



## **A Development of English-Learning Modules for Teachers of Small-sized School**

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### **Abstract**

This action research had two objectives: 1) to develop an English-learning module for teachers of the small-sized school, 2) to develop the teachers' capacities and creative thinking for self-producing instructional materials. The target group are the 7 teachers of Ban A-hi Community School, Thali District, Loei Province. The data about the teachers' requirement for creating English module were collected by observation, personal communication and interview. They were done both in group and individually. Because of the COVID 19 situation, some data were collected through telephoning. The instrument were related-topics, such as, a level of English grammar, difficulty in understanding the cultural meaning, how to pronounce English words, and so on. The data were analyzed by content analysis. After that, the analyzed-data were used for planning and producing the practical English module. Based on the data from the target group, the first objective of the research was completed. The English-learning module with 13 sets of basic words at primary level was done. The second objective was also succeeded. The data disclosed the result. That is, it could be seen that the target teachers could share and discuss about the English instructional materials. They also identified their self-requirement which were useful for producing the practical module. After the distribution of the 40 copies of English module for 2 month, the follow-up action was done. It was found that the target teachers could increase their confident in English teaching. They designed the work-project in English subject by using the English module as instructional materials for an on hand method of teaching-learning because of the delayed schooling, which was affected by COVID 19 situation. It could be concluded that the instructional materials which were mutually produced and based on the users' requirement, the materials would be used actively and successfully.

**Key words:** English-teaching at primary level, English learning of small-seized Schools, instructional materials for non-English majored teachers



## 1. Introduction

Thai Basic-education is organized under the national framework made by the Ministry of Basic Education. The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 prescribes the content standards of all basic education subjects. Suwit Mesinsee (2014), an educator in Thailand, did a research titled **A Prescription for Thai Education Development for 21<sup>st</sup> Century**. He said that education is a key variable of long term competitiveness. Two strategies were mentioned in this research: the improvement and the supplement. The improvement consists of 4 topics relating to the urgent reform: 1) a teacher-production process and in-service teachers' potential, 2) learning for 21<sup>st</sup> century and life-long learning, 3) formative assessment, and 4) structure and administration changes, as well as management system reform. The supplement strategy involved the equipment of a wisdom-based society, lifelong learning and supportive learning- environment. It was said, in the research, that in-service teachers' potential is the important variable to Thai-education achievement. According to the first topic of the improvement strategy, it notified that most of Thai in-service teacher's potential might be substandard.

Referring to the national policy, English was identified as one of important potentials of the learners in education system, especially in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is widely applied as the standard instrument of English-proficiency evaluation. To meet the English learning achievement after CEFR, the English learning process is specified to be natural for the students. It concerns individual context of the learners and put the emphasis on English skills. According to The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 about English content. It specifies the scope of vocabulary for student from grade 1- 6 as the followings.

Student of Grade 1 should learn concrete vocabulary about 150-200 words.

Student of Grade 2 should learn concrete vocabulary about 250-300 words.

Student of Grade 3 should learn concrete vocabulary about 350-450 words.

Student of Grade 4 should learn concrete vocabulary about 250-300 words.

Student of Grade 5 should learn concrete vocabulary about 750-950 words.

Student of Grade 6 should learn concrete vocabulary about 1,050-1,200 words.

The content standard in English is questioned in schools with different sizes and educational facilities. The current research put the emphasis on small-sized schools. Damrong Chonsuk (1917) mentioned that small sized-schools are mostly disadvantageous schools. Most of them are primary schools with a fewer in-service teachers than the number of the classes. It is usually found that the educational facilities are rather inadequate and might be rather out-mode.

Ban A-hi Community School is a small sized school. As Damrong mentioned, it is situated in Thali District, Loei Province, closed to the border office between Thailand and Laos, PDR. Therefore, some Lao people, accompanied with their children, work in this area. Some of their children are students in the community schools. So the students' capacities might be another problem for the teachers. This school had 8 teachers after the public information, excluding the



director. However, the on-site observation, only 7 teachers were found. Moreover, one of them was being retired in 2021. None of the teachers finished bachelor degree in English program. They finished in Home Economic Sciences, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Thai. It was found that their ages were between 45-59 years.

It is known that teachers in primary schools, especially grade 1-3, have to be class teachers and teach all subjects for the classes. It means that all teachers have to teach English. About English instructional materials at the schools, it was told that the school provided some complementary English books for teachers and some books the teachers bought for themselves. The details of content was rather difficult to understand and to choose for teaching. One of the target teachers said that there were so many vocabulary words and activities which the teachers did not understand and did not know how to use as class instructional materials. Some teachers revealed that they were not confident of English pronunciation and speaking. These problems were similar to other small-sized schools with the similar context.

As an English lecturer of Loei Rajabhat University, the researcher has experienced the problems and context of these small-sized schools in Loei Province for years. Some of the researches and academic services were taken in these small schools. It has been learned that English becomes an important problem of the small-sized schools and class teachers. Most of these schools do not have in-service teachers with educational qualification in English. This problem appears to the present date. The researcher )2018( did the research at a small-sized school at Phakhaw District, Loei Province, where was 90 kilometers to the city. The action research was done at Ban None Phoothong School, a primary school. The purposes were related to a problem of lacking of English-teacher. One of the objective was a developing of speaking skill in English for student grade 3. In fact, the purposes were indirectly aimed at the teachers, that is, to demonstrate how to teach speaking skill. The research could be done after the research-plan because of no COVID 19 infection by that time. It was found that, the class teacher of grade 3 did not have bachelor degree in English but he had to teach English. He expressed that it was very hard to understand and teach. As a class teacher, he had to teach English with little confidence and without self-creativity. He only did after an English book that he understood. In 2020, the researcher did the research involving the similar problems at Ban A-hi Community School, Thali District, Loei Province. It was no English-majored teachers at the school. By this time, this research put the emphasis on the teachers only because the researcher realized that if a teacher was not qualified in English, the learning achievement would be impossible.

According to The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 about English content. It is doubtful of the students in rural area whether they could reach the content standard. The researcher has experienced the junior students' potential. It was found that some junior or even senior students could not read or write Thai vocabulary properly. What English, where and how the students learn the hundreds of English vocabulary while their daily-life environment and academic context at schools may be inadequate. The teachers are expected to be the English distributor without concerning what they could do or not. So many researches concern how to improve students at



primary about their English proficiency. They used various instruments, such as, games, songs, cartoons, pictures and digital supplement. However, a person who begins an English class is a teacher. So this current research put the emphasis on teachers' English proficiency. That is, the teachers should be helped on the right track. The current research had 2 objectives: 1) to develop an English-learning module for teachers of the small-sized school, 2) to develop the teachers' potential and creative thinking for self-producing instructional materials.

## 2. Research Methodology

This current research was designed to be action research. The action-plan was mostly put on-site actions, that is, the researcher and the English team would visit the school 1 time in a month to collect the data and do the action plan together. There would be informal discussion and on-site actions. The English module was designed to be produced after the teachers' recommendation and the researcher's opinions. The teachers would be asked to try out the recent work during the process. The correction and creation would go together at the real time. The action process was planned for 1 semester after the basic education system. The plan, however, had to be changed because of the serious situation of COVID 19. The on-site teaching and learning was not allowed.

Because of on-site research could not be taken, the researcher decided to continue the plan which had to be adjusted, to keep the beneficial result of the research for the teachers. The former data collected at the target school before the coming of COVID 19 situation were analyzed again and the new plan was made up. That is, the English module had to be produced by the researcher and the team at Rajabhat Loei University for the target teachers. Instead of being tried out by the teachers, the 5 Social-studies students were asked to do this process together with the 4 English students who worked with the researcher about creation and correction. This producing-process took 4 months. Finally, the English module with 13 sets of vocabulary was completed. The researcher made the appointment and visit on-site because it was compulsory to explain how to get benefit from the module. And also, the satisfaction and opinions of the target teachers were required. The 14 modules were distributed to the target teachers accompanied the demonstration of using. As mention before, the satisfaction was asked and observed, as well as the recommendation after the modules were explored. Two months later, the target teachers reported through telephoning that they taught by on hand strategy and used the module as the instructional material, to accompany the project work for the students.

This producing-process of the module was as the followings.

- 1) The data were analyzed for producing the module.
- 2) The English team and the researcher designed the module together.
- 3) The English module was drafted, based on the analyzed data.
- 4) The 4 English students and 5 Social-studies students of the Faculty of Education

were recruited as the team for producing the module. The process of communication during the team was taken by email and line application. When the English team finished each set of the vocabulary together with the explanation and cartoon, it was sent by email to the Social-studies students to read and check if they could understand or not.

5) The social-studies team studied the vocabulary set and returned the comment to the researcher and the English team. This process was done because the Social-studies team's qualification in English was assumed to be similar to those of non-English majored teachers. Their recommendation was expected to be closed to those of the target teachers.

6). The English team and the researcher made the revision.

7). All 13 sets of vocabulary were gathered into one module.

8) The 14 copies of the English module were printed in color and distributed to the target teachers. It was 14 copies because there were about 6-7 students in junior primary class.

9) The on line monitoring was done by telephoning and Google-meet application.

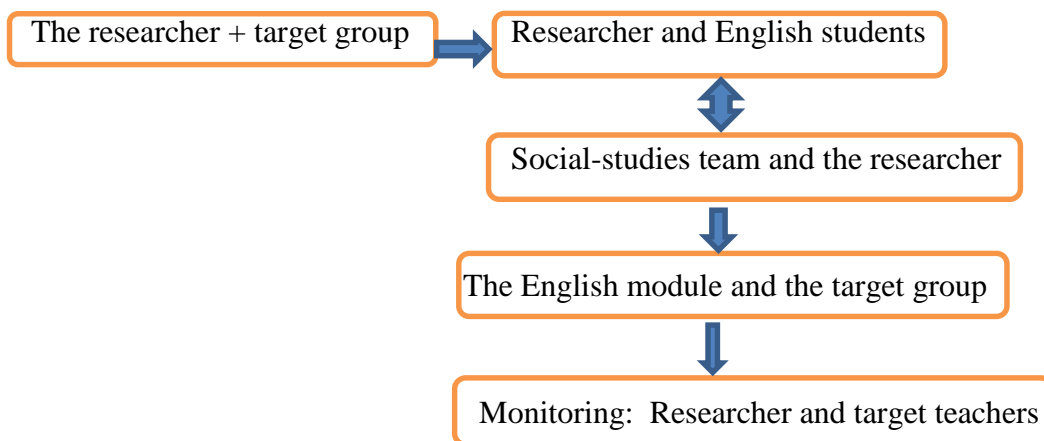


Figure 1: Process of producing the English module

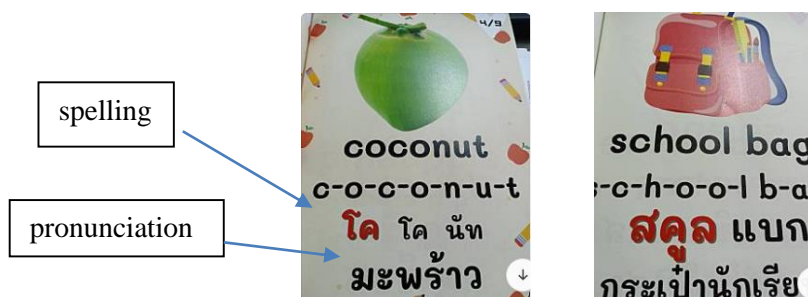


Figure 2: The examples of vocabulary presentation in the module

One page of a vocabulary word consist of a picture, spelling step by read aloud, that is, one letter at a time, pronunciation with Thai script and meaning in Thai. All characters are colored. The research team expected that this style of presentation would be easy for teacher to improve their English and design the work for the students. They could teach a pronunciation, a meaning of a vocabulary word, a spelling of the word. Further, they could transfer the English from the other set, such as, the color set to teach about the color of a coconut or a school bag, for examples. About English pronunciation, a stress syllable of each word was presented by a red color. All of these characters had explained to the target teachers already.



### 3. Results

The first objective was succeeded. The English module with 13 sets of vocabulary was Done. The target teachers informed that they could understand the module easily. They also expressed their feeling that the Thai script increased their confidence about English pronunciation. Each page of the module consists of one English vocabulary, how to pronounce by Thai script and meaning in Thai. All letter characters were cartooned and colored styles. The 13 sets of vocabulary were: 7 days in a week, months in a year, colors, fruits, sport, things in class room, places, natural environment, occupation, flowers, vegetables, trees, and COVID 19. There was no conditions which set of vocabulary would take the priority. It depended on the teachers if they felt like to pick it up. Asking by telephoning, it was found that the topic about COVID 19 was mostly received the interest from the teachers because it was corresponded to the situation. All sets of vocabulary was concrete which the students could see and touch. So it was easy to design the on hand work sheet. Therefore, the first objective was succeeded because the target teachers could understand, gain more knowledge about English vocabulary. The teachers could improve their English proficiency by themselves which was needed for primary level. Most of all, it was important to see that the teachers had more self-confidence in teaching English, that is, they had the instrument that they could understand.

The second objective was also satisfied. Not only the teacher cooperation, the English module was also done by creating based on the teachers' requirement and recommendation. It meant that the teachers had their own opinions and ideas about instructional materials. They knew what would be practical for them.

The satisfaction which was not the objective of the research, was revealed after 2 months of the module distribution. One of the target teacher sent by line application to the researcher how he used the module as the instructional materials during on hand learning. Moreover. One of the teachers informed that he used the module for the junior secondary class because he found that the student could learn some vocabulary words, spelling, reading and speaking from the module.

### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

#### 4.1 Discussion

The finding for the researcher in the current research was the problem. As mentioned before that most of experiment researches about primary students put the emphasis on improving the students' English proficiency with various instruments. For this current research, the focus of problem to be solved was changed to be the teachers instead. It might be sensitive issues if the research involves teachers. The teachers might feel unhappy if they are to be captured as the main factor. This research was done by considering the teachers as the helpers and as the research team. No teachers were put to any experiment without advanced notification. And also, the research explain the problems as the general issues of primary schools. They might feel satisfied that the problems were common and belonged to all. According to the serious COVID 19 situation, the teachers were not disturbed on-site but on line. It was found that they were exciting and happy to join on line meeting. They were pleased to learn that the research tended to be academic service for them rather than a research.





## 4.2 Conclusion

The results of the research was correspond to the standard content of English, prescribed by the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551. That is, the content was scoped at word level. All English vocabulary words in the module were concrete. Therefore, the module could improve the teachers' English proficiency at word level, and also it could be used as the English instructional material for English subject. It could imply that if the users knew what they want, and took part in making decision, the product would be used actively. The product of this research was directly useful to the target teachers, both the knowledge and further creative using. It was seen that the teachers used the module for on hand teaching as well. Although the research was planned to be action research, it could be adjusted to be another action and kept the equal benefit to the target group.

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