

Development of English Communication Skills on Uplifting Local Wisdom and Sales Career for Grade-8 Students Through Projects-Based Activities

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Abstract

This study utilized a quasi-experimental approach, employing a one-group pretest-posttest design. The objectives of this study were to: (1) develop and assess the quality of lesson plans integrating vocational work; (2) compare the communication skills of grade-8 students before and after the course; and (3) investigate the satisfaction level of grade-8 students with lesson plans that integrated vocational content. Grade 8 students' communication skills were aimed to be improved through project-based English learning activities, facilitating the enhancement of their speaking abilities for proficient professional English communication. With an increasing student population, the sample size will also expand. For the academic year 2023, the study focused on 18 grade-8 students, chosen through purposive sampling. The research lasted for 9 weeks, with two sessions per week, totaling 18 hours. The study employed: 1. Six lesson plans, amounting to 18 hours. 2. Project-based English learning activities designed to enhance local vocational knowledge and promote language communication skills among grade-8 students via four learning exercises. 3. An English language proficiency communication test. 4. A Satisfaction Assessment Form. Data collection utilized statistical methods, including rating scales, IOC, CVI, X, S.D., and T-test.

The findings of this study showed that:

1. All six lesson plans had an average content appropriateness score of 4.98 and a media quality score of 4.80, both meeting the highest acceptable standards.

2. Academic success was evident with an improvement in English language skills before and after the course using the English learning plan based on project activities integrating local wisdom into vocational trading. This method resulted in a higher average score of 44.89 and a t-test value of 15.10.

3. The satisfaction level of grade 8 students with the lesson plans integrating vocational content was high, with average scores of 4.11, 4.06, 4.23, 4.50, 4.33, and 4.33, respectively.

Keywords: Improvement in English Language Skills; Enhancement of Communication Speaking Abilities; Project-Based Learning, Integration of Local Wisdom.

Introduction

In today's technologically advanced era, global interconnectedness has reached unprecedented levels, fostering rapid communication and widespread access to news. As a result, a universally accepted language is essential for effective communication, with English emerging as the predominant international language. Graddol (2009) highlighted the increasing significance of English, forecasting that the number of English learners worldwide would reach 2 billion within the next decade. This global trend underscores the vital role of English in our interconnected world, particularly in a global economy where effective communication is crucial for business success.

Thailand, with its capitalist economic model emphasizing trade and export-oriented production, has historically prioritized economic development. However, this focus has often marginalized local culture and traditional wisdom, which are integral to the country's cultural heritage and societal development (Chitraporn Pengdee, 2016). The neglect of the agricultural sector, supporting a significant portion of the Thai population, further exacerbates this imbalance. Consequently, there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate local cultural capital and wisdom into community development strategies to foster self-sufficient economies that promote sustainability and long-term societal benefits (Patana Sukprasert, 2015).

Responding to the global prominence of English, the Thai Ministry of Education initiated a comprehensive reform of its English language education policy in 2014. This reform aimed to enhance English proficiency among students, emphasizing the importance of equipping them with the necessary language competencies to access global knowledge and enhance Thailand's competitive edge. The updated curriculum integrates English instruction into vocational subjects, enabling students to select courses aligned with their interests and career aspirations, preparing them for active engagement in the ASEAN Community.

Modern educational paradigms aim to cultivate individuals with 21st-century competencies, encompassing life skills, vocational proficiencies, ethical acumen, and multilingual capabilities. Given English's global ubiquity, its role in fostering cross-cultural understanding and facilitating communication is paramount. Thus, English pedagogy should prioritize enhancing learners' communicative skills, particularly oral proficiency, through an interactive communicative approach. This pedagogical strategy emphasizes practical language application, encouraging students to engage in meaningful discourse and project-based learning, a methodology validated for its effectiveness in promoting local wisdom acquisition and lifelong learning (Phattharawadee Yuanchuen, 2010: 2-10).

Project-based learning provides students with opportunities to apply their existing knowledge and competencies in real-world contexts, fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and collaboration (Marcus Guido, 2022). This learner-centric approach promotes student autonomy, encouraging self-directed learning and peer knowledge sharing. Grounded in a growth mindset, this approach seeks to optimize educational outcomes by integrating practical competencies and experiential learning within the curriculum, preparing students for meaningful societal engagement and adaptation.

Despite economic and social constraints, schools in Thailand are expanding educational opportunities, aiming to inspire hope and foster interaction with students, including those with educational limitations. These schools prioritize both academic knowledge and life skills, aiming to equip students to lead meaningful lives and adapt to societal challenges. By employing project-based learning methods, educators facilitate experiential learning and connect students with their local community and wisdom, ensuring that learning is relevant,

current, and meaningful. The primary goal of project-based learning is to cultivate a growth mindset among students, instilling confidence and determination to learn and evolve, while emphasizing the development of essential life skills, career skills, and problem-solving abilities (Equitable Education Research Institute, 2022: 41-44).

As an English teacher at Khlong Huai Na Pattanakarn School, a vocationally oriented institution in a rural setting, the researcher has observed that students predominantly communicate in Thai, with limited opportunities for English language engagement outside the classroom that cause from students feel that English is not necessary to their life, based on teacher methods, To address this challenge, The researcher implemented project-based learning in Grade-8 English for Communication curriculum. This instructional innovation has empowered students to conceptualize and execute projects aligned with their vocational interests, enabling the application of systematic methodologies, gaining practical insights, and promoting community knowledge sharing. This integrative approach not only enhances students' English language proficiency but also cultivates their creativity, self-efficacy, and vocational readiness, laying a solid foundation for their future academic and professional endeavors.

In light of these considerations, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing English language proficiency, fostering creativity, and promoting vocational readiness among Grade-8 students at Khlong Huai Na Pattanakarn School. By examining the impact of this instructional innovation on students' learning outcomes and attitudes towards English learning, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on innovative English pedagogy in the context of Thailand's evolving educational landscape.

Research Objectives

1. To develop and assess quality lesson plans integrating vocational content.
2. To compare the communication skills of grade-8 students before and after the project-based English learning activities.
3. To investigate the satisfaction level of grade-8 students with lesson plans that integrated vocational content

Research Methodology

This study utilized a quasi-experimental approach, employing a one-group pretest-posttest design. The research was conducted by following the steps outlined below:

1. Population and Sample:

1.1. Population: Grade-8 students from the academic year 2023 in Chondaen district, Phetchabun Province. The school, operating under the School of Expanded Educational Opportunities, possesses a unique identity related to vocational careers.

1.2 Sample: Grade-8 students at Khlong Huai Na Pattanakarn School, were selected using purposive sampling. This selection included one classroom, totaling 18 students.

2. Research Tools

The research tools consist of the following:

2.1 Learning Plans: Six plans totaling 18 hours.

2.2 English Learning Activities: Four project-based learning activities aimed at upgrading local wisdom to trading careers, fostering the development of language communication skills among Grade-8 students.

2.3 English-Speaking Skills Test: To assess communication abilities.

2.4 Satisfaction Assessment Form: To gauge student satisfaction

3. Data Collection

The researcher was collected data by as following steps below:

3.1. The researcher explains the learning objectives to students.

3.2. Students take a communication speaking skills test before class, which is a test to measure speaking skills for communicating in English.

3.3. The researcher conducted self-teaching by organizing project-based learning to promote speaking skills for communication with English learning activities. Upgrading local wisdom for Sales career, 6 lesson plans, 18 hours

3.4. After studying the sample group conducted a project on a topic of interest.

The researcher collected data from communication within the group. and presentation of work

3.5. Students completed a satisfaction assessment of the use of project-based learning.

3.6. The researcher uses the results from all data collection to analyze the data.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Basic statistics, including mean, percentage, and standard deviation.

4.2. Statistics to analyze the quality of learning plans, including the appropriateness of the content (rating scale), mean, and standard deviation.

4.3. Statistics to analyze the content validity of the English-speaking presentation skills assessment to find the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC).

4.4. Statistics to analyze satisfaction results, including percentage, standard deviation, and mean will be used. Each score corresponds to a level of satisfaction as follows: 5 = Very satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 3 = Moderately satisfied, 2 = Slightly satisfied, 1 = Least satisfied.

Criteria for Satisfaction Level

The average score is categorized as follows:

An average score of 1.00-1.50 indicates the lowest level of satisfaction.

An average score of 1.51-2.50 indicates a low level of satisfaction.

An average score of 2.51-3.50 indicates a moderate level of satisfaction.

An average score of 3.51-4.50 indicates a high level of satisfaction.

An average score of 4.51-5.00 indicates the highest level of satisfaction.

Research Conceptual Framework

The researcher aims to employ project-based teaching methods centered around local wisdom products for sales careers for Grade-8 students at Khlong Huai Na Pattanakarn School, Chon Daen District, Phetchabun Province. The study seeks to compare the students' achievements in English speaking skills for communication and their multimedia video works. The evaluation will consider the students' achievements post-study in relation to the criteria for assessing speaking skills and the criteria for evaluating their work.

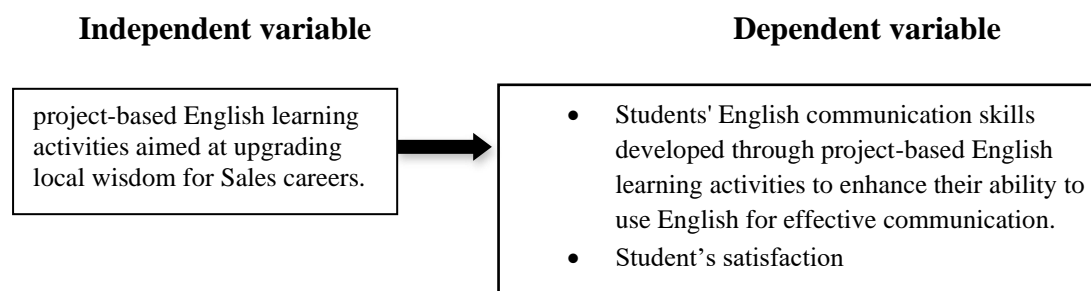


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

After completing the experiments and gathering data, the researcher analyzed it and presented the findings as follows:

1. Results of the evaluation of lesson plans for upgrading local wisdom for a sales career for Grade-8 students through project-based activities. The researcher evaluated the lesson plan in two parts: content and media quality, assessing their suitability for enhancing local wisdom. It was found that the lesson plans for upgrading local wisdom for a sales career for Grade-8 students, involving learning from project-based activities, The findings revealed a notable average score of 4.98, indicative of the high appropriateness of the designed lesson plans in achieving their intended objectives.

Table 1: Evaluation of lesson plans by experts

Evaluation list	N= 5	μ	σ	Interpret results
Content	5	4.98	0.00	Strongly agree
Media quality	5	4.80	0.27	Strongly agree
Total average	5	4.98	0.00	Strongly agree

From Table 1, the lesson plan aimed at enhancing local wisdom for grade 8 sales careers through project-based activities is considered most suitable.

2. Comparative Analysis of Grade-8 Students' Communication Skills Before and After Project-Based English Learning Activities

Upon comparing the communication skills of Grade-8 students before and after studied with project-based English learning activities, significant improvements were observed. Following the implementation of these activities, students who studied with lesson plans aimed at enhancing local wisdom for sales careers enhancements in their communication abilities. The average score subsequent to the study period exhibited a substantial increase compared to pre-study levels. Specifically, the average pre-study score was 46.67, while post-study assessments revealed a significant surge to an average score of 91.56. This observed enhancement represents a notable escalation from the initial average score of 44.89. Further statistical analysis, employing the t-test, underscored the significance of this improvement, yielding a calculated value of 15.10. This statistical finding indicates a substantial disparity

between pre-study and post-study scores, thereby highlighting the robust impact of project-based learning activities on enhancing students' communication skills. It is noteworthy that this disparity was observed at a significance level of 0.05, affirming the statistical significance of the observed improvement.

Table 2: Academic achievement of grade 8 students

Test	n	score	S.D.	t - test
Pre-test	18	46.67	6.25	15.10
Posttest	18	91.56	11.94	-

From Table 2, students using the lesson plan to enhance local wisdom for grade 8 sales careers through project-based activities demonstrated a significant improvement in academic achievement. The post-study average score was higher than the pre-study score, with a significant difference at the 0.05 level.

3. Results of Satisfaction Assessment Among Grade-8 Students

The satisfaction assessment of Grade-8 students who engaged with lesson plans aimed at enhancing local wisdom for sales careers through project-based activities yielded insightful findings. The researcher categorized the results into two tables: 1. Satisfaction of Students by Learning with Lesson Plans for Upgrading Local Wisdom for Sales Careers Through Project-Based Activities. 2. Satisfaction of Students in Each Topic of Lesson Plans.

Upon analyzing and presenting the results of the satisfaction evaluation, it was discerned that Grade-8 students expressed a high level of satisfaction with lesson plans designed to augment local wisdom for trading careers through project-based activities. The average satisfaction score among students was notably high at 4.43.

Furthermore, a detailed examination of satisfaction levels across various topics within the lesson plans revealed compelling insights. Students exhibited particularly high levels of satisfaction with the lesson plan focused on Thai dessert and bakery, garnering an average satisfaction score of 4.50. This was closely followed by the lesson plans covering model products and the 'proud to present' topic, both of which received an average score of 4.33. Similarly, the lesson plan centered on tamarind preserved in syrup attained a commendable level of satisfaction, with an average score of 4.23. Additionally, the lesson plan addressing our community garnered a high level of satisfaction, achieving an average score of 4.11, while the lesson plan focusing on our local products also received positive feedback, with an average satisfaction score of 4.06.

Table 3: Satisfaction assessment of grade 8 students

Evaluation list	N	μ	σ	Satisfaction level
Overall satisfaction	18	4.43	0.29	Satisfied

From Table 3, the satisfaction evaluation results for grade 8 students using the learning management plan for enhancing local wisdom in sales careers through project-based activities indicated high levels of satisfaction among the students.

Table 4: Satisfaction scores for individual lesson plans

Lesson plan	x	S.D	Satisfaction level
Our community	4.11	0.96	Satisfied
Our local product	4.06	1.11	Satisfied
Tamarind preserved in syrup	4.23	1.11	Satisfied
Thai dessert & bakery	4.50	1.10	Satisfied
Model products	4.33	1.14	Satisfied
Proud to present	4.33	1.14	Satisfied

From Table 4, students showed high satisfaction across multiple lesson plans. The Thai dessert and bakery lesson plan led with an average satisfaction score of 4.50, closely followed by the model products and 'Proud to present' topics, both scoring an average of 4.33. The tamarind preserved in syrup lesson plan received a commendable average score of 4.23. Furthermore, the lesson plans focusing on our community and our local products also garnered positive feedback, with average satisfaction scores of 4.11 and 4.06, respectively. So, these results show overall:

The evaluation of all six lesson plans demonstrated adherence to the highest standards in terms of content appropriateness and media quality, yielding an average score of 4.98. Academic achievement and a marked improvement in students' English language proficiency were evident pre- and post-course. Specifically, the post-test average score registered at 91.56, accompanied by a t-test value of 15.10. The satisfaction assessment data collected from students indicated elevated levels of satisfaction with the lesson plans and the overarching project-based learning methodology, reflected in an average satisfaction score of 4.43.

Discussion

1. Lesson Plan Content Assessment

The lesson plan was evaluated by five experts. The learning plan includes curriculum analysis according to standards and in accordance with the characteristics of the learners. This encompasses setting goals and learning activities that align with standards. Evaluation is conducted in line with these standards and is tailored to the characteristics of the learners. Furthermore, there is an evaluation component that can reflect the quality of students' learning and teaching. The results of the learning management plan were evaluated based on a rating scale with five levels, following the Likert method (Bunchom Srisa-ard, 2002: 103), using the following evaluation criteria: Mean interpretation score: 4.51–5.00, most appropriate 3.51–4.50, very appropriate 2.51–3.50, moderately appropriate 1.51–2.50, slightly appropriate 1.00–1.50, least appropriate

The evaluation results from the five experts yielded an average score of 4.98. This indicates that the teaching plan is most appropriate. Utilizing a learning plan that integrates local wisdom into the curriculum can help students develop a positive attitude and stimulate their interest in learning. It also encourages students to think critically, express themselves confidently, communicate effectively in language, and develop skills to support their future careers. As a result, students will gain more confidence in speaking and communicating, and they will dare to use English.

2. Academic Achievement of grade 8 Students Before and After Project-Based Learning

Before and after learning using projects as a base to upgrade local wisdom to a trading career and develop English communication skills, academic achievement of grade 8 students significantly increased after studying, with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This finding aligns with the research results of Taweessin Naijit (2020), which compared students' English-speaking presentation skills before and after studying by organizing learning using projects to promote English speaking and presentation skills. The research employed various tools including: 1. A learning management plan using projects to promote English speaking and presentation skills. 2. Tests of speaking and presentation skills in English before and after class.

3. Assessment of English speaking and presentation skills. 4. Questionnaires on student satisfaction with project-based learning.

The research findings indicated that: 1. Students' English speaking and presentation skills improved significantly after studying, with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. 2. Overall, students reported high satisfaction with project-based learning management (mean = 4.07, S.D. = 0.04).

Considering the results of developing English language skills for communication and upgrading local wisdom to a trading career for grade 8 students through learning from project-based activities, it was observed that 18 students demonstrated improvement in their English communication skills. The average pre-study score was 46.67, which increased to 91.56 post-study, compared to the original post-study average score of 44.89 for students engaged in project-based English learning activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that grade 8 students have enhanced their English communication skills, supported by a t-test value of 15.10, where the post-study score significantly exceeds the pre-study score at the 0.05 level due to learning activities grounded in project-based learning.

3. Results of Student Satisfaction with the Development of English Language Skills for Communication

In studying the satisfaction of grade 8 students with the development of English language skills for communication and the upgrading of local wisdom to a trading career through project-based activities using learning activity sets, the researcher collected satisfaction questionnaires via Google Form after the learning sessions. The discussion of the results was divided into two aspects. Firstly, in terms of the overall picture of English teaching and learning through project-based activities, student satisfaction was found to be high. Secondly, regarding student satisfaction with learning management across all six subjects, students reported high levels of satisfaction. This can be attributed to the organization of English teaching activities using projects as a base, coupled with a learning management plan that facilitates easy access to learning activities. The plan is systematically organized for each sub-content, featuring sequential activities linked to students' previous knowledge in their local wisdom areas. Additionally, contextual conditions and connections with additional English knowledge are emphasized to support students' future careers. The quality of the learning management plan is deemed most appropriate for the learners, resulting in high satisfaction levels among students. This finding is consistent with Phakaporn's research. Furthermore, Sermasuk (2021) conducted research on project-based teaching for the development of English communication ability among grade 8 students, applying assessments according to actual conditions. The results revealed that organizing project-based teaching and learning activities

significantly improved students' English communication ability scores, surpassing the criteria of 75%, with a significant difference observed in pre- and post-study scores at the 0.01 level. This finding is also supported by the research of Desi Ratna Sari Simbolon, Acep Haryudin, and Efransyah (2023), who focused on improving students' speaking skills through Project-Based Learning (PjBL). In this regard, the researcher prepared a learning plan to develop English language skills for communication and upgrade local wisdom to a trading career for grade 8 students through project-based activities, with a focus on vocational skills. This approach provides students with opportunities to create projects aligned with their interests, learn systematic work processes, gain practical experience, consolidate knowledge, and showcase their work through various channels. This encourages students to utilize their abilities and interests effectively, paving the way for their future careers.

Recommendations

1. Theoretical Recommendation

The curriculum should be tailored to align with students' daily lives, facilitating clearer understanding and sparking interest to promote effective learning.

2. Policy Recommendations

2.1. Classroom Atmosphere

Foster a Friendly Environment: Teachers should create a relaxed and welcoming classroom atmosphere to encourage students to express themselves.

Post-Activity Discussions: Conduct discussions after activities to reinforce understanding and support learning.

2.2. Evaluation Tools

Development of Assessment Tools: Design tools to measure and evaluate students' communication skills, ensuring clear criteria and diverse assessment methods to meet students' varying needs.

3. Practical Recommendations

3.1. Comparative Research

Exploration of Teaching Methods: Research should compare the effectiveness of project-based activities with other teaching methods in enhancing English communication and vocational skills among grade-8 students.

3.2. Community and Market-based Research

Tailoring Curriculum to Students' Interests: Investigate the development of English communication skills in community and market settings, focusing on students' interests in mechanics and food sales in made-to-order shops. This research indicates that project-based learning could be advantageous.

3.3. Research on 21st Century Skills

Comprehensive Study on Skill Development: Conduct research on the enhancement of English communication skills and vocational knowledge through project-based activities across various student levels. Emphasis should be placed on fostering other essential skills for 21st-century students.

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