

English @ Work: An Impact of Grammar upon TOEIC Scores

Ketkanda Jaturongkachoke^a, Sutep Tongngam^b, Supamit Chanseawrassamee^c, ^{a,b}National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand, ^cTOT Academy, Thailand,

With the propensity to highlight the importance of communicative approach, the grammatical one seems to be derogated. This 2 year study thus aimed to investigate how research participants developed and demonstrated their English proficiency via a grammar-translation approach. The 15 participants were immersed in four grammar textbooks during the 450 hour course. The data was garnered both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data was based on the participants' standard Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores at the English Testing Service (ETS) Centre and their in-class grammar test, while the qualitative ones on their resolution and assessment questionnaire. The major finding revealed a positive correlation between grammar knowledge and TOEIC points. Around 70% of the participants obtained a TOEIC score of 500+ at the end of the course. Students who had some development in the TOEIC test achieved an approximately 6% increase on average. Based on the four course lecturer assessment questionnaires, all learners felt satisfied with the course at 4.97/5.00 overall.

Key words: *English @ work, TOEIC, . Adult Learners.*

Introduction

English has long permeated into workplaces all over Thailand. It comes in verbal and written form. At a highly acclaimed HYJ Company, many employees claim that their jobs do not directly require English proficiency. Therefore, they ignored learning English. However, one day suppliers and banks sent them some English documents and called them to confirm the acknowledgment. In another case, an accountant had a sudden chance to speak English on the phone with an oversea client. E-document staff also need to know where to forward a specific English email to somebody concerned. If these staff members do not understand the English text, how can they perform their duty effectively in the modern business world? In Thailand nowadays, even a street vendor has to be able to communicate in English to make a bargain,

give change or encouraging customers to make a bulk purchase. These situations drive employees at all levels at HYJ Company to be well equipped with at least communicative English. Being fluent in English is not something ineluctable as in the past.

This study delves into how 15 students endeavoured to learn English and their progress was periodically measured with standard tests, i.e. a grammar placement test by Cambridge University Press and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). The employees hired before 2015 were not required their TOEIC scores, while those after that needed to earn at least 500. The gap between existing employees with low English proficiency and newcomers with higher proficiency often arose. When the workplace provided English courses, many asked why they needed to learn grammar. Many participants claimed that they had learned English grammar for almost twenty years since kindergarten. The conflicts and negative attitudes toward English grammar caused the three researchers to look into this case and aimed to find the evidence to encourage the participants to study English both communicatively and grammatically.

The information in this study thus is collected in qualitative and quantitative manners. The quantitative data comes from the TOEIC scores they took at the English Testing Service (ETS) Centre and the grammar test produced by the publishing house. The qualitative data is derived from the students' resolution to learn English after the first month of their 4 course series and the lecturer assessment questionnaires at the end of each course. All these data sources can posit how these adult learners became more competent in English during a 2 year period. Their resolution is a piece of convincing evidence of their positive attitude toward learning English. Some excerpts are shown later in the discussion part of this paper.

The researchers hope that the findings from this study can influence future students to learn English without ignoring grammar — the backbone of the language.

Literature Review

Importance of Grammar-based Approach upon English Learning

There have long been debates about grammar-based approach and many others like communicative approach. This paper will focus on the positive impact of grammar studies upon students' TOEIC scores at HYJ Company in Thailand. Being asked by participants why they are always required to study grammar despite their long English learning at school, the researchers often mentioned numerous gurus who divulged the significance of English grammatical rules.

Alexander (1993) pinpoints four factors originating “difficulty” at the advanced level of English learning: (1) content, (2) allusion, (3) syntax, and (4) grammar points. First, when

reading advanced texts, students are presupposed to possess “extensive ‘knowledge of the world’: the kind of knowledge individuals need to bring with them before they can decode the information in a piece of writing” (p. 8). Second, writers usually presume that readers knew about something they wrote. For example, readers are surmised to have already known the concept of “the double helix” (p. 9). Third, what bewilders readers is not a word and a phrase, but the way they are combined to form a sentence in English — syntax. Many students frequently cavil that they knew all the words’ expansive definitions, yet they still cannot discern the text. The last point is grammar. Familiar grammatical points or common rules may be perplexing. “Common rules, such as the use of the present progressive to describe actions and events in progress at the moment of speaking, must be extended to account for sentences like ‘People are becoming less tolerant of smoking these days’. Advanced level of material therefore requires a deeper understanding of grammatical structures and what they convey, as well as the elimination of persistent errors” (p. 9). Even though word definitions are known, readers lacking the knowledge of syntax and grammar points are unable to understand the text clearly (Alexander, 1993).

Thornbury (1999) underlines the importance of teaching grammar to English learners. He opines that English learners have to realise the format. Students should have at least basic grammar. When students do not understand any rule, a good explanation must be immediately provided so that they can master such rule and will never forget it. Mastering English grammar can enhance reading and listening skills while augmenting TOEIC scores (Harada, 2017).

Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) agree with the debate about the two means of attaining a high proficiency in English which are: (1) communicative approach such as in an immersion experience; and (2) lexicogrammar, the words and grammatical structure. Via both ways, English learners can achieve their goals alike. However, both researchers view that teaching English is not easy and simple. If students know more about grammar, they can be aware of how the language works. English grammar does not have only format to recognise, but it also has meaning. Grammatical perception then enables learners to notice the meaning more clearly and expeditiously (1999, p. 1).

The ideas of Alexander (1993) as well as Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) confirm the importance of grammar studies, especially for ESL/EFL learners. Grammatical impact upon English as a Second Language or ESL learner is further explicated in Betty Schramper Azar’s grammar series in 2002. Azar put this at her house in 2006 on the first page of her well known book *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (3rd Edition) (2002):

“When I published the first book, I hoped maybe a few other teachers might find the textbook useful, too. In all honesty, I never imagined there were so many teachers like myself who



found the grammar-based skills approach to be effective and appropriate for their students. It turns out we are legion.”

The naturalist or communicative approach was in the 80s and into the 90s and grammar instruction seemed to disappear from the school curricula. Nonetheless, some teachers have seen that without grammatical rules, students’ use of English became limited. Of course, they can speak and understand the language, which means they can communicate. However, when it comes to speak formally or write, they can do it effectively (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Participants at HYJ Company are alike; they can speak and understand but in a conversational style only. Thanks to ESL/EFL teachers who stick to a grammatical approach, grammatical instruction still exists and continues (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). As such, it does not mean that students should learn only grammar. Rather, an inclusion and a combination of grammar can make English learning more effective and productive in the long run.

Presently, the difficulty of the English language does not come only in terms of grammatical subtlety per se, but also its globalisation; a combination of globalisation plus localisation process. The English language has been used vastly and differently from one part of the world to another consequently, it is necessitated that grammar be untied and standardised for accurate and common understanding. As earlier mentioned, verbal communication or a communicative approach may be inadequate, especially in a formal setting. Pam Peters (2004) scrutinised this point in her book *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*:

“At the threshold of the third millennium, English is more diverse than ever in all hemispheres. Research into “new Englishes” has flourished, supported by journals such as English World-Wide, World Englishes and English Today. At the same time, the quest for a single, international form for written communication becomes more pressing, among those aiming at a global readership. This book is designed to support both global and local communicators. It identifies regionalized elements of usage, grammar and style, with systematic attention to American and British English, and reference to Canadian, Australian and New Zealand English as well. It allows writers to choose styles and usage appropriate to their readership, according to how local or large it is. The local options help to establish and affirm regional within, say, North America or Great Britain. But communicating beyond those regions calls for reappraisal of the options, putting a premium on those with the widest distribution worldwide, ideally region-free (p. vii).”

The abovementioned gurus in the English-language learning field all agree that grammar is very important in language learning. This paper adheres to such a belief and will further reveal some truth about grammatical influence upon the TOEIC.

Importance of a Standard Test: TOEIC

What is TOEIC? TOEIC is the abbreviation for Test of English for International Communication. The Test has always been redesigned to match the accelerating English proficiency of non-native English speakers. It assesses the daily English listening and reading skills of employees in a global environment. Over 5,000 businesses and institutions in more than 60 countries including Thailand rely on TOEIC, with almost 5 million test takers annually (Trew, 2006). Collins (2012) provided an overview of the TOEIC test in its book, *Skills for the TOEIC Test: Speaking and Writing*, as follows:

“The TOEIC test measures your proficiency in the type of English used in business settings around the world. The test does not evaluate your knowledge of the English language. Rather, it measures your ability to use English in a variety of business settings. The TOEIC test is divided into two smaller, timed tests: Listening and Reading and Speaking and Writing. The Listening and Reading Test is a paper and pencil test.”

“Based on Collins’ handbook (2012), the Listening Test is currently divided into four parts: Photographs (10 questions), Question-Response (30 questions), Conversations (30 questions), and Talks (30 questions), making a total of 100 questions. The Reading Test is separated into three sections: Incomplete Sentences (40 questions), Text Completion (12 questions) and Reading Comprehension (48 questions), similarly totalling 100. The Listening Section takes 45 minutes, while the Reading Section 75. Students have to arrive at the Centre at least 30 minutes earlier to complete the general forms for test taking (Collins, 2012, pp. viii-ix).”

At HYJ — the company under investigation in this research — a 500+ TOEIC score is one of selection criteria for new recruits. The pass/fail score used in this study hence depends on this criterion. Nonetheless, existent employees are not required to have this score like many other multicultural companies. As a tenure lecturer at the company, the second author held practice tests for many employees who need to use English in their job. On one hand, the practice test score can be the based score for each newcomer. Their development can be measured from this very first score. On the other hand, such score development can be a criterion for students to take the real TOEIC at the ETS Centre on Asoke-Dindaeng Road in Bangkok. After studying English at this in-house training centre, students with a 700+ TOEIC score from the practice test will be sent to sit the test at the ETS Centre. This effort was initiated in 2007. Over ten years has passed and now 22 students were sent to take the test. Some students took two or three times on a biyearly basis. As Thai adult learners are usually not familiar with taking tests, it took 5-6 years before sending the first two pioneers to experience it. Currently, approximately 20 students per time are sent to take the test. Some students even take it themselves for their own purposes and at their own cost. For the 4 course series, students had practiced English for some time before taking the TOEIC.

Even though the score comparison will explain its significance per se, the participants' assessment and resolution can further explain the findings. Such data is included and analysed to reconfirm the quantitative data.

Method

The methodological part can be subsumed under five categories consisting of: (1) the course, (2) textbook, (3) participants, (4) the assessment questionnaire, and (5) the participants' resolution.

Nature of the English @ Work Course at HYJ Company

The course was divided into four levels: Basic, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate, and Advanced. Each course took various lengths due to its complexity. To be exact, the basic course took only 90 hours or 15 weeks, whereas the other three took 120 hours each. The class was divided into two sessions: morning (3 hours, from 9 am to noon) and afternoon (3 hours, from 1 to 4 pm). The students hence spent a whole day with each other. The morning session usually dealt with some grammar lessons and readings. The afternoon session allowed participants to give a presentation or write some assignments. The duration of the four courses are shown below.

Table 1: Course name, duration and assessment score of the 4 course series

<i>No.</i>	<i>Course Name (hours)</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Assessment Score</i>
1	English @ Work: Basic (90 hrs.)	Aug 27 – Dec 3, 2015	4.90
2	English @ Work: Intermediate (120 hrs.)	Feb 4 – Jun 30, 2016	4.97
3	English @ Work: Upper Intermediate (120 hrs.)	Aug 18 – Nov 24, 2016	5.00
4	English @ Work: Advanced (120 hrs.)	Feb 2 – Jun 25, 2017	4.96
Average		2 years	4.97

Nature of the Textbook

Before coming to class, students had to read some books and prepare themselves for doing the class activities. The books the students were assigned to read at each level follows.

At the basic level, Grammar & Beyond 1 (2012) by Cambridge University Press. At this stage, students learned the verb “to be”, nouns, determiners, pronouns, prepositions,



adjectives, adverbs, simple present, simple past, imperatives, present and past progressive, conjunctions, subjects, objects, complements, the future and modals. To amplify students' lexicon repository, Business Advantage Intermediate (+DVD) (2012) by Cambridge University Press and English for Telecoms & Information Technology (2009) by Oxford University Press were introduced to the class. As Business Advantage Intermediate is really hard for basic students, it was deployed until they entered the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.

At the intermediate level, students had to study Grammar & Beyond 2 (2012) by Cambridge University Press. At this stage, students learned the present, the past, nouns, determiners, pronouns, the present perfect, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, the present perfect, the future, modals, phrasal verbs, comparatives, superlatives, gerunds, infinitives, clauses and conjunctions. For the writing section, they studied Longman Academic Writing Series 3: Paragraphs to essays 4th Edition (2014, 2007) by Pearson Education Inc.

At the upper-intermediate level, students had to study Grammar & Beyond 3 (2012) by Cambridge University Press. At this stage, students learned the present and past, the perfect, the future, modals, nouns, pronouns, gerunds, infinitives, questions and noun clauses, indirect speech, the passive, relative clauses, conditionals and connecting ideas. Moreover, students further studied Longman Academic Writing Series 4: Essays 5th Edition (2014, 2006) by Pearson Education Inc.

At the advanced level, students had to study Grammar & Beyond 4 (2013) by Cambridge University Press. At this stage, students learned how to apply their grammatical knowledge to various rhetorical modes including cause & effect, comparison & contrast, narrative, classification & definition, problem-solution, summary-response and persuasion. In conjunction with the grammar applications, their writing competence was continuously extended via Longman Academic Writing Series 5: Essays to research papers (2014) by Pearson Education Inc.

As students studied the whole series of Grammar & Beyond 1-4, they took a placement test to monitor their progress along the course. The data analysis will partly involve the progressive score of each student comparing to their TOEIC score. Because the entire book series of grammar by Cambridge University Press was used, students were tested on their grammar level as provided by the publishing house. The test score levels are shown below.

- 1-13 Grammar & Beyond Level 1
- 14-22 Grammar & Beyond Level 2
- 23-30 Grammar & Beyond Level 3
- 31-40 Grammar & Beyond Level 4

Nature of the Participants

The 15 respondents in the study were all HYJ employees. Their average age was around 48. At the time of this study, they were working for the company and all of them did not major in English. Their professional fields included computer science, engineering, finance, accounting and business administration. The 4 course series was two years long, thereby showing some tangible development or proficiency.

Nature of the Lecturer Assessment Questionnaire

The questionnaire assessing the lecturer consists of seven parts concerning the: objectives of the course, knowledge transfer, topic relevance, clear explanation, student motivation and encouragement, student participation, quality time management, and content conclusion. The questionnaire was distributed to the students in the absence of the lecturer. There was hence no pressure on the respondents.

Nature of the Participants' Resolution

After students attended class for a month, they were asked to write a resolution of their own learning. They could mention their goals and their pathway to reach such targets. For example, they could set their TOEIC score as they knew beforehand that they had to take it at the end of the class or along the line. They might mention what they thought they would do to make their dream come true. As the group was small, the co-researchers did not look into the gender and age differences.

Based on all the data summoned from all these sources, the findings and discussions come next.

Results and Discussions

As the findings came from three sources, the authors would like to present the findings and discussions from each source first followed by a brief summary.

The Data from the Participants' Scores

As the course took around two years, some students left the course before its end. Some new students also took only the advanced class. However, the new group of students had high proficiency and could get along with other upper-intermediate students quite well. Consequently, there were only 15 students whose scores could be used in this analysis.

Table 2: Course name, duration and assessment score of the 4 course series

Student No.	TOEIC Score (≥ 500)		Grammar & Beyond Level	
	Nov 17, 2016 (upper-intermediate)	May 25, 2017 (advanced)	Feb 4, 2016 (intermediate)	April 27, 2017 (advanced)
1	760	785	4**	4
2	595	645	2	4**
3	615	690	3.8**	4
4	610	605	3.7**	3
5	505	570	3	4
6	530	555	3	4
7	555	600	3	3
8	725	870	4	4
9	385	335	2	3
10	450	445	2	3
11	415	475	3	3
12	875	815	4**	4
13	755	705	4**	4
14	510	525	3	4
15	395	405	2	3
%Development*		5.97%		
Correlation coefficient(r)	0.81	0.68		

*Calculated only students whose TOEIC score were developed.

**Missing data filled with value imputed by regression, but no more than 4.

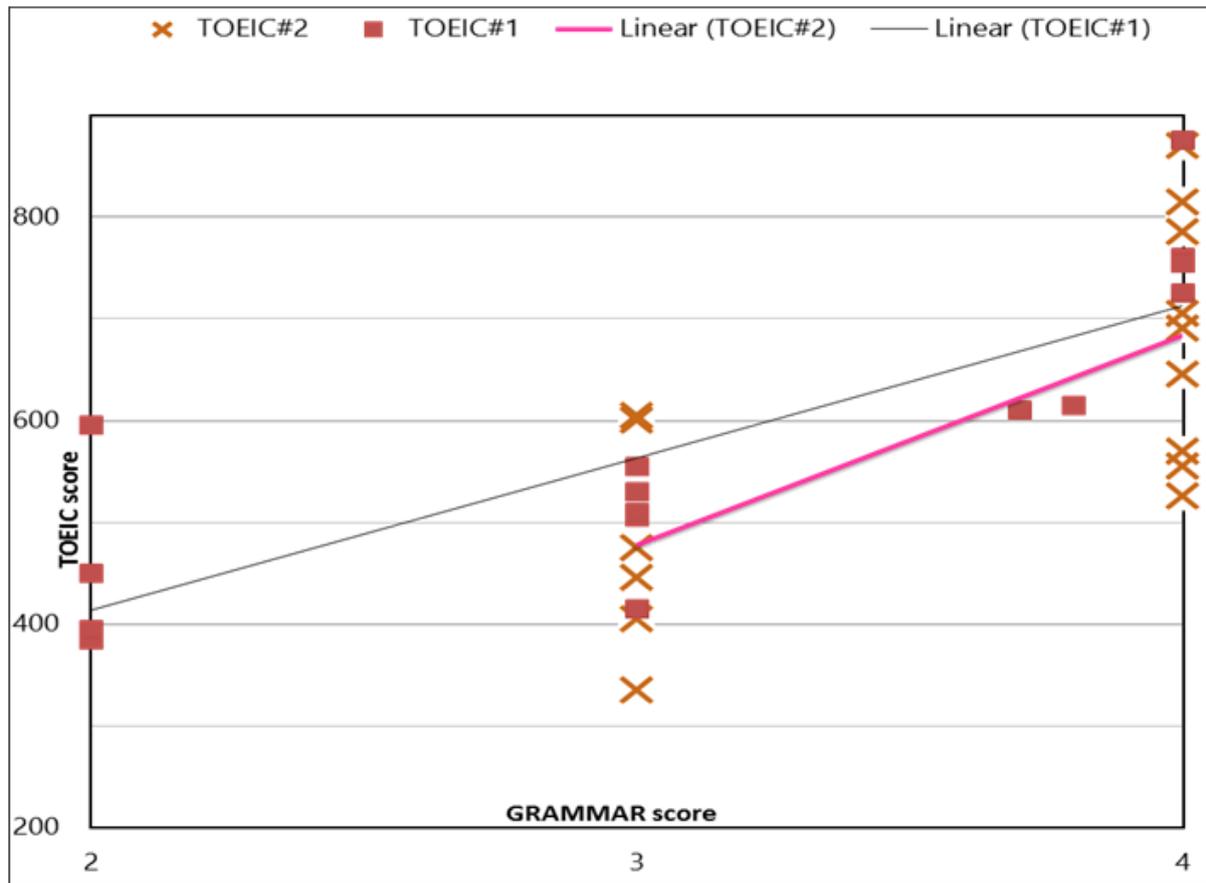
The second and third columns of Table 2 show the TOEIC score of 15 students compared to their grammar level. Since this is close to the end of the upper-intermediate level, most students (11 out of 15 or 73.33%) passed the TOEIC. The same results were found at the end of the advanced level, but with similar or greater scores. Only some students' scores reduced. Students 4 and 9 experienced a slight decrease in their TOEIC scores because they became busy at work during this period of time. Students 12 and 13 had to go to work in provincial areas, thereby having not good enough preparations for the test. The others gained greater scores. Even those who still had around 300-400 TOEIC scores made some progress. This can be deemed a result of studying English for 450 hours as students learned not only grammar but also other relevant topics. This clearly supports what Azar said in 2006, "A great deal of current research shows that many if not most of our students benefit greatly from a grammar component blended with other approaches in a well-balanced program of second language instruction."



When exploring the TOEIC scores compared to the grammar levels, some direct correlation can be seen. However, as both test-taking periods differed at the beginning, it can be assumed that their English is in progress. At the intermediate level, their English grammar level was a little bit low and mediocre. When time passed and these students became more experienced, their scores of both TOEIC and grammar test significantly escalated.

From Table 2, students without grammar level on February 4, 2016 are those who joined the advanced class only. Student 2 missed the class on April 27, 2017 because her mother was seriously ill. It took her mother some time to recover thus, there was no make-up test for this student. The first grammar test took place at the outset of the intermediate course, while the second in the middle of the advanced course. Students with 500+ TOEIC scores were also at higher a grammar level of 3-4. On the contrary, those with less than 500 TOEIC score generally earned a lower level of 2-3. Again, such findings replicate what Betty Schramper Azar said in 2006 in her well-known book *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (3rd Edition) (2002) that students can gain countless benefits from grammar studies and other relevant topics. The positive relation between grammar level and the TOEIC can be a sign for instructors to realise that a grammar-based approach can lead to successful English learning. Figure 1 shows a linear regression between grammar score and the TOEIC score.

Figure 1: A Linear Regression between GRAMMAR score (Independent variable) and TOEIC score (Dependent variable)



Statistical Analysis

The authors used two statistics measurements to analyse the data shown in Table 2. Before doing so, the authors had to fill the missing data in column Grammar & Beyond level. They used the rest of the data to predict the missing values by Regression method (Rubin, D.B., (1987), p. 166-167) with no greater than level 4 as stated in section III-B. Then the authors calculated the correlation coefficient between GRAMMAR score and TOEIC score in order to find if the two scores had any linear relationship. The value of the calculated correlation coefficient ranged between -1.0, a perfect negative correlation and 1.0, a perfect positive correlation. However, the correlation could not reflect whether or not those two sets of values did affect each other. The authors further preceded using Linear Regression to determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable, TOEIC score and the independent variable Grammar score. The results are shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

In Table 2, the value of correlation coefficient (r) between TOEIC#1 score and GRAMMAR#1 score was greater than zero (0.81) and very close to 1, meaning that both

scores had a strong positive relationship. In other words, when one score increased, the other would also increase and vice versa. Notice that the value of the correlation coefficient between TOEIC#2 score and GRAMMAR#2 was also positive (0.68) and not far from 1 thus, it was quite strong. As a result, students whose GRAMMAR score was high were likely to have high TOEIC score as well.

In Figure 1, the graph showed the relationship between two values, so called independent variable and dependent variable. In this case, the authors used GRAMMAR score as an independent variable and TOEIC score as a dependent variable. A linear regression was applied to the values just described. The positive slope of the trend lines, Linear (TOEIC#2) and Linear (TOEIC#1), on the graph identified that TOEIC score increased when GRAMMAR score increased. Students who did well in GRAMMAR test possibly did well in TOEIC test. In other words, the better GRAMMAR score they had, the better TOEIC they did.

The Data from the Lecturer Assessment Questionnaire

This study showed that 100% of course participants were satisfied with the lecturing session. Students are generally content with the course. The score out of five at each level is as follows in Table 3.

Table 3: A summary of the 4 course satisfaction assessment

<i>Course</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Upper-intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Topic				
1. Lecturer identified the course objective clearly.	4.83	5.00	5.00	5.00
2. Lecturer transferred knowledge and experience.	4.83	5.00	5.00	5.00
3. Lecturer arranged the contents in a logical sequence.	4.83	4.94	5.00	4.93
4. Lecturer could answer questions fully and clearly.	4.94	4.94	5.00	5.00
5. Lecturer encouraged students to participate actively.	4.94	5.00	5.00	4.87
6. Lecturer managed time effectively.	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.93
7. Lecturer supplied students a clear summary with good timing.	4.94	4.94	5.00	5.00
<i>Average</i>	4.90	4.97	5.00	4.96

Based on Table 3, the lecturer in this course tended to be able to fulfil almost all students' expectation in every dimension. Still, there are some gaps in all areas including: (1) course objective identification, (2) knowledge transfer, (3) topic arrangement, (4) question & response session, (5) student encouragement, (6) time management, and (7) right summarisation.

On the day the respondents took the grammar text for the second time, they were asked to discuss their preferences for the Grammar and Beyond 4-book series, all students confirmed that they liked the series, as follows:

- I like the G&B series. I like Part I in all units. It is easy to read and understand. The mistake part is too hard for me.
- In my opinion, this series starts from easy to difficult step by step. I think this series covers all grammatical points for non-native learners.
- I like G&B series. All book levels helped me to improve my reading, writing, and listening skills. Its contents are up-to-date.
- In my opinion, G&B series suits everyone who likes to learn English. It teaches me from the beginning stage. I learned a lot about patterns, usage, and practices. However, it's not good to do the exercises alone. Rather, it's better to do exercises in class with classmates. G&B made me feel happy to learn English grammar without boredom.

The Findings from the Participants' Resolution

Another activity that students did during the four courses is writing: "My Resolution to Learn English" on September 17, 2015 or during the basic level. Only written pieces of nine students (Students 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15) who continued to learn until the advanced course are included, analysed and presented in this paper. There are two major purposes of the students who attended these four classes including (1) for their job and (2) for a higher TOEIC score.

- I earned some money from being a secretary to a webmaster. I stopped practicing English for 10 years. Then, I met this teacher. I gained inspiration again. I earned 530 TOEIC score last year. I will try to practice harder. One day, I will develop my English skills while learning with fun. I am certain I will gain a lot of benefits from such improvement.
- I want to learn English because I need to have good English skills in the AEC era. I would like to improve my English skills continually. I learn English 20 years ago, and still have problems of understanding English. Now, my level is average. However, I will try to reach 'very good' level. I set my target to receive 700+ TOEIC score in one year.
- I want to learn English because I want to improve my English skills: vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and writing as well as to use English for my job. My English

learning started at school and university. Afterwards, I have studied at HYJ Training Academy from 2001 until now. I enrolled in various courses: Advanced Writing, Thai-English Translation, and Business. At present, I'm enrolling in the Basic English @ Work course. Most recently, I took the TOEIC and received 505. I plan to practice English for another year in order to earn the score of 605+.

- I like to learn English so much because when I see my teacher speaking English, she looks so smart. I would like to be like her. I started learning English at school and threw it away more than 25 years ago. For one and a half years, I took the English Business course at HYJ Training Academy. Here, I found that my level was basic. I expected to reach an intermediate level at the end of the course.
- I want to learn English because I need to read English-language emails at work. However, my English proficiency is poor. I do not speak English. My listening and reading skills gradually develop. I have an idea to fix my problem by reading, writing, and speaking within five years.
- I went to learn English because I want to learn four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These are the four skills I want to use in my job. Based on my language learning background from the bachelor's degree, my current level is poor to average. My target is to be good at listening and writing. I want to improve these two skills and achieve greater proficiency. I have a one-year plan. I will try to obtain 500+ TOEIC score at the end of this class.
- I want to learn English because English is necessary for me to succeed in my career, and I want to teach English to my daughter. I have learned English since I was a fifth grader. I keep on learning it.
- I want to learn English because I want to improve my English skills. My fixed target is to use English in my work and in my everyday life.
- I want to develop my English language skills for my work and travel. I want to be able to read, write, and understand English better. I feel positive about learning English. I will practice and learn English increasingly.

The above comments do not only offer the goals or the importance of English to their jobs, but their positive attitude toward English learning. Additionally, all of them mentioned that they would resolve to learn English outside class and/or add English practices into their daily life, such as reading newspapers, looking up new vocabulary in the dictionary, practicing listening to and speaking English more, etc.

Conclusions

As statistically proved, even students with meagre development in the TOEIC improved their English proficiency at the growing rate of almost 6%. In addition, by calculating correlation and linear regression, the findings demonstrated that the grammar score and the TOEIC score

established a positive relationship, in which the grammar score had an impact on the TOEIC score. Numerous gurus in the field found good grammar can positively affect the TOEIC score to some extent. In this study, participants studied four English grammar books along the course. The Grammar & Beyond series is prone to be a lexicogrammatical textbook rather than a pure grammar book according to Alexander (1993) and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999). The findings also conform to Azar's remark that a grammar-based approach along with others can assist ESL students in attaining their English proficiency. Students in this study learnt English grammar along with business and telecommunication textbooks. As a consequence, students had ample opportunity to learn some vocabulary in conjunction with vast varieties of grammar points. Collocations were also included. Another reason is the participants were learning consistency throughout the two year period. Their positive attitude toward the grammar textbook also supports their learning advancement. The four courses were provided at a training centre and some related-vocabulary textbooks were also offered for students' preparations beforehand. As all students came to the centre to learn English for their career, their learning was purposeful and meaningful per se.

The TOEIC test may be another stimulus for the participants to acquire the language wholeheartedly. When being measured by the in-class test, the encouragement level may be lower than going out to the real world and experiencing the same thing as other adults. For the time being, TOEIC is being used as a selection criterion for rookies. Encouraging these students to take the real TOEIC test can become a target for them to be grouped with new subordinates. Existing and new colleagues can accept each other because of their similar preferences for real TOEIC test scores. As a matter of fact, in an international department at HYJ Company, the head's TOEIC was also 800+. He is automatically accepted by his superiors, colleagues and subordinates. Such acceptance may extend to outsiders like suppliers, clients, partners, etc., both domestically and worldwide. He can become a role model for other executives and employees.

This study is interesting because the data was garnered from many sources. In reality, the TOEIC score is widely accepted, but focusing on the score only may mislead the general readers to focus only on the score not the participants' real communicative performance in English. The respondents' resolutions can be an illustration of the writing activity in class.

For limitations, the group of respondents in this study is relatively small. No comparison can be made in some points. As the 4 class series took a long time, some students left and others joined the class for different reasons. Such phenomenon is natural at an in-house training centre. The test-taking date of the TOEIC and the grammar test did not take place very close to each other and even at different course levels. All respondents' educational backgrounds and fields differ. The only similarity was no English major. Therefore, it is a pleasing for the authors that some can reach 800+ TOEIC score. It is quite extraordinarily pleasant!



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