

“Smart English Program: an Innovative Special Classroom Curriculum Enhancing English Language Skills Of Primary School Students”

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ABSTRACT: In the era of globalization, where technology and digital media are rapidly evolving, English language proficiency—encompassing knowledge, communication skills, and positive attitudes toward learning—has become a crucial foundation for lifelong learning. The SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM is an innovative special classroom curriculum specifically designed for primary school students to enhance the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills serve as a vital starting point in establishing long-term language foundations and learning trajectories. The program is structured around five key components: (1) S – Specialized Curriculum: supplementary specialized courses; (2) M – Motivational Environment: creating a supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere; (3) A – Active Learning Activities: learner-centered teaching strategies; (4) R – Real-World Communication: practicing authentic communicative situations; and (5) T – Targeted Language Outcomes: achieving measurable proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, the SMART English Program represents a comprehensive and contemporary approach to English language education, aiming to provide young learners with a solid linguistic foundation and prepare them for academic success and lifelong learning in the future.

KEYWORDS - curriculum, English skills, English program, primary school, innovative.

I. INTRODUCTION

English serves as a worldwide lingua franca, significantly facilitating international communication. In Thailand, English has been embraced as a means of communication with the global community, rendering English proficiency a crucial ability for Thai youngsters in the 21st century. The acquisition of English should be fostered from the primary school level, deemed the most suitable phase for basic learning and cognitive growth. Arewan Iamsaard's research (2018) demonstrated that English instruction at the primary school level is crucial in Thailand's educational framework, as it establishes a basis for advanced learning and the enhancement of communication skills in the context of Thailand 4.0. Research conducted by Nawaporn Chalarak (2016) on English instruction among Grade 6 educators in Lamphun Primary Educational Service Area Office 1 identified various challenges: (1) Teachers possessed inadequate formal qualifications in English education, (2) insufficient comprehension of the curriculum, (3) limited proficiency in English, (4) inadequate pedagogical competence, (5) excessive workloads beyond English instruction, (6) overloaded curriculum content, (7) restricted teaching

methodologies, (8) minimal opportunities for training with native speakers, (9) lack of direct exposure to English-speaking environments, (10) inappropriate instructional materials, (11) insufficient English learning resources, (12) inadequate educational media, (13) poorly equipped language laboratories, and (14) insufficient funding for English programs. These findings align with Raekkawan Namsawang's (2015) study, which highlighted analogous issues and requirements in English instruction for primary pupils with reading difficulties. These issues underscore the pressing necessity for creative methodologies in English language instruction in Thailand.

In the digital era, education must be adaptable and attuned to individual variances. A viable strategy involves the creation of specialized classroom programs intended to augment the capabilities of particular learner groups, with the objective of improving academic performance and cultivating important 21st-century skills. Enhancing English language learning results necessitates the implementation of Active Learning techniques. Kamol Potiyen (2021) asserts that Active Learning diminishes instructor authority and enhances student engagement. It underscores experiential learning, critical reflection, and collaborative interaction among peers both within and beyond the classroom, facilitating the construction of knowledge by active participation in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and discourse. This corresponds with the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999), as revised in B.E. 2562 (2019), which emphasizes the significance of incorporating knowledge, ethics, and educational methodologies appropriate to each educational tier. Additionally, Sumai Bilbai (2015) delineated crucial 21st-century competencies, encompassing critical thinking, cooperation, communication, creativity, digital literacy, and job and life skills. These competencies must be included into English language instruction to equip learners for future success.

In response to these requirements, the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM: An Innovative Special Classroom Curriculum for Enhancing English Language Skills of Primary School Students” was created. The program is based on five fundamental components: **S - Specialized Curriculum**: Enrichment classes including English for Communication and Phonics English, additional topics beyond the basic curriculum, and instruction by foreign educators. **M - Motivational Environment**: An educational setting that fosters good attitudes and motivation for learning English. **A – Active Learning Activities**: Student-centered methodologies including English games, collaborative group learning, role-playing, and the incorporation of technology (e.g., Interactive Boards, YouTube Kids, Kahoot!). **R — Real-World Communication**: Opportunities to engage in English practice within genuine, real-life contexts, connecting everyday experiences with academic instruction. **T – Targeted Language Outcomes**: Proficiency in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing, evaluated by assessment instruments including pre- and post-tests, rubrics, and observation checklists.

In summary, SEP exemplifies an educational innovation that tackles the challenges and potential of English language instruction in Thailand. It offers a thorough and developmentally suitable methodology for primary school pupils, promoting English proficiency alongside critical 21st-century skills to facilitate lifelong learning.

II. THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Good (1973) defined academic achievement as the knowledge or skills acquired from learning across various subjects, measurable through assessments conducted by teachers or instructors.

Wehmeier (2000) defined academic achievement as the attainment of knowledge, skills, and competencies across various domains. He further emphasized that academic achievement comprises three essential components: knowledge, skills, and related competencies.

Chanida Yodsalee and Kanchana Bootsang (2016) defined academic achievement as the cognitive abilities developed through instruction and the attainment of knowledge or skills that necessitate intellectual effort. Performance can be assessed through three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

Tissana Khammani (2019) defined academic achievement as the knowledge acquired through the development of learners' skills or the results of their actions. This indicates behavioral modifications stemming from experiences gained via self-directed or formal education, which can be evaluated through assessments or instructor observations.

Pichat Kaewphuang (2021) defined academic achievement as the success resulting from alterations in learners' characteristics and learning experiences related to specific subject content, assessed through various types of achievement tests.

In summary, student achievement development pertains to the improvement of knowledge and skills acquired through learning or the actions of learners themselves. It represents a modification in behavior resulting from a series of learned experiences. Academic achievement comprises three essential components: knowledge, skills, and competencies, which are manifested across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPECIALIZED CURRICULUM: "SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM "

The specialized classroom curriculum addresses students' individualized learning needs more effectively than general curricula, especially at the primary education level, which is crucial for establishing foundational language skills, analytical thinking, and fostering a positive learning experience. The acquisition of second language communication skills is increasingly important, given that English serves as the global medium of communication. In the current era of globalization, advancements in transportation, and modern technology, the world has contracted, leading nations to prioritize English as a primary means of communication. English is essential in numerous domains, including higher education, cultural exchange, international trade, travel, and various business activities.

This is consistent with Priya Pechayang (2019), who indicated that the implementation of a specialized classroom curriculum improves student motivation for learning, especially when Active Learning strategies are incorporated into classroom activities. These methods promote the development of language skills and systematic thinking in students. Suchada Yodsuran (2019) observed that specialized classrooms utilizing English as the primary medium of instruction, such as English Programs (EP) or Mini English Programs (MEP), significantly contribute to the development of confidence and communication skills in primary school students, thereby enhancing their ability to perform effectively on an international scale. Slavin (2020) highlighted that classrooms designed with content aligned to learners' specific ability levels facilitate deeper learning and enhance the application of knowledge in real-world contexts. Tomlinson (2017) asserted that English special classrooms ought to promote the development of differentiated curricula by teachers to address the varied potentials of learners.

The significance of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM curriculum is evident in its direct influence on students' academic performance, especially regarding English language proficiency and systematic thinking abilities. The implementation of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM (SEP) at the primary school level facilitates language development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while also enhancing comprehension of linguistic structures.

IV. RESULTS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM : AN INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM FOR ENHANCING ENGLISH SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM comprises five essential components as outlined below:

Component 1) S – Specialized Curriculum, which this component highlights additional subjects, such as English for Communication and Phonics English, the involvement of foreign teachers, and content that extends beyond the national core curriculum. Specialized courses offer a systematic method for managing curriculum and instructional practices, facilitating the attainment of specified learning objectives outlined in the curriculum framework.

Component 2) M – Motivational Environment, which this pertains to the classroom environment and communication strategies that enhance motivation and promote positive attitudes. Motivation is a crucial element influencing learners' behaviors in the pursuit of educational objectives. It is categorized into 2 types: 2.1) Intrinsic motivation refers to an internal drive that fosters learning behaviors independent of external rewards, typically oriented towards personal growth, and 2.2) Extrinsic motivation refers to a drive shaped by external environmental factors, resulting in behaviors aimed at obtaining specific rewards.

Component 3) A – Active Learning Activities, which this includes instructional methods such as English games, learning groups, role-play, and the integration of educational technologies (e.g., Interactive Boards, YouTube Kids, Kahoot!). Active Learning fosters instructional methods that improve learner engagement, comprehension, and the application of knowledge in practical situations. It highlights the importance of active learner engagement and practical experiences, which enhance academic performance and overall learning outcomes.

Component 4) R – Real-World Communication, which this emphasizes the practice of authentic conversations and the integration of everyday experiences with English instruction. The program employs the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, integrating linguistic knowledge, language skills, and communicative competence. Communicative competence consists of 4 components: 4.1) Grammatical competence encompasses knowledge of vocabulary, word formation, sentence structure, spelling, and pronunciation, 4.2) Sociolinguistic competence refers to the capacity to utilize language suitably across diverse social situations, including acts of apologizing, expressing gratitude, issuing commands, or inquiring for directions and information, 4.3) Discourse competence refers to the capacity to connect grammatical structures with meaning in both oral and written communication, taking into account various contexts and situations. 4.4) Strategic competence refers to the application of strategies that facilitate effective communication, particularly in spoken interactions. This includes the use of body language and other techniques aimed at preventing communication breakdowns.

Component 5) T – Targeted Langered Language Outcomes, which this component highlights quantifiable learning outcomes in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Assessment tools comprise Pre-tests, Post-tests, Rubrics, and Observation Checklists. These tools are intended to be reliable, valid, and equitable, facilitating an accurate assessment of learners' knowledge, skills, and progress.



Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM: An Innovative Special Classroom Curriculum for Enhancing English Language Skills of Primary School Students

V. EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BY USING THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT CYCLE (PDCA)

The evaluation of the conceptual framework by using the Quality Management Cycle (PDCA) is essential for testing hypotheses, gathering data, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making aimed at continuous improvement. Assessment of the Conceptual Framework's Quality Employing the Quality Management Cycle (PDCA) :

(P) Plan : Designing the curriculum and establishing clear objectives are fundamental to developing an effective curriculum that addresses learners' needs. Defined objectives facilitate effective curriculum planning and implementation, aiding learners in attaining specified outcomes. Stakeholders in the school collaboratively establish clear objectives for the implementation of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM aimed at improving English language skills and competencies.

(D) Do : The implementation of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM commences with the establishment of goals and strategic planning. This involves establishing a conducive learning environment, hiring educators with specialized knowledge and expertise, facilitating effective communication, and selecting students who demonstrate interest and capability in enhancing their English proficiency.

(C) Check : The evaluation process entails assessing the outcomes of implementation over a specified period through evaluation plans, including pre-tests, post-tests, or checklists.

(A) Act : The outcomes derived from the preceding three stages inform the development, enhancement, and refinement of planning and practice. This step outlines a framework for the continuous enhancement and innovation of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM.

Quality Management Cycle (PDCA)	Analysis
(P) Plan	1.Learning-Friendly Classroom Environment A classroom environment should be designed to promote learning by creating conditions that are supportive and appropriate for learners. Examples include installing air conditioning, providing an electronic research corner, setting up display screens, and establishing a unique classroom identity under the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM. 2.Guidelines for Recruiting Foreign Teachers The recruitment of teachers must comply with the qualification standards for hiring English language teachers as specified by the Office of the Basic Education Commission. These include: 2.1 Native speakers from five countries—United Kingdom (England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland), United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. 2.2 Foreign nationals who use English as a second language or as an official language, such as in South Africa, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, India, Nigeria, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Botswana, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. 2.3 Foreign nationals who use English as a foreign language, such as those from China, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, and Saudi Arabia. 3. Class Scheduling The scheduling of classes in the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM focuses on enabling students to learn throughout the day. Specialized English courses are arranged in the morning, when students' brains are most active, while English is integrated into every subject across the school day.

(D) Do	1.Lesson Planning Teachers design instruction using the Active Learning approach, emphasizing learner-centered development. First-grade primary students engage in hands-on experiences through various activities, such as the <i>Zoo and Amusement Park activity</i> and the <i>Introduce Yourself activity</i>, which encourage learning by doing and foster meaningful participation. 2.Sample Courses and Activities Within the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM , two additional courses are offered beyond the core curriculum: <i>English for Communication</i> and <i>Phonics</i>. Both subjects focus on enhancing students' communication abilities and spoken interaction, aiming to strengthen their practical language skills.
(C) Check	A systematic testing process has been established, beginning with an entrance examination for the selection of primary school students into the special SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM classroom. This is followed by Pre- and Post-Tests to examine students' progress and the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. In addition, satisfaction surveys are conducted with relevant stakeholders to gather feedback on the program's outcomes.
(A) Act	The SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM curriculum was further developed and improved based on the results of the evaluation process.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed extension of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM: An Innovative Special Classroom Curriculum for Enhancing English Language Skills of Primary School Students is to establish model schools that serve as exemplars in enhancing students' English language proficiency. These model schools could also host academic visits, allowing other interested schools to observe and adapt the program to their own contexts.

However, the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM requires a considerable budget, as it involves improving the classroom learning environment—for example, installing air conditioning, providing electronic research corners, setting up display screens, and creating a distinctive classroom identity under the program. Additionally, the relatively high remuneration for specialized personnel presents a limitation and a significant factor to be considered. Therefore, schools intending to adopt the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM to develop English skills among early primary school students must plan for supplementary educational fees. Such fees should align with the development objectives of the program and support students' English language learning. Importantly, the collection of these fees must comply with the Ministry of Education's regulations regarding the criteria, procedures, and conditions for announcing and collecting tuition and other fees in private schools.

VII. CONCLUSION

As discussed above, the development of learning achievement among early primary school students through the implementation of the SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM serves as a crucial foundation for long-term language proficiency and lifelong learning. The curriculum is carefully designed to be developmentally appropriate, thereby fostering motivation, interest, and active engagement in the learning process. A variety of activities—such as role-playing, game-based learning, and the use of audiovisual media—provide students with authentic language experiences that contribute to the comprehensive development of all four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The SMART ENGLISH PROGRAM thus emerges as a highly effective tool for enhancing academic performance by strengthening language knowledge, communication skills, and positive attitudes toward English learning. These foundations are vital in preparing learners for lifelong learning in the modern world, which requires citizens equipped with robust language proficiency and critical thinking skills to meet future challenges.

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