

Developing Creative Thinking through Constructivist Approach in an English Language Course for Grade 11 Students

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Abstract. This classroom action research aimed to: (1) develop linguistic creativity in the Fundamental English course using a Constructivist approach, with at least 70% of Grade 11 students achieving a minimum score of 70%; (2) investigate students' linguistic creativity and academic achievement after instruction through the Constructivist approach; and (3) examine students' satisfaction with this learning management model. The participants were 35 Grade 11 students from Class 5/1 at the Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University (Mo Din Daeng) during the second semester of the 2024 academic year. Research instruments included lesson plans based on the Constructivist approach, a linguistic creativity assessment, a learning achievement test (pre- and post-test), and a student satisfaction questionnaire. Data were analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The findings showed that students' linguistic creativity—fluency, flexibility, and originality—consistently increased across three action research cycles, with 71.43% of students meeting the set criterion in the final cycle. Academic achievement also improved, with mean scores increasing from 64.00% on the pre-test to 77.05% on the post-test. Additionally, students reported high overall satisfaction with the Constructivist learning approach. The results indicate that Constructivist-based learning management effectively enhances linguistic creativity, academic achievement, and student engagement in English language learning.

Keywords: Constructivist approach, language creativity, learning management, Fundamental English, Grade 11 students

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, life is characterized by rapid transitions, necessitating quick adaptation, problem-solving, and continuous development. Creative thinking skills are paramount in today's world and are a key goal of 21st-century learning management. This involves individuals creating new things, understanding, and viewing problems in novel ways. Such abilities are cultivated through education, practice, brainstorming, diverse thinking, selecting new options, and continuous improvement. This aligns with the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and its amendments (No. 2) B.E. 2545 (2002), Chapter 4, regarding Guidelines for Education Management, specifically in the learning process organization. Article 2 emphasizes the development of thinking skills,

management, coping with situations, and applying knowledge to prevent and solve problems. Article 3 mandates organizing activities that allow learners to gain real-world experience, practice hands-on skills, think critically, act effectively, foster a love for reading, and continuously seek knowledge. Article 4 highlights the integration of diverse knowledge areas in a balanced proportion, alongside instilling virtues, good values, and desirable characteristics across all subjects (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Creative thinking is a core component of linguistic creativity and language learning effectiveness. In this study, creative thinking is conceptualized based on Cropley's framework, which identifies key components of creativity as fluency, flexibility, and originality in idea generation (Cropley, 2001; Guilford, 1967). These components are also consistent with Torrance's (1966) view of creative thinking as the ability to generate multiple ideas, shift perspectives, and produce novel responses. In the context of English language learning, creative thinking enables learners to use language innovatively, adapt expressions to different communicative contexts, and convey meaning beyond memorized structures (Richards, 2013). Constructivist theorists such as Piaget (1973), Bruner (1966) and Vygotsky (1978) emphasize that creativity emerges through active engagement, social interaction, and meaningful problem-solving. When learners are encouraged to explore ideas, negotiate meaning, and reflect on their learning experiences, creative thinking and language development occur simultaneously. Therefore, integrating creative thinking within Constructivist learning environments is particularly effective for fostering linguistic creativity in English classrooms.

Learning foreign languages is critically important and necessary in daily life. It serves as a vital tool for communication, education, knowledge acquisition, and fostering an understanding of global cultures and perspectives. It helps learners develop a better understanding of themselves and others, comprehend linguistic and cultural differences, customs, traditions, and thought patterns, and effectively convey Thai thoughts and culture to the global community. Therefore, the ability to think is a crucial competency (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The goal of learning management within the Foreign Language Learning Area, specifically Fundamental English for Grade 11 students, aims to promote knowledge construction rather than mere transmission. This aligns with Constructivism, an innovative learning management approach that emphasizes the individual's appropriate construction of new knowledge, where the environment plays a crucial role in creating meaning within a real-world context (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). A key principle of Constructivism is that learning focuses on empowering learners to actively construct knowledge. The Satit KKU Innovator framework for Constructivism outlines six stages: 1) connecting prior knowledge with new knowledge, 2) stimulating cognitive conflict/curiosity and undertaking learning tasks, 3) constructing and seeking knowledge independently and expanding diverse ideas, 4) developing self and group understanding through reflection and knowledge synthesis, 5) creating creative and innovative products, and 6) developing an entrepreneurial mindset. Implementing this learning management approach will enable students to connect prior and new knowledge, practice learning tasks, construct and seek knowledge independently, expand diverse ideas, synthesize knowledge, and ultimately lead to the creation of creative and innovative products, further fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

Several interesting issues arise in English language classrooms, including a lack of student thinking, hands-on practice, participation, experience, reluctance to express themselves, and negative attitudes towards learning English. To enable learners to acquire knowledge, engage in practical application, and cultivate creativity, the researcher is interested in developing linguistic creativity using the Constructivism innovation. This aims to prepare students to be creative thinkers, capable of independently constructing and

seeking knowledge, and equipped with life skills to contribute to a better society in the future.

Objectives

1. To develop linguistic creativity in the Fundamental English subject for Grade 11 students using the Constructivist approach, with the goal of 70% of students achieving a minimum of 70% in academic performance.
2. To investigate linguistic creativity in the Fundamental English subject and the academic performance of Grade 11 students who receive learning management using the Constructivism approach.
3. To study students' satisfaction with learning management using the Constructivism approach.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research employs a Classroom Action Research design, utilizing a Constructivist approach to enhance linguistic creativity. This approach aims to promote student involvement in self-knowledge construction through direct experience and social interaction, foster critical thinking and real-life problem-solving skills, and sustainably develop linguistic creativity.

2.2 Research Participants

The target group consisted of 35 Grade 11 students from Class 5/1 at the Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University (Mo Din Daeng), who were studying in the second semester of the academic year 2024.

2.3 Research Instruments

The research instruments consist of two parts:

2.3.1 Instruments for Research Implementation

The primary instrument for research implementation consisted of English Fundamental course lesson plans designed for Grade 11 students based on the Constructivist approach. The lesson plans were organized into 10 learning units implemented over one semester. Each unit followed the Satit KKU Constructivist framework, which includes six stages: (1) connecting previous and new knowledge, (2) cognitive conflict and doing learning task, (3) exploring independently and constructing knowledge and exploring various ideas, (4) idea sharing and constructing group conclusion, (5) creating product and innovation, and (6) creating how to be an entrepreneur.

Learning activities included problem-based tasks, group discussions, role-plays, creative writing assignments, project-based learning, and peer presentations. Students were encouraged to explore authentic situations, generate multiple language responses, exchange ideas, and reflect on their learning processes. The teacher acted as a facilitator by guiding discussion, providing scaffolding, and offering feedback rather than direct instruction. These activities were designed to promote linguistic creativity, particularly fluency, flexibility, and originality in English language use.

2.3.2 Instruments for Data Collection and Reflection (Student Learning Assessment Tools)

To gather data and assess the impact of the Constructivist approach, several tools will be utilized: a Test of Linguistic Creativity will measure students' innovative language use, while a Learning Achievement Test (administered both pre- and post-instruction) will evaluate their academic progress. Additionally, a Learning Satisfaction Questionnaire will

gauge students' perceptions and contentment with the learning experiences facilitated by this teaching methodology.

2.4 Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in strict accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Given that all participants were students under the age of 18, formal ethical approval was meticulously sought and granted by the Center for Ethics in Human Research, Khon Kaen University before any data collection commenced. The research protocol was thoroughly reviewed to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being.

3. Results& Discussions

3.1 Achievement of Linguistic Creativity and Academic Performance Benchmarks

The evaluation of student achievement post-intervention reveals that the 70/70 success criteria were successfully met. As illustrated in Table 1, the number of students meeting the 70% proficiency threshold rose from 37.14% in Cycle 1 to 71.43% (25 out of 35 students) in Cycle 3.

Table 1: Summary of Students Achieving the 70% Proficiency Criterion Across Three Cycles (N=35)

Research Cycle	Number of Students Passing (Criterion $\geq 70\%$)	Percentage of Students	Class Average Score (%)	Target Status (70/70 Goal)
Cycle 1	13	37.14%	46.85%	Below Target
Cycle 2	17	48.57%	52.73%	Below Target
Cycle 3	25	71.43%	67.70%	Target Achieved

The data confirms a clear upward trajectory. While Cycle 1 scores were lower due to students' unfamiliarity with the Constructivist approach, iterative adjustments—specifically in Step 4 (Reflection) and Step 5 (Creative Production)—resulted in a significant breakthrough by the final cycle.

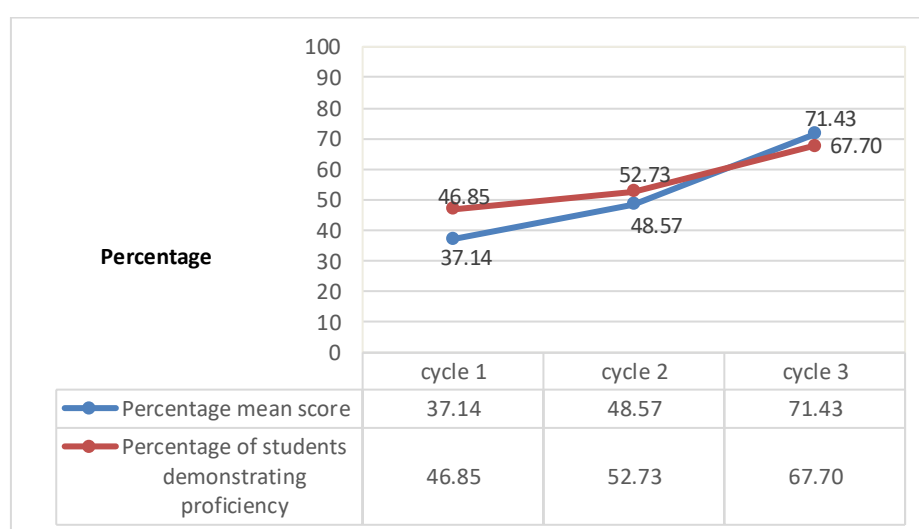


Figure 1 Percentage mean score and Percentage of students demonstrating proficiency

Figure 1 reveals that in Cycle 1, the average class score was 9.37 out of a possible 20, representing 46.85%. In this cycle, 13 out of 35 students (37.14%) met the passing criteria. This improved in Cycle 2, where the average class score rose to 15.82 out of 30, or 52.73%. The number of students meeting the criteria also increased to 17 out of 35 (48.57%). Finally, in Cycle 3, the average class score further increased to 20.31 out of 30, equivalent to 67.7%. At this stage, 25 out of 35 students (71.43%) met the criteria. In conclusion, both the average percentage scores and the percentage of students meeting the criteria increased with each successive cycle.

The observed increase in average scores and the passing rate across each cycle clearly indicate that the activities implemented under the Constructivist approach—which emphasizes hands-on learning, self-construction of knowledge, and collaborative reflection—had a significant impact on developing linguistic creativity. These findings are consistent with domestic research by Pimthaisong (2019) and Sonkhuntod & Prommuang (2023), who successfully applied Constructivist principles in the Thai EFL context. Furthermore, they align with international studies by Jones (2016) and Richards (2013), which argue that creative language use is best fostered through tasks that require learners to move beyond rote repetition toward functional and original communication, as suggested by the Cropley (2001) framework.

3.2 Analysis of Linguistic Creativity and Student Learning Outcomes

Beyond the "pass/fail" metrics, the investigation into the Constructivist-based management indicates a significant qualitative development in linguistic creativity and academic proficiency.

3.2.1 *Qualitative Growth in Linguistic Creativity Components*

The qualitative reflections across the three cycles illustrate how students moved through the stages of Functional Creativity (Cropley, 2001):

Fluency & Vocabulary Expansion: In Cycle 1 (Exploring Global Art), students initially relied on basic adjectives (e.g., amazing, beautiful). By Cycle 3 (Cooking & Health), fluency improved remarkably as students could generate diverse technical vocabulary such as sauté, dissolve, and cholesterol through "Hands-on" video-based learning. Moreover, they showed an increased ability to generate a wider range of vocabulary during brainstorming sessions.

Flexibility & Grammatical Sophistication: Students demonstrated increased flexibility in using complex structures. In Cycle 2, students struggled with parts of speech (nouns vs. verbs), but through teacher-led "Cognitive Conflict" and peer correction, they mastered If-Clauses and Causative structures (e.g., "We get the dough done"). Observations showed students moving beyond "textbook" phrases to adapt their language to different social contexts during role-plays.

Originality (Novelty): In final assignments, students demonstrated the ability to create unique metaphors and non-linear narratives in their writing.

The growth in originality was evident in the "Entrepreneurial" stage (Step 6). Students moved from simple sentence completion to creating unique recipes and realistic doctor-patient dialogues that reflected personal interests and real-world contexts

3.2.2 *Academic Performance and Learning Gains*

The impact of the Constructivist intervention is further validated by the comparison between pre-test and post-test scores, as shown in Table 2.

The data shows a gain score of 13.05% in overall academic performance. Notably, the Standard Deviation (S.D.) decreased from 6.76 to 6.14, indicating that the

Constructivist approach not only improved scores but also helped close the achievement gap, resulting in more consistent performance across the entire class.

Table 2: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Academic Achievement (N=35)

Assessment	Full Score	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Percentage(%)	(S.D.)
Pre-test	60	38.40	64.00%	6.76
Post-test	60	46.23	77.05%	6.14

3.3 Evaluation of Student Satisfaction with the Constructivist Approach

This section analyzes students' satisfaction with the learning management approach using Constructivism. A researcher-developed, 18-item Likert-scale questionnaire with five levels was used to collect data from all 35 students. The questionnaire assessed satisfaction across four dimensions: learning management, use of instructional media, teacher's personality, and assessment. The data were analyzed using mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.). The results are summarized below.

Table 3: Overall Student Satisfaction with Learning Management

Evaluation Item	Mean Score ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Interpretation
Learning Management	4.49	0.05	High
Use of Instructional Media	4.59	0.04	Highest
Teacher's Personality	4.82	0.06	Highest
Assessment	4.47	0.05	High
Overall Satisfaction	4.59	0.009	Highest

According to Table 3, Grade 11 students demonstrated overall satisfaction with the Constructivist learning approach at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.59$, S.D. = 0.009). Upon reviewing the individual dimensions, the highest mean score was for teacher's personality ($\bar{x} = 4.82$, S.D. = 0.06), indicating the highest level of student satisfaction. This was followed by the use of instructional media ($\bar{x} = 4.59$, S.D. = 0.04). The dimension with the lowest mean score was assessment ($\bar{x} = 4.47$, S.D. = 0.05).

These results suggest that students are highly satisfied with all aspects of the learning management, particularly the teacher's personality and the use of instructional media. This aligns with research indicating that Constructivist learning innovations can effectively create a conducive learning environment and increase student engagement. (Kwaengmuang, 2018; Neo, 2005).

In summary, both the experimental results and the student satisfaction evaluations clearly demonstrate that applying the Constructivist approach in Fundamental English learning activities can significantly promote linguistic creativity and enhance student learning achievement. Moreover, it received positive feedback regarding student satisfaction across all dimensions. Therefore, these research findings serve as crucial evidence supporting the Constructivist learning approach, which can be applied to other grade levels and subjects to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the present era and effectively prepare students to face changes in the global society.

4. Conclusions

This research aimed to (1) develop linguistic creativity in Grade 11 students in Fundamental English using the Constructivist approach, with the goal that 70% of students achieve at least 70% in learning outcomes; (2) study linguistic creativity in Foundation English and the learning achievement of Grade 11 students who received instruction using the Constructivist approach; and (3) examine student satisfaction with learning

experiences facilitated by the Constructivist approach. The research results, derived from pre- and post-instruction tests and experiments in each cycle, demonstrated development in both student achievement and satisfaction.

4.1 Development of Linguistic Creativity in Grade 11 Students

The analysis of linguistic creativity test scores in each cycle revealed the following:

Cycle 1: All 35 students achieved an average score of 9.37 out of 20 (46.85%), with only 13 students (37.14%) meeting the passing criteria.

Cycle 2: The average score increased to 15.82 out of 30 (52.73%), and the number of students meeting the criteria rose to 17 (48.57%).

Cycle 3: The average score further increased to 20.31 out of 30 (67.70%), with 25 students (71.43%) meeting the passing criteria.

From the results of each experimental cycle, it was found that activities emphasizing hands-on learning and self-construction of knowledge continuously enhanced linguistic creativity. The achievement demonstrated by the increase in average scores and the passing rate indicates the effectiveness of the Constructivist approach in stimulating the generation of new ideas in language use.

4.2 Learning Achievement of Grade 11 Students Who Received Instruction Using the Constructivist Approach

The average pre-instruction score was 38.40 (64.00%, S.D. = 6.76), which increased to 46.23 (77.05%, S.D. = 6.14) after instruction. This clearly shows that implementing activities based on the Constructivist approach significantly improved language achievement. Students engaged in both individual and group activities, going through processes of hypothesis formulation, information seeking, creative production, and knowledge reflection before and after learning. This led to a deeper and more consistent understanding of the content, while also fostering creative thinking skills throughout every stage of learning.

4.3 Student Satisfaction with Learning Experiences Facilitated by the Constructivist Approach

The results from the student satisfaction questionnaire indicated that students held a positive attitude towards learning with the Constructivist approach. Students gave an overall rating of "most satisfied" (overall average = 4.59 out of 5). Specifically, teacher personality received the highest score (4.82), followed by use of instructional media (4.59). This evaluation confirms that this learning management model effectively creates a learning environment conducive to developing students' skills and creativity.

In summary, the research findings indicate that the Constructivist approach to learning management can enhance linguistic creativity, learning achievement, and student satisfaction in all aspects. This serves as important evidence supporting the application of this approach in other grade levels and subjects to elevate the quality of teaching and learning in the current era.

5. Recommendations

5.1 For Instructors

5.1.1 Instructors should be encouraged to design challenging activities that provide students with opportunities for hands-on practice and independent expression of ideas. The use of diverse and modern instructional media, along with providing creative feedback to learners, will help foster continuous development of creative thinking.

5.1.2 Additional activities should be promoted to serve as a guideline for improving student learning achievement.

5.2 For Future Researchers

Future research should investigate the long-term effects of using the Constructivist approach to develop linguistic creativity and learning achievement. This includes the development of assessment tools that can accurately and precisely reflect these changes.

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