

Using Tokkatsu Approach for English Communication Skills' Development

Karima Mohamed El Sayed

PhD researcher
Hurghada Faculty of Education

Abstract

The present study investigated the effect of a program based on Tokkatsu approach for developing some English communication skills of primary stage pupils at the Egyptian Japanese Schools. Following the one-group quasi-experimental design, the study applied the program over (37) pupils who were chosen at the EJS schools in Hurghada. They selected, taught and assessed using the procedures of the quasi-experimental design with its pre and post testing procedure. The researcher designed and implemented four instruments and materials: (a) An English communication skills checklist, (b) Tokkatsu-based program, (c) English communication skills test, (d) Speaking rubric. Analyzing the results obtained from the English communication skills test showed that there were statistically significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in their listening skills, speaking skills and their overall English communication skills core. The study recommends using the Tokkatsu approach as a holistic approach for developing other language skills such as reading and writing.

Keywords

Tokkatsu – EFL – Communication – Skills

1. Introduction

The Egyptian educational vision aims at providing various learning environments in different schools through a national mission which supports communicative based learning opportunities. The Egyptian Japanese Schools (EJS) are one of these schools that follow the Japanese activities that support communication in the different classes including English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They aim at developing pupils in different aspects that include respecting the other and value polite communication in a world full of cultures' variety. According to the Egyptian decree No.159 / 2017, The Egyptian Japanese Schools are Egyptian schools that apply the Egyptian curricula next to the Japanese activities known as Tokkatsu in all the educational stages; they aim at developing morals, citizenship, positive behaviors, problem solving and creating positive learning environment using a Japanese educational setting.

Since English language is a means to global access and international communication requirement; it needs to be developed at an early age for effective citizenship. Communication is a dynamic process through which people can exchange ideas, attitudes, information, feelings, opinions or words and expressions to transfer specific messages. The function of communication is the core of daily life activities and aspects. In a futuristic view, according to the World Bank in 2014, people who seek a chance to

get a job in multinational companies or start their own business should be able to communicate by using a foreign language.

Communication in English is a pioneer and required skill in many fields across any modern educational system (Graddol, 2006; Ghasempoor, Liaghardar & Jafari, 2011; Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2010). In this view, Myles (2009) stated that students compete to have a high level of language proficiency as well as cultural and pragmatic knowledge. It is important for students to develop communication skills since communicative ability involves more than mere knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. It involves the ability to express oneself clearly and appropriately depending on situation, topic, time, and place.

According to Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010), handling complex information and communicating it effectively is a major requirement in life. This information processing is a means for effective intercultural awareness. In his study, Mohamed (2018) highlighted the value of developing both listening and speaking skills for better culture knowledge and language communication development.

As to the Japanese Educational Activities Model (Tokkatsu), it is a model for teaching and learning. Tokkatsu entails educational activities in which the school and classrooms are considered as

societies where independent and practical attitudes are cultivated in children to enable them to build a better group life and make better personal selves (Mext, 2018). The distinctive feature of the Tokkatsu model is that various non-academic activities are provided as part of the educational experience and included within the curriculum along with academic subjects.

The Tokkatsu model, according to Kusanagi (2019) includes “classroom activities, student council, club activities, and school events. Activities such as the entrance ceremony, graduation ceremony, club activities, student council activities, evacuation drills, community service, and various cultural festivals are just a few examples” (p.72). These activities may not be unique to the Japanese curriculum; however, the way in which these activities are integrated for a common purpose under the Tokkatsu curriculum is unique. For these reasons, the Tokkatsu model can be an effective model for language communication development at an early age.

Therefore, there is a need to develop a program based on Tokkatsu model for developing Egyptian Japanese pupils’ English communication skills.

2. Problem of the research

Problem of the research was determined through its context and statement as follows:

2.1 Context of the problem

Context of the problem can be determined through different approaches followed by the researcher; the first is reviewing the studies that assured the lack in pupils' performance in communicating through English and in using effective listening and speaking skills. Both Egyptian and Arab literature in the field of English communication skills (e.g. see Ezz, 2018; Ahmed, 2015; Ebeid, 2020; Ashraf, 2019; Mohamed, 2018; Amin, 2007; Al Mashy, 2011 and Atli & Bergil, 2012) highlighted the problem of pupils' inability to use proper English communication skills in the Egyptian context. Ebeid (2020) investigated using an Artificial Intelligence Application for developing primary school pupils' oral language skills. The study showed that primary stage pupils find difficulties in mastering oral communication skills due to activities, teacher control, vocabulary development, tasks, seating, models and text books. Pupils face challenges in integrating both listening and reading to communicate in English.

Literature in EFL focused on developing the language skills and their interrelated sub-skills but there have been rare studies—

according to the researcher's knowledge- that mainly targeted intercultural communication. One of the studies that studies that investigated communication using the target language is the study by Ibrahim & Ibrahim, (2007) which investigated communicative English language teaching in Egypt: Classroom practice and challenges. The study assured the communication problems in the different EFL classes including culture-related communication.

To verify the problem, a second approach was followed, which was through conducting a pilot study. In the pilot study, the researcher utilized a refereed field questionnaire that aimed to identify English language teachers' views at the Egyptian Japanese schools at Hurghada in Red Sea Governorate (2 schools) about using the Tokkatsu model at English classes, reality, challenges and suggestions. For ease of scoring and objectivity of teachers' inputs, the questionnaire was provided online for all EFL teachers at the Egyptian Japanese schools at Hurghada in Red Sea Governorate. Ten teachers responded to the questionnaire by using Google Forms application. The results showed two main problems, the first is that many pupils face difficulties in communication with English and the second is that they also face difficulties in intercultural awareness and linking between the cultural issues in the target culture and their mother language communication.

Based on the pilot study, literature analysis, questionnaire results and researchers' experience, the researcher conducted the study at the Egyptian Japanese schools to investigate the effectiveness of a program based on the Tokkatsu model in developing primary stage pupils' English communication skills.

2.2. Statement of the problem

The results of the pilot study conducted by the researcher revealed that many pupils at the Egyptian Japanese schools have weaknesses in communication skills as they face difficulties in class communication using proper English and to understand the cultural linkage in the English course they study. Pupils face challenges in listening to new vocabulary, uttering phonemes, repeating utterances; they also face challenges in speaking skills during peer and group communication in class activities. Therefore, the present study investigated the effectiveness of a program based on Tokkatsu activities for developing some English communication Skills of Egyptian Japanese Schools' primary stage pupils.

3. Questions of the study

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are English communication skills that are necessary for primary stage pupils at the Egyptian Japanese Schools to develop?

2. What is the form of the program which is based on the Tokkatsu Model?

3. What is the effectiveness of the Tokkatsu model based program in the experimental group's communication skills?

4. Hypotheses of the study:

The study hypothesized the following main hypothesis:

H.1 There would be no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre-post testing of their English communication skills test.

This main hypothesis is divided into two sub-hypotheses:

H.1.1 There would be no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre-post testing of their listening skills.

H.1.2 There would be no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre-post testing of their speaking skills.

5. Aim of the study

The study aimed at achieving the following:

- Developing the participants' English communication skills by using a program based on the Tokkatsu Model.

6. Significance of the Study

Results of the study are thought to be significant due to the following:

- *EFL teachers at the Egyptian Japanese Schools*: as the program may enable them know how to use the Tokkatsu Model to develop their pupils' communication skills and intercultural awareness. The current study may also help the teachers in changing the current practices of using Tokkatsu activities in EFL context.

- *Primary stage pupils at the Egyptian Japanese Schools*: the program would help them know how to develop their English communication skills as they would be acquainted with the program which may also help them to develop their intercultural awareness, therefore, fostering the concept of accepting the other cultures.

- *EFL curriculum developers*: as they are provided with an attempt to theorize using global models in foreign language learning contexts with the aim of autonomy.

7. Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited to the following:

- 7.1. A group of fifth year primary stage pupils (37) who were randomly selected. Red Sea Governorate.
- 7.2. Some English communication skills necessary for third year primary stage pupils (listening and speaking skills).

8. Instruments

The study utilized the following tools and materials:

- 8.1 English communication skills checklist: in included two parts (listening and speaking. The checklist was validated through jury validation.
- 8.2 An English communication skills test to assess the participants' listening and communication skills before and after the experiment. It was also validated through content validation and the reliability of the test was calculated using split half method (0.78) which indicated its high reliability.
- 8.3 A program based on the Tokkatsu model, to develop the experimental group's English communication skills.
- 8.4 A rubric to assess the participants' speaking skills before and after the experiment.

9. Design:

The study followed the two-group quasi-experimental design with its pre-post testing procedure; Variables of the study are the following:

a. The independent variable:

A program based on the Tokkatsu Model.

b. The dependent variable:

- English communication skills (listening and speaking).

10. Definition of the terms

1. Tokkatsu Model

According to Tsuneyoshi, Sugita, Kusangi & Takahashi (2020), Tokkatsu is a short term for (Tokubetsu Katsudo), which is literally defined as “special activities in the Japanese curriculum. It is a reflection for the holistic framework of the Japanese curriculum, which strives to develop the total child (p. 9).

Tokkatsu model can be *operationally defined* as the type of activities that aim at developing pupil’s characters holistically by using real life activities for comprehensive meaningful practice.

2. English Communication skills

Celce and Murcia (2001) defined English communication skills as “using the language more than a tool for communication, representing social and cultural background; the capacity to incorporate culture knowledge into language use and choose appropriate language in different contexts” p. 99).

English communication skills can be operationally defined as using listening and speaking skills to convey pupils’ language meaning in meaningful situations by using meaningful language use through primary stage pupils’ interactive performance.

11. Procedures of the study:-

The study followed these procedures:

1. Reviewing the literature and related studies.
2. Designing an initial checklist of English communication skills and submitting it to a jury of judges to indicate the communication skills that are needed to be developed by third year primary stage pupils.
3. Modifying and putting the checklist in its final form.
4. Designing an English communication skills test to be used as a pre, post –test with the participants of the current study.
5. Submitting the English communication skills test to the jury members to verify its validity.
6. Assessing the reliability of the English communication skills test by the test-retest method.
7. Designing the intercultural awareness scale to be used as a pre, post scale with the participants.
8. Selecting the participants of the current study.
9. Designing the program which will be based on the Tokkatsu model.
10. Submitting it to the same jury members to check its validity.
11. Modifying it according to the opinions of jury.
12. Administering the pretest and the pre scale on the experimental and control groups to make sure that they are

equivalent in their English communication skills and their intercultural awareness level before conducting the experiment.

13. Administering the program with the experimental group, while they control group will only study the "Connect Plus" English course.
14. Administering the post English communication skills test and the post intercultural awareness scale on the experimental group and the control group by the end of the experiment.
15. Collecting the data and conducting the statistical analysis.
16. Discussing the findings of the study.
17. Presenting conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Results of the Study

Using T-test statistic, the following table verifies the first hypothesis that states:

There would be no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre-post testing of their English communication skills test. The following table shows the differences in participants' means.

Table (1) Differences in Means in the Pre and Post Testing

Paired Samples Test

variables	measurement	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
listening	Pre Test	13.4730	37	1.58090	**10.905	36	.000
	post Test	16.7297	37	2.51273			
speaking	Pre Test	14.9189	37	1.63942	**7.888	36	.000
	post Test	17.4324	37	1.96554			
Communication skills	Pre Test	28.3919	37	2.45271	**10.856	36	.000
	post Test	34.1622	37	3.72315			

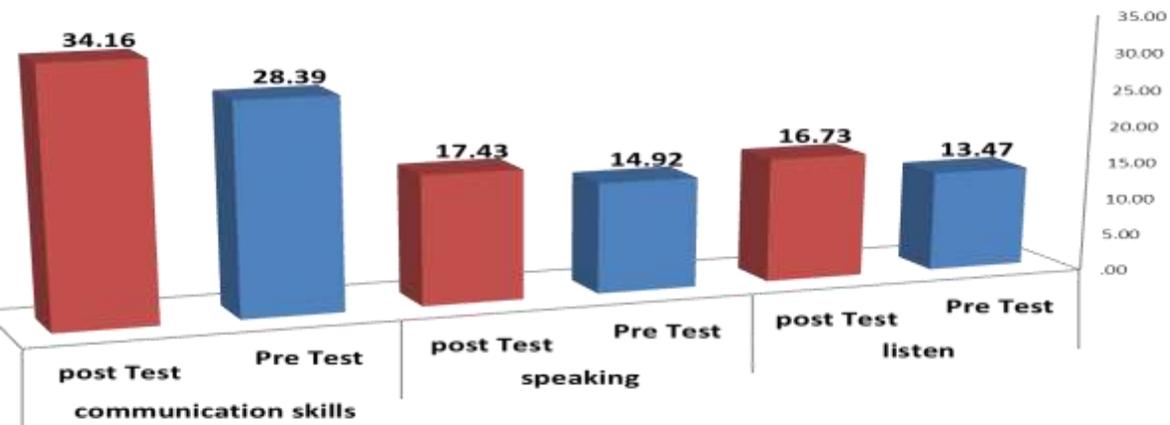
**Significant at level .01

The above table shows that there are significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post testing of their listening and speaking skills as well as their general English communication skills score (0.00) at the level (0.01). This is shown in the means of the participants in the listening skills pre and post

testing (13.4730, 16.7297 as well as speaking (14.9189, 17.4324) and their total score (28.3919, 34.1622). These differences reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

The following figure (1) shows the difference in means between the participants in the pre and post testing of their English communication skills.

Figure (1) Means differences in the pre and post testing



To verify the effect size of the program, Eta Square η^2 statistic was used to identify the effect of the independent variable (the program

based on Tokkatsu) on the dependent variable (English communication skills) using the following equation:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$$

The symbol (t2) represents T-Value, (df) shows the degree of freedom, the (d) value which represents the effect size is calculated using the following equation:

$$d = \frac{2\sqrt{\eta^2}}{\sqrt{1 - \eta^2}}$$

Where (d) represents the effect size for t2 in three levels:

$\eta^2 = 0.01$ indicates a small effect.

$\eta^2 = 0.06$ indicates a medium effect.

$\eta^2 = 0.14$ indicates a large effect.

The following table (2) shows η^2 values for the listening, speaking and total English communication score:

Table (2) Effect Size of the program

Skills	T	η^2	d	Effect Size
Listening	10.91	0.592	2.41	Large Effect
Speaking	7.89	0.432	1.74	Large Effect
English Communication	10.86	0.590	2.40	Large Effect

The table shows η^2 is (0.592) for listening, 0.432 for speaking, and 0.590 for the total score. The effect size ranged from (1.74 – 2.41) as d value was greater than (0.8) and this shows that 80% of the total variance of the dependent variable (English communication skills) were developed due to the independent variable. The result shows the large effects of the program based on Tokkatsu in developing primary stage pupils' English communication skills.

Discussion

The study utilized the Japanese Holistic model "Tokkatsu" in developing the oral communication skills of primary stage pupils. The obtained results showed that there were significant mean differences in participants' means in listening, speaking and the total

score of their English communication skills. This discussion aims to relate the results to the literature with reference Tokkatsu and the English communication skills.

The study agrees with different studies that assure the value using Tokkatsu approach in English language skills development (e.g. (Aboufotoh, 2022; Haggag, 2022; Mankarious, 2018; Nagy & Shaaln, 2018; Abo Al-Ghait, 2017). In her study, El Bahnasawy (2019) examined taking an advantage of the model of an integrated building personal (Tokkatsu) and its application in Japanese education in music education activities. The approach proved to be effective in teaching music education activities of the participants.

The study also agrees with different studies that highlighted the value of Tokkatsu approach in developing the communication skills (e.g Haggag, 2022; Ahmaad, 2015; Kassem, 2015). For instance, Mahmoud (2022) investigated the effect of using platforms in developing English communication skills of prep stage pupils. The results obtained from the study also highlights the importance of developing listening and speaking skills using interactive activities whether online or through frontal and task based approaches.

The present study is different in the type of activities used which are related to *Connect Plus* course book that the participants

study. It is also different in the type of activities that targeted developing the primary stage pupils listening and speaking in the light of an intercultural setting. They responded to different activities that highlighted

Conclusions

The present study utilized the effect of using Tokkatsu based program for developing primary stage pupil's English communication skills. The obtained results concluded that this Japanese model of activities could develop the participants' listening and speaking skills in the light of the means differences between the participants' pre and post testing procedures. The program of the study can be useful for teaching the English course at the primary stage and it can also be used for different types of participants. Teachers can make use of the program and adapt its activities to their classrooms' needs. The study and its program add to the theory and practice of using Tokkatsu approach in developing English communication skills in the Egyptian context.

References

- Abolfotouh, M. (2020). Utilizing problem based learning for developing classroom management skills among EFL student teachers. *Journal of Faculty of Education, Benha University*, No 122, Vol. (4).
- Abu Al-Ghait, R. (2014). The Effectiveness of a Proposed Program in Electronic Assessment on Developing EFL Teaching Skills for Student Teachers at Faculties of Education. *Ph.D. Dissertation*, Faculty of Education, Mansoura University
- Ahmed, H. (2015). Using Puppets Based Learning for Promoting Primary Stage Pupils EFL Listening and Speaking Skills, *Journal of Faculty of Education, Benha University*
- Almashy, A. (2011). Causes of EFL speaking Weakness in Saudi Secondary Schools in Al-Gunfuthah City. *Unpublished Ph.D thesis*, Faculty of Education, King Saud University.
- Altbach, P. (2010). Notes on the future of SQU: Comparative perspectives. In *Towards a Long-term Strategic Plan for Sultan Qaboos University: Proceedings of the International workshop (9-10 November 2010)*, pp. 3-9. Muscat: Sultan Qaboos University Press.

- Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L. and Rumbley, L. E. (2010). Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution. Paris: UNESCO.
- Ashraf, A. (2019). The effect of “Dogme” strategy on developing oral communication skills for English language teachers. *Unpublished MA thesis*, Faculty of Education, Helwan University
- Amin, E. (2007). A Suggested Self-efficacy-based Program for Developing Secondary School Students’ EFL Speaking Skills. *Unpublished Master Thesis*, Faculty of Education, Benha University.
- Celce-Murcia, M.: (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.
- Ebeid, S. (2020). Using an Artificial Intelligence Application for Developing Primary School Pupils Oral Language Skills, *Educational Journal*, Faculty of Education, Sohag University.
- El Bahnasawy, F. (2018). Taking an advantage of the model of an integrated building personal TOKKATSU and its application in Japanese education in music education activities. *AMESEA Journal*. DOI: 10.21608/AMESEA.2018.75993

Ezz, H. (2018): A strategy based on role playing to improve elementary stage students speaking skills. Graduate school of education, the American University in Egypt.

Graddol, D. (2006). Why Global English may Mean the End of “English as a Foreign Language”. United Kingdom: British Council.

Ghasempoor, A., Liaghardar, & Jafari, E. (2011). The internationalization of higher education: An effective approach for Iran’s higher education. *Higher Education Studies*, 1(2), 35-40

Haggag, M. (2022). Using Holistic Tokkatsu-Based Training Module in English Lesson Planning for Developing EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Teaching Knowledge, Classroom Management and Community of Practice-Oriented Competences. *Journal of Research in Education and Psychology*, 13 (3), pp. 1385-1418.

Ibrahim, M., & Ibrahim, Y. (2017). Communicative English language teaching in Egypt: Classroom practice and challenges. *informet*, 27(2), 285-313.

Kaeem, H. (2015). The Relationship between Listening Strategies Used by Egyptian EFL College Sophomores and Their

Listening Comprehension and Self-Efficacy. *English Language Teaching*, 8 (2), doi:10.5539/elt.v8n2p153.

Kusanagi, K. (2019). Education for Sustainable Development and the Implementation of —Tokkatsu in Indonesia, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, volume 404 International Conference on Social Studies and Environmental Issues (ICOSSEI 2019)

Mahmoud, R. (2021). Using the Flipped Learning Strategy to Develop Faculty of Education English Majors' Critical Reading and Writing Skills. *Journal of Research in Education and Psychology*, 36(3), 109-146

MEXT.(2018). Basic Education in Japan. Retrieved from: http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/brochure/title01/detail01/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2018/10/09/1409899-01.pdf

Mankarious, F. (2018). Tokkatsu activities in the Egyptian Japanese schools. *First international conference of Faculty of childhood education*, Assuit University.

Mohamed, A. (2018). Investigating the strategies for teaching English communication skills to Sudanese secondary schools students in the locality of Khartoum, *Journal of educational sciences*, 19 (4), pp 89-97

Myles, J. (2009). Oral competency of ESL technical students in workplace internships. *TESOL-EJ*, 13(1). [Online] Available: <http://www.tesol-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume13/ej49/ej49a2/>

Shaalán, E. & Nagy, F. (2018). Training needs of EJS teachers in Tokkatsu according to their views. *Fayoum university journal of educational and psychological sciences*, Vol. 71, No. (4)

Tsuneyoshi, R.; Sugita, H.; Kusangi, K. & Takahashi, F. (2020). *Tokkatsu: the Japanese educational model of holistic education*. World Scientific, Tokyo, Japan

Wickramasinghe, V. & Perera, L. (2010), Graduates', university lecturers' and employers' perceptions towards employability skills", *Education + Training*, Vol. 52 No. 3, pp. 226-244.