



Improvements in Thai Students' Learning of English Language through a Sequenced Model Course: A Case Study of English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA) and Thai Music Performance Management (TMPM) Courses *

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Abstract

This paper presents an application of a sequenced model course designed to improve the ability to learn English through studying this language in the context of English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA) and Thai Music Performance Management (TMPM) courses. The population comprises of the 45 undergraduate students majoring in Thai Music at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, all of whom were registered for both the English Communication for TMPA and TMPM courses during the second semester of the 2014 academic year. The instruments used in the research were lesson plans, learning materials in each learning unit of teachings and learning materials, and integrated tasks or assignments in both subjects on interpreting data on the basis of mean scores and standard deviations. In terms of the English language skills and knowledge acquired through the two courses, based on an evaluation of the four assignments integrated into the two courses, the students received a mean score of 86.22 (S.D. at 0.42). This result clearly indicates that the students' abilities and language skills improved on all the tasks evaluated—which included communication, teamwork, and writing.

Keywords: English, Learning ability, Sequenced model course, English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA), Thai Music Performance Management (TMPM), Integrated course, English language learning

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Introduction

At the end of 2015, ten ASEAN nations (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) agreed to establish the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) with the defining goal of achieving regional economic integration (ASEAN Economic Community, 2015). The AEC envisions itself as a potentially competitive economic region that is based on a single market and wholly integrated into the global economy. The AEC will focus on cooperation across its member countries with a focus on integrating industries throughout the region in an effort to promote regional sourcing. In particular, the cultural tourism industry is of great importance to the AEC. It is, therefore, essential to strongly promote efforts to learn the English language as which the principal universal language through which to communicate both across the AEC and worldwide.

At present, not only is English playing an important role in Thailand, but it is also the most important language for working in the AEC and around the world. Based on experience teaching English and working more generally in arts and cultural and arts contexts involving Thai music students, the author has found that that students in these fields have only limited English skills regard. It may be that the students show limitations in their field as they have been taught English without a context and/or without drawing on their knowledge background to support their English learning. Also, grammar and usage are taught separately, and the four broad skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are taught in ways the fail to engage with real-world contexts. In addition, the content taught is generally not related to the curriculum. Nor does the content connect with the learners' focal studies-i.e., the content used in teaching English tends not to have any relevance to the learners' intended professions. Thus, most students express a negative attitude toward learning English.

However, courses designed to teach English should focus on the development of language skills; they should also pursue a content-based approach that connects to the rest of the curriculum to support the rapid and meaningful acquisition of the language. MacWhinney (2004) states, to start with the positive aspects, the main benefit of learning a foreign language with meaningful context and connected to both other subjects and learner experiences, the learners can make use of the natural process of acquiring the language. According to Zuzana Strakova (2014) suggests most definitions of language acquisition describe learners can acquire the language to which they are exposed in sufficient quality and quantity without the need to systematize the knowledge about the language. Also, the process of language acquisition is as a process in

which learners master facts, rules or skills subconsciously, unaware of the reception process and without the connection to formal instruction. According to Krashen (1982) defines language acquisition, however, becomes reality on condition that learners are exposed to the target language sufficiently, learners need to see and hear sufficient amount of examples so that their brain can systemize language samples and derive the rules of how something is used and in what circumstances. That is definitely true about both first and second/foreign language acquisition. While conditions for first language acquisition are clearly and easily imaginable, the conditions, for foreign language acquisition are more difficult for teachers to depict. According to Nithitwaraphakun (2010), Bennett (1991), and Lake (2010), integration of this nature can support efforts to create the scope of knowledge and experiences necessary to address real-life situations by integrating subject areas so that they inform and enrich each other particularly it can support acquisition of the target language in the classroom. In another study by H. Sezgi Sarac (2014), in English teaching at tertiary education especially the teaching of 'speaking and listening' skills is fostered in an integrated way, and the teaching of writing and problem solving skills are also the strengths of using this environment in ELT. Lightbown & Spada (2006) discuss about younger students may be better when it comes to acquiring pronunciation, but, otherwise, they are perfectly able to reach high levels of proficiency in a foreign language when they are taught in an integrated way. However, based on the researcher's teaching experiences, grammar, structure, and language usage are separately taught. Teaching skills of the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is not integrated to the real situation context. In addition, the content learned has not related to the curriculum and is not consistent with learners' background knowledge they would apply in their future professions. Thus, most students have negative attitudes on learning English.

In 2014, the author served on a committee charged with revising the curriculum for the Thai music program at Phranakhon Rajabhat University and study into missions of all Rajabhat Universities in Thailand found that the distinctive mission is to preserve arts and cultural heritage and promote and inherit local wisdom both national and international. The committee members agreed based on the scope of the study on the fundamental content of and the teaching approaches for the English communication for TMPA and TPM courses. In fact, the committee found that the curriculum for each of these courses had already been designed to benefit learners given that the students took both courses were in a single semester.

Thai music students study English communication for the TMPA and TPM courses during the same semester of their sophomore year. And, in 2014, the year during which the present study was conducted,



the author was assigned to teach the English communication for TMPA course. The author was well qualified to do so, as he/she had experience teaching English based on content and experience conducting research related to the concentrated language encounter approach. Further, the author had a strong background to draw on for this study as she had developed the course sequence for the English communication for TMPA and the English for TMPM courses.

In reference to the guidelines pertaining to developing curriculums and to the problems that arise in these endeavors, the author investigated the English ability of Thai music students who had completed four units of sequenced courses in English communication for TMPA and TMPM with the goal of comparing the results in order to establish whether these courses could be rendered more effective in terms of helping the students improve their language skills. In addition, a further goal is to focus on content that the students will be able to apply in their careers, as content of this nature would promote a positive attitude toward learning English.

Based on the integrated instruction, Fogarty classified the integration into 3 groups with 10 models. However, the sequenced model is selected to suitable for the nature and context of the two subjects. The sequenced model views the curriculum through eyeglasses: the lenses are separate but connected by a common frame. Although topics or units are taught separately, they are rearranged and sequenced to provide a broad framework for related concepts.

The sequenced model is conducted by a minimum of two teachers who teach different subjects but make the lesson plans together. They would focus on the thematic instruction. The task assigned would be different or similar but had to be evaluated by both of them. This type of learning can provide a connection between learning units or interdisciplinary topics, thereby benefiting both teachers and learners. This helps teaching and learning rearrange easier. However, both teachers need to discuss and share ideas on what content should be taught and how to arrange the sequence of teaching content or learning units, who would lead or follow, what subject is regarded as the core based on the following example given by Fogarty (2009).

Lecturers teaching different majors in the same year can team up for curriculum design, lesson plans, and evaluations. The themes of teaching process can be described as follows:

1. Set the themes
2. Design the integrated curriculum
3. Design the teaching and learning

For instance, a history teacher and a literature teacher could coincide the content of two subjects related or happening in the same period. This helps students to visualize and understand how the contents are related in the big picture. The advantages of the model are that it is suitable for the class which one teacher has to teach many subjects, and it is flexible and easy to integrate other content across disciplines.

However, the limitation of the model is that it is time-consuming in terms of mutual planning and flexible teaching schedules.

According to the problems and guidelines of developing curriculums, the researcher is interested in developing the sequenced model of the subjects *English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)* and *Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM)* to enhance students' language skills more effectively. Also, they can apply the knowledge in their future professions and this could help them create positive attitudes toward learning English.

Purposes of the Study

1. Develop the sequenced model of the subjects English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA) and Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM).
2. Evaluate the sequenced model in the subjects English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA) and Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM).

Scope of the Study

1. Subjects: students majoring in Thai Music of Phranakorn Rajabhat University
2. Course design

The development of the sequenced model of the subjects *English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)* and *Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM)* was conducted by two researchers studying and designing learning units used in both subjects. Then, it was tried out with the subjects. The researcher taught *English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)* and the co-researcher taught *Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM)* with the same subjects by assigning the same task, criteria, and evaluation.

For instance, *English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)* 1: Unit 1 Guess! How many types of Thai music ensembles are there?



Task: Write a brochure Identify and find out about the types of Thai music ensembles and the instruments used in each.

Evaluation: Evaluate based on the content or skills of each unit.

In addition, the researcher and co-researcher share ideas and suggestions throughout the study.

3. Variables

3.1 Independent Variables: the teaching and learning the sequenced model of the subject *English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)* and *Thai Music Performances Management (TMPM)*, designed by the researcher

3.2 Dependent Variables

3.2.1 Undergraduate Thai Music-majoring students' opinions on the instruction of the sequenced model

3.2.2 Achievement of studying *Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts (TMPA)*, integrated with the sequenced model

Methodology

In order to help Thai students develop their English-language skills via the English Communication for TMPA and TMPM courses, a sequenced model was selected. The sequenced model views the curriculum through eyeglasses: the lenses are separate but connected within a single frame. Although the topics or units are taught separately, they are rearranged and sequenced to provide a broad framework for related concepts and are taught at the parallel sessions (Eisen, 2000; Fogarty, 1991).

Subjects and development

The sample comprised 45 students majoring in Thai music in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Phranakhon Rajabhat University who were enrolled in the English Communication for TMPA and TMPM courses. The two courses were developed via a research and development (R&D) process that consisted of two major steps as follows:

Step 1: Create and experiment with a unit on English Communication for TMPA and TMPM using a sequenced model as follows:

- Implement the sequenced model for English Communication for TMPA and TMPM by studying articles, textbooks, academic articles, and other materials available on websites. Then, determine which units are required to create the lesson plans of each unit. Plan the tasks or assignments that the students

should complete in each unit. The tasks or assignments in each course were developed and graded by the author. Finally, the data were analyzed and presented via a descriptive method.

- Evaluate the quality of the instrument used in the sequenced model for both English Communication for TMPA and TPM, including lesson plans, materials in the units of learning, the assignment plan, and the evaluation criteria before experimenting with the model in the classroom. In this study, the course evaluators were instructors with considerable experience teaching both English Communication for TMPA and TPM. Purposive random sampling was used to evaluate the statistical instruments used for content analysis and frequency finding. Some aspects were modified as a direct result of the evaluators' suggestions, and the data were presented via a descriptive method.

- Even though the two teachers responsible for the two courses planned the two courses according to a sequenced model, this research focuses only on the results of teaching English Communication for TMPA in the context whereby it was taught in parallel with TPM. That is, the results from TPM taught in parallel with English Communication for TMPA course are not considered. The author experimented with the sequenced model with undergraduate students majoring in Thai music in the academic year 2014. In addition, the author taught the sequenced model and shared ideas and suggestions regarding this model throughout the study.

Step 2: Evaluate the usage of the sequenced model course. That is, the students enrolled in the English Communication for TMPA course in the second semester of the academic year 2014 were taught using the sequenced model course, which was evaluated in the following ways:

- Evaluate students' achievement in using English Communication for TMPA and TPM.
- Evaluate the shared tasks or assignments of the two courses, i.e., English Communication for TMPA and TPM, based on the rubric set. The author presented the evaluation results only in terms of the knowledge and skills of English Communication for TMPA.

Research Instruments

- The units of learning, the assignment plan, and the assessment rubrics or criteria for the sequenced model course English Communication for TMPA and TPM was created and developed by the author.

- Teaching materials for the English Communication for TMPA were based on the units of learning in the sequenced model course, English Communication for TMPA and TPM, which included lesson plans, exercises, an answer sheet, and an answer key all created and developed by the author.



The assignment plan and assessment criteria shared in the sequenced model or both courses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Assignments and shared assessment rubrics or criteria of the two courses.

Assignments/ Content	Assignments in TMPM	Assignments in English Communication for TMPA	Assessment Rubrics
1st Assignment: Guess! How many types of Thai music ensembles are there?	Study information about the history of Thai music, types of Thai music bands, and the instruments played in each. The finished work must be in the form of a brochure.	Write a brochure (Identify and learn about the types of Thai music ensembles and the instruments played in each). Describe the characteristics of each type of ensemble. Create a brochure in English that includes information you learned from your research.)	Brochure Writing Scoring Rubric – Organization – Ideas Required Elements – Conventions – Graphics
(Use knowledge learned in weeks 1–6.) Due date: Week 7			
2nd Assignment: Let's find out the differences between Thai and Western music.	Research, study, and analyze data related to the main characteristics of and the differences between Thai and Western music. Finished work should be in the form of a presentation. Due Date: In class. (The evaluation will be performed during student presentations in the English Communication for Thai Music Performance course in week 12.)	Write about and present on the differences between Thai and Western music.	Presentation Scoring Rubric – Opening (Introduction) – Content – Closing (Conclusion)
3rd Assignment: It's time to perform on the stage!	The students are divided into groups of three, and each group presents information about an instrument of their own choice. Then, each group demonstrates how to play the chosen instrument. (File VDO (Using knowledge from weeks 12 and 13) Due Date: File VDO of demonstration must be submitted in week 14. (This assignment is also evaluated for the English Communication for Thai Music Performing Arts course.)	Write a presentation script on one musical instrument, describe its characteristics, and also demonstrate how to play it.	Rubric for English presentation – Introduction – Content – Conclusion
4th Assignment: Experience Thai music performances accompanied with Thai dance.	Put on a Thai music performance on stage in front of an international audience and present information in the form of a traditional Thai music band performance. Due Date: A VDO recording of the event must be submitted in week 15. (This assignment is also evaluated for the English Communication for TMPA course.)	Write a script and dialogue for the purpose of presenting a stage show on TMPA.	Give an English- language presentation on Thai music on stage. – Describe Thai music reactivities – Pronunciation, accent, and stress – Structural grammar – Fluency

Research Instrument Preparation

The following procedures were used to prepare the study instruments:

1. The units of the sequenced course, assignment descriptions, and assessment rubrics/criteria for the sequenced model course for English Communication for TMPA and TMPM were created as follows:

- The author studied the details of the course descriptions for English Communication for TMPA and TMPM as well as the central concepts of and details pertaining to the unit designs from credible sources.

- The author brainstormed, planned the units, and designed learning activities including the assignments with descriptions and the criteria ready to use for the English Communication for TMPA and TMPM courses. The author ensured that the contents advanced each course's content-learning-based and communicative purposes.

- The author provided the sequenced units, assignment descriptions, and criteria for the assignments for the English Communication for TMPA and TMPM courses to experts in related fields for review. The author then considered the feedback received and improved the instruments accordingly before using them in the classroom.

2. The teaching materials for English Communication for TMPA that connect with the sequenced subjects of English Communication for TMPA and TMPM consisted of lesson plans, exercises, an answer sheet, and an answer key-all of which were created and developed by the author. Some of the most important points pertaining to the author's preparation of the teaching materials are as follows:

- The author designed and created a learning activity plan and unit assessment rubrics in alignment with content-learning-based and communicative purposes.

- The author ensured the appropriateness of the learning activity plan by seeking feedback from experts in related fields and incorporating that feedback into the plan before using it in the classroom.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed according to two main factors as follows:

- The students' learning of English Communication for TMPA and TMPM was analyzed and evaluated on the basis of two criteria. The first criterion was overall knowledge gained from the subjects; 50% of all the students should meet this criterion. The second criterion was the number of students who had passed the overall knowledge criteria; 80% of all the students considered the study's population. A statistical calculation was used to produce the percentage.



● The result of assignments focused on English Communication for TMPA and TMPM were analyzed and evaluated on the basis of the criterion of knowledge skills pertaining to English Communication for TMPA. Statistical calculations were used to produce the mean and the standard deviation.

Results

The findings from the tasks or assignments used as a basis for evaluating both English Communication for TMPA and TMPM were based on the rubric set and graded by the author. However, the results are presented only in terms of the students' knowledge and skills in regard to the subject of English Communication for TMPA.

Table 2: Total and mean, expressed as a percentage and standard deviation from the evaluation of the assignments from both courses relating to skills and content taught in the English Communication for TMPA.

Performance/Content	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
1st Assignment: Guess! How many types of Thai music ensembles are there?	30	17.21	0.38
2nd Assignment: Let's find out the differences between Thai and Western music.	30	16.49	0.29
3rd Assignment: It's time to perform on stage!	20	28.74	0.53
4th Assignment: Experience Thai music accompanied by Thai dance	20	23.98	0.33
Total	100	86.22	0.42

As shown in Table 2, the average score of the students received on the four assignments is 86.22. The standard deviation is 0.42, which means that all the students received a very good score on each assignment.

As shown in Table 3, the assignments in the sequenced model course, English Communication for TMPA and TMPM, included content and activities that reflect the kind of English used in real-life situations, which students will have to put into practice in their careers. Often, students of classical Thai music travel abroad to give performances of Thai arts and culture, especially traditional Thai music and other traditional performing arts. Sometimes, they perform in front of international guests who are visiting Thailand. The teaching and learning activities for the sequenced model course are arranged in order from easiest to the most difficult. The activities are designed to connected with what the students will do in their careers, for example, producing English-language pamphlets to present information about Thai musical instruments and classical

Thai music or presenting information in English about traditional Thai music bands and the main characteristics of classical Thai music before a performance on stage. Therefore, the students are given opportunities to practice expressing themselves in English according to various work situations. Activities, assignments (both individual, pair, and group work) in these courses help the students to gain knowledge about and an understanding of systems and procedures in their work, and most of all, how to use English in their work, especially in regard to speaking English correctly in work situations, as well as learning etiquette among performers, as representatives of Thai's unique culture.

Table 3: Evaluation results of the shared assignments of both courses with focus on the scope of the skills and knowledge of English Communication for Thai Music Performances.

Assignment No./Content	Assignment	Evaluative Criteria	Principal Learning Outcomes	Additional Learning Outcomes
1st Assignment: Guess! How many types of Thai music ensembles are there?	Write a brochure Identify and find out about the types of Thai music ensembles and the instruments used in each.	Brochure Writing Scoring Rubric – Organization – Ideas – Required Elements – Conventions – Graphics	– The students were skillful at administration. They planned the task performance well. – The students showed creativity in designing the brochure. – The students used the knowledge they acquired to design and develop the brochure appropriately.	– The students showed more understanding of the lesson and were capable of applying their knowledge to produce the brochure in an efficient way.
2nd Assignment: Let's find out the differences between Thai and Western music.	Write and present about the differences of Thai music and Western music.	Presentation Scoring Rubric – Opening (Introduction) – Content – Closing (Conclusion)	– The students engaged in study and research and analyzed the material independently in order to identify differences between Thai and Western music. – The students wrote scripts in English in line with accepted English presentation formats. – The students spoke correct English in their presentations.	– The applied evaluative criteria and method helped the students to improve their understanding of the subject matter. The students were able to determine correct ways to use English in their presentations.



Table 3 (Continue)

Assignment No./Content	Assignment	Evaluative Criteria	Principal Learning Outcomes	Additional Learning Outcomes
3rd Assignment: It's time to perform on the stage!	Write a presentation script about a musical instrument, describe the characteristics of the instrument and demonstrate how to play it.	Rubric for English presentations – Introduction – Content – Conclusion	– The students were able to give basic information about a Thai musical instrument of their choice in a competent way and describe its features in English. – The students demonstrated appropriate presentation skills. – The students spoke correct English in their presentations	– The activities and assignments helped the students to become more skillful at comprehending others' opinions and at practicing skills relating to information and presentation.
4th Assignment: Experience Thai music performances accompanied with Thai dance	Write a script and dialogue to present for a stage show on TMPA.	Present in English on Thai music on the stage. – Describe how Thai music is created. – Pronunciation, voice accent, and stress – Structural grammar – Fluency	– The students correctly described the musical instruments played in the performances of Thai music pieces on stage. – The students used English to articulate and explain on stage ensemble performances in front of an audience.	– The activities and assignments increased the students' interest in and their development of English communication skills. – The students became proud and confident in themselves as individuals with knowledge and competence in communicating in English.

Conclusion

The findings from teaching the sequenced course for English Communication for TMPA and TMPM at Phranakhon Rajabhat University are presented in this paper. The tasks or assignments evaluation scores of the two subjects, English Communication for TMPA and TMPM are based on the rubrics set. The author presented the evaluation results only in terms of the knowledge and skills pertaining to English Communication for Thai music performances. On the four tasks, in the sequenced course, the students mean score was 86.22 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.42. The results from the evaluation of the tasks or assignments indicated that all the students performed at a high level. Their

results suggest that the students significantly improved their ability and skills relevant to each task in regard to writing, communication, and teamwork. In addition, the students gained more rapid English understanding in the learning content.

Discussion

Based on the present study, it is reasonable to suggest that teachers play an important role in sequenced model courses, as the respondents or experts agreed that effective teachers are those who work with students via learning activities, pay attention to them informally, and provide opportunities for students to express their opinions. An approach of this nature can make learning more interesting, and in addition students engage more when the teacher finds ways to make classes entertaining. Thus, the teacher's job encompasses the role of facilitator. Students should be consulted when there are problems through learning activities, which can foster their success both in terms of their educational outcomes.

This study focuses on evaluations of the tasks or assignment used to teach two subjects, English Communication for TMPA and TMPM. It is important for the structure of a sequenced model course to focus on students' potential for development. A good evaluation of an assignment requires clear and systematic criteria appropriate to the students' skill level and to the subject content. In this regard, appropriate methods to use include recording the mistakes that the students make during an activity and providing feedback when the activity is over. It is not advisable to correct mistakes during the activity because doing so may cause students to lose confidence. During lectures and activities, teachers should positively reinforce the students' efforts by, for example, giving compliments when a student does well on an activity or completes an assignment to a high standard. These students can act as good examples for other students.

According to the results of this study, a sequenced model course constitutes an effective way to arrange learning activities. Such models can provide benefits for the teachers, the students, and the institution. One of the distinctive benefits of the sequenced model course is that this structure can be used to help students gain more knowledge pertinent to the subjects they are studying and to facilitate effective transfer of learning. This means that the knowledge the student already have can be integrated with new knowledge acquired in the current course, thus fostering fast and joyful learning and the development of a body of knowledge that can be applied to everyday life and future work. The benefits to the teachers include opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience, to fully use their skills and abilities, and to build good relationships between the teachers and



between the teacher and students. Consequently, this leads to cooperation among the teachers and different work units of the institution. It also adds value to teaching and learning activities. The benefits that universities receive include academic strength and coordination between work units and the teachers at the university. Therefore, a sequenced model course should be used in a range of courses to improve the quality of educational outcomes.

From applying the sequenced courses, we found that the teachers of both subjects should regularly meet for discussion and exchange of opinions and advices. They should also make and adjust plans together, as well as finding solutions for problems in management or other problems that occurred during the course.

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