

## Research Article

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# AN INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT BASED ON AUTHENTIC LEARNING AND COMMUNICATIVE LEARNING APPROACHES TO ENHANCE VOCATIONAL BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING ABILITY FOR PROJECT PRESENTATION IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF THAILAND

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## Abstract

The objectives of this study were to 1) develop and assess the quality of the developed instructional model, 2) implement the developed instructional model and study the results of an instructional model implementation on students' English-speaking ability for project presentation, and 3) study learners' satisfaction towards the instructional model and implementation process. The instructional model was designed following 3 research and development steps. The instructional model was implemented with two different groups of 25 and 23 students respectively selected by clustered random sampling. Data were analyzed using scoring rubrics, descriptive statistics, T-test dependable, and content analysis. The results revealed as follows: 1) the developed instructional model consisted of 5 components: principle, objective, learning content, learning instruction and evaluation. The developed instructional model was at the highest level of appropriateness ( $\bar{x} = 4.54$ ). An English-speaking learning instruction was designed with 5 steps: presentation and explanation to subject matter, task assignment, re-definition of tasks and inquiry, practice and accomplishment of speaking task and presentation of speaking task; 2) students' English-speaking ability for project presentation for both groups was significantly higher than before at 0.01 level; and 3) learners' satisfaction towards an instructional

model implementation process was at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.42$ ) and students expressed positive views towards instructional model and instructional model implementation process.

**Keywords:** Authentic Learning, Communicative Learning, Project Presentation, Instructional Model Development

## Introduction

English is one of the most popular and widely used languages in the world today. It has been accepted as a global language that people around the world use for communication, education, business and for the development of the world as a whole. About 400 million people speak English as their first language while over 900 million people speak English as their second language (Soares, 2010). It is estimated that the number of people who speak English will continuously increase as English is used as a global means of communication for several purposes and in a variety of context both at the regional level and the world's organizations including the Asia-Europe meeting, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and a variety of others. According to Brown (1994); Burns and Joyce (1997) Speaking in particular has acquired great importance along the history of English teaching since it is referred to as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information.

English needs in Thailand are similar to those of other countries all over the world. In Thailand, English is used as a foreign language as it is one of the foreign languages used in official, professional, academic and commercial circles. It is taught as a subject in all educational institutions and at all levels. Since it has been identified as a language basically required for lucrative and powerful jobs, it is much in demand and becomes a must-have language for many individuals (Ministry of Education, 2008). According to the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (2011) Thailand in 2015 signed an agreement under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) which committed them to labor mobility. The laborers and professionals from member countries have the opportunity to work throughout the Southeast Asian Nations community. For this reason, vocational students who are considered as the important man powers of the country should be prepared for this challenge. According to Mongkonwanich (2009) the WISE model for competitive workforce plays an important role in helping vocational students and graduates to improve their skills. Since English language is important in job search, vocational students need to develop these skills to be more qualified for labor mobility in ASEAN and around the world.

The Thai government realized the importance of English language a long time ago and since Thailand is one of the ASEAN community members where English is the language of communication. With this, English is taught as a core and compulsory subject at all levels of education with the aim to develop Thai citizens who are able to use English for communication as well as for easier and wider access to bodies of knowledge, and will have vision in leading their lives (Ministry of Education, 2008). The Thai government and the Ministry of Education is taking a lot of measures to enhance students' speaking skill but students still have deficiencies as they cannot express themselves using the target language. Many researches (Wongsuriya, 2003; Promshoit, 2010; Phuphanpet, 2004; Kethongkum 2005) reveal the Thai students in general and particularly vocational students' speaking ability is deficient as they cannot express themselves or even present a project using the target language. The inability of vocational students to express themselves in English language is as a result of traditional teacher-centered methods where students are not given the opportunities to use English outside the classroom especially in authentic and real-life situations related to their area of studies (Khemkhien, 2010).

Given that English-speaking is an important 21<sup>st</sup> century skill that should be infused in learners and considering the fact that it is compulsory for all bachelor degree vocational students to design, develop new innovations and present them both at national and national level, there is the need to enhance their English-speaking ability for project presentation in order to prepare them for the challenges awaiting them ahead. Therefore, it is the intension of the researcher to develop an instructional model based on authentic and communicative learning approaches where vocational bachelor students can practice their speaking ability for project presentation using steps such as presentation and explanation of subject matter, re-definition of tasks and inquiry, practice and accomplishment of speaking task and presentation of speaking task using authentic communication in real-world situations with the instructor helping them to overcome fear, develop confidence in themselves and get ready for the future challenges.

The authentic learning approach provides opportunities for learners to construct new knowledge and skills instead of reproducing existing knowledge. In order to achieve this, learners are provided with multiple sources from which they can draw information, examine the problem from many angles, distinguish relevant information from irrelevant information and formulate a product (Lombardi, 2007). It focuses on connecting what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications. The basic idea is that students are more likely to be interested in what they are learning, more motivated to learn new concepts and skills, and better prepared to succeed especially if what they

learn mirrors real-life contexts, equips them with practical and useful skills, and addresses topics that are relevant and applicable to their lives outside of school. In relation to language learning, authentic learning approach gives learners the opportunity to develop their speaking ability through authentic communication; that is; giving students the opportunity to develop the English-speaking ability using real-life situations in the area of study such as project presentations.

The goal of communicative learning approach is to develop communicative competence, which emphasizes the use of language for a wide variety of purposes and functions: varying the use of language according to different settings and participants producing and understanding different types of text, and maintaining communication even if having limitations in the learner's language ability (Richards, 2006). Communicative language learning approach prepares learners to use the language in real life situations as well as support the atomization of language knowledge (Thornbury, 2005). Through the communicative approach, learners can also receive real- life whole-task practice, improve their motivation, have opportunities to learn natural language with authenticity and create a social context which supports learning (Littlewood, 1998)

## **Literature Review**

Speaking is one of the central elements that plays an important role in communication. Brown (2007) says that speaking can be maintained by having three components. The first one is fluency which is the ability to speak spontaneously and eloquently with no pausing and with absence of disturbing hesitation markers. The second component is accuracy which means the mastery of phonology elements, grammar and discourse. Speaking English accurately means doing without or with few errors on not only grammar but vocabulary and pronunciation (Thornbury, 2005). The third component is pronunciation which refers to the production and perception of the significant sounds of a particular language in order to achieve meaning in context of language use. This comprises the production and perception of segmental sounds of stressed and unstressed syllables and of the speech melody or intonation (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Without good pronunciation, it becomes difficult for the listener to understand the speaker. Therefore, pronunciation has a central role in both academic and social fields in the way that students can be able to participate and interact successfully in their community. In conclusion, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation are three important components in the development of students' speaking skill. Authentic learning refers to learning which happens by actually participating and working on real-world problems, it engages learners by the opportunities of solving real-world

complex problems and finding out solutions, in this way learners practice the skills and knowledge that are relevant and real to workplace situations and learn it at the same time.

According to Donovan et al. (1999) authentic learning is an instructional approach that allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner. It focuses on connecting what students are taught in the classroom to real-world issues, problems, and applications. The basic idea is that students are more likely to be interested in what they learn, more motivated to learn new concepts and skills, and better prepared to succeed especially if what they are learn mirrors real-life contexts. Authentic learning equips learners with practical knowledge and useful skills and addresses topics that are relevant and applicable to their lives outside of the classroom (learning by action or by doing). Authentic learning activities provide opportunities for learners to construct new knowledge and skills instead of reproducing existing knowledge. In order to achieve this, learners are provided with multiple sources from which they can draw information, examine the problem from many angles, distinguish relevant information from irrelevant information and formulate a product (Lombardi, 2007). To prepare students for life outside school, we need to develop learners who can make meaning of their learning; this is done by making links between previous learning and new learning, from one subject to another.

Authentic learning approach differs greatly from traditional “lecture” classes, where teachers give students information and content of a subject discipline that students are expected to memorize and repeat on tests. It promotes understanding through discovery and doing. Authentic learning is recommended as the best way of learning for students as it is solidly grounded by the theories of learning and cognition, in a batch of theories (constructivist learning), which refers to the theory of cognitive development by Piaget (1986) discovery learning by Bruner and constructivist learning by Vygotsky.

Collins's (1988) idea of situated learning which refers to learning knowledge and skills in contexts that reflect the way the knowledge will be useful in real life also addressed knowledge applied in authentic contexts. Many recent instructional theories focus on authentic tasks that help learners integrate needed knowledge, skills and attitudes, coordinate individual skills that comprise a complex task, and transfer their school learning to live or work settings. Authentic learning steps include:

- 1. Setting the Scenario** where the instructor explains the scenario (context) of the whole task to the students and highlights the requirements or the goals of the tasks.

**2. Re-defining the tasks and Inquiry:** where learners form groups and start to examine the main task. They need to divide the main task into smaller parts or sub-tasks through discussion on the topic. Soon afterwards, students search for related information and try to solve the problems.

**3. Accomplishing the task:** After the investigation on relevant topic and collection of information, students work on the main task. They need to reproduce the knowledge they learned from the previous stage and transform it into a product. New skills, apart from information, are acquired in this stage as students are asked to create a product for presentation. Communication is also a key element in this stage as peer support is essential when students are not very confident in working on new topics.

**4. Presentation:** Students share the product within their class or even with the community. This allows students to learn from other groups or to get constructive feedback from the teacher and other community members.

The communicative approach emphasizes on developing communicative competencies. According to the principles of communicative approach, learners do not concentrate on studying only grammatical rules but it stresses the importance of communication (Allwright, 1979; Cambell, 1972; Nunan, 1991; Recharads & Rodgers, 2015; Savignon, 1991).

## Research objectives

The objectives of this research were:

1. To develop and assess the quality of an instructional model based on authentic and communicative learning approaches to enhance vocational bachelor degree students' English-speaking ability for project presentation in the Northern Region of Thailand.

2. To implement and study the results of learners' English-speaking ability after instructional model implementation.

3. To study students' satisfaction towards instructional model and instructional model implementation process based on authentic and communicative learning approaches to enhance Bachelor degree students' English-speaking ability for project presentation in the Northern Region of Thailand.

## Research Methodology

The study was conducted using three research and development steps as follows:

**Step 1:** The development and assessment of an instructional model quality had the following steps:

1. Critical analysis and synthesis of related approaches, authentic and communicative learning principles, learning steps for drafting and development of an instructional model.
2. Validity check by experts using a 5-level rating scale.
3. The effectiveness and reliability check by conducting a pilot study with a class of 22 students (Department of Auto Mechanics) from Phitsanulok Technical College selected by using clustered random sampling.

**Step 2:** The implementation of the instructional model consisted of 3 steps as follows:

1. The developed instructional model was implemented with two different groups of 25 students (Department of Electrical Engineering) and 23 students (from the Department of Architectural Technology) in the second semester of 2019 academic year who had to take the course “English for Project presentation” (4000-41203). This study employed a two-group pretest-posttest design. The implementation was done for two months with one session per week. Each session took four hours with a 10-minute break during the learning process. A total of 32 hours was used for instructional model implementation for each group.

2. During instructional model implementation process, learners were given different task related to their area of study to accomplish and present in pairs, in groups and individually. All tasks were related to real-life situations where students will use in their various areas of studies.

3. An English-speaking pre and post-test was administered consisting of four situations namely: 1) project presentation, 2) paired conversations/ dialogue, 3) interview, and 4) group video production based on activities with foreigners in order to assess, evaluate and compare students’ English-speaking ability before and after instructional model implementation. The Pre and post-test were all checked by experts.

**Step 3:** Studying vocational bachelor’s degree students’ satisfaction towards instructional model and instructional model implementation process was done using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire consisting of 6 sections with a total of 12 items was used to assess students’ satisfaction towards the English-speaking ability enhancement instructional model. Participants were asked to rate their personal satisfaction level using a 1-5 level Likert rating scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The interview part consisted of 5 items. Each questionnaire and interview item were developed using the content extracted from teaching and learning English-speaking instruction and checked by experts and any item which failed to elicit its aim was revised.

### **Participants**

The instructional model was implemented with two different groups of 25 students (department of electrical engineering) and 23 students (department of Architectural technology) from Phitsanulok Technical College in the second semester of 2019 academic year who were required to study the course “English for project presentation (4000-41203).”

### **Research instruments**

The research instruments included: instructional model with 5 components (Principle, objective, learning content, learning instruction and evaluation), evaluation forms (instructional model evaluation form and instructional model manual evaluation form), English-speaking pre-test and post-test consisting of four situations namely: 1) project presentation, 2) paired conversations/ dialogue, 3) interview, and 4) group video production based on activities with foreigners, instructional model manual with lesson plans, a scoring rubric and students’ satisfaction questionnaire and structured interview.

### **Data analysis**

An English-speaking scoring rubric using a rating scale of 1-5 was used for different test situations to assess and evaluate students’ English-speaking ability. The t-test dependable was used to compare students’ score between pre-and post-test, whereas descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to analyze the quality of the instructional model, and students' satisfaction questionnaire while data from structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

## **Research Results**

### **1. Results of Instructional Model Development**

Results of an instructional model development and quality assessment revealed that the developed instructional model consisted of 5 components: principle, learning objectives, learning content, learning instruction and evaluation. The learning instruction consisted of 5 steps: presentation and explanation to subject matter, task assignment, re-definition of tasks and inquiry, practice and accomplishment of speaking task, and presentation of speaking task.

The results of an instructional model evaluation revealed that all instructional model components were generally at the highest level of appropriateness ( $\bar{x} = 4.54$ ). The results from the pilot study also revealed that the model was effective enough to enhance students’ English-speaking ability for project presentation. This is a reflection that all instructional model components were in line with the potential criteria of instructional model development and effective enough to enhance vocational students’ English-speaking ability for project presentation.





**Figure 1:** Instructional model to enhance English-speaking ability for project presentation

## 2. The results of instructional model implementation

English language in general and speaking ability in particular is an indispensable skill in our today's society especially with vocational graduates who constitute the labor group as individuals are faced with different real-life situations that they need to handle using speaking skills and coupled with the fact that English speaking skills are required at all sectors of economy and life such as business, education etc. The increased emphasis of an instructional model development and implementation based on authentic and communicative learning approaches to enhance students' English-speaking ability

for project presentation requires authentic communication of real meaning by students and being responsible for their own learning not only enable them to work and learn how to communicate either but also providing them with opportunities to practice their English-speaking ability in real-life situations.

**Table 1** Comparison of vocational bachelor's degree students' English-speaking ability for project presentation before and after instructional model implementation

	English-speaking ability	n	$\bar{x}$	S. D.	D.	S.D. <sub>D</sub>	t	p
Group 1	Pre-test	25	32.84	2.13	37.52	2.68	70.03*	0.0000
	Post-test	25	70.36	2.02				
Group 2	Pre-test	23	33.00	2.15	39.39	3.38	55.88*	0.0000
	Post-test	23	72.39	2.50				

\*\*p < .01

From table 1 the results of instructional model implementation revealed that vocational students' English-speaking ability for project presentation for both groups was higher than before at .05 level of significance.

### 3. The results of studying students' satisfaction towards instructional model and instructional model implementation process.

The evaluation of an instructional model implementation monitors the progress towards the achievement of stated research objectives. The results revealed that students' satisfaction towards instructional model implementation process was at the high level ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.43). Vocational students also expressed positive responses towards the instructional model and instructional model implementation process.

## Discussions

### 1. Results of Instructional Model Development

The results of an instructional model evaluation revealed that all instructional model components (principle, objective, learning content, learning instruction and evaluation) were generally at the highest level of appropriateness ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.54). Also, results from the pilot study revealed that the instructional model was appropriate. This is a reflection that all instructional model components were consistent with the potential criteria of instructional model development and effective enough to enhance vocational students' English-speaking ability for project presentation. The appropriateness of the instructional model was because it was systematically developed from approaches and checked and

corrected by experts. The findings were consistent with Joyce and Weil (2009) who stated that effective instructional models are systematically developed from theories or a combination of learning approaches. The findings were also consistent with the study conducted by Henry (2019) on the topic “A development of an Instructional model development based on collaborative and communicative approaches to enhance lower secondary students’ English-speaking skills in Thailand” and the results of instructional model evaluation revealed that the instructional model was the highest level of appropriateness ( $\bar{x} = 4.73$ ) and also consistent with a study on “Learning Management Model for Learner Development with regard to Ethics, Intellect, and Learning” conducted by Kaewurai (2011) where the results revealed that the developed model was good, and suitable for learning process reforms focusing on learners.

## 2. Results of instructional model implementation

Vocational students’ English-speaking ability for project presentation for both groups was higher than before at .05 level of significance. The enhancement in students’ English-speaking ability for project presentation was because during the implementation process, students were taught to use the language using real-world and similar situations related to their projects. Giving the opportunity to use similar situations repeatedly made them get acquainted with the language, and the situations. Equally, learners were constantly motivated to go out of the classroom in order to use the language in authentic situations through different tasks. The results were consistent with Littlewood (2002); Harmer (2001) as they state that English-speaking ability can be enhanced by engaging learners in interactive and authentic communicative activities which aim at giving learners the opportunity to effectively communicate meaning and also in line with the research “A development of an Instructional model development based on collaborative and communicative approaches to enhance lower secondary students’ English-speaking skills in Thailand” conducted by Henry (2019) and the results revealed that students’ post English-speaking skills were significantly higher than before at .01 level. The findings were also consistent with Preedekun et al. (2010) who developed an English listening and speaking instructional model for Rajabhat University students using communicative approach and brain-based learning principles to enhance students’ communicative competences and found that students’ achievements after instructional model implementation was significantly higher than before at .01 level.

### 3. The results of studying students' satisfaction towards instructional model and instructional model implementation process.

Vocational students' satisfaction towards instructional model and implementation process was at the high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.43$ ). Vocational students also expressed positive responses towards the instructional model and instructional model implementation process. The reasons accounting to this high satisfaction and positive feedback was because of the availability of varied authentic activities for students to participate in enhancing their speaking skills. some tasks were interpreted for students to understand. Students were given enough time to practice their speaking ability based on their strengths and weaknesses. The instructor took the students out of the classroom in order to use the language in authentic and relaxed environments. Through practice, vocational students had experiences in exploring different situations, engaging in conversations with native speakers and producing a video of their activities. It was exciting for them to watch a video of themselves speaking English-language. This research findings were consistent with the research conducted by Henry (2019) on the topic "A development of an Instructional model development based on collaborative and communicative approaches to enhance lower secondary students' English-speaking skills in Thailand" which revealed that students' satisfaction towards an instructional mode implementation was at the highest level ( $x = 4.57$ ).

## Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that the instructional model based on authentic and communicative learning approaches to enhance vocational bachelor students' English-speaking ability for project presentation was appropriate and successful in enhancing learners' English-speaking ability for project presentation. Enhancing vocational students' English-speaking ability is giving them the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process, use the language in authentic situations and concentrate in developing language in use rather grammatical structures. Any learning instruction, activities, instructional materials and any learning environment that gives learners the opportunity to interact and communicate in authentic situations concentrating on language in use will nurture and foster the enhancement of learners' speaking ability. Enhancing learners' English-speaking ability for project presentation requires effective practice in authentic situations, active learning approaches and authentic communicative activities that will enable students to interact.

## Research Recommendations

### 1. Recommendations for Application

The research results proved that the implementation of the developed instructional model was effective in enhancing vocational bachelor's degree students' English-speaking ability for project presentation. Based on this issue, educators are recommended to introduce training courses for both general and vocational English instructors on effective ways of developing authentic instructional models to enhance students' English-speaking ability through the organization real world learning activities and activities that concentrate on language in use rather than grammatical structures.

### 2. Recommendations for Future Research

This study concentrated on the enhancement of vocational bachelor students' English-speaking ability for project presentation using an instructional model based on authentic and communicative learning approaches in Phitsanulok Technical College which consisted only a small proportion of the entire population. The findings may not be generalizable to other institutions in different areas. Therefore, further research should be conducted in different areas with different population samples and levels under different conditions in order to generalize the results on enhancing vocational bachelor students' English-speaking ability for project presentation. Evidence is equally required to demonstrate the need to enhance students' English-speaking ability. Therefore, further study should investigate the effectiveness of other approaches in enhancing students' English-speaking ability.

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