improvement. Some characteristics of the participants; for example, timidity and enthusiasm were also observed to affect the participants' improvement. Participants who were more active and enthusiastic were observed to have better improvement according to the opinion of the partners and the researcher. On the other hand, participants who were more shy and unenthusiastic were observed to have no or less improvement.

From Table 4, the participants' perception on the practice was mostly positive in terms of their improvement on speaking and confidence. The social network site for language also helped connect them with people who are willing to talk to language learners. Some participants mentioned conversing online using video conferencing application helped them to feel less shy and more safe to talk to strangers. The practice was also described as a fun way to practice English speaking. English speaking practice using videoconferencing technology and social network site, therefore, seems to create positive learning experience among the participants.

Regarding technical problems, although the devices used by the participants of this study were brand new, the devices of the real partners still created some technical problems. Three out of six participants experienced technical problems, which can be related to the study of Hampel (2002) and Hampel & Hauck (2004) where technical problem was the main drawback. However, those three participants did not find the problems impact negatively on their practice. The time problem mentioned by two of the participants of this study also agrees with Ip's (2012) and Hampel & Hauck's studies (2004) in which they found that time was the biggest problem of the participants. Both participants in this study find the time to be problematic due to their busy schedules at school.

In order to initiate a speaking practice using social network and videoconferencing technology, factors that affect learners' improvement include their initial speaking competency and characteristics. Benefits learners will receive from participating in the practice are speaking improvement, connection to people around the world and positive learning experience, for example, fun, relaxed, and safe. Instructor might need to consider integrating the practice into a course to motivate unenthusiastic learners and to solve the time management problem some learners may have. In order to avoid technical problems, the devices and technology used during the practice must be reliable. Technical supports must be available.

In the field of computer mediated communication and language learning, this study addresses the use of social network and video conference as effective tools that can be implemented into a course or used for a personal speaking practice. The findings such as the participants' initial speaking competency or integration of the practice into a course could also be an important factors to consider when planning the practice. Although the findings regarding the benefits received and supports needed by learners using computer mediated communication to improve speaking skill of English and other languages have been shown in many literatures, factor regarding learners' initial speaking competency this study found has never been clearly investigated in English teaching and learning field in Thailand. This study, therefore, leads to a further investigation of this area. Therefore, another research should be conducted to find out whether lower level learners will stop their improvement when a certain competency is reached.

Figure 2 shows the diagram developed from the findings of this study.

Figure 2 *Diagram of Factors, Benefits and Things to Consider When Implementing Videoconferencing and Social Network Site for Language Learning into a Course.*
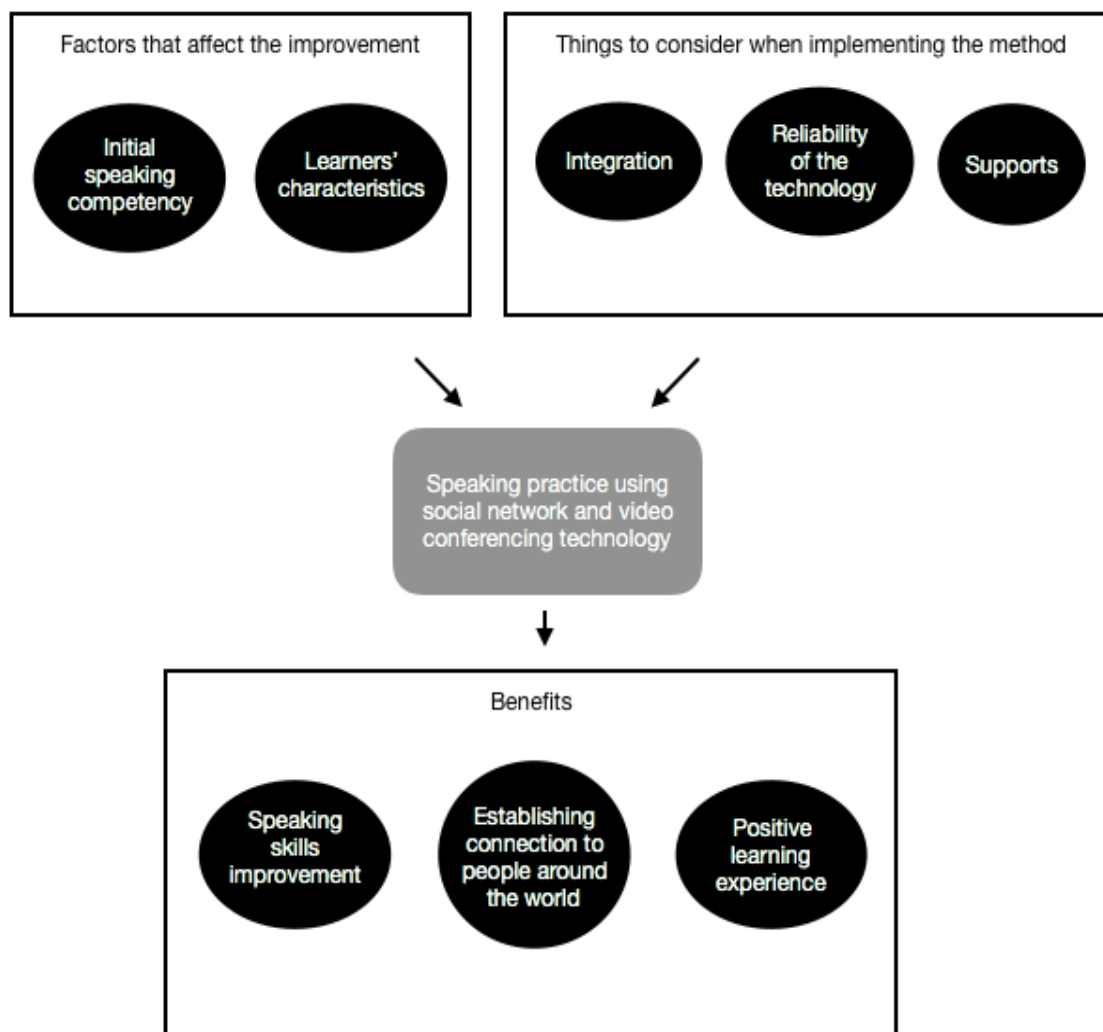
Conclusion

From the results of this study, it could be concluded that learners' speaking skills improved when learners practiced speaking with online partners evidenced by the improvement in scores, which relates to the studies of Liu et al (2002) and Bahrani and Tam (2012) and Diyyab (2013) who found improvement on the participants in their studies. One factor that helps some of them do better is their English proficiency before joining the practice. The results, therefore, seemed to show that lower level learners tend to have more improvement. Regarding their perception, technical and time problems, which were experienced by the participants in Hampel's (2003), Hampel and Hauck's (2004) and Ip's (2012) studies were also found to be experienced by some of the participants of this study.

Regarding implementation, this practice might be a suitable remedial course for lower level learners as it seemed to work best with learners in elementary level. While technical problems coming from the partner side may not be avoided, support from teachers should be made available to prevent it from interrupting the learning process. In terms of time problem, the practice could be implemented as a course to enroll in a semester, not an extra course students have to do apart from their regular courses, thus, they will not feel that the practice is a burden.

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