

“T

# he Custom-designed Communicative-based Instructional Aids- CCIAs” For Effective Classroom English Listening and Speaking

## “อุปกรณ์ช่วยสอนเน้นการสื่อสารตามความต้องการของผู้เรียน”

### เพื่อการพูดและการฟังภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

- ปรียานุช จันทร์ประเสริฐ
- อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาอังกฤษธุรกิจ
- คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย
- E-mail: pawanarith@yahoo.com

#### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้เปรียบเทียบรูปแบบการสอนที่ใช้อุปกรณ์การสอน และตำราเรียนเป็นสื่อในการกระตุ้นให้ผู้เรียนพัฒนาทักษะทางด้านภาษา โดยเฉพาะทักษะการฟังและการพูด รูปแบบการสอนสองรูปแบบในการวิจัยนี้ คือ การสอนแบบดั้งเดิมที่ยึดตำราเรียนเล่มใดเล่มหนึ่ง และการสอนแบบสื่อสารที่ยึดผู้เรียนเป็นศูนย์กลาง โดยใช้ ‘อุปกรณ์ช่วยสอนเน้นการสื่อสารตามความต้องการของผู้เรียน’ หรือที่ผู้วิจัยใช้ชื่อย่อว่า ‘CCIAs’ ที่ผลิตขึ้น ด้วยความเชื่อที่ว่า ภาษาเปลี่ยนแปลงตลอดเวลา ผู้วิจัยได้ออกแบบ ‘CCIAs’ เพื่อใช้เป็นอุปกรณ์อเนกประสงค์ครบวงจร บรรจุเนื้อหาที่สร้างขึ้นโดยยึดความต้องการของนายจ้าง และความสนใจอย่างแท้จริงของนักศึกษาเป็นหลัก ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น อุปกรณ์ช่วยสอนดังกล่าวพัฒนาขึ้นให้สอดคล้องกับวัตถุประสงค์ในการวัดผลประเมินผลการเรียนการสอนผลที่ได้จากการวิจัยเป็นไปตามสมมติฐานที่ตั้งไว้ กล่าวคือ มีความต่างในผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนรู้ของผู้เรียนทั้งสองกลุ่มอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ เมื่อนำความไม่เท่าเทียมกันของพื้นฐานภาษาอังกฤษ (Ratio Change) มาวิเคราะห์ร่วมด้วย ข้อค้นพบสะท้อนให้เห็นว่า ปัจจัยที่ช่วยพัฒนาความสามารถในการเรียนรู้ภาษาของผู้เรียนส่วนหนึ่งนั้น คือ การปรับปรุงสื่ออุปกรณ์การเรียนการสอนให้สอดคล้องกับ

การใช้งานด้านภาษา รวมถึงความหลากหลายในการเลือกใช้เนื้อหาที่เหมาะสมกับผู้เรียน จากตำราเรียนต่างๆ ในฐานะที่เป็นอุปกรณ์การสอนหนึ่งเช่นกัน

**คำสำคัญ:** อุปกรณ์ช่วยสอนเน้นการสื่อสารตามความต้องการของผู้เรียน การสอนแบบดั้งเดิม การสอนแบบเน้นวิธีการสื่อสารโดยผู้เรียนเป็นศูนย์กลาง

## **Abstract**

This study compares two teaching approaches where audio-visual instructional materials and a textbook were used as a means to encourage students to improve their language skills – listening and speaking in particular. The two approaches employed in this research were the Traditional or Classic Approach with a textbook and the Communicative Approach with ‘Custom-designed Communicative-based Instructional Aids’ or CCIAs. Believing that language itself is dynamic, the researcher designed the CCIAs as all-in-one instructional aids containing the contents based on employers’ needs and students’ real interests. Moreover, the audio-visual instructional materials were developed to support the contents as well as the assessments. The research outcomes supported the hypotheses set when “the ratio change” (the subjects’ different backgrounds of English) was brought into consideration. That is; the listening and speaking proficiency of the two samples were significantly different. This indicated that improving students’ ability to learn new languages can be defined as the improvement of audio-visual instructional materials, as well as a variety of choices in selecting appropriate contents from different textbooks to be used as “teaching tools.”

**Keywords:** The Custom-designed Communication-based Instructional Aids (CCIAs), The Traditional or Classic Approach, The Communicative Approach

## Introduction

Learning and teaching English language in terms of listening and speaking skills has become a serious topic which has been discussed in most Asian countries. In Thailand, English language plays an important role as a crucial means to a student's successful future career and to further his or her own education abroad. However, even though students realize how important English language is to their success, it is still difficult for them, as learners, to acquire the language effectively. The problems of learning foreign language partly come from a serious mismatching of learning styles of students in a class and the teaching styles of the instructor. This results in students' passive behavior in class, poor scores on tests and especially their dropouts (Schmeck, 1988 cited in Felder and Henriques, 1995: 21) Moreover, instructors confronted by low test grades, unresponsive or hostile classes, poor attendance, and dropouts, may become overly critical of their students (making things even worse) or begin to question their own competence as teachers (Felder and Henriques, 1995: 21-22).

To solve these learning and teaching problems, Sato and Kleinsasser (1999: 511-512) have studied what should be the most appropriate method for ESL learners. Among

several language teaching approaches introduced, the Communicative Approach is considered to be priority.

When comparing the Communicative Approach to the Traditional or Classic Teaching Approach in terms of teachers' roles in the classroom, it's quite obvious that teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more - becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 140-149). The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as a referee or a mentor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task. According to CLT theory, individual learners possess unique interests, styles, needs, and goals that should be reflected in the design of instructional methods (Savignon, 1991: 265-270). Therefore, teachers are to develop materials based on the needs of a particular class. Students are made to feel secure, unthreatened, and non-defensive in a CLT classroom, so teachers using CLT should avoid adopting a teacher-centered, authoritarian posture (Taylor, 1983: 72-80).

On the contrary, Rao (1996: 461-463) summed up teachers' roles in traditional teaching classrooms in the article “Reconciling Communicative Approaches to the Teaching of English with Traditional Chinese Methods” that the teacher has sole authority in the classroom and therefore should not be questioned, interrupted, or challenged. The judgment of the teacher is final and the students' job is to take down those judgments and memorize them after class. Moreover, language is seen as governed by grammar, just as the universe is governed by sacred laws in the classics. A great satisfaction is felt in sentences that can be logically explained and justified by grammar.

This study focuses on the comparison between the two teaching approaches-using the Custom-designed Communication-based Instructional Aids or CCIAs based on the Communicative Approach and using a selected commercial textbook based on the Traditional or Classic Approach- to evaluate which one will result in students' listening and speaking proficiency and to reflect the comparative picture of the two teaching styles as well as to assure how important the CCIAs are in classrooms. The details of the two teaching approaches are presented as follows:

The CCIAs designed by the researcher to serve UTCC students' needs were used as instructional materials for the Communicative Approach instead of a commercial textbook. The instructional aids function as an all-in-one teaching aids containing a course outline, detailed lesson plans, contents based on topics listed in the course objectives, audiovisual materials, and evaluation forms. Moreover, in order to make the CCIAs more valid and reliable, the advice and the feedbacks from the research advisors and the foreign teachers who have already employed the CCIAs in their classrooms in a trial period were collected as an important data for the instructional aids improvement.

As we know, students in most of Thai private universities are considered as students who are disappointed with their entrance exam results. Their background of English language is around lower intermediate or intermediate level. Therefore, all the classroom activities of the CCIAs were designed as student-centered activities. The assigned teacher, Mr. Mark Spencer worked as a learning facilitator encouraging his students to use English in class freely. The students' grammatical errors were corrected only when necessary. The most important thing the teacher kept in mind was to create friendly and lively atmosphere in learning English for students.

As a designer of ‘CCAI’s, the research is confident that a user-friendly, tailor-made, and student-centered instructional aids can solve the problems of teaching English listening and speaking at UTCC in terms of students’ low motivation, their lack of confidence and uninteresting teaching styles and materials.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To compare English listening and speaking proficiency of the treatment group using the CCIAs based on the Communicative Approach and that of the control group using a commercial textbook and its instructional materials based on the Traditional or Classic Approach.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The score of listening and speaking proficiency of the students who studied with the Communicative Approach using CCIAs will be higher than that of the students who studied with the Traditional or Classic Approach using a commercial textbook.

### **Expected Benefits of the Study**

It is anticipated that the benefits of the study would improve students’ learning potential, create teachers’ teaching motivation, encourage teachers to produce and develop more efficient teaching materials.

### **Operational Definitions of Terms**

In this study, three operational definitions of terms are introduced:

1. ‘The Communicative Approach using Custom-designed Communicative-based Instructional Aids’ or ‘CCIAs’ refers to a teaching style which considers learners as a learning center, and teachers are as facilitators. In addition, the instructional aids employed in the classroom are designed to serve UTCC students’ needs in listening and speaking skills learning. The CCIAs include a course outline, contents for students, Power Points for teachers, audio-visual materials, a teaching guide booklet, a course calendar, a CCIAs evaluation form for teachers and detailed lesson plans stating the objectives, skills utilized (class activities), teaching materials, time required, lesson procedures, assessments, and suggested follow-ups. The CCIAs are well-organized in a package with the details on its front cover so it is user-friendly and practical instructional aids for teachers.



The CCIAs

2. ‘The Traditional or Classic Approach using a Commercial Textbook’ in this study refers to the teaching style which a teacher uses a selected commercial textbook and its instructional materials in class based on a traditional style. This traditional style can be defined as the teaching style that the teacher leads the classroom, the teaching focus is on grammatical correctness, the teacher is the one who corrects the grammatical points for the students, and the students memorize all the grammatical judgments after class. Therefore grammatical awareness is considered to be an important aspect in class, and the classroom activities are in control of the teacher in a friendly atmosphere.

3. ‘The Ratio Change’ is the different background of English of the control group and the treatment group analyzed from their grade results of the pre-requisite course of the experiment one. The grade results were analyzed by comparing all grade result levels ranging from A, B<sup>+</sup>, B, C<sup>+</sup>, C, D<sup>+</sup>, and D in order to statistically calculate for the difference of the average percentage. From the statistical analysis, the difference of the average is 18.83%. Therefore the 18.83 percent difference was employed as the additional percentage in statistical analysis for the treatment group in every aspect.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design:**

This study was primarily designed to make the comparison of the control and the treatment groups reliable in terms of the controlled variables including the equivalent background of English, the maximization of teaching procedures based on the two teaching styles, the selected classrooms, the assigned teacher, the contents, and the assessments employed in the study. The details are as follows:

1. Equivalent background of English - The variable in terms of students’ background of English could not be controlled because the groups of students were divided primarily by using the overall scores they got when having the entrance examination. However, to make the statistical analysis of this study reliable, the ratio change – the difference of the background of English for Communication 3, the pre-requisite course of English for Communication 4, between the control and the treatment groups – was employed as a means of the statistical analysis.

2. The selected classrooms - The two classrooms for this study were selected equivalently in terms of size, periods of teaching, facilities, light etc..

3. The assigned teacher - Mr. Mark Spencer was assigned to be the only teacher of the two groups.

4. The maximization of teaching methods based on the two teaching styles - The control group was taught by using a commercial textbook and its instructional materials based on the Traditional or Classic Approach, and the treatment group was taught by using the CCAs based on the Communicative Approach. The detailed teaching methods of the two groups were presented in the lesson plans prepared by the research for the treatment group and by Mr. Spencer for the control group to cover the topics assigned to teach and to achieve the same key performance objectives. The assigned topics which are considered to be important for their future career are Gathering Information for Job Interview, Mock Interview, and Oral Presentation. Each lesson plan includes lesson objectives, skills utilized (class activities), teaching materials, time required, lesson procedures, lesson assessments, and suggested follow-ups. The details in each aspect of the lesson plan were the same. However, the skilled utilized such as group discussion, listening, etc. have to be based on specific approach set for each group. Also, the teaching materials for the control group were from the selected commercial textbook, whereas those for the treatment group were from CCAs. In terms

of lesson procedure, Mr. Spencer was allowed to create his own teaching steps freely with the focus on teaching for grammatical accuracy in a friendly classroom atmosphere, while the teaching steps for the treatment group were designed to encourage the students to use English without thinking much seriously on grammatical errors, and Mr. Spencer's roles in this group was as a classroom facilitator.

5. The assessments -To make the assessments reliable, the test equivalency, the attendance criteria, and the group work assignments of the two groups were strictly controlled as follows:

- The listening and speaking tests - The same listening and speaking test sets employed with the two groups are the script for the 10-per cent listening test, the two versions of the listening test exam paper, the audio CD for the listening test, the list of job interview questions for the 10-per cent speaking test, and the mock interview evaluation form.

- The attendance criteria - The same criteria in attendance check which is checking students' presence in class for not less than 80% of the total course attendance was used.

- The group work assignments - The topics assigned as students' group work in the two groups were the same

which are selecting a suitable job based on job ad listening techniques studied in class and making a group presentation about a selected company in Thailand using the presentation expressions studied .

#### **Data Collection:**

The data collected for this study are 1) the students' grade results and some personal information such as sex, age, locations and types of their secondary schools which were kept as a primary record and 2) four assessment tasks - including listening and speaking tests, one assignment, and class attendance check. The test scores were submitted by the instructor to the researcher after each test was conducted.

#### **Data Analysis:**

The data collected in this study was analyzed by using T-test model analysis, Chi-square Test, and Contingency Coefficient Test. The tests were employed to determine the effects of the listening and speaking test

scores and gender, types of secondary school, age, and locations of secondary school of the control group and the treatment group. The standard for significance in this study is  $p < 0.05$  or  $0.10$ .

#### **Research Outcomes**

The research outcomes in Table 1 revealed the average grade results of English for Communication 3 earned by the two groups which represented the average of the control group (2.65%) was higher than that of the treatment group (2.23%). This accounted for the ratio change (the different background of English) of 18.83 percent. As a result, it could be concluded that the control group's background of English was significant higher than the treatment's. Therefore, the control group's superior English background of 18.83 percent was used as a percentage compensation for the statistical analysis of the treatment group in this study.



**Table 1** The Ratio Change (The Different Background of English)

Grade Results of English for Communication 3	Ratio Change (%)	
	The Control Group	The Treatment Group
A	11.8	3.9
B+	11.8	3.9
B	23.5	11.5
C+	20.6	30.8
C	14.7	26.9
D+	14.7	11.5
D	2.9	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Average	2.65	2.23
Ratio Change (%)	118.83	100.00
Std. Deviation	0.8306	0.7380
T-test	2.018	
P-value	0.048	
Meaning	<b>Significance</b>	

\*Significance level at 0.05

Table 2 indicated the means gained from the speaking test of English for Communication 4 in the control group was 9.0, while in the treatment group was 8.9. Even though the figures in the control group were a little higher than in the treatment one, the T-test value (1.274) and P-value (0.214) showed no statistical significance. Table 2 also indicated that the means gained from the listening test of English for Communication 4 in the control group was

8.8, while in the treatment group was 8.6. Even though the figures in the control group were a little higher than in the treatment one, the T-test value (1.642) and P-value (0.107) showed no statistical significance. However, when the ratio change was considered, it could be claimed that the improvement in listening and speaking skills of the treatment group was higher than the control group.

**Table 2** The Comparison of Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Test, and P-Value of the Scores

Group	Dependent	Statistics				
		Mean	Std. Dev.	T-test	P-value	Meaning
The Control Group	Eng 4 Speaking	9.0	0.250	1.274	0.214	Non-significance
The Treatment Group	Test Scores	8.9	0.489			
The Control Group	Eng 4 Listening	8.8	0.561	1.642	0.107	Non-significance
The Treatment Group	Test Scores	8.6	0.359			

In Mr. Mark Spencer’s point of view expressed in the interview (about his role as a teacher for the treatment and the control groups of the study), the employment of the CCIAs in class could help improve UTCC students’ English listening and speaking skills significantly. Mr. Spencer added that since the CCIAs were designed from their needs, the students found it interesting for them to be involved in classroom activities. Furthermore, without much grammatical accuracy, they were brave enough to speak English with their friends and their teacher in class.

While as the teacher of the control group, Mr. Spencer was assigned to use a commercial textbook based on the Traditional or Classic Approach, and the textbook were required to cover the same topics and to achieve the same key performance objectives as mentioned in the previous teaching approach. However, he was allowed to choose a commercial textbook (intermediate level) freely to serve the topics and the objective set. The

classroom activities were as suggested in the teacher’s guidebook as well as the teaching materials. Mr. Spencer played an important role in class and the classroom activities were in his control. Even though students’ grammatical mistakes were taken seriously by the teacher, the classroom atmosphere was still friendly. Based on the interview, Mr. Spencer quite agreed that the student’s proficiency in terms of listening and speaking wasn’t improved much. The reason for this is partly because of their being afraid of making grammatical mistakes when speaking.

To reflect how CCIAs played much important role in the students’ listening and speaking proficiency, it is necessary for the researcher not to report only the research outcomes, but also to present the conceptual framework in designing the CCIAs and the benefits when compared to the other teaching approach as well.

The conceptual framework in designing the CCIAs - The design was from the

concept of how to facilitate teacher roles in classroom and to encourage students to be involved in an English class willingly and happily, and more importantly, how to make teaching equivalent for all learners.

Stimulated by a lot of students' feedbacks about nonequivalent teaching materials and styles which resulted in their unfair grade results, the researcher, as a coordinator of English for Communication 4 course at that time, realized that to solve the problem, detailed teaching preparation such as lesson plans, audio-visual instructional materials, assessments, contents for students and teachers, criteria for tests, assignments and class attendance check were needed in order to provide student the same teaching standard. However, with the limitation of time available, the idea of inviting all instructors of the course to design the course teaching and evaluation were not reached. Therefore, the researcher designed the CCIAs to serve UTCC students' needs, Business Administration students in particular.

The benefits of the CCIAs when compared to the other teaching approach - With a careful selection of contents, audio-visual materials production, and suitable criteria for listening and speaking test as well as criteria for assignments, and class attendance check to meet UTCC students'

needs of learning English, the CCIAs became a better tools for improving UTCC students' listening and speaking skills. Moreover, some advice and suggestions gathered from the research advisors and the teachers employed the CCIAs in a trial period to improve the instructional aids could make the CCIAs well-accepted as a means to improve UTCC students' listening and speaking proficiency. In brief, the custom-designed instructional aids to meet UTCC students' needs in learning English together with the communicative-based design are the advantageous aspects in employing the CCIAs in classroom. Moreover, with a similar environment and students' background of English, this study is beneficial for learning and teaching English in other Thai private universities as well.

## Discussions

Based on the statistical results stated in the research findings section, the researcher developed the following discussions to match the sequences of the research hypotheses as follows:

*"If listening and speaking proficiency is related to appropriate instructional material usage, then teaching the two skills using the 'CCIAs' based on the Communicative Approach will result in*

*students’ higher learning proficiency when compared to teaching the two skills using a commercial textbook and its instructional materials based on the Traditional or Classic Approach.”*

Table 2 showed that the means of the listening and speaking test scores earned by the control group and the treatment group were not different. However, it was proved significantly that the English background of the control group was higher than the treatment group (See Table 1). Therefore, even the means revealed non-significance, the improvement in listening and speaking skills of the treatment group through the use of the CCIAs could be claimed to be higher than the control group.

Earlier researchers found the results supporting the idea of language learning proficiency through the use of the creative instructional materials based on a communicative approach. In his study on “An evaluative study of the relationship between instructional differences and learning outcomes: A survey-based and experimental study of a more communicative approach to language teaching in a traditional setting,” Tuncel (2006: 132-152) found out that the addition of a communicative element led to higher student achievement in measuring their test scores, and later in their specialist studies. On the contrary,

Jones (1992: 178-190) concluded in his study on “Comparison of Instructional Strategies for Teaching English in a Taiwan College: Traditional Chinese Approach VS. Natural Language Approach” that students’ oral skill tended to improve through the use of natural method (a communicative approach) while students’ writing skill was improved by the Traditional Chinese Approach.

As a teacher of the control and the treatment groups, Mr. Spencer strongly agreed that the ‘CCIAs’ could be employed as all-in-one instructional aids to help improve students’ listening and speaking skills effectively. He, however, believed that careful selection of contents from different commercial textbooks and supplementary teaching materials such as CDs, cassettes, etc could also possibly be a means to motivate language learners. This was supported by the positive response of the control group and the treatment group to the questionnaire about the satisfaction of the contents and the instructional materials employed in the study. Therefore, further studies should be focused on the careful selection of the contents from different commercial textbooks and the use of the appropriate supplementary teaching materials as a means to solve language learning problems. In addition, other aspects such as gender, age, school locations, and

types of schools should be considered as interesting factors affecting language learning.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Teaching listening and speaking skills through the use of the CCIAAs was pointed out in this study to be as a vital tool to help the students who had lower English background improve themselves proficiently. It will be beneficial if future researches focusing on teaching reading and writing skills through the use of certain creative sets of instructional materials are conducted. Moreover, the comparison of teaching approaches that are appropriate for teaching the two skills should be considered as well.

## References

- Felder, Richard M., and Henriques, Eunice R. 1995. "Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education." **Foreign Language** 28, 1: 21-31.
- Jones, Nathan Brian. 1992. "Comparison of Instructional Strategies for Teaching English in a Taiwan College: Traditional Chinese Approach VS. Natural Language Approach." Educational Doctoral Dissertation, Language and Literature, School of Education, Washington State University.
- Larsen-Freeman, Diane. 2000. **Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching**. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rao, Zhenhui. 1996. "Reconciling Communicative Approaches to the Teaching of English with Traditional Chinese Methods." **Research in the Teaching of English** 30, 4: 458-471.
- Sato, Kazuyoshi., and Kleinsasser, Robert C. 1999. "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Practical Understandings." **The Modern Language Journal** 83: 494-517.
- Savignon, Sandra J. 1991. "Communicative Language Teaching: State of the Art." **TESOL Quarterly** 25, 2: 261-277.
- Schmeck, Ronald R. 1988. **Learning Strategies and learning Styles**. New York: Plenum Press. Cited in Felder, Richard M., and Henriques, Eunice R. 1995. "Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education." **Foreign Language** 28, 1: 21-31.
- Taylor, Barry P. 1983. "Teaching ESL: Incorporating a Communicative, Student-centered Component." **TESOL Quarterly** 17, 1: 70-89.
- Tuncel, Ediz. 2006. "An Evaluative Study of the Relationship between Instructional Differences and Learning Outcomes: A Survey-based and Experimental Study of a More Communicative Approach to

Language Teaching in a Traditional  
Setting.” Doctoral Dissertation,

Department of Language and  
Linguistics, University of Essex.



**Preeyanuch (Pawanarith) Chanprasert** received her Master’s Degree in Education (English Major) from Srinakarintaraviroj (Prasarnmitre) University. She is currently working as a lecturer in the School of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. She is responsible for teaching English for Communication courses offered to second-year students of all UTCC faculties. Audio-visual instructional materials and e-learning course design and development are her main interests.